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WOMEN AND EDUCATION IN LANSING, MICHIGAN, 1904 - 1925

By

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A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

WOMEN AND EDUCATION IN LANSING, MICHIGAN, 1904-1925

By

Tracy Elizabeth Culcasi

The public schools of Lansing, Michigan provide a case study to explore the intersections of changing ideas about gender and educational reform in the early twentieth century. Most work dealing with urban educational reform in this time period focuses on the male power structure rather than on teachers or women, and examines larger cities such as New York, Boston, Chicago, or Los Angeles. This study, instead, examines how female teachers, club women, and ideas about gender influenced the educational reforms of a smaller city. Specifically the paper discusses how changing ideas about gender in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century empowered women to teach and form the club movement. The female teachers of Lansing further challenged gendered ideas about professionalism in Lansing by creating the Lansing Teachers' Club, with the specific goal of elevating teaching to a profession. In the same spirit, the club women challenged the gendered notion that women should not participate in civic discussions and policy making by introducing manual training and domestic education into the public schools. Nonetheless, both groups reinforced ideas about gender as well, the teachers by their tacit acceptance of the gendered wage scale and the club women by their introduction of a gendered curriculum.

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Introduction

In Lansing, Michigan during the early twentieth century, challenges to traditional ideas about gender, or gender roles, affected the public school system. In particular, changing ideas about gender roles helped feminize the teaching force, prompted club women to get involved in reform, encouraged female teachers to pursue professionalization, and encouraged club women to introduce new programs into the curriculum. Traditional ideas about gender in the late nineteenth century dictated that middle-class women should remain in the home, and the ultimate goal of all women should be to marry and raise children. Middle-class women were not expected to become professionals or take part in public decision making. But in Lansing teachers and club women began to redefine these ideas about gender by teaching, joining clubs, choosing to become professional teachers instead of marrying, and petitioning for curriculum reforms. During the spring of 1904, Lansing officially implemented its first pay scale, for women only, and the club women successfully introduced manual training into the schools. The pay scale exemplifies the gendered hierarchy that existed within the school system as a result of the feminization of the teaching force. By introducing manual training into the schools, these club women were acting as municipal housekeepers, extending the domestic sphere to include the entire community. They also implemented a major curriculum change that placed Lansing children into separate classes for the first time based solely on gender.

These educational reforms of the Lansing schools in the Progressive Era reflected the influence of domestic ideology and the understanding of urban gender roles on the community. This thesis explores the effect of changing ideas about gender on public education in Lansing, through an investigation of the intersection of such ideas and two specific school reforms, the introduction of the pay scale and of manual training. The female teachers of Lansing and the women of the Federated Women's Clubs of Lansing provided two examples of women who used traditional gendered ideas about women's roles as nurturers and caregivers to justify new roles for women as professional educators and club women active in civic policy making. Yet in 1904 they helped reaffirm traditional gendered ideas about men as breadwinners and the value of female labor through their tacit acceptance of the wage scale and they reaffirmed traditional gendered ideas about the proper vocational path for boys and girls by introducing manual training.

Lansing as a case study, can provide insight into the intersection of ideas about gender and early twentieth century reform. Most work dealing with urban educational reform in this time period focuses on the male power structure rather than teachers or women, and examines larger cities such as New York, Boston, Chicago, or Los Angeles as case studies.¹ This study, instead, examines how female teachers, club women, and

¹ Some examples of literature which focuses on the male power structure in reform, especially the role of superintendents, rather than women or teachers are: David Tyack and Elizabeth Hansot, Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America, 1820-1980 (New York: Basic Books Inc. Publishers, 1982). Harvey A. Kantor, Learning to Earn: School, Work, and Vocational Reform in California, 1880-1930 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988). Lawrence A. Cremin, The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961). David Nasaw, Schooled to Order: A Social History of Public Schooling in the United States (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979). Ronald D. Cohen, Children of the Mill: Schooling and Society in Gary, Indiana, 1906-1960 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990). Herbert Kliebard, The Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1893-1958 (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986). Paul E. Peterson, The Politics of School Reform, 1870-1940 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985). Selwyn K. Troen, The Public and the Schools: Shaping the St. Louis System, 1838-1920 (Columbia: University Of Missouri

ideas about gender influence the educational reforms of a smaller city. Though Lansing was not the first city to institute reforms such as wage scales and manual training - large cities such as New York and Chicago led the way - smaller cities such as Lansing did not merely copy the large ones. Instead they implemented reforms in their own way, to suit their own character and needs. Putting women in the center of the story and using gender as a tool of analysis helps add another perspective to the picture of urban educational reform in the early twentieth century. Lansing certainly is not the model for all smaller cities, and this thesis does not pretend to claim that it is. But the methodology of using women and gender to study educational reform is something that can be applied to other places to gain a new understanding of educational reform and of the role ideas about gender play in shaping public education.

Though the information on the Lansing Federation of Women's Clubs and the teachers of Lansing is sketchy, it is possible to discover who these women were through a variety of sources. These sources include School Board meeting minutes, city directories,

Press, 1975). David Tyack, The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974).

The works that do touch on women and teachers tend to focus on larger cities. Some examples are: Bryce E. Nelson, Good Schools: The Seattle Public School System, 1901-1930 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988). Marjorie Murphy, Blackboard Unions: The AFT and the NEA, 1900-1980 (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1990). Judith Rosenberg Raftery, Land of Fair Promise: Politics and Reform in Los Angeles Schools, 1885-1941 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992). Jane Bernard Powers, The 'Girl Question' in Education: Vocational Education for Young Women in the Progressive Era (Washington, The Falmer Press, 1992). Robert E. Doherty, "The Tempest on the Hudson: The Struggle For 'Equal Pay for Equal Work' in New York City Public Schools, 1907-1911," History of Education Quarterly 19 (1970): 413-434. Richard Altenbaugh, ed., The Teachers' Voice: A Social History of Teaching in Twentieth Century America (Washington, D.C.: The Falmer Press, 1992). Kate Rousmaniere, City Teachers: Teaching and School Reform in Historical Perspective (New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1997). Nancy Hoffman, ed. Women's 'True Profession': Voices from the History of Teaching (Old Westbury: Feminist Press, 1981). Donald Warren, ed., American Teachers: histories of a Profession at Work (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989).

census records, school yearbooks, local newspapers, and publications by the Lansing Teachers' Club and the Michigan State Federation of Women's Clubs. The teachers and club women have left few written records explaining the motivations behind their actions, but by using all of these sources together it is possible to tell their story. The teachers and club women of Lansing were mainly native-born, white, middle-class women. Their backgrounds reflected the backgrounds of the majority of the Lansing population. (See Appendix for Table 2 - Lansing Population Growth) At the turn of the century, Lansing was a small, industrializing city without a strong working-class, union or immigrant component. This helps explain why the teachers chose the more middle-class structure of a professional club over a working-class organization like a union. It also helps explain why the club women were able to introduce curriculum changes and why they chose to reinforce middle-class norms of female domesticity.

The first chapter examines how teachers and club women used traditional ideas about gender, namely the ideology of domesticity, to justify new roles for themselves as educators and reform activists. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, increasing numbers of women challenged ideas of gender by foregoing marriage and becoming professional teachers. They were careful to defend their choices with traditional domestic rhetoric, however, emphasizing the caring nature of women and their special qualifications as nurturers of the young. The result was that in Lansing, as in many other school systems, the teaching force became completely feminized. In a similar manner, Lansing club women challenged ideas of gender by moving beyond their own homes to

One work which deals with smaller cities and includes club women in the story of school reform is William J. Reese's Power and the Promise of School Reform: Grassroots Movements During the Progressive Era (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986).

begin actively reforming their communities. Like the teachers, they were careful to defend their work with traditional domestic rhetoric, referring to themselves as municipal housekeepers.

The second chapter focuses on the first wage scale for teachers, which was implemented in 1904 and only applied to female teachers, and the teachers' quest for professionalization. While the creation of the schedule did acknowledge that women were a vital part of the professional teaching force, it also reinforced existing ideas about the place of women in society. The salary schedule accentuated the all-male administrative structure of the school system. The fact that women continued to receive lower wages than their male counterparts also indicates strong ideas about gender on the part of the School Board. Despite obvious inequalities, the teachers of Lansing did not unite to fight unequal pay as teachers in some other cities did at the time. Instead, they focused on increasing the professional stature of teaching in Lansing by creating the Lansing Teacher's Club. How the teacher's acceptance of the wage scale and focus on professionalization reflected their ideas about gender, will be explored in this chapter.

Chapter three explains how the Lansing club women got involved in educational reform, and explores how their reform ideas and actions reflected their ideas about gender. The Federated Women's Clubs of Lansing petitioned the Board of Education to introduce manual training in 1904. They even helped pay for equipment to start the program. Their actions embodied the concept of municipal housekeeping, which was being embraced by club women across the United States at the time. Lansing club women affected public education in Lansing by introducing one of the first 'progressive' educational reforms into the curriculum. Cooking and sewing classes were designed for the girls, and

woodworking classes were designed for the boys. The introduction of manual training, created a gendered curriculum for the first time in the Lansing schools. These classes reinforced the prevailing gender norms (whether intentional or not) of the proper role for males and females. The classes especially stressed the domestic role for females by teaching them sewing and cooking.

In times of change people begin to question traditional gender roles, yet at the same time they also cling to them. As the female teachers were truly beginning to make careers in education, they never questioned gendered hierarchy or gender differences in pay. As club women began expanding their own roles in the community, they did so by creating a program that reinforced gender stereotypes for the next generation. Their actions supported traditional ideas on gender as much as challenged them, showing that the period of the early twentieth century was a time of change, which led to confusion on gender roles as women began redefining their place in society. During the Progressive Era middle-class women led the charge of reform. They were responding to the concerns that were raised by the overcrowding of rapidly expanding cities and the perceived needs of the children in the cities. Through their reform efforts, the women were able to change the schools and change the way women were perceived by society. The female teachers and club women of Lansing used traditional ideas about gender to justify new roles for women as educators and educational reformers. Yet while they challenged ideas about gender in their new roles, they also helped reaffirm these ideas by accepting the gendered wage scale and introducing manual training and domestic education into the curriculum.

Chapter 1

“From Separate Spheres to Teachers and Clubwomen/Activists”

In Lansing, both teachers and club women used the ideology of domesticity, which traditionally confined women to the home, to justify their movement into the public sphere of wage work and civic reform. The majority of Lansing’s teachers and club women were middle-class, American-born, educated women of Western European descent. It therefore makes sense that both groups would utilize the domestic ideology of the middle-class to justify their entrance into the work force and into school politics. The women of Lansing used ideas about gender to their benefit in their movement out of the home and into the schools and club meetings. In doing so they operated within and reshaped ideas about gender in Lansing.

Lansing’s Teachers

The female teachers of Lansing, Michigan simultaneously operated within, and reshaped, traditional ideas about gender to forge new roles for themselves in Lansing. They challenged domestic ideology by working for wages in the public sphere. Some of them decided not to marry and dedicated their lives to becoming professional teachers. The result for Lansing was a feminized teaching force.¹ Women in Lansing successfully employed the domestic image of women inherited from the early Republic to justify their entrance into the teaching profession, despite male backlash. In doing so they both

benefited from traditional ideas about gender and woman's caring nature and challenged the parts of this ideology which stated that middle-class women did not belong in the professional world of wage work.

Ideas about gender in Lansing in 1904 reflected 'traditional' American ideas of women as nurturers and caregivers and men as providers, and were constantly being changed and reproduced by the teachers. Some scholars, such as Jacqueline Jones, believe that the concepts of gender and gender roles are cultural constructs. The definition of what it means to be of a certain gender - male or female - changes depending on the time and place.² Other scholars, such as David Tyack and Myra Strober, take a more structuralist approach. They believe that the influence of gender is more than just roles which can be changed, it is deeply embedded in the structure of society.³ Sari Knopp Biklen visualizes "gender as a system of culturally constructed power relations produced and reproduced in interactions between men and women."⁴ This chapter will focus on how ideas about gender in Lansing were challenged, recreated, and reproduced by the teachers within the public school system.

Nineteenth-century American concepts of Republican Motherhood and separate spheres had shaped ideas about proper gender roles in Lansing. The concept of Republican Motherhood, according to which women needed to stay at home and

¹ The feminization of teaching refers to the movement of women into the teaching profession in the second half of the nineteenth century, which led to a predominantly female teaching population.

² Jacqueline Jones, "Race and Gender in Modern America," Reviews in American History 26 (1998): 220-221.

³ David B. Tyack and Myra H. Strober, "Jobs and Gender: A History of the Structuring of Educational Employment by Sex" in Educational Policy and Management: Sex Differentials ed. by Patricia A. Schmuck, Richard O. Carlson, and W. W. Charters, Jr. (New York: Academic Press, 1981), 131-132.

⁴ Sari Knopp Biklen, School Work: Gender and the Cultural Construction of Teaching (New York: Teachers College Press, 1995), 6. The idea of gender as a way to signify power relations is also put

concentrate on raising their children, particularly their sons, to be good citizens of the Republic, had defined what it meant to be a woman in America. Women's place was in the home, or private sphere, while men lived in the 'public' world of politics.⁵ This concept of "separate spheres" for men and women became a cornerstone for ideas about gender in the nineteenth century. Women were in charge of the private or domestic sphere and men ruled the public sphere of wage work and political activity.⁶ From this separate sphere ideology emerged what historians have called the 'Cult of True Womanhood' or 'Domestic Ideology'. These ideologies brought the idea of separate spheres a step further by stressing that women had 'special' domestic, moral, maternal and intuitive qualities which prepared them to be wives and mothers. Catharine Beecher was one of the spokeswomen for women's domestic virtues.⁷ The rise of domesticity in the nineteenth century was an attempt to restore the status of women, at a time when their status within the home had deteriorated with the advent of industrialization, which took much of women's traditional work and sources of power out of the home.

Industrialization further separated women's private and men's public spaces. As women

forward by Joan Wallach Scott in her article, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," in Gender and the Politics of History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 167-70.

