

Contributions To Global Historical Archaeology

Suzanne M. Spencer-Wood *Editor*

# Historical and Archaeological Perspectives on Gender Transformations

From Private to Public



Springer

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Editor

# Historical and Archaeological Perspectives on Gender Transformations

From Private to Public



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**Mary Praetzellis** is the associate director at the Anthropological Studies Center, Sonoma State University. She works in cultural resources management and believes that archaeology should contribute to current social and political debates. Mary Praetzellis is a mother to two children; they are her most prized accomplishment and the reason why she feels that early childhood education is so important—past and particularly present.

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**Suzanne M. Spencer-Wood** is a professor in anthropology at Oakland University and an associate at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University. She organized the first two symposia on gender research in historical archaeology at the Chacmool Conference and the Society for Historical Archaeology

Conference in 1989 and published numerous book chapters and articles in the following journals: *Archaeologies*, *Historical Archaeology*, *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, *Northeast Historical Archaeology*, and the *Landscape Journal*.

**Anne E. Yentsch** received her Ph.D. in anthropology at Brown University, Providence, RI. She received the first James Marston Fitch Award for work on the built environment in 1990 and has written extensively about garden archaeology. She learned about Mina Miller Edison and her intriguing life while writing a history of the landscape at the Edison-Ford Estates in Fort Myers, Florida, in 2001–2002 and expanded this with further research in the Chautauqua archives. The “Art and Mystery of Historical Archaeology: Essays in Honor of James Deetz” was coedited by Yentsch and Mary C. Beaudry, and she is the author of *A Chesapeake Family and Their Slaves: a Study in Historical Archaeology*. Dr. Yentsch retired from teaching in 2008.



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# Chapter 1

## Introduction to Historical and Archaeological Perspectives on Gender Transformations: From Private to Public

Suzanne M. Spencer-Wood and Stacey Lynn Camp

### Book Purpose

This edited volume examines and denaturalizes the “separate-spheres” sex/gender system that historians have identified as persisting at least from the Greek, Roman, and Christian empires into modern times in Western cultures (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: xiii–xiv, 96–99, 144; Donovan 2001: 19; Matthaei 1982: 29–31). It is important to understand the “separate-spheres” ideology, identities, roles, and practices because this sex/gender system is the deepest historical context for this volume. The dualistic ideology posits that men belong in the public sphere while women are innately inclined to engaging in private domestic pursuits (Spencer-Wood 1991a: 237). The association of women with the domestic sphere of housework, mothering, and household activities has been considered a natural extension of women’s biological roles in childbirth and breast feeding. According to the “separate-spheres” ideology, women are genetically engineered to enjoy and excel at caring for the home and mothering children, while men are best at conducting public activities such as agricultural fieldwork, wars, governments, and capitalist businesses (Robertson 1982: 21, 25–28; Matthaei 1982: 110–111). The asymmetrical power dynamics in the “separate-spheres” gender system are addressed in Spencer-Wood’s chapter in this volume.

In historical archaeology, Diana Wall (1994: 17–36) settled a disagreement among historians by conducting archival research to identify the early nineteenth

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century as the period of initial movement of men's urban workplaces into the public sphere, away from the domestic sphere of the home, which then became associated with women. This research invalidates the supposed biological basis of the "separate-spheres" gender system by clearly establishing the cultural basis for the urban segregation of elite and middle-class men's workplaces from their homes. In the "separate-spheres" ideology, gender is constructed as a fixed unchanging dichotomy that assigned specific traits, tasks, identities, and material culture to particular culturally constructed genders (Matthaei 1982: 116).

Western culture, including archaeology, retains a legacy of inaccurately perceiving women as innately passive, domestic, unchanging, and therefore not worth researching (Wylie 1991: 32). For instance, feminists have critiqued how the unconscious belief in the stereotypes of active males versus passive females led biologists to inaccurately interpret sperm as the aggressor in fertilization and the egg as passive, while in fact the egg actively selects the sperm that it admits through its membrane for fertilization (Martin 1991). Once a baby is born, the gendering process continues. As Anne Fausto-Sterling has argued, even something that seems as straightforward as determining a baby's biological sex can be influenced by cultural norms and expectations. In the United States and western Europe, approximately 1.8 % of babies are born as intersexed. Instead of accepting intersexed individuals as a separate gender category in itself, "current treatment standards" require that "the child must leave the hospital 'as a sex,'" meaning one of two choices: male or female (Fausto-Sterling 2000: 45). The heterosexual separate-spheres gender ideology is physically enforced in Western cultures.