⁵ Linda Kerber, "The Republican Mother" in Women's America: Refocusing the Past eds. Linda Kerber and Jane De Hart-Mathews (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 83-91. Kerber also discussed the idea of Republican Motherhood in her book, Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), chapters 7 and 9. Kristi Andersen uses some of these ideas about Republican Motherhood in her book, After Suffrage: Women in Partisan and Electoral Politics Before the New Deal (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 3.

⁶ Sara M. Evans, "Women's History and Political Theory: Toward a Feminist Approach to Public Life" in Visible Women: New Essays on American Activism eds. Nancy A. Hewitt and Suzanne Lebsock (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 119-132.

⁷ Karen J. Blair, The Club Woman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914 (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1980), 1-2. Kathryn Kish Sklar, Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 83, 135-136, 156. Courtney Vaughn-Roberson, "Having a Purpose in Life: Western Women Teachers in the Twentieth Century" in The Teachers' Voice: A Social History of Teaching in Twentieth Century America ed. Richard Altenbaugh (Washington: The Falmer Press, 1992), 15.

lost power due to industrialization, an alliance arose between women and ministers creating the concept of 'sentimental womanhood' and the idea of women's moral superiority.⁸

One problem with the separate sphere and domestic ideologies was that they were generally applied to American-born, middle-class, Euro-American women.⁹ For example, African-American women had worked outside the domestic sphere, from the time of slavery. Additionally, there were differences in the outlook of middle-class and working-class women on domesticity, specifically housework and marriage. While the middle-class ideologies of 'separate spheres' and domesticity glorified housework and marriage, working women had a different view. Working women saw housework as an added burden at the end of a long day. For working women, domestic ideology provided an ideal they could not possibly live up to since they could not afford to stay at home in the private sphere.¹⁰ So the ideals of separate spheres and domesticity were primarily middle-class constructs, attainable by only a select number of American women, but they were important for the teachers of Lansing since they enabled them to use domestic ideology to justify their changes in lifestyle.

Lansing, as with other urban school systems of the time, was experiencing the feminization of the education profession. The effects of feminization could already be seen in 1904 in the homogeneous teaching population and growing number of women who

⁸ Sklar, 193. Biklen, 50. Blair, 3. John Richardson and Brenda Hatcher, "The Feminization of Public School Teaching, 1870-1920" Work and Occupations 10 (1983):84-89.

⁹ Kathleen Weiler, "Women's History and the History of Women Teachers" Journal of Education 171, no. 3 (1989): 9-16.

¹⁰ Priscilla Murolo, The Common Ground of Womanhood: Class, Gender, and Working Girls' Clubs, 1884-1928 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 49 and chapter 4 discusses working-class women. Stephanie J. Shaw, What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do: Black Professional Women Workers During

made teaching a long-term career. The transformation of teaching into ‘women’s work’, begun in the mid-nineteenth century, reflected changes in the role of women within the family, in the way society viewed women, and in the nature and economics of schoolteaching. Industrialization meant that many products formerly manufactured in the home, such as clothing, were now manufactured in factories. This left daughters of middle-class families with fewer household chores and more time to spend on other pursuits. Since they were not needed at home, many young women continued their education. Thus many schools, like Lansing High School, graduated far more females than males up until the 1920’s.¹¹ (See Appendix For Chart 4 on Graduation Rates) Some of these women then attended female colleges, coed universities such as the University of Michigan, or local normal schools after high school.¹² These educated females began to yearn for the opportunity to earn some money and be independent for the few years between their graduation from school and marriage. Teaching filled this time period perfectly. Female activists such as Catharine Beecher began advocating the employment of female teachers based on the concepts of ‘domesticity’ and ‘separate spheres’.¹³ In order for society to accept women teachers, advocates such as Beecher portrayed teaching as an extension of the domestic sphere. Women made ideal teachers because of their caring nature; teaching was portrayed as the perfect training for future mothers and as

the Jim Crow Era, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), chapter 4 discusses African-American women.

¹¹ Frederick Aldinger, History and Growth of Lansing Public Schools (Lansing: Lansing School Department, 1944): 63-5. The first year Lansing High School actually graduated more males than females was 1929. Numbers began to even off in the 1920’s as progressive educational reforms such as industrial education began to have the desired effect of keeping boys in school. Prior to these efforts most boys left school early because it bored them and a high school diploma was not necessary to secure a good job.

¹² A Normal School was a college specifically dedicated to preparing teachers and granting teaching degrees.

'woman's true profession'. Considering the lack of viable career options for middle-class females in Lansing at the time, teaching became very attractive.¹⁴ It offered greater social prestige than work as a domestic or as a clerk.

At the same time that women began looking for a new place for themselves in society, the common school movement began to grow. The common school movement began prior to the Civil War in most Northeastern communities.¹⁵ This concept of free public schools for all children was already well in place in the United States when Lansing created its public school system in 1861, just two years after the City of Lansing had been incorporated.¹⁶ Many common school advocates such as Horace Mann quickly realized the desirability and potential for female school teachers. His reasoning was purely economic: women could be hired to teach for less money than men. The dream of free public schools for all American children would not have been realized so quickly if women had not been part of the teaching force. Male school administrators imagined that young females would make a more docile workforce than men, a justification similar to that being

¹³ Sklar, 83, 97-8, 135-6, 173, 193.

¹⁴ Several authors have discussed this concept. Those noted here are: Hoffman, 2-17. Weiler, 16-17. Rousmaniere, 34-35. Myra Strober and David Tyack, "Why do Women Teach and Men Manage? A Report on Research on Schools," *Signs* 5, no. 3 (1980): 495-497. Altenbaugh, 8-12. Donald Warren, 9-48, 49-62, 118-156, 293-343. Alison Prentice and Marjorie R. Theobald, eds. *Women Who Taught: Perspectives on the History of Women and Teaching* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 115-135. Keith Melder, "Women's High Calling: The Teaching Profession in America, 1830-1860", *American Studies* 13 (1972):19-32. Richardson and Hatcher, 81-100. Myra Strober and Laura Best, "The Female/Male Salary Differential in Public Schools: Some Lessons from San Francisco, 1879", *Economic Inquiry* 17 (1979): 218-36. Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 63-72. Myra Strober and Audri Gordon Lanford, "The Feminization of Public School Teaching: Cross-Sectional Analysis, 1850-1880", *Signs* 2 (1986):212-35. Schmuck, Carlson and Charters, eds., 131-152. Shaw, 2 and chapter 6 - Shaw discusses how for African-Americans, teaching required 'socially responsible individualism', in which the teachers worked not just for themselves but for racial uplift and to give back to the community.

¹⁵ The common school movement refers to the push to establish the first public schools in the United States. They were generally ungraded and open to all students in common.

¹⁶ Aldinger, 4-5.

used by early mill owners.¹⁷ In Lansing this seems to have been the case, since from 1861 the female teachers received less money than their male counterparts. Even if one takes into account the fact that the men generally served in administrative capacities, the Lansing School Board realized early the feasibility of hiring a male supervisor at a higher rate and then several female teachers for lower wages.¹⁸

At the same time that domestic ideology pulled women into teaching, changes in the structure of education and the economy began pushing men out of the profession and into other careers in Lansing and in other cities. As education, especially in urban areas like Lansing, became more bureaucratized, stricter requirements were implemented. For example, the school year was lengthened, making teaching a full time profession, not part-time work to supplement one's income or help finance higher education. This change resulted in a decrease in the number of male teachers. At the same time, stricter standards requiring schooling and certification, also made teaching a more permanent position.¹⁹

For many male teachers, the salary teaching provided could not compensate for the time

¹⁷ Sklar, 180-1. Schmuck et. al., 137. Melder, 20-7.

¹⁸ Aldinger, 66.

¹⁹ In the state of Michigan, either the State Board of Education or city school boards could issue teaching certificates. While the certificates granted by the state board were valid anywhere in the state, those issued by individual cities applied only in that particular city. Thus the teachers of Lansing were either certified by the city or by the state. In both cases, a teacher needed to meet a minimal education requirement and sometimes pass a test in order to qualify for a certificate. A lifetime teaching certificate represented the highest mark of professional excellence for a teacher. First created in 1889, a life certificate was granted to anyone with good moral character who had taught for two years and passed a lengthy exam covering approximately 22 subjects. Graduates of the University of Michigan and some of the state's other incorporated colleges could take the exam without satisfying the teaching requirement first. In the early twentieth century, as the profession evolved, certification no longer depended merely on passing an exam, but on professional training. The 1921 teacher training law required that as of September, 1925, all certificates issued to beginning teachers be issued only on the basis of a four year high school course plus additional years work in professional training. The law still did not require teachers to obtain a degree, but they at least needed to attend professional school. Charles R. Starring and James O. Knauss, The Michigan Search for Educational Standards, (Lansing: Michigan Historical Commission, 1969), 77, 113, 172. Donald W. Disbrow, Schools for An Urban Society, (Lansing: Michigan Historical Commission, 1968), 19.

and money that now had to be spent on schooling. Finally, most urban areas offered other career opportunities for men which paid better than teaching. For men who had to consider the possibility of supporting a wife and family, teaching just did not make sense financially, unless they had the opportunity to move into a higher paying administrative position.²⁰ For example in Lansing at the turn of the century, positions in the state government, Michigan State University, or R.E. Olds among others all provided men with alternate career paths than teaching. Nationally, teaching changed from an almost exclusively male profession at the beginning of the nineteenth century into a predominantly female one (70%) by 1900. In Lansing 96% of the teaching force was female in 1900.²¹

This feminization of teaching was not accepted by all, and there was some backlash from men who opposed the movement of women into the professional realm. By the late nineteenth century, the feminization of education was under attack. A 'woman peril' in education was discovered by male educators and educational experts in response to the rise of feminism and women to positions of power in school administration. Opponent of female teachers charged, first, that female teachers in the high school were psychologically harmful to adolescent male students who needed virile men as role models. Women were also blamed for teachings' lack of status as a profession, since the other 'true professions' were predominantly male (i.e. law and medicine). Some argued that women kept teacher's salaries low, since they worked for less money than men because they did not

²⁰ Some of the authors who developed these ideas of what pushed men out of teaching include: Strober and Lanford, Thomas Morain, "The Departure of Males From Teaching in Nineteenth Century Iowa", Civil War History 26:2 (Summer 1980):161-70, Bruce A. Kimball, The 'True Professional Ideal' in America: A History (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 265-6. Warren, 9-48, 49-62. Altenbaugh, 8-12.

²¹ Kimball, 173, 264 (for national statistics). Lansing City Directory 1900, 16-17 (for Lansing statistics).

need to earn a family wage.²² Unmarried female teachers were viewed as a threat to family and home, since it seemed ‘unnatural’ for a woman to wish to remain single and teach instead of marrying and starting a family of her own. This concern grew as more and more women opted to forego marriage in order to stay in the profession.²³

In Lansing, some students even objected to what they perceived as the over-feminization of the high school in the early years of the school system. From the establishment of Lansing High School in 1868 until 1873, the school was staffed entirely with women teachers, including a woman principal. “In April, 1873, the students of the high school petitioned the Board of Education for a ‘first-class gentleman teacher’.”²⁴ The School Board obliged their request by hiring a Mr. Gleason for the year 1873-1874 as the first male principal of the high school. The tradition of a male high school principal continued for several years. Domestic ideology had opened the way for Lansing women to enter the teaching force but the same traditional ideas about gender also kept the female teachers out of the administration.

Lansing’s Clubwomen

In Lansing, just as the single daughters of the middle-class used domestic ideology to justify their work as teachers, many married middle-class women used domestic

²² The concept of the family wage was used to justify higher incomes for men because it was believed that men needed to earn enough money to support themselves and their families and to keep their wives out of the workforce. Theda Skocpol, Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992), 33-34.

²³ Several historians have examined this reaction to the feminization of teaching. They include: Weiler, 22-25. Doherty, 420-1. Rousmaniere, 39-40. Redding S. Sugg, Jr., Motherteacher: The Feminization of American Education, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), 24, 85, 106, 120, 126.

²⁴ Aldinger, 68.

ideology to justify the creation of women's clubs. Women's clubs became popular with middle and upper class urban women in the second half of the nineteenth century. Just as industrialization left middle-class daughters with time to teach, it left married middle-class women with time to devote to club work. Clubwomen used the club to regain some of the power they lost when production was taken out of the home and moved into the factories, creating a gendered division of labor.²⁵ Lansing boasted 10 women's clubs in 1904, which joined together to form the City Federation of Women's Clubs. In Lansing, the club women were generally middle-class, American-born, married or widowed women of western-European decent, the same background as the teachers.²⁶ The club women also hailed from the same background as the majority of Lansing residents at the time. (See Appendix, Tables 1 and 2 - Lansing Population) Originally founded as literary societies to discuss art, literature and history, the clubs eventually moved from self-improvement to civic improvement. When urban women began moving from the private domestic space of the home to the public political space of civic reform they coined the term 'municipal housekeeping.' Basically the club women came to view the local community as an extension of the home, thereby tying community work to their work as homemakers and making public work respectable. The club women justified their involvement in issues concerning women and children on the grounds that men were too busy with business and

²⁵ Blair, 3-5. Anne Firor Scott, Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 79-83. Murolo, 150. Skocpol, 321-322.

²⁶ Lansing City Directory, 1904, 42. The clubs which belonged to the City Federation of Women's Clubs were the: Bay View Reading Circle, E.M.B. Club, Fortnightly Club, Woman's Historical Club, Lansing Woman's Club, Sorosis Club, Unity Club, West Side Literary Club, Daughters of the America Revolution, and P.G.T. Club. The background of the club women was discovered by cross-referencing the Lansing City Directory and the Census Records from 1900 and 1910. There is no evidence of any black women's clubs at this time in Lansing. This could be explained by the fact that the black population of Lansing remained relatively small until after World War II.

partisan politics to deal with these issues.²⁷ At a time when women could not formally take part in public political life, municipal housekeeping allowed them to improve the social and political conditions of the city in which they lived.

By the turn of the century, many women's clubs were actively pursuing the work of civic improvement. To justify this change in emphasis, activist women articulated "the idea that women as the center of home life were responsible for the moral tone of a community.....such responsibility did not end with the four walls of a home, but extended to the neighborhood, the town, the city."²⁸ This idea they called 'municipal housekeeping' and historians of women have discussed the various ways in which this idea dramatically expanded urban women's possibilities for civic action. According to Maureen Flanagan, "using a term such as 'municipal housekeeping' enabled women to become involved in every facet of urban affairs without arousing opposition from those who believed woman's only place was in the home."²⁹ Sara Evans has argued that the concept of municipal housekeeping allowed women's clubs to create a 'free space,' somewhere between the domestic sphere of the female and the public sphere of the male, wherein women could act politically and address social issues such as educational reform. They could get away with this invasion of male domain by dressing their concerns in domestic concerns and basing their actions on their domestic roles as mothers concerned with the education of their

²⁷ Anne Scott, 141-2. Skocpol, 20-21, 328-332, 335.

²⁸ Anne Scott, 141.

²⁹ Maureen A. Flanagan, "Gender and Urban Political Reform: The City Club and Women's City Club of Chicago in the Progressive Era," The American Historical Review 95, no. 4 (1990): 1048.

children. By invoking domesticity, club women were able to influence males in authority because they seemed to support traditional ideas about gender and female domesticity.³⁰

Women had few opportunities to act politically or publicly in Lansing in 1904 except for voting in the nonpartisan school elections, so they used the ideas of municipal housekeeping to create an outlet for themselves to act publicly and politically. In 1867 the Michigan legislature had granted school suffrage to all taxpaying women in Michigan. In 1881 the legislature then extended school suffrage to the parents and guardians of school-aged children, and finally, in 1893, mothers were granted equal and corresponding rights with fathers in all school matters.³¹ Despite their electoral power, Lansing had never had a female Board member before 1904. The first women were elected to the Board in 1916.³² But, the fact that in the United States schooling is a local concern, with each city having autonomy over its own local school system, made it easy for women to justify concern for such a local issue, especially as the schools of Lansing tended to be non-partisan even though the School Board was elected.³³ On municipal election day (the first Monday in April each year)³⁴ there was barely any mention of the School Board election in either the Democratic State Journal or the Republican State Republican. Neither paper endorsed one candidate over another based on party affiliation. Therefore it probably was not seen as very threatening for the Lansing club women to address this seeming non-partisan body,

³⁰ Sara M. Evans, "Women's History and Political Theory." 128-129. Skocpol, 368-371. Others such as Karen Blair, Jane Powers and John Rury referred to the use of domesticity to extend women's sphere as domestic feminism. Blair, 4-5. Powers, 16. Rury in American Teachers, 16.

³¹ Karolena N. Fox, "History of the Equal Suffrage Movement in Michigan," Michigan History Magazine II (1918): 92-95.

³² Aldinger, 12.

³³ *Ibid.*, 11-12. The School Board had twelve members, two from each ward. In 1921, Board members began to be elected at large.

³⁴ Lansing City Directory, 1900, 19.

especially when their proposal was based on their concern for children and the larger domestic space of the community.

The women of Lansing may very well have been exposed to the concept of municipal housekeeping through their association with the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), which called for municipal housekeeping to be applied to public education. In the fall of 1891 the Lansing Woman's Club³⁵ joined the General Federation, which had been founded a year earlier. Two members of the Lansing Woman's Club, Mrs. Irma T. Jones and Mrs. Amanda Barnes, attended the first GFWC biennial in Chicago in 1892.³⁶ "At the third biennial of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (1896) a resolution was adopted recommending to all the member clubs 'a study of the science of education and of educational conditions existing in their home cities, to the end that the united influence of women's clubs may be exerted for the betterment of the state system of education, from the kindergarten to the university'."³⁷ From its inception, the GFWC diverted clubs from their cultural programs and pointed them in the direction of municipal housekeeping.³⁸ There is no evidence indicating whether any Lansing women attended the third biennial, but both the Lansing Woman's Club and the Michigan State Federation of Women's Clubs (MSFWC), which counted five Lansing clubs as members including the Federation, belonged to the GFWC by 1896. Even if the Lansing women were not present

³⁵ The Lansing Woman's Club was one of the founding members of the Federation of Lansing Women's Clubs. They are two separate groups.

³⁶ Lansing Woman's Club Scrapbook from the GFWC First Biennial, 1892. Irma Jones would eventually become President of the Federated Club of Lansing from 1896-1897. She was also active in presenting papers supporting manual training in the public schools to women's clubs throughout Michigan.

³⁷ Scott, 149.

³⁸ Blair, 93.

at that particular meeting, the GFWC's focus on municipal housekeeping was very clear. It certainly must have played a role in the Federation's actions in 1904.

Lansing women were also exposed to municipal housekeeping rhetoric at the state level. The Michigan State Federation of Women's Clubs was organized March 20, 1895. The Lansing Woman's Club hosted the organizational meeting in Lansing. Delegates from four other Lansing Clubs (Lansing EMB, Lansing Historical Club, Lansing Home Culture Club, and the Lansing West Side Club) attended the first meeting.³⁹ The Michigan State Federation of Women's Clubs, in conjunction with the Michigan Woman's Press Association published a newsletter/magazine called The Interchange to keep members updated on club activities and to discuss different topics relative to club life. Since many of the Lansing clubs belonged to the State Federation it is probable that they received the newsletter and either dispersed it for all club members to read or discussed it at club meetings. Issues of The Interchange prior to 1904 show that manual training and domestic education were hot topics among members of the State Federation and among Lansing women themselves. These articles emphasized the fact that club women were obligated to get involved in improving their community and instituting educational reforms such as manual training. In January of 1896, an article lamented the fact that many clubs spent too much time on study and not enough time on improving their community. According to the author, "the club of the future will address itself to the great problem of living. It will question poverty, crime, disease, education, economics, religion, and all that pertains to society, with the aim of lessening the dreariness of human life, enlarging its scope, and lifting its horizon. It may become the reserve force of the nation - who can

tell? the inspired home guard of all its sanctities.”⁴⁰ This call is dressed in the words of municipal housekeeping. The article insinuates that it is inevitable that club women will be the ones to deal with the problems of urban society.

By 1904, Lansing had a feminized teaching force and an active network of women’s clubs, the members of which were drawn from similar class and ethnic backgrounds. The domestic ideology of the middle-class enabled them to justify their new positions in Lansing society, and to push forward with professionalization and educational reform. Yet at the same time, the teachers felt the constrictions placed on them by domestic ideology through the implementation of the first wage scale that was based on gender. The next chapter will examine how the Lansing teachers accepted these restrictions and focused instead on raising the professional image of teaching within the community.

³⁹ A History of the Michigan State Federation of Women’s Clubs, 1895-1953 (Ann Arbor: Ann Arbor Press, 1953), v-xvii.

⁴⁰ “Among the Clubs,” The Interchange II, no. 7 (January 1896): 3.

Chapter 2

“The Formation of a Profession”

By the beginning of the twentieth century, teachers across the country had begun to define themselves as professionals. Generally, professions were considered a male domain in the early twentieth century, but a few professions, nursing, teaching and the newly created profession of social work, were becoming female professions. As teaching evolved into a profession, its members continued to wrestle with issues of race, class, and gender in deciding who could enter the profession, what role women would play in the professional hierarchy, and how women viewed themselves as professionals. By 1904 the Lansing School Board illustrated the gender and job stratification created by the feminization of teaching through the passage of the first wage scale, which reflected traditional ideas about gender. The teachers of Lansing did not protest the inequities of the wage scale as teachers did in other cities, instead they focused on strengthening their professional image by creating the Lansing Teacher’s Club, thereby challenging gendered notions of what it meant to be professional. This chapter will explore the wage scale and the teachers’ quest for professionalization and suggest how the homogeneous makeup of the Lansing teachers, the relatively short tenure of most Lansing teachers, the teachers’ own acceptance of traditional ideas about gender, and the failure of equal wage proposals in the past explain the choices made by Lansing teachers.

The Teachers of Lansing

In studying the teachers of Lansing, it is first important to see just who these teachers were, and the community they taught in.¹ Lansing teachers were a fairly homogeneous group in 1904. In general Lansing teachers could be described as single women who were born in the United States, educated, from the middle-class, and of Western European descent.² They reflected the population of Lansing at this time, which was predominantly American-born European-Americans. (Refer to Appendix For Tables 1 and 2 on Lansing Population) Most teachers lived either as boarders or with relatives in the city. An example of a teacher who fit the generalization was Emma Lott. She was single, born on a farm in Michigan, and had earned a bachelor's degree. She lived in Lansing with her elderly father, a German immigrant. The average teacher in Lansing taught in the system for just a few years. For example, in 1900 the Lansing school system employed approximately 78 teachers. By 1904 only 42 of those teachers remained in

¹ Unfortunately I have uncovered only one primary document describing the life of a Lansing teacher. The 1911 diary of Isabella Hamilton, who taught in Lansing for almost 20 years, is part of a collection of the family's papers at the Lansing State Archives. The diary mainly refers to Hamilton's social engagements with only brief mention of her work as a schoolteacher and little reflection on her work. Instead, I will be talking about the Lansing teachers more as a group, bringing in individuals when possible to enhance their collective story. The lack of sources highlights the problem of voice. It also brings up the question, why aren't there a lot of written sources left by such a highly educated and literate group of people? Nancy Hoffman discusses the lack of written sources (diaries and letters) left by female urban teachers in the early twentieth century in her work Women's 'True' Profession: Voices from the History of Teaching. She summarizes that perhaps it was because by the early twentieth century their experiences seemed too ordinary to bother recording them. In any case, like Hoffman, I am left to use sources written about teachers by former students and writers of the time. (Hoffman, 200-3)

² This generalization does not apply to all Lansing teachers of course. But at least some, if not all of that description applies to all Lansing teachers. One notable exception was Isabel Hasty, who taught grade school in Lansing for over 20 years. She was already married and the mother of 2 children when records first make mention of her in 1894. Records indicate that she continued teaching until at least 1918. Although there is no indication of any written restrictions against married female teachers in Lansing until 1942 (Lansing Board of Education Minutes March 9, 1942), there must certainly have been an unwritten understanding which Mrs. Hasty was allowed to break. The term middle-class is used here

Lansing, or a little more than half. By 1910, only about 21 of the 122 teachers employed by the Lansing Public Schools had taught in the city in 1900. All of those who remained in the system were women. Though it is nearly impossible to ascertain what happened to all of the teachers who left, most probably sought jobs in other school systems or married and left the teaching profession.³ While the superintendent and high school principal were men, most of the high school teachers and all of the grade school teachers and principals were women.

Certification and educational requirements made teaching unattainable for certain groups in Lansing and helped to create Lansing's homogeneous teaching population. In the early twentieth century many students left school early, and many immigrants and blacks were encouraged into vocational tracks, thus effectively excluding them from the profession. Since Lansing was an urban system, its qualifications for teachers tended to be slightly higher than the state's, which dealt with both urban and rural school systems. In the first wage scale established by the Lansing Board of Education in 1904, the Board stipulated that all female teachers employed in the high school had to have graduated from an approved college or university or have taken a four year course in a normal school. To be eligible to become a ward school principal or teacher, a woman had to complete high

because as educated professionals, teachers would be considered middle-class in their communities even if their incomes did not reflect this status.

³ Exactly who taught in Lansing at any given time and their background has been recreated through a variety of sources. The names of the teachers and their teaching assignments for various years have been provided by: The Lansing City Directory (1894, 1900, 1904, 1910) , the Lansing Board of Education Minutes (May 11, 1908, April 7, 1913, April 26, 1915, April 24, 1916, April 4, 1917) , and The Oracle (the Yearbook for Lansing High School) (vol. 9 1900, vol. 19 1910, vol. 30 1920, vol. 38 1930). This information was then cross-referenced with the Census Records for the City of Lansing. I therefore tried to obtain the names of the faculty for the years which coincided with the United States Census (1900, 1910, 1920, 1930) and the State of Michigan Census (1894, 1904, 1914, 1924). The Lansing City Directory stopped printing a listing of the teachers sometime after 1910 and the Minutes from the Lansing Board of Education did not always include the list for each school year. I cross-referenced my information

school, and she had to graduate from either a college, university, or normal school or have two years teaching experience and a second grade teaching certificate from the state of Michigan.⁴ The higher education requirements meant that many women who trained to become teachers hailed from middle-class families who could afford to send their daughters on for advanced schooling.

While most teachers in Lansing stayed in the profession for only a few years, a few female teachers stand out because of their longevity. These women are the focus of this case study since they had the most invested in the system and were most affected by the inequalities within the system. These women challenged traditional ideas about gender because, for whatever reason, they chose work over marriage. They also seemed to be strong supporters of the Lansing Teachers' Club. Among these women who chose to make teaching their profession, not just a way-stop on their paths to marriage and motherhood, were Emma Lott, Ida Lamb, Edith Atkins, and Hannah McHenry.⁵ These four teachers will be used as examples of long-term Lansing teachers throughout the chapter. They were part of a growing group of women at the turn of the century who helped make teaching a female profession. Since these women had so much at stake in their teaching, it seems all the more interesting that they would not protest practices that paid men higher wages for the same work or kept them from achieving higher status because of their gender. While there is no evidence of the Lansing teachers openly

with the actual census records that have been preserved on microfilm at the State of Michigan Library (State of Michigan Census 1894 and 1904 and U.S. Census 1900 and 1920).

⁴ "New Wage Scale For Teachers", State Republican, 10 May 1904, 1.