Another example of the widespread acceptance and impact of the gender ideology of separate gender spheres in contemporary Western culture is the fact that, on average, American women's math test scores are lower than men's. Research has shown that this is due to unconscious actions by teachers, parents, and their children that enact the widespread stereotypic belief that men are innately superior in math compared to women, who are portrayed in the "separate-spheres" gender ideology as irrational and unintelligent. However, studies have shown that women's scores on math tests are not biologically determined because they improve if their math education is equal to men's or if their unconscious belief in these gender stereotypes has been raised to consciousness, challenged, or destroyed by showing that the stereotypes are inaccurate (Baenninger and Newcombe 2002). The arbitrariness and changeability of stereotypes is demonstrated by the fact that in the nineteenth century, women were considered superior to men at math because it was repetitive and boring like housework. This stereotype justified hiring women as bookkeepers and bank tellers in the late nineteenth century (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 196; Reinhartz 1992: 78; Robertson 1982: 376). This finding has clear implications for historical archaeology—a discipline many would argue is dedicated to exposing inequality in the present by tracing the historic genealogies of intertwined ideologies such as capitalism, racism, and sexism (Delle 2000; Paynter and McGuire 1991; Scott 1994; Spencer-Wood 1992: 106).

## Book Themes

The “separate-spheres” sex/gender system is the deep cultural structure that forms the historical context underpinning all the chapters in the volume. The “separate-spheres” gender ideology shaped the meanings of many kinds of material culture into mutually exclusive binary categories of *either* domestic *or* public, feminine *or* masculine, and male *or* female (Spencer-Wood 1995: 121–122, 129–130). Historically, gender segregation was readily apparent in some kinds of material culture, such as clothing, items of adornment, work tools (due to gender segregation of work), and public architecture such as schools and churches, which usually segregated females from males with separate building entrances, staircases, and rooms for each gender (Spencer-Wood, forthcoming). Many chapters start from the context of sex/gender segregation in places, spaces, and/or artifacts, which materialized the separate-spheres ideology in actual practice.

## Diversity and Change

This volume builds on previous feminist critiques and research in historical archaeology showing that the supposedly mutually exclusive “separate spheres” in the binary gender ideology were not completely separate in actual practice. Spencer-Wood (1991a: 237) argued at the 1989 Chacmool conference that the ideology of separate spheres constructed an oversimplified social division that misrepresented the actual complexity and diversity of historic gender systems, where women’s and men’s activities frequently crossed the ideal boundary between the gendered spheres. Subsequent feminist critiques of binary gender ideology for not representing historic reality were made by Donna Seifert (1991) and Deborah Rotman (2006).

Spencer-Wood’s commentary in this volume points out that historians and archaeologists have found evidence of women’s and men’s separate-spheres boundary crossings in a variety of substantive research topics and time periods. While some military men, lumberjacks, miners, sailors, and farmers performed domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and/or sewing (Babits 1994: 125–126; Stine 1991), women performed public roles as colonial traders (Cantwell and Wall 2011; Kwolek-Folland 2002: 17–18), by selling their domestic products in public markets (Jensen 1986; Rotman, forthcoming; Spencer-Wood 1991a: 237; Yentsch 1991) and working on farms and in all kinds of family trades and businesses (Matthaei 1982: 51–68; Little 1994; Smith 1990; Stine 1991). In the nineteenth century, manufacturers supplied raw materials for underpaid industrial home production by women and often whole families. The most common employment for single girls and women was domestic service, and servants usually lived in their workplace, combining the domestic and public spheres (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 248–250, 270–274; Collins 2003: 112; Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 200–201; Matthaei 1982: 54). Supposedly domestic working women and children, as well as public men, were employed in a great variety of public businesses, and a few women were entrepreneurs