⁵ Emma Lott was a high school teacher and assistant principal for over 40 years. Ida Lamb taught at Lansing High School for over 25 years. Edith Atkins taught at Lansing High School for over 10 years. Hannah McHenry was a grade school teacher and principal in Lansing for over 30 years as well as the first president of the Lansing Teachers' Club.

opposing the wage scale and gendered hierarchy, the formation of the Lansing Teachers' Club and focus on professionalization can be viewed as their way of protecting their rights to be professionals in the public arena.⁶

The Lansing Schools

The Lansing School System in 1904 contained one high school, thirteen grade schools, and a gendered administrative hierarchy. The teaching force totaled approximately 84 teachers, of which 80 were women. The high school had 15 teachers, among whom were Emma Lott, Edith Atkins and Ida Lamb. The grade schools had from 1 to 8 teachers in each school.⁷ The grade schools all had female principals, including Hannah McHenry at Cedar Street. The male teachers all worked in the high school and the high school principal, Norman Sloan, was a male. The Superintendent and School Board members were all men as well.⁸ By the time the wage scale went into effect a gendered administration already existed in Lansing. Females could only be in charge of other females. The feminization of teaching helped to create these gender inequities and the wage scale only seemed to highlight these discrepancies.

⁶ Just because there are no written records of teachers' complaints, that does not mean that the teachers necessarily accepted the inequalities of the system. They might have objected to the inequalities in their own way. Such actions would not necessarily have been recorded for history.

⁷ Lansing City Directory 1904, 16-17. The number of teachers includes principals, since principals taught classes at this time in addition to their administrative duties. The 13 grade schools were: Central, Bingham Street, Cedar Street, Cherry Street, East Park, Kalamazoo Street, Larch Street, Logan Street, Michigan Avenue, South Street, Townsend Street, Pine Street, and Walnut Street.

⁸ As mentioned earlier, the Board Members for the 1903-1904 school year were Dr. David Nottingham, Edward White, J. F. Campbell, William Dodge, J. S. Bennett, L. B. Gardner, C. E. Bement, Peter Baumgrass, J. E. Nichols, William O'Connor, Mr. Smith, and A. D. Saxton. (Aldinger, 20) W. D. Sterling was the Superintendent (Aldinger, 88).

The gender based hierarchy in Lansing mirrored the gender based hierarchy created in school systems across the nation. The differences existed not only in pay, but also in the job opportunities available to men and women. In Lansing, the educational power structure was completely male in 1904. The superintendent had been a man from the inception of the position in 1868. Even though five different women held the principalship of Lansing High School in the 1800's, the last in 1889, the high school principals were all men for the time period of this study. Even the Board of Education did not have a single female member until 1916.⁹ The one administrative area where women could excel in Lansing was at the level of grade school principal. Even in that position, however, they gained limited prestige and wages. The pattern taking shape in Lansing, where women taught and men managed, was replicated in urban school systems across the country. Part of the reason for this hierarchy rested on a reaction to the feminization of teaching, and part rested on traditional notions of men's and women's proper place in society. During the same time period, most urban school systems centralized authority. The newly created bureaucracies needed competently trained scientific managers to run them, which meant men in the context of the Progressive Era. Thus, while men represented only 30% of public school teachers nationally, they accounted for 85% of public school administrators.¹⁰

⁹ Aldinger, 13-22, 88-89.

¹⁰ Many scholars have addressed this issue of male domination of educational administration. David Tyack and Elizabeth Hansot are probably of the best known of this group. David Tyack and Elizabeth Hansot, The Dream Deferred: A Golden Age of Women School Administrators (Stanford: Institute for Research on Educational Finance and Governance, 1981). Tyack and Hansot, Managers of Virtue. John B. Reid, "A Career to Build, a People to Serve, a Purpose to Accomplish: Race, Class, Gender and Detroit's First Black Women Teachers, 1865-1916," in We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible: A Reader in Black Women's History, ed. by Darlene Clark Hine, Wilma King, and Linda Reed. (New York: Carlson Publishers, 1995), 307. Kimball, 293. Weiler, 19-22. Strober and Tyack, "Why Do Women Teach and Men Manage?," 494-503.

The Wage Scale and Stratification

The wage scale created in 1904 accentuated the stratification of the Lansing School System between men and women and high school and grade school teachers.¹¹ On May 9, 1904, the Lansing Board of Education voted to accept the first wage scale in the district's history. The Board of Education believed that a fixed salary schedule was needed because inequalities existed in the present system. What inequalities it was meant to rectify were not elaborated on. According to the motion, "the salary of the superintendent, principal in high school, the gentlemen teachers in the high school and the supervisors of drawing and of music, it is thought best be left solely to the judgment of the board, without any fixed schedule."¹² Thus all male teaching professionals were exempt from the salary schedule. No reason was given as to why they should be excluded. By leaving their salaries up to the discretion of the Board of Education, it became possible to pay male teachers and administrators more than their female counterparts without violating any salary schedules. In examining the pay of male and female teachers it is obvious that the men did make more money than women who basically performed the same job.¹³ In addition, teachers were still subject to the scrutiny of the superintendent and the teachers' committee of the Board of Education. If a teacher's work was not of "the highest order," an ambiguous term without any definition given, then she would not

¹¹ The stratification between high school and grade school teachers is a sort of 'class' stratification since grade school teachers were the second-class citizens of the teaching profession.

¹² "New Wage Scale," 1.

¹³ Lansing Board of Education Minutes, April 7, 1913.

benefit from the salary schedule.¹⁴ Therefore, while wages for female teachers were no longer arbitrary, there was still no clear definition of who would be considered a good teacher. The wage scale confirmed the Board of Education's ideas about gender and the economic value of male and female labor.

The belief that female teachers could be paid less money than male teachers had existed since the feminization of education first began in the middle of the nineteenth century. In Lansing the equalization of wages in 1868 drove men out of the teaching force entirely, resulting in a 100% female teaching force for 5 years.¹⁵ Men might have been excluded from the pay scale in order to keep their wages competitive with other professions open to men in Lansing. Lower wages for women, both in teaching and in the labor force in general, were justified with the belief that women did not need higher wages because they did not stay in the work force that long or need to support themselves. Ideas about gender roles might explain why the new wage scale of 1904 was only in effect for a set number of years, because the Board felt that most Lansing teachers would not teach beyond the scale limits anyway.¹⁶ But in 1904 there was already a growing number of Lansing teachers proving these beliefs to be wrong. For example, in 1904 high school teacher Emma Lott had already been teaching in Lansing for 11 years, and so was already beyond the limits of the wage scale. High school teachers Ida Lamb and Edith Atkins were beyond the scale as well.¹⁷ Some of these teachers, such as Lott, had dependents for whom they had to care. By this time Lott lived with her father who was well into his

¹⁴ "New Wage Scale", 1.

¹⁵ Aldinger, 67-8.

¹⁶ Ibid. The limits were 10 years for high school teachers, 7 years for grade school principals, and 9 years for grade school teachers. After a teacher reached the limit of the wage scale, her salary was again up to the determination of the board.

seventies and she was probably his sole means of support.¹⁸ Finally the idea that men should earn more because they had to earn a ‘family wage’ reinforced traditional ideas about men as breadwinners.

The Minutes of the Lansing Board of Education do not provide actual evidence of teacher salaries until 1908, so this is the first opportunity to examine the effects of the wage scale. At that point, there were fourteen teachers in the High School, including principal Sloan, 5 men and 9 women. Six of the female teachers earned beyond the \$800 maximum described in the scale, indicating that they had all taught for more than ten years. All the male teachers, including Sloan, earned as much as or more than Emma Lott, the highest paid female teacher. Yet records indicate that she had taught in Lansing longer than any of the men. Ida Lamb and Edith Atkins, who had also taught at Lansing High School longer than any of the male teachers, were both paid less than their male colleagues. All the women had obtained four year college degrees. Though it is unknown if the male teachers had taught previously in other places, there is no indication that they held more than a four year college degree. One of the men, Principal Sloan, did not graduate from college until at least five years after Lott, Atkins, and Lamb had begun their teaching careers.¹⁹ (See Appendix For Chart 1-Lansing Wage Scale)

The list of salaries for the 1913-1914 school year shows the wage gap growing between male and female high school teachers. In the high school, the highest paid male teacher (other than the principal) H.E. Gardner, earned \$1400. He had taught at Lansing for at least ten years. In comparison, the highest paid female teacher, the Assistant

¹⁷ Educators of Michigan: Biographical, 484, 176-7, 411.

¹⁸ 1900 U.S. Census.

¹⁹ Lansing Board of Education Minutes, May 11, 1908. Educators of Michigan, 484, 176-7, 411, 305-6.

Principal Emma Lott, earned \$1050 and had been working in Lansing for about 20 years. Ida Lamb earned only \$875 and she had been teaching in Lansing for over 20 years. Out of the 22 teachers at Lansing High School in 1913-1914, not including Principal Sloan and Assistant Principal Lott, the 8 men earned an average of \$1175 for the year while the 14 women earned an average of \$805. The reason the female figure is so high is probably because 8 of the 14 female high school teachers earned more than the \$800 maximum for seven years stipulated on the wage scale. (See Appendix For Chart 1-Lansing Wage Scale) Though the wage scales for both high school and ward school teachers had again gone up, they still earned less than their male counterparts. The Board Minutes do not provide any justification for the salaries of the men, like their degrees earned or years of service. So there is no basis for comparison, especially since yearly lists of teachers are not available, it is therefore difficult to determine when a teacher started and if they had any previous experience in a different school system, which was honored on the pay scale.²⁰

It was not until the 1920's that separate salary schedules appeared for male teachers and even then their base salary was higher than the female teachers'. The 1923-1924 salary schedule based pay on a teachers' education and their teaching performance rating. Women earned a base salary of \$1200 for those without a bachelor's degree and \$1440 for those with a bachelor's degree. Men earned a base salary of \$1500 for those without a bachelor's degree and \$1740 for those with a bachelor's degree. Even though men were now on a set salary schedule, they still earned approximately \$3000 more a year

²⁰ Lansing Board of Education Minutes, April 7, 1913.

than women with equal education and performance ratings.²¹ (See Appendix For Chart 2-Lansing Wage Scale)

A closer look at Lansing's first wage scale shows that a hierarchy existed among female teachers as well, with high school teachers receiving more money than grade (or ward) school teachers. This is the 'class' stratification within the school system. The wage scale perpetuated the idea that somehow grade school teachers were second class teachers because they worked with younger children and did not focus on one single discipline as high school teachers did. The fact that all grade school teachers in Lansing were women certainly comes into play here. For example, the scale for female high school teachers started at \$500 for the first year. By the tenth year they earned \$800. In order to teach in the high school a teacher needed a degree from an approved college or university or to complete a four year course in a normal training school. The female assistant principal in the high school received \$50 over the schedule. In comparison, principals for the ward or grade schools started out at \$500, the same salary as a first year high school teacher. But by their seventh year (the end of their schedule) they only made \$600, while the female high school teacher made \$725. To become a ward school principal one needed a high school diploma and either a degree from a college, university or normal school, or two full years teaching experience (with at least six months in each school year) and a second grade certificate. So at the ward school level, experience was valued just as much as post-secondary education. As for ward school teachers, they only earned \$350 in their first year. They did not earn the starting salary of \$500 for female high school teachers and ward school principals until their ninth year of service. Ward school teachers

²¹ Aldinger, 93-95.

required the same level of preparation as ward school principals. Once a teacher reached the top of the salary scale, their wages once again depended on the discretion of the Board of Education.²² (See Appendix For Chart 3-Wage Scale of 1904)

The reason for the wage differences between female high school and grade school teachers in Lansing can best be explained through differences in qualification and ideas about gender. One can surmise that the higher degree of education needed to teach high school was one of the considerations behind the higher wage scale. Throughout the United States high school teachers received a higher status than grade school teachers, mainly because they often had more advanced degrees.²³ The fact that in the Lansing grade schools, as in many grade schools across the United States, women accounted for the entire teaching and administrative staff probably determined their lower wages as well. The lower education standards and pay combined with the notion that women were better suited to teach younger children effectively kept males from teaching in grade schools in most urban school systems like Lansing. The fact that the Lansing School Board was not interested in attracting male teachers into the grade schools, mainly because men in Lansing had many other more lucrative opportunities, also accounts for the lower wages.

The scale created in 1904 changed occasionally, as the School Board raised wages and made other changes. In 1908 the pay scale for high school teachers remained the same, while the scales for ward school principals and teachers went up slightly. In fact, ward school principals now started at \$550, \$50 more than the \$500 that high school teachers started at. But within a few years, high school teachers again made more money. By the fifth year ward school principals only made \$650 to the high school teachers' \$675.

²² "New Wage Scale for Teachers" State Republican, May 10, 1904, 1.

Additionally grade school principals hit the wage ceiling after 5 years. So Hannah McHenry, who had been a grade school principal at least 8 years, still only earned the \$650 stipulated as the wage for 5 years of service. In comparison high school teachers Edith Atkins and Ida Lamb, who had both taught for more than 10 years, earned \$25 more (\$825) than the \$800 salary cap for 10 years.²⁴

The scale continued to rise over the years, but grade school teachers and principals still earned less than their high school counterparts. In 1910 the high school teachers' schedule remained the same, while the schedule for ward school principals and teachers went up. The ward school teachers were still underpaid in comparison to the high school teachers, but the ward school principals passed the high school teachers in wage level for a short time. Ward school principals now started at \$600, \$100 more than the \$500 a first year high school teacher earned. For some reason (no explanation given) the scale of the ward school principals now only lasted for three years. But in the third year, a ward school principal made \$700, in comparison to a high school teacher's \$600.²⁵ For the 1915-1916 school year, the only change to the salary schedule was to cap off the maximum salary for grade school principals at \$800 a year. They would then earn an additional \$10 for each room above four that the school contained. Thus the salary gap effectively prevented grade school principals from earning more than high school teachers. Additionally, these principals had to teach as well as manage their schools.²⁶ For the 1916-1917 school year the starting salary of grade school principals was raised to \$700, with the maximum remaining at \$800. The schedule for the grade school teachers was

²³ Doherty, 416.

²⁴ Lansing Board of Education Minutes, May 11, 1908.

²⁵ Lansing Board of Education Minutes, January 24, 1910.

extended so that the maximum equaled \$700.²⁷ The salary scale continued to increase, as did teacher's salaries throughout the 1920's. Grade school principal was the highest aspiration for female teachers without the credentials to teach high school. Many women in Lansing who devoted their lives to teaching became grade school principals.

Lansing certainly was not the only city that paid its male teachers more than its female teachers, or that paid high school teachers more than grade school teachers. One of the main reasons that school boards hired women as teachers in large numbers in the nineteenth century was that they would work for lower wages. A survey done by the NEA (National Education Association) in 1905 showed that on average, female high school teachers earned only 69% of the salary of male high school teachers. These differences in salary were compounded by the fact that women dominated in the grade schools, which traditionally paid lower wages anyway. In one city at least, New York, the female teachers banded together to fight this wage discrimination on the high school level. They demanded 'equal pay for equal work,' and in 1912 they succeeded. Though it was not until 1947 that New York state law abolished differences in salary between high school and grade school teachers.²⁸ The female teachers of Lansing however, did not react as their New York City counterparts did; they did not try to unionize or fight for equality. Instead, they focused on the idea of professionalization.

²⁶ Lansing Board of Education Minutes, April 26, 1915.

²⁷ Lansing Board of Education Minutes, April 24, 1916.

²⁸ Doherty, 413-34. Rousmaniere, 18-20. New York was certainly a trend setter in that it was the first city to abolish pay differences based solely on gender. There is no indication that Lansing teachers

The Lansing Teachers' Club: A Professional Organization

Lansing teachers created their own professional organization, the Lansing Teachers' Club, in 1912 to protect their professional needs and define themselves as professionals. The "club's purpose [was] the mutual benefit of its members and their advancement socially, intellectually, and professionally, and the securing of such other advantages as may be properly gained by a union of efforts."²⁹ The focus on professionalization was itself a challenge to traditional ideas about gender and what it meant to be a professional. The predominantly female teaching population of Lansing was asserting their right to be labeled professionals, even though the professions were traditionally a male domain. Furthermore, their claim to professionalism was not based in a male dominated institution, such as the MEA or NEA, but in the female club tradition. Teacher organizations such as the NEA originally excluded female teachers because it was believed that only men could be professionals and therefore men should be the ones to control the teaching profession.³⁰ Though the Lansing Teachers' Club was coed, it was predominantly female. Not all female teachers in the country chose the club format. Many female teachers, like those in Chicago, chose to form unions. The decision to form a club instead of a union in Lansing reflects the predominantly middle-class background of the teachers involved. Their decision also reflects the lack of a strong labor component in Lansing at the time. The official labor organizations listed in the city directory are skilled

agitated for gender equality in pay during the same time period. In fact in most systems, pay differences based on gender remained in effect until the 1940's or so.

²⁹ Lansing Educational News, Vol. II, No. 1, October 1931.

³⁰ Murphy, 47-52.

crafts unions of barbers, bricklayers, carpenters, electrical workers and the like.³¹ The Lansing Teachers chose the middle-class club format to promote their professionalization rather than the union movement as had the teachers in Chicago, who represented a larger and more diverse teaching population which drew largely from the working-class.³²

The Lansing Teachers' Club was dedicated to improving the quality of life for Lansing teachers and Lansing citizens as well as professionalization. Some of the achievements of the club included bringing a variety of musical programs to Lansing for the benefit of the members and the general public as well as sponsoring extension courses and lectures open to the public. The Teachers' Club played a hand in increasing the teachers' salary schedule. They raised money for various charity organizations in the city of Lansing, thus keeping the link open between professionals and the wider community.³³ Some of the goals of the Teachers' Club as stated in the 1925-1926 Annual Announcement included promoting the cause of public education throughout the city, state and nation, creating prestige for the teachers of Lansing and the Teachers' Club, promoting stronger unification of all public school teachers, and creating a high grade of professional work to raise the professional status of teachers.³⁴ Based on the structure and activities of the Lansing Teachers' Club, it seems that Lansing teachers defined a professional as one who gave back to the community, promoted education, and kept informed in her field.

³¹ Lansing City Directory, 1908, 22-23.

³² Murphy provides a good description of teacher unionization in Chicago, 7-12, 61-70, and chapter 5.

³³ Ibid. Lansing Educational News, Vol. III, No. 7, May 1928. Lansing Educational News, Vol. II, No. 1, October 1926, 4. Lansing Educational News, Vol. I, No. 1, October 1925, 4. Lansing Educational News, April 1929, 14.

³⁴ Annual Announcement of the Lansing Teachers' Club 1925-1926.

The first president of the Lansing Teachers' Club was Miss Hannah McHenry and the membership fee for the first year was \$1.³⁵ Hannah McHenry had been a grade school teacher and then principal in Lansing for almost twenty years at that point. She was one of the growing number of Lansing teachers who had devoted their lives to teaching. As a woman and a grade school teacher she suffered doubly under the wage hierarchy, yet her election as first president of the Lansing Teachers' Club shows that her response was not to agitate, but to professionalize. After her term as president, McHenry continued her active involvement in the club, as shown by her membership on the social committee in the 1927-1928 school year.³⁶ By the 1920's all of the teachers in Lansing had joined the club.

In 1913 the Lansing club joined the Federated Teachers' Clubs of Michigan. Again they emulated the structure of the women's clubs by joining in state federations. Some of the reasons for joining with the Federated clubs were laid out in a pamphlet produced by the Lansing Teachers' Club in January of 1914. At that time the Federated Club included some twenty clubs. The teachers of Lansing realized the need for unity in order to obtain better conditions for teachers as well as students. While most other professions had strong organizations, the teachers did not. The two main goals for the Federated club in 1914 were a school for mentally deficient children and a teachers' retirement salary system.³⁷ The State Federation of Teachers' Clubs was formed in 1911 as a department of the Michigan State Teachers' Association (MSTA). It was created to promote teachers' welfare and represent classroom teachers within the parent organization, which had come represent male administrators instead of female classroom

³⁵ Aldinger, 184.

³⁶ Lansing City Directories, 1894, 1900, 1904. Lansing Educational News, October 1927, 5.

³⁷ Lansing Teachers' Club Pamphlet, January 28, 1914.

teachers. The Federation was not overly aggressive and did not present itself as a union, in fact it objected to union methods.³⁸ Like the women's club movement, it identified solidly with the middle-class ideal of professionalism, not the working-class ideal of unionism.

One of the many goals of the Teachers' Club was to further the professionalization of Lansing teachers. As stated in the 1925-1926 Annual Announcement, teaching was now considered a profession, one which required much training and preparation. In a quote from Lansing Superintendent J.W. Sexton, "The Teachers' Club of Lansing, federated with other clubs in the state and co-operating with the Michigan State Teachers' Association and National Education Association, has done much to professionalize teaching."³⁹ Sexton felt that the Teachers' club had done this through its support of professional training of teachers. He felt that the goal of professionalism was not a selfish one for teachers, rather that professional teachers would be better prepared to train students to handle the future.⁴⁰

One of the many committees of the Lansing Teachers' Club was the Teachers' Welfare Committee, which worked on behalf of the teachers to help secure benefits such as salary increases. Emma Lott belonged to this committee for several years. The welfare committee often made recommendations to the teachers' committee of the Lansing Board of Education. Since the club was not a union and had no bargaining power, they could only make suggestions, they could not force the Board to follow their suggestions. Sometimes in order to gain more leverage they reached out to other community groups for

³⁸ Disbrow, 55, 135- 136. The MSTA became the MEA in 1926. Until 1906 the MSTA was mainly an organization of administrators. Classroom teachers were not really involved in the organization.

³⁹ Annual Announcement of the Lansing Teachers' Club, 1925-1926.

support. For instance, in 1913 the Welfare Committee petitioned the Board of Education for a general increase in salaries, “as they [were] unable to live or save anything on their present scale of pay.”⁴¹ The Board did adopt a new salary schedule for the next year, though there is no indication if the letter from the Welfare Committee had any influence. In 1920, the Welfare Committee presented their case for higher wages to various civic organizations in the city such as the Women’s Historical Club. As a result, the Board of Education received a flood of letters from organizations such as the Women’s Historical Club, the E.M.B. club, the Rotary Club, the Kiwanis Club, the Engineers Club, and the Chamber of Commerce. Each group stated their belief that the teachers should receive a salary increase. So even if the Welfare Committee itself could not sway the Board, it could influence powerful groups in the city who could sway them. One reason these groups probably aided the teachers was that they were made up of middle-class women and other professionals, similar in background to the homogeneous teaching population. This was one of the first instances in Lansing where there was an alliance between the club women and the teachers. The welfare committee continued lobbying the Board concerning teachers’ salaries. Overall they were fairly successful in achieving their goals.⁴²

In October of 1925, the Lansing Teachers’ Club, in cooperation with the Lansing Board of Education, started a monthly newsletter for teachers called The Lansing Educational News. The goal of the publication was to unify the teachers and keep them informed of what was going on in the school system. This was a concern since the system numbered 460 teachers by that time, spread out through several buildings. Each month

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Lansing Board of Education Minutes, April 7, 1913.

the newsletter had a theme, such as Platoon schools or football. The publication included not only articles on the Lansing schools, but also a kind of gossip section for teachers to find out who was doing what, a feature that was similar to the women's club column in the State Journal.⁴³ The April 1926 issue discussed how Lansing coped with teaching newly arrived immigrant children who did not speak English by teaching them in a separate school room where they learned to read and write English before being enrolled in the proper grade level of a regular classroom.⁴⁴ The newsletter also served to spread information to members of the Lansing Teachers' Club regarding issues which directly affected them. For example, one issue included an article which explained the position of the Federated Teachers' Club on newly proposed amendments to the teachers' retirement law. These amendments would help strengthen the law and were strongly endorsed by the Federated Teachers' Clubs.⁴⁵ The Lansing Educational News helped the Teachers' Club meet their professional goal of educating their members.

Unfortunately the Lansing teachers of the early twentieth century did not leave written records indicating exactly what they thought of the gender and class stratification of the school system or why they chose to focus on professionalization instead of fighting for equal opportunity. Yet, available records do strongly suggest that the homogeneous makeup of the Lansing teachers, the relatively short tenure of most Lansing teachers, teachers' acceptance of domestic ideology and traditional ideas about gender, and the

⁴² Lansing Board of Education Minutes, March 8 and 15, 1920. Perhaps their success in achieving their goals was what kept the Lansing teachers from unionizing at this time.

⁴³ Lansing Educational News, Vol. I, No. 1, October 1925, 3-4.

⁴⁴ Lansing Educational News, Vol. I, No. 6, April 1926, 5.

⁴⁵ Lansing Educational News, Vol. II, No. 6, April 1927, 8-10.

failure of equal wage drives in the past were deciding factors in their choice. The feminization of the teaching force helped to create a homogeneous teaching population in Lansing. One of the characteristics of this group was that they hailed from the dominant culture. Another characteristic of this group was that they were generally of middle-class background, and therefore they probably shunned the working-class image that unionization might infer. They probably felt more comfortable focusing on professionalization, a middle-class ideal. The fact that they sought help from middle-class women's clubs and business organizations shows their desire to be aligned with the middle-class. Their decision to form a club, rather than an association like many male professional groups, also reflects the influence of the middle-class women's club movement on these teachers.⁴⁶ In contrast to Lansing, cities like Gary, Indiana formed Teacher Federations, similar to the Lansing Teachers' Club, which quickly evolved into unions affiliated with labor organizations like the AFL (American Federation of Labor). One of the main reasons why unionization might have occurred earlier in a city like Gary was that Gary had a strong labor/union presence that Lansing did not have. Therefore it was easier for the Gary teachers to associate with the working-class backgrounds of their students.⁴⁷

Moreover, the relatively short tenure of Lansing teachers left only a small group of women who remained in the profession for a significant number of years. Thus these women were really the only ones who felt the long-term impacts of stratification. Why didn't these women unite? Perhaps because their numbers were so small, they did not feel

⁴⁶ Some teachers were also club women. Mary Shaffer, principal of Walnut Street School and member of the E.M.B. and the Lansing Teachers' Club, is one example who will be discussed in chapter three.

⁴⁷ Information on Gary schools taken from Cohen, 42, 63-64.

it would accomplish anything. Besides most women who made a career of teaching ended up in administrative positions such as grade school principal or assistant high school principal. They might not have wanted to rock the boat and threaten their position by protesting. Finally the fact that these women were divided between high school and grade school meant that grade school teachers had nothing to gain by helping their high school counterparts gain equal wages with men while they gained nothing. Or if all female wages were equalized then female high school teachers stood to lose some of their prestige. The female high school and grade school teachers would have had to work together to overcome the stratification of the system in Lansing, unlike in Chicago where the grade school teachers were able to unite without the high school teachers because of the size of the system.⁴⁸

Another reason that teachers might not have objected to the wage scale inequalities is because (consciously or not) they accepted the ideas about gender inherent in the wage scale. If these women accepted the idea that men's labor was more valuable than women's labor, then they would not question the differences. The higher wage for men confirmed the idea that men should earn a 'family wage', an idea which many of the female teachers might have agreed with, especially if one day they hoped to marry and leave the career world behind. Besides, the gendered ideology of domesticity helped women get into the teaching profession in the first place.

Lansing teachers might have acted out of a realization of the consequences of the attempts to equalize wages in 1868. Then, when male and female teachers were granted equal pay, all the men left the school system, to return only after "High School students

⁴⁸ Murphy, 87-90.

began to revolt against what they felt to be an over-feminization of the school system, especially of the high school. In April, 1873, the students of the high school petitioned the Board of Education for a 'first-class gentleman teacher'.⁴⁹ When the School Board obliged by hiring a Mr. Gleason for the year 1873-1874, the tradition of a male high school principal continued through the 1920's. Mr. Gleason and all the male teachers hired after him were offered higher wages than the female teachers already at the high school. Teachers concerned with enhancing their professional image probably felt that it would not be helpful to demand equal wages and drive men out of the profession all together.