in public professions identified with men (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 62–68, 250–251, 258–263, 267–269, 288; Fraser 1984; Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 122–124; Millett 1970: 69–70; Robertson 1982: 161; Spencer-Wood 1991a: 237–238). Some working-class women operated “domestic” entrepreneurial businesses in the home, such as taking in boarders, laundry, or sewing (De Cunzio 2004; Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 5, 202; Robertson 1982: 159; Rotman, forthcoming; Spencer-Wood 1991a: 238). From the 1870s to 1930s, middle-class reform women’s domestic-public organizations created many new women’s domestic-public professions ranging from childcare and dietetics to public health, social work, and librarians (Spencer-Wood 1991a, b, 1994, 2003). Finally, many women of all classes left the domestic sphere to shop for household goods (Fraser 1984: 278; Martin 1994: 175–177, 183; Matthaei 1982: 115, 120–122, 139–140; Spencer-Wood 1995: 122; Wall 1994: 135–136; Yamin 2001: 166). All this evidence shows that the supposedly separate gender spheres were never completely separated, but instead were inseparably connected in many different ways.

These border crossings raise the question whether the separate-spheres gender ideology represented anyone’s actual practices in real lives. Spencer-Wood’s chapter in this volume points out that elite and middle-class women who had servants identified themselves as respectably domestic in contrast to women who worked in public occupations. Middle-class reform women tried to internally colonize working-class women into respectable domesticity by teaching them middle-class housekeeping (Matthaei 1982: 32, 110, 116, 139–140; Camp, forthcoming). Women who had to work to support their families could maintain their husbands’ respectable masculine identity and pride in having a “nonworking domestic wife” by working in family businesses or earning money from domestic production, self-employment, or industrial home production, which had such low wages that children also usually helped and sometimes husbands (Matthaei 1982: 121–130). Until the second half of the nineteenth century, daughters and wives remained domestic regardless of any such border-crossing waged labor because their earnings legally belonged to the male head of household (Spencer-Wood, forthcoming). Women working outside the home in factories were regarded as “public women” who were out of their proper sphere, not respectable, and akin to prostitutes because they were not escorted by a man when crossing public landscapes (Hobson 1990: 32–33; Stansell 1986: 125–127). The “separate-spheres” gender ideology valorized elite white nonworking domestic women and denigrated working women. Blue-collar industrial men’s unions argued for a male “family wage” to permit working-class women to become respectable domestic housewives who raised children and did not work in the public sphere (Matthaei 1982: 121–122). The “separate-spheres” gender ideology was legally enforced through men’s public rights and wives’ lack of such civil rights. Possibly the most important merging of women’s domestic sphere with men’s public sphere was the women’s rights movement that increasingly gained civil rights for women over the nineteenth century. Perhaps most important were new laws that allowed wives to retain their property and earnings, providing them with economic independence (Spencer-Wood, forthcoming).

Most chapters in this volume denaturalize the separate-spheres gender ideology by showing that some overlap existed between the domestic or private sphere and the public sphere. The volume provides research on two fundamentally different ways that the separate gender spheres were overlapped and combined. In some cases, aspects of men's public sphere were brought into women's domestic sphere, domesticating aspects of the public sphere and making the domestic sphere partly public. In other instances, aspects of women's domestic sphere became public in a variety of different ways, such as gender-segregated occupations. In order to change the deeply embedded belief that gender stereotypes are natural, chapters in this book discuss the diverse, complex, and changing ways that women and men have interrelated and overlapped the domestic sphere with the public sphere around the world since medieval times. Spencer-Wood's (1995: 129–130) feminist inclusive *both/and* theoretical approach has revealed that each of the supposedly separate spheres was *both* domestic *and* public.

While the “separate-spheres” gender system was historically important, this static concept of gender that associates specific traits and societal roles to particular culturally constructed sexes does not represent the diversity of gender identities that existed in the past and continue to exist in the contemporary world. This volume enlarges the scope of gender research by analyzing the diversity of gender systems that individuals adopted and created, in effect challenging the notion that only the separate-spheres ideology, identities, roles, and practices existed throughout time in Western cultures.