Finally, the female teachers of Lansing were caught between the traditional ideas about gender imposed on them by the School Board through the wage scale and their own desire for professionalization. The wage scale, which itself was founded on traditional ideas about gender, reinforced the gendered hierarchy which already existed. The response of the teachers both reinforced the idea that male labor was more valuable than female labor, while at the same time challenging the traditional idea of 'professional' by demanding that women be included. The next chapter examines how the club women of Lansing acted in a similar manner. By initiating curriculum changes, they challenged traditional ideas about gender and who controlled the schools. At the same time they also reinforced traditional ideas about gender through the reforms they enacted. The division of male and female students into woodworking and domestic education reproduced traditional ideas about gender in Lansing for the next generation.

⁴⁹ Aldinger, 68.

Chapter 3

“From Club Women to Educational Reformers”

At the Lansing Board of Education’s meeting on June 27, 1904, in Lansing, Michigan, a request was made that set the trend for educational reform in the city. During the course of the meeting Mrs. Winfield S. Sly, a member of the Confederate Women’s Clubs of the City of Lansing¹, addressed the School Board with the following proposal:

“[The club women are] asking for the privilege of instructing the children of the 7th and 8th grades in the Townsend St. school, Central [school] building, Walnut St. school, Cedar St. [school] and Larch [school], the girls in sewing and the boys in woodwork: the ladies of the Club to furnish all the teachers necessary for the sewing, also material; also furnish \$50 towards the material necessary for the boys.”²

Dr. David Nottingham, Treasurer of the Board,³ moved that the proposal of the Confederate Women’s Clubs be accepted and that the Superintendent of Schools, W. D. Sterling, supervise the club women’s work. The Board adopted his motion.⁴ By introducing manual training into the seventh and eighth grade curriculums of the Lansing

¹ Also known as the Lansing Federation of Women’s Clubs. Margaret Sly was president of the Federation in 1902 and vice-president in 1906. At the time that manual training was implemented she was a married woman in her early 50’s with two daughters living at home. One of those daughters, Marion, would eventually teach for a short time in the Lansing schools. Lansing City Directory 1902 and 1906, 1900 United States Census, 1920 High School Yearbook.

² Lansing Board of Education Minutes, June 27, 1904.

³ Aldinger, 20, 88.

Lansing City Directory, 1900. The Lansing School Board Members for 1903-4 were: Dr. David M. Nottingham (Treasurer), Edward White, John F. Campbell (Clerk), William Dodge (President), John S. Bennett, Leonard B. Gardner, Clarence E. Bement, Peter Baumgrass, Jason E. Nichols, William O’Connor, Mr. Smith. and Albert D. Saxton. For the 1904-1905 term Schuyler Champion and John G. Schlee replaced John S. Bennett and Mr. Smith. W.D. Sterling served as Superintendent from 1902-7.

Public Schools in 1904, the club women were simultaneously expanding their public influence by making public education reform the responsibility of women and initiating progressive educational reforms in the city. At the same time, the reform they introduced - manual training - helped reaffirm traditional ideas about gender in Lansing.

Lansing club women had been involved in the public schools and interested in manual training for at least 25 years before their manual training proposal in 1904. In 1879 the Lansing Woman's Club appointed a committee to visit the schools and report on teacher examinations.⁵ Back in December of 1887 members of the Lansing Woman's Club invited a guest lecturer to speak on 'Manual Training in the Public Schools'.⁶ The speaker, Professor H.D. (David) Howell, was the Superintendent of the Lansing Public Schools.

After the Federated Women's Clubs' successful proposal in June, the Board of Education did not move to implement manual training until its September 26, 1904, meeting. Board Member Clarence E. Bemet moved that Board President William Dodge appoint a committee of three or five Board members, including Superintendent Sterling, to report on the feasibility of carrying out manual training. The Board adopted Bemet's proposal.⁷ At its October 3 meeting, the committee, which consisted of Superintendent Sterling, John F. Campbell and Leonard B. Gardner, asked the Board to appropriate \$300 towards supplies for the implementation of manual training, that would be under the

⁴ Board of Education Minutes, June 27, 1904.

⁵ Virginia Dunn, "Early Times: Looking Back to the Beginnings of Lansing Woman's Club, 1874-1910," (Paper presented in the 1970's at a Lansing Women's Club Meeting).

⁶ "The City", The State Republican, 15 December 1887, 4. Aldinger, 88. Howell served as Superintendent March 1883 - March 1890.

⁷ Board of Education Minutes, September 26, 1904.

supervision of Superintendent Sterling. The Board approved the motion.⁸ On Tuesday, October 18, The Lansing State Journal reported that, “Miss Bemis has been secured by the clubs to instruct the girls in the domestic art, and Miss Camp, instructor in drawing, has so arranged her work that she can devote half her time to the wood work that is to be taught the boys.”⁹ No other mention was made of manual training in the Board Minutes or the newspapers for the rest of the year, although the experiment apparently worked well, as the next fall the Board created a committee to study the costs of permanently installing manual training.¹⁰ On December 11, 1905, the committee gave its report to the School Board, after studying manual training in Ann Arbor, Battle Creek and Kalamazoo. The committee members recommended the purchase and installation of carpenter benches and kitchen appliances as well as supplies at an estimated cost of \$1,150. They asked the Board to hire teachers for the manual training program, with the hope of beginning the program on a permanent basis on February 1, the start of the second half of the school year.¹¹ In 1906, a Miss Beckworth was named supervisor of manual training and a Miss Jared supervisor of domestic science.¹² They were in charge of the newly created woodworking and domestic science departments. Within two years of the Federated Club’s proposal, woodworking and domestic education had become an accepted part of the Lansing school curriculum. As was common with most reform initiatives started by

⁸ Ibid., October 3, 1904.

⁹ “Plans Nearly Completed,” Lansing State Journal, 18 October 1904, 1.

¹⁰ The three school board members on the committee were Dr. Ralph Morse (the same Dr. Morse who had presented an unsuccessful proposal for manual training in 1900), Dr. Schuyler Champion, and Mr. Alva Cummins. The fate of manual training was now out of the club women’s hands.

¹¹ Board of Education Minutes, December 11, 1905.

¹² Fred Olds, “School Kids Still Get Their Three R’s,” State Journal, 1 January 1950, 12.

club women, while they provided the start up costs the goal was to let the local schools take over the project as soon as possible so that they could move on to other things.¹³

At first glance it seems odd that at a time when few women were involved in making educational policy, the Lansing club women could successfully petition the local school board to change the curriculum. But women in Lansing and in other cities succeeded because of who they were, how they asked, and because the time period was right for reform. The club women of Lansing were, like the teachers, a fairly homogenous group of middle-class, native-born, white, married women.¹⁴ In fact there was some crossover between the Lansing club women and the teaching population. Mary Shaffer, principal of Walnut Street School, was an active member of the Lansing Teachers' Club who belonged to the EMB club as well. Additionally, high school teachers such as Marion Sly, May Person, and Etta Wilbur were all daughters of prominent club women. At least one club woman, Katherine Sloan, was married to a male teacher, high school principal Norman Bert Sloan.¹⁵ The club women came from the same middle-class background as the men on the School Board and were careful not to seem to be treading on male public

¹³ Sara M. Evans and Harry C. Boyte, Free Spaces: The Source of Democratic Change in America (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1986): 92. Anne Scott, 124-6.

¹⁴ Unfortunately I was unable to uncover any records from the Federated Women's Clubs of Lansing. The main primary sources I have relied on include: newspaper accounts, the Lansing City Directory, the 1900 Michigan Census Records, records from the Lansing Woman's Club (a founding member of the Federation), records from the Michigan State Federation of Women's Clubs (to which the City Federation and most of the other clubs in Lansing belonged), minutes from the Lansing Board of Education Meetings, and the Annual Reports from the Michigan State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The generalization of the club women is based on the identities of the most prominent club women, officers and members whose names appeared in the papers, since I could not obtain lists of all the club women at the time. The assessment that most club women were from the middle-class is based on their husband's occupations. Their husbands were mainly businessmen and professionals. I have found no evidence of any African-American women's clubs in Lansing at this time; if there were I have found no evidence of their belonging to the Confederation of Lansing Clubs.

¹⁵ The information on Mary Shaffer comes from the Isabella Hamilton Diary, March 17, 1911, and The Lansing Educational News, Oct. 1926 and Oct. 1929. The information on Marion Sly, May Person, Etta

territory. They were also the wives of prominent men in the community. Given their success and lack of any recorded male opposition, it seems reasonable to conclude the club women succeeded because they couched their request as a united group (the Federated Women's Clubs of Lansing) concerned for the children, and offered to foot the bill.¹⁶

The time also was undoubtedly right because it was the era of progressive educational reforms, many of which were also being advocated by the men in charge of the school system. Like other industrial cities of the time, Lansing faced the challenge of educating a growing population to deal with the changes created by urban life and industrialization. At the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century industrialists, educational theorists and progressive reformers began to turn their attention to urban education. The schools became contested urban space, where these groups, joined by club women, vied for control. This was the beginning of progressive urban educational reform. Progressives were middle-class reformers concerned with helping the city adjust to the intense growth caused by industrialization. They wanted to broaden the functions of the school, make schooling more relevant to the students, and help students and new immigrants adjust to their new roles in an urban industrial society. They also sought to apply the scientific principles of business administration to the schools. Manual Training was just one solution proposed by the many factions fighting to influence urban school curriculum during the Progressive Era.¹⁷ Toward the end of the

Wilbur and Katherine Sloan comes from the Lansing City Directories 1900-1906, the 1900 census, and the High School yearbooks of 1910 and 1920.

¹⁶ Skocpol, 367-371.

¹⁷ The Progressive Era, which ran from approximately the 1890's to World War I, was characterized by its focus on civic reform, especially education reform. Several groups vied for the opportunity to reform the

century, as the club women of Lansing were exposed to the concept of municipal housekeeping through their association with the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) and with the Michigan State Federation of Women's Clubs (MSFWC), both of these general organizations urged club women to become involved in their local schools by pushing for new subjects to be added to the curriculum. Manual training and domestic education were the subjects that the Lansing women were drawn to. The implementation of domestic education and manual training by Lansing club women was their application of the idea of municipal housekeeping to education reform.

One strong proponent for manual training in the state of Michigan was Irma T. Jones, president of the Federated Women's clubs of Lansing from 1896-1897, who presented papers on domestic education to women's clubs throughout the state, including her April 1896 presentation of a paper entitled, "Can Home Sciences Be Taught in Public Schools?", in Muskegon.¹⁸ The women of Muskegon were interested in the topic because the city planned to build a manual training school, a result of a generous donation from a Mr. Charles H. Hackley and the efforts of Muskegon club women and other educational

public schools including club women. The result, they changed the focus of education for the rest of the twentieth century. For some background information on Progressive Era Reform look to: Robert H. Wiebe, The Search For Order, 1877-1920 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967). Nancy S. Dye and Noralee Frankel, eds. Gender, Class, Race and Reform in the Progressive Era (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991): especially chapter. 1. Robyn Muncy, Creating A Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). Ellen Fitzpatrick, Endless Crusade: Women Social Scientists and Progressive Reform (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). Dye and Frankel, Muncy, Fitzpatrick, and Skocpol look particularly at women's involvement in Progressive Era reform.

Scholars who focus particularly on Progressive Era reforms in the schools include: Raftery, especially chapter 2. Cremin. Cohen wrote about the Gary Schools. Nelson wrote about the Seattle Schools. Powers wrote on educational reforms pertaining to women. Reese examines Milwaukee, Toledo, Rochester and Kansas City. Tyack's One Best System examines the advent of 'administrative progressives' in the public schools, especially in parts 4 and 5.

reformers.¹⁹ Irma Jones pursued her interest in domestic science in another paper presented at a women's club in Belding, Michigan on "Home Sciences for the Public Schools" in the spring of 1897.²⁰

At the annual meeting of the Michigan State Women's Clubs, held in Detroit from November 3-5, 1896, club women were again called to participate in municipal housekeeping and education reform. A MSFWC resolution stated:

"Whereas, we, as women, are deeply interested in everything that pertains to the welfare of children, and as citizens we realize that the public school is second only to the home in its influence upon individual life, therefore, resolved, That the MSFWC pledge its united effort to the support of all that is good and the eradication of all that is bad in the public school system of the state. Resolved, further, To accomplish this end we will visit the public schools in our home cities, and study educational questions with reference to local conditions, and endeavor to secure the election of disinterested members of boards of education. Resolved, further, That each club in the Federation be asked to report at the next annual meeting upon some special phase of public school work which may be particularly interesting to it, because in line with the special work for which the club was organized."²¹

¹⁸ Interchange III, no. 4 (December 1896/January 1897): 9. While The Interchange articles discuss the papers Irma Jones gave, they do not provide copies of them. The Interchange, which was published by the Michigan Women's Press Association, was the official newsletter of the MSFWC.

¹⁹ "Among the Clubs," The Interchange II, no. 10 (April 1896): 6.

²⁰ "Among the Clubs," The Interchange, III, no. 7 (June/July 1897): 9.

²¹ "The Michigan State Federation of Women's Clubs," The Interchange, III, no. 3 (October/November 1896): 5.

There was certainly pressure on the club women of Lansing to become involved in the local schools and involved in educational reform.

The December 1896/January 1897 issue of The Interchange reprinted an address on domestic education given at the November MSFWC convention by Professor Edith F. McDermott, professor of Household Science at Michigan Agricultural College (MAC). Professor McDermott felt that it was not enough to offer domestic science at the college level. She felt that the only way to educate the masses of women, especially the poor, on how to purchase and prepare the most nutritious meal for the least amount of money for their families was through the public schools. She even offered advice to club women on how to introduce domestic education into their local schools. "First, work up public sentiment to the point that they want it [domestic education]. Second, go to your school board; impress upon them the importance of this work, and get them to set aside one of the regular classrooms, if you cannot afford a special building, and then get a good, efficient teacher, and let her do the rest."²² The advice offered by McDermott was similar to strategies employed by women's clubs across the United States. The clubs set to educate and influence voters and politicians through personal contact and the media, until they were persuaded that the club women's stand was the correct stand on the issue.²³ The women of Lansing followed this advice in 1904 when they petitioned the School Board to allow them to introduce woodworking and domestic science into the schools.

Originally, manual training was popularized in the United States in the late nineteenth century as a complement to traditional education, not as an alternative to it. Friedrich Froebel, the German educational theorist, developed the concept of manual

²² "Domestic Science in Public Schools", The Interchange. III, no. 4 (December 1896/January 1897): 3.

training as the introduction of constructive work into the educational setting; for the purpose of developing a child's creative powers. Starting out with the lower elementary grades, manual training consisted of activities such as paper folding and drawing.²⁴ Eventually it developed into very gender specific activities for the upper grades in the United States such as domestic education and industrial education. According to a report in 1900 by the State of Michigan's Superintendent for Public Instruction, Jason E. Hammond, manual training was based on the ideas "that training of the hand gives mental power," and that "learning by doing" developed physical strength and self-control.²⁵ Some of the main reasons given for the implementation of manual training in the public schools in 1900 were that it developed the intellect, kept students busy and away from vice and crime, it better prepared the majority of students for their future careers and allowed less intellectual students to shine, made children thrifty and industrious, and finally that students enjoyed manual training and thus it kept them, particularly males who had a higher dropout rate than females, in school longer.²⁶ The original aim of manual training, thus, was not necessarily industrial education or training students to work in industry, though it did develop into industrial training in the United States.

The strongest of the original arguments for manual training in the United States seems to have been that it kept boys in school longer, since that was the positive aspect most discussed about manual training. Manual training or industrial education was seen as a good way to deal with 'the boy problem in education'. The boy problem was that boys

²³ Skocpol, 361-367.

²⁴ Ellwood P. Cubberley, Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of American Educational History (Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1962), 461.

²⁵ State of Michigan, 64th Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Michigan (Lansing: Wynkoop, Hallenbeck & Crawford Co., 1901), 16, 29.

were more likely to drop out of school before reaching high school or before graduation. They dropped out to find work or simply because school did not interest them enough. “Vocational education was touted as a way to make schooling more masculine.”²⁷ In the State of Michigan, less than 16% of the total enrollment entered high school in 1899 and less than 7% of the total enrollment graduated from high school.²⁸ For Lansing the number of females that graduated from high school was markedly higher than the number of male graduates well into the 1920’s.²⁹ (Refer to Appendix For Chart 4 on Lansing Graduation Rates) Without records that indicate the specific reasons behind the club women’s proposal in 1904, it is impossible to know with certainty, but the high dropout rate in Lansing may well have been a motivating factor behind their actions. Despite the fact that compulsory education laws were first passed in Michigan in 1871, it was not until 1905 that compulsory attendance was extended from four consecutive months to the entire school year.³⁰ Even with the compulsory attendance law, dropouts were still a problem because many students simply left school without a diploma when they turned 16.

Increasingly, manual education was seen as essential for urban youth by businessmen, club women, educational reformers and trade groups alike. Though each group had a slightly different reason for supporting its implementation. Many supporters of vocational training in schools felt that it would help make the students’ transition into a career easier. Many business leaders especially touted vocational training for the working-

²⁶ Ibid., 20-36.

²⁷ Powers, ix.

²⁸ 64th Annual Report, 21.

²⁹ Aldinger, 64.

³⁰ Aldinger, 50, 60-1. The original law only required 12 consecutive weeks of schooling for children between the ages of 7-16 in cities. The law was generally not enforced until 1895 when a provision was added for the appointment of a truant officer. Lansing first appointed a truant officer in 1895. Mr. Lee

class and minorities because they wanted a well trained workforce. This certainly reflected prejudice on the part of the white middle-class progressives who initiated these reforms. In Chicago for example, the men of the City Club supported vocational education because it trained students to be good workers. Many of the members of the Chicago City Club were businessmen, and therefore business was their primary concern. In contrast, the women of the Women's City Club of Chicago supported vocational education because they were concerned with keeping students in school. They were concerned with the students as individuals and wanted to help them succeed in life. The Chicago case shows just one example of the different approaches that businessmen and club women took towards vocational education. Vocational education was aimed at training the working-class for working-class occupations, while many students and their parents saw school as a tool for getting out of the working-class. Many working-class students opted for commercial or college preparatory courses which would enable them to obtain a middle-class job.³¹

The original push for manual training in Lansing actually did not come from the Federated Women's clubs, but from an unknown group of 'representative citizens' who petitioned the school board in 1900. It is unknown if club women were among this group, or if this group was all male since only the name of one petitioner survives in School Board records. The petition was presented at the School Board meeting on September 10, 1900, signed by 103 citizens who asked the board to establish manual training in the

Cook, a member of the police department, acted as truant officer until 1900. At that time the Board of Education decided to appoint their own man, George E. Palmer.

³¹ Nasaw, 117-8. Flanagan, "Gender and Urban Political Reform," 1039-1042 (for Chicago information).

public schools. Dr. Ralph W. Morse³² presented the petition on behalf of the citizens. He also addressed the board on the subject stating that “[m]anual training, especially sewing and carpentry,is not only of great practical benefit to the children, but i[t] also varies the monotony of school life and therefore keeps children in school until a later age.”³³ This suggests that Lansing’s high dropout rate troubled this group. Morse felt that benches and tools could be secured for \$300 and a teacher for \$650. These estimates were based on the costs of the Flint school system, which had already implemented such a program. He suggested using a large room in the basement of city hall for the classes. The plan called for starting on a small scale, and allowing the School Board to expand the program as finances allowed. According to the newspaper article covering the meeting, “wherever manual training has been introduced, it is so highly favored that it has been made a permanent part of the school curriculum.”³⁴ The matter was referred to the financial committee, who were expected to report on it at the next Board meeting, but there is no record of what they reported.³⁵ Since the club women made the same proposal four years later, however, the 1900 proposal must have been rejected. If the finance committee reported negatively, this would also help to explain why the club women felt it was necessary to offer to help pay the start up costs for manual training four years later. The school budget dropped from \$49,500 in 1899 to \$45,850 in 1900. It then jumped back up to \$48,000 in 1901.³⁶ So lack of finances may have killed the drive for

³² The same Dr. Morse who as a School Board member was part of the committee which recommended making manual training a permanent part of the curriculum in 1905.

³³ “Manual Training,” The Lansing Journal, 11 September 1900, 1.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Some of the minutes of the School Board from this period have been lost.

³⁶ Aldinger, 54.

manual training in 1900. One thing is for certain, the club women were able to succeed in 1904 where these citizens failed in 1900.

The records do not provide any indication of the motives of the petitioners in 1900, or why they were not successful. Who signed the petition can only be guessed at as well. Dr. Morse was a dentist and president of Bates & Edmonds Motor Co.³⁷ So as a businessman he may have been concerned about training future workers. In his plea to the School Board he indicated that keeping students from dropping out of school was also a concern. In 1903-1904, seven of the twelve Board members who served in 1900-1901 remained on the Board: White, Campbell, Dodge, Gardner, Bement, Baumgrass, and Nichols.³⁸ Without knowing the vote numbers it is hard to say if the changes in Board personnel changed the vote on manual training, or if some of the Board members just changed their minds between 1900 and 1904.

After the failed proposal of 1900, the topic of manual training continued to interest Lansing club women. At the eighth annual meeting of the MSFWC held in Muskegon, the delegates got a chance to tour Muskegon's Manual Training School. In The Interchange, the school was described as a place, "where every girl who attendshas the opportunity of learning to cut and make her own clothing, cook, care for her room, and, indeed, to do every kind of work required in the modern home; and the boys to learn the different trades."³⁹ Professor David MacKenzie, the Superintendent of the Muskegon schools, gave a lecture at the meeting on manual training. In his lecture he stressed that manual training was not vocational training. Rather it was aimed at teaching children in a manner

³⁷ Lansing City Directory, 1900, 213.

³⁸ Aldinger, 19-20.

³⁹ "Eighth Annual Meeting of MSFWC," The Interchange, IX, no. 1 (Nov./Dec. 1902): 2.

that was relevant to their everyday lives. He believed that working with one's hands, taught children the true value and joy of work. He also stressed the fact that every school system should have manual training.⁴⁰ Such thinking was further reinforced by an article in The Interchange which presented a New York Tribune interview with Dr. Eliza M. Mosher, the former dean of women at the University of Michigan. The article quoted Dr. Mosher as saying that domestic education was necessary in the public schools because otherwise girls would not be able to learn how to be good mothers and homemakers. Dr. Mosher felt that in present society girls could not possibly be able to learn about homemaking from their own mothers as they used to. "During her school days, Dr. Mosher insists, is the only time that a twentieth century girl has to prepare herself for a career as a homemaker or prospective mother."⁴¹ The ideal woman of the twentieth century, like the ideal woman of the nineteenth century, was destined to be a homemaker and mother.

The educational reforms first instituted by the club women in 1904 continued throughout the Progressive Era. By the 1920's the curriculum of the public schools had changed drastically from what it was in 1900. Though the club women certainly initiated the changes, the only other program they seem to have been directly involved in, besides manual training, was the furnishing of milk in the schools.⁴² In 1910 a commercial course was introduced into the high school to help prepare students for jobs as typists and clerks.⁴³ At the May 27, 1912, School Board meeting, a committee assigned to

⁴⁰ Ibid., 5-7.

⁴¹ The Interchange, IX, No. 2 (Jan./Feb. 1903): 25-26.

⁴² "West Side Club Was Infant As New Century Arrived", The Lansing State Journal, 1 January 1950, 7 (section 2).

⁴³ "No French Course in High School," The State Republican, 10 May 1910, 10.

investigate the feasibility of introducing an industrial cooperative course into the high school gave its report. The reasons for the industrial cooperative course were very similar to reasons given in 1900 by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction's Report in support of manual training. According to the committee: there was a rapid fall off in school attendance after the eighth grade, ordinary high school class work failed to appeal to a large number of boys, and many boys needed to work outside the home in order to help support their family by the time they reached high school age. As a way to rectify this situation the industrial cooperative course, based on the model of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, was recommended. The committee's recommendation was adopted by the Board.⁴⁴ On May 28, the papers reported that the industrial cooperative course would begin in the fall. Boys would be paired up, with one boy attending school one week while the other one worked, and then switching the following week. The system was explicitly for boys and a male teacher was appointed to oversee it. The new course was heartily accepted by local businesses and factories.⁴⁵

Throughout the Progressive Era, the Lansing schools continued to expand their curriculum. Lansing started a Night School in September 1914, that provided adult education in courses such as bookkeeping, cooking, German, and shopwork. Domestic science and manual training were introduced into the high school as credit courses in 1915, just 11 years after the club women's proposal. A new school for the deaf was also established in 1915. A separate Technical High School for industrial and vocational classes was created out of Central High School in 1943.⁴⁶ The implementation of manual

⁴⁴ Board of Education Minutes, May 27, 1912.

⁴⁵ "Industrial Work Will Be Part of School Training," State Journal, 28 May 1912, 1 and 12.

⁴⁶ Aldinger, 119-20, 36.

training by club women in 1904 therefore had long range affects on the curriculum of the Lansing Public Schools.

Due to the focus on keeping boys in school, one of the effects of manual training and its evolution into industrial education was that schooling for girls and boys became more segregated by gender. Even though the majority of public high schools in the United States remained coed, boys and girls were more likely than ever to attend different classes. The inclusion of woodworking and domestic science meant that for at least one class a day, students were in same sex classes.⁴⁷ “The boys [would] give attention to tools, woods, and metals; the girls to foods, fabrics, and home decorations.”⁴⁸ Manual training also attracted industrialists who benefited from a better educated work force, trained at the public expense. Training for females was not as big of a concern since they made up a smaller percentage of the work force. Thus manual training helped to reinforce the idea that men worked in factories outside the home, while women were supposed to take care of the domestic work.

Manual training for girls was seen as an opportunity to reinforce the female role as mother and housekeeper. According to Jane Powers, this ‘girl question’ in education dealt with the larger issue of what a woman’s place was in American society. The question was should a woman be trained to work outside of the home, or was a woman’s proper vocation that of homemaker and mother? The focus on domestic science ignored the reality of working-class girls who needed to work to support their families.⁴⁹ The original aim of domestic science, like manual training for boys, was not seen as vocational

⁴⁷ John Rury, “Vocationalism for Home and Work: Women’s Education in the United States, 1880-1930,” History of Education Quarterly (1984): 36-8.

⁴⁸ 64th Annual Report, 19.

instruction, but rather another context in which girls could learn manual dexterity and practical lessons about science.⁵⁰ While manual training increasingly came to be seen as a positive way to prepare boys for work in industry, domestic science was rarely seen as similar training for girls. “As a result, manual training for women in the late nineteenth century developed as a sort of women’s auxiliary to the manual training movement. In the eyes of some, sewing and cooking were simply things for women to do while their male counterparts were learning to be better industrial workers.”⁵¹ Despite the fact that many industrialist might not have concerned themselves with the education of girls, most club women did. Since club women justified their involvement in public discourse on education through their domestic background as wives and mothers, it only makes sense that they would want to pass on this tradition to their daughters. If the goal of municipal housekeeping is to organize the city like the home, then in the city as a whole it would be the club women who would pass on domestic skills to their daughters, just as a mother would in her home. By teaching domestic education in the schools, perhaps the club women were hoping to train a new generation of municipal housekeepers.

For club women, domestic training was essential for young girls in a rapidly changing society. There was fear that the rise in the number of working women meant that they were losing touch with their most important roles as homemakers. Domestic education and its focus on the home was needed more than ever, argued the supporters of domestic education, because of the upheavals caused by industrial society. Domestic education was also seen as necessary by some educational reformers for immigrant women

⁴⁹ Powers, 2.

⁵⁰ Rury, “Vocationalism For Home and Work,” 23.