Many chapters in this volume research the materialization of one or more of the diversity of alternative gender ideologies, identities, roles, and gender practices that challenged and changed the “separate-spheres” ideology and practices in a variety of ways. As a whole, the volume critically examines many meanings and configurations of the domestic and public spheres over time and around the world. Chapters provide diverse temporal and international case studies that demonstrate the often contradictory ways that the domestic sphere has been redefined in relation to the public sphere, changing gender roles, identities, relationships, and practices at the intersections of gender with class, race, ethnicity, age, and other social inequalities.

## ***Materiality of Sex/Gender Systems***

Material culture is instrumental in changing sex/gender systems because it operates at an unconscious level to shape actions, whether in conformity with the ideology of “separate spheres” or in different, often more egalitarian, directions. Historically, reformers purposely created and used material culture and architecture to symbolize and implement reforms in gender systems (Spencer-Wood 1987, 1991b, 1994, 1996, 2002). This volume combines a global scope with innovative analyses of the diverse material methods women and men used in challenging gender systems historically. Material changes were often made in gender systems, though not always to the extent desired by reformers.



In this volume, archaeology is concerned from a feminist inclusive perspective with *both* excavated *and* above-ground material culture, artifact classes, and/or architecture during specified time periods and usually at particular sites that exemplify major processes of change in gender systems. Material culture above ground is as important as excavated material remains because together they comprise the complete material remains of a site. Most chapters consider a sampled continuum of material remains above and below ground at one or more sites. Some material remains are documented and others observed in archaeological survey and/or excavation. Two chapters are limited to above-ground archaeological survey or landscape archaeology, and two others analyze major temporal developments in classes of artifacts in general historical context rather than analyzing particular sites as do most chapters.

Taken as a whole, the volume discusses international movements of people and materially expressed ideas that transformed gender systems. Most chapters discuss how individuals and sites associated with them were involved in major changes in gender systems. Most of the major changes discussed were international in scope, from patriarchal colonization and domestic colonialism to the feminization of tea, woman suffrage, the Arts and Crafts movement, dress reform, kindergartens, playgrounds, cooperative housekeeping, the City Beautiful, and other domestic reform movements (Spencer-Wood 1991b: 239–41). Chapters discuss how some individuals, most often women, and in some cases men, materially changed gender ideologies, identities, roles, relationships, and practices in the past. New insights are gained concerning ways that cultural constructions of gender stereotypes have been materially maintained and changed in the past, suggesting possible material strategies to move gender relations toward greater equality in the future.

### *Creative Tensions*

A number of creative tensions are interwoven throughout the volume. A primary theme involves the historic tensions between the “separate-spheres” gender system and alternatives created predominantly by middle-class women. These tensions led to constant renegotiation in the meanings of the domestic and public spheres that involved combining and conflating the spheres and shifting the ideal boundary between them (Spencer-Wood 1991b, 1994, 1996). A major related theme focuses on the historically complex, contingent, and interrelated nature of individuals’ multiple, intersectional, and fluid identities in relation to the constant redefinitions of what gender-specific work, tasks, and arrangements of material culture were included in domestic versus public places and spaces.

The chapters examine (1) the great variety of ways that different aspects of the domestic sphere became public and (2) how some aspects of the public sphere were transformed into domestic practices. In some cases, men and women sought to control private or intimate interactions through public ideology and institutionalized actions. In other cases, reformers raised women’s status and improved their lives by

transforming domestic, private, or intimate concerns into public matters, enterprises, and professions. Some chapters address how different aspects of the public sphere were transformed into material domestic practices. The interrelated documentary and material evidence of such transformations are closely analyzed. This volume builds on and enlarges the trend in the historical archaeology of domestic reform toward analyzing the gendered tensions in relationships among female and male social reformers who were working together or in gender-segregated institutions (De Cunzio 2001; Spencer-Wood 1994, 2003, 2004).

## *Colonization and Colonialism*

The centrality of domestic reform in implementing colonization and colonialism is another major theme running through many chapters in this volume. In this volume Clements' chapter and Spencer-Wood's commentary both draw on Stephen Silliman's (2005: 59) definition of colonization as the creation of foreign colonies by people migrating from a nation-state. He defines colonialism as (1) the attempt by colonists/settlers from a nation-state to control foreign territories and indigenous peoples and (2) the responses of indigenous peoples. Imperial states established colonies to exploit natural resources and indigenous labor (Silliman 2005: 58). Silliman (2005: 61) subsequently briefly adds gender, sex, and intimacies to his model of colonialism. Feminist postcolonial theory and research has focused on investigating such private, domestic, and intimate aspects of colonialism, labeled "internal colonialism" (Gordon 2006: 429).