⁵¹ Ibid.

and their daughters to learn proper ‘American’ hygiene and how to be good Americans.⁵²

There was a push to professionalize homemaking. Homemaking had become so complicated that one needed to be trained in it. Therefore domestic science was useful for all students since all girls would become mothers.⁵³ Unlike manual training for boys, “homemaking courses [did] not hold the girls in school”.⁵⁴ Domestic Education courses failed to prepare girls to work outside the home in any capacity except as a domestic servant.

Domestic Education got a boost with the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in February, 1917, due mainly to the support of club women. This law provided for federal grants to the states for the introduction of agricultural, industrial and domestic education along with money to provide for teacher training. Such courses had been available in most states, including Michigan, for several years before the federal law was passed. Now there would be some standardization to these programs. According to the stipulation in Michigan, at least one-third of the money must be spent on part-time schools and no more than 20% of the money could be spent on home economics.⁵⁵ Home Economics had been included in the Smith-Hughes Act mainly because of the lobbying efforts of the GFWC. “The [GFWC]’s interest in the Smith-Hughes legislation and its support for the inclusion of home economics was very much in keeping with their general philosophy of woman’s role as homemaker, mother, and municipal housekeeper, as well as with their ambivalence

⁵² *Ibid.*, 25-27.

⁵³ *Interchange* (December 1896-January 1897): 3.

⁵⁴ Rury, “Vocationalism For Home and Work,” 32.

⁵⁵ *State of Michigan, 81st Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Michigan* (Fort Wayne: Fort Wayne Printing Co., 1918): 34-39.

about women in industry.”⁵⁶ The women of the GFWC were able to use their influence to include funding for home economics in the Smith-Hughes Act, over funding for industrial education for girls. The women of the GFWC believed that girls needed to be trained as homemakers. In their support of home economics, they also supported the idea that education should be segregated based on gender.⁵⁷

The club movement has been criticized for forcing their middle-class domestic values onto working-class women. There is strong evidence that many young women opposed domestic training.⁵⁸ But it does not seem that the Lansing women were purposely trying to impose their values, at least not consciously. Instead, they probably saw their contribution as helping young women. Professor Edith F. McDermott, professor of Household Science at MAC, addressed the topic of introducing domestic education into the public school curriculum in The Interchange, the paper of the MSFWC. McDermott appealed to the ideal of women as the moral guardians of their homes using the rhetoric of the municipal housekeeper. Nor is there any evidence that the Lansing women saw themselves as morally superior. More likely, theirs was a response to a dramatically changing society. McDermott addressed the concern that housekeeping had grown so complex in industrial society that girls needed to be educated on how to be good housekeepers. “Will you not as club women help to make it possible for every girl born in our great and free America, to obtain an education fitting her to become a representative woman in all that goes to make up the higher, purer, and loftier standard of womanhood?”

⁵⁶ Powers, 67.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 67-70.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 95-6.

she inquired.⁵⁹ The club women were just as concerned with the domestic education of Lansing girls as they were with keeping the boys of Lansing in school longer. This may ultimately be the reason for their introduction of manual training. Their concern for the domestic skills of Lansing girls shows that even as these club women were forging new gender identities for themselves, they were still most comfortable with the traditional identification of women as homemakers and caretakers, and that is the idea about gender that they wanted passed on to their daughters as well.

⁵⁹ "Domestic Science in Public Schools," The Interchange, iii, no. 4 (December 1896/January 1897): 3.

Conclusion

Lansing women utilized traditional ideas about gender, such as domestic ideology, to expand dramatically their public activities earlier this century. Their success in this endeavor can be seen in the feminized teaching force of Lansing and the strong club movement dedicated increasingly to inserting women's voices into public affairs. The teachers continued to challenge and recreate ideas about gender by focusing on professionalization and not publicly protesting the gendered wage scale passed in 1904, which epitomized the gendered hierarchy of the school system. The club women challenged and reproduced ideas about gender by expanding their public influence through the introduction of progressive educational reforms into the Lansing Public Schools. At the same time they reaffirmed traditional gender roles by stressing that boys should be taught woodworking while girls should be taught to cook and sew.

The women of Lansing challenged certain ideas about gender in their society, while at the same time reinforcing others. Some of the ideas that were challenged were the ideas that women could not work outside of the home, that women could not be professionals, and that women could not have any say in public policy. Some of the ideas about gender that were reinforced and reproduced by the club women were the image of women as domestic, which was used to justify women's teaching and club activities. The idea of women as domestic was also replicated in the creation of the gendered domestic education program and the acceptance of gendered wage scales.

The teachers of Lansing challenged gendered ideas about professionalism, even as they accepted a gendered administrative hierarchy and pay scale. The background of the

Lansing teachers and the city of Lansing itself offers valuable clues as to why the Lansing teachers chose to focus on professionalization instead of unionization. The middle-class background of the teachers, combined with Lansing's weak labor movement made unionization very unlikely for Lansing teachers at the beginning of the century. The relatively small size of the teaching force and short tenure of most teachers also kept female teachers from uniting against gendered inequities within the school system. Finally, many of the Lansing teachers probably accepted the gendered domestic image of teaching and did not want to do anything that would taint that image.

The club women of Lansing were able to use domestic ideology to their benefit, by allowing it to open the door for their involvement in civic decision making. Their actions resemble those of many other club women in many other cities across the country; their reform - the introduction of manual training and domestic education - was similar to the types of reforms other urban school systems were implementing at the time. Lansing provides a case study of how a small industrial city instituted educational reform and the role played in those reforms by its women's clubs. Unfortunately there is a dearth of evidence remaining for Lansing and the Lansing schools in the Progressive Era. For instance, there is no evidence as to whether the club women were involved in any of the other educational reforms in the Lansing schools besides manual training and the introduction of the milk program. But they were instrumental in initiating the curriculum changes of the first quarter of the twentieth century. Their ability to address the Board of Education and institute curriculum changes reflects changing ideas about the role of women in the city of Lansing. Under the guise of municipal housekeeping and extending the domestic sphere, women were able to take part in the masculine domain of deciding

educational policy. Yet the curriculum changes that the club women introduced - manual training and domestic education - reflect their continued desire for women to be identified with the domestic realm.

APPENDIX

TABLE 1 - Lansing Population Growth 1900-1930¹

	1900	1910	1920	1930
Total Population	16,485	31,229	57,327	78,397
Total Male	8,150	-	30,098	39,785
Total Female	8,335	-	27,229	38,612
% Male	49.4%	-	52.5%	50.7%
% Female	50.6%	-	47.5%	49.3%
Total White	16,156	30,868	56,662	76,939
Total Black	323	354	698	1,409
Total Other	6	7	27	49
% White	98%	98.8%	98.8%	98.1%
% Black	2%	1.1%	1.2%	1.8%
% Other	< 0.1%	< 0.1%	< 0.1%	< 0.1%

¹ United States Census Office, Twelfth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1900, Population, Part 1 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1901), 623. United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910, Abstract of the Census: Statistics of Population, Agriculture, Manufactures, and Mining for the United States, the States, and Principal Cities with Supplement for Michigan Containing Statistics for the State Counties, Cities, and Other Divisions (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1913), 96. United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920, Volume II, Population 1920, General Report and Analytical Tables (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1922), 67. United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population, Volume III, Part 1: Reports By States Showing the Composition and Characteristics of the Populations for Counties, Cities, and Townships or Their Minor Civil Divisions (Alabama-Missouri) (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1932), 1148.

TABLE 2 - Lansing Population Growth 1900-1930 By Race and Ethnicity²

	1900	1910	1920	1930
# Native born white	13,796	26,895	50,617	70,309
Total % of population Native Born white	83.7%	86.1%	88.3%	89.7%
# native born whites w/native born parents	9,373	19,497	38,373	54,461
% of pop. native born whites w/native born parents	56.9%	62.4%	66.9%	69.5%
# native born whites w/mixed or foreign born parents	4,423	7,398	12,244	15,848
% native born whites w/mixed or foreign born parents	26.9%	23.7%	21.4%	20.2%
# foreign born whites	2,360	3,973	5,985	6,630
% foreign born whites	14.3%	12.7%	10.4%	8.5%
# whites born in Canada	-	1,169	1,492	1,666
% foreign born whites born in Canada	-	29%	24.9%	25.1%
# whites born in Great Britain (England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland)	-	589	822	1,058
% foreign born whites born in Great Britain	-	14.8%	13.7%	16%
# whites born in Germany	-	1,363	1,105	1,059
% foreign born whites born in Germany	-	34.3%	18.5%	16%

² United States Census Office, Twelfth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1900, 661. United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910, 96, 212. United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920, 67. United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920, Volume III, Population 1920, Composition and Characteristics of the Population by States (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1922), 495. United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, 1148, 1155.

CHART 1 - LANSING WAGE SCALE
Average Teacher Salaries (High School)

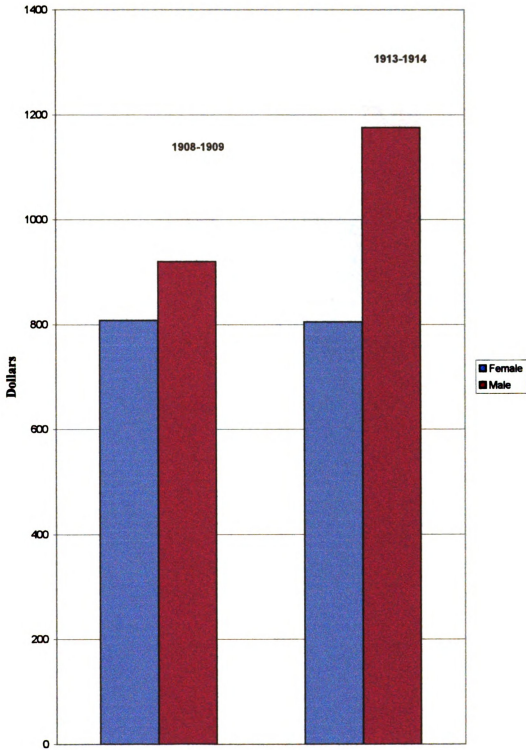


CHART 2 - LANSING WAGE SCALE
Base Pay For High School Teachers 1923-1924

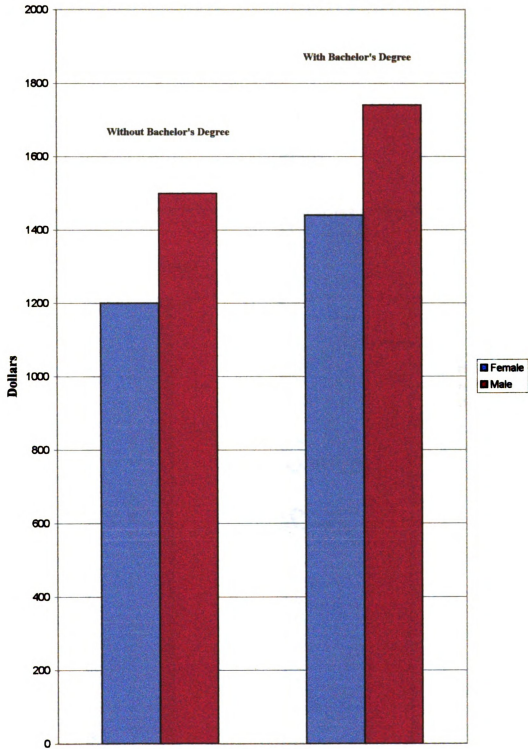
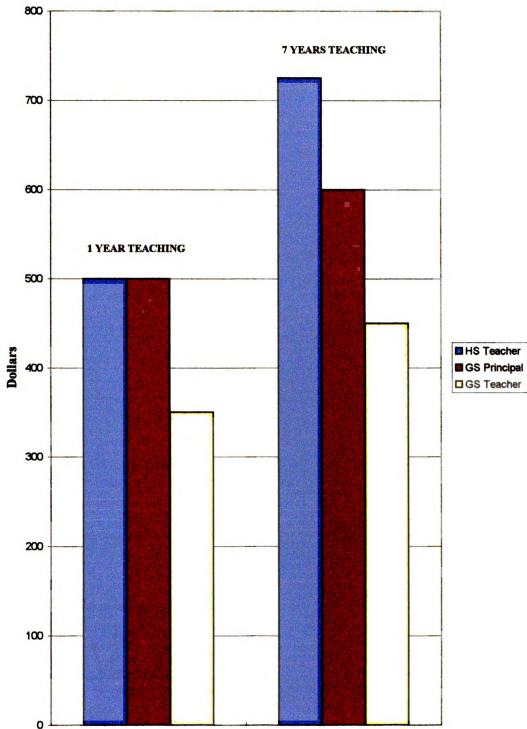
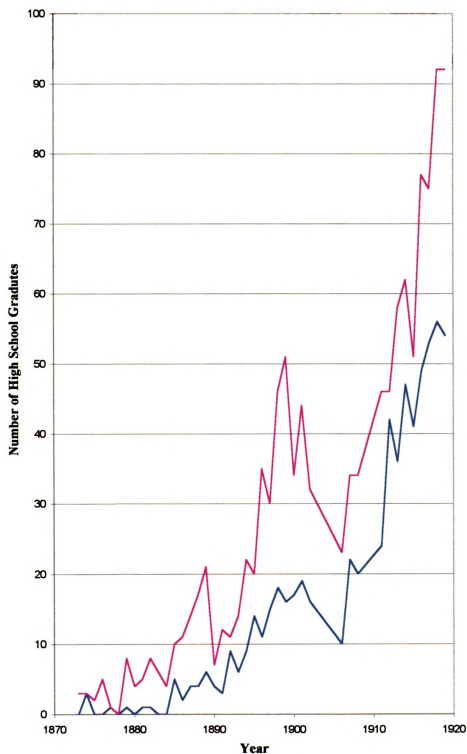


CHART 3 - WAGE SCALE OF 1904
Salaries of Female High School Teachers,
Grade School Teachers and Grade School Principals



**CHART 4 - LANSING HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES
1870-1920**



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