Silliman's definition takes the viewpoint of the nation-state that the areas it conquers are foreign, with all the negative connotations of that word. Spencer-Wood's commentary in this volume suggests the term "external colonialism" to express the viewpoint and experiences of the colonized that the colonists are foreign invaders and conquerors from an external nation-state. Colonization and external colonialism are concerned with the dialectical interactions between colonists and colonized peoples that lead to hybrid cultures in colonies. The term "colonization" is concerned with processes of settlement that also encompass external colonialism. In this volume, chapters in the section entitled "How External Colonization Made Domestic, Intimate, and Bodily Affairs Public" mostly use the term colonization, with Jackson's chapter also discussing British colonialism in South Africa.

Silliman (2005: 59) uses the term "internal colonialism" to refer to long-term attempts by colonial settler populations to control indigenous cultures. However, the term "internal colonialism" was initially used by Lenin and his followers to describe inequalities within a nation-state due to capitalist dominant-group exploitation of social groups distinguished and stigmatized by their class, race, ethnicity, and/or religion and the interconnections among stigmatized social identities (Gordon 2006: 428, 430–431, 433, 442 cited in Spencer-Wood's commentary chapter).

Spencer-Wood's commentary discusses how feminist postcolonial theorists have used the term "internal colonialism" to refer to attempts by the dominant group

within a nation-state to impose interrelated imperial gender, sexual, racial, ethnic, and class divisions; beliefs; and capitalist exploitation on immigrants and minorities (including indigenous minorities) within the state (Gordon 2006: 444). External colonialism developed into internal colonialism as European colonies became westernized nations in the Americas, Africa, and Australasia. Feminist postcolonial theorists have also defined “internal colonialism” as the dialectical interactions between the dominant group in a nation-state imposing patriarchal, racist capitalism on immigrants and minorities, and the responses of the internally colonized people, ranging from resistance to willing adoption of aspects of patriarchy and/or middle-class housekeeping.

In this volume, chapters in the section entitled “Internal Colonialism: Public Reform of Domestic Material Practices” use the feminist meaning of the term and examine attempts by reformers to impose their domestic ideology and practices on immigrants or white working-class people in the United States. In some cases, the recipients of domestic reforms resisted, while in other cases, they willingly adopted aspects of domestic reforms that were in their interest. Spencer-Wood’s commentary in this volume suggests the terms “patriarchal colonialism,” “domestic colonialism,” and “gender/sexual colonialism,” to specifically refer to those different kinds of internal colonialism, rather than using the latter term for multiple meanings. Patriarchal colonialism is concerned with attempts to impose Western patriarchy on aborigines, immigrants, and/or other minorities, while domestic colonialism involves attempts to impose middle-class housekeeping practices. Gender/sexual colonialism is concerned with attempts to impose gender/sexual roles when this does not involve imposing the power dynamics in patriarchal colonialism. Gender/sexual colonialism could occur if indigenous groups or minorities were forced into homosocial work groups and denied heterosexual relations.

Spencer-Wood’s feminist commentary argues for increasing our understanding of internal colonialism by modeling the dialectical relationships between reformers and recipients of reform as a spectrum or continuum of degree of force used by reformers to socially control recipients, and the related amount of resistance by recipients of reform. At one extreme of the continuum, paternalistic companies such as the Lowell, Massachusetts, textile mills fired employees who did not follow moralistic rules controlling their lives or who held strikes in resistance to speedups and decreasing pay (Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 126, 131–132). In the middle of the continuum were coercive methods of reform that were less forceful and therefore generated less resistance, such as company rewards for immigrants who adopted middle-class housekeeping, as discussed in Camp’s chapter in this volume. The other extreme involved voluntary participation in reform programs by immigrants who wanted to become Americans by adopting American lifeways and material culture, as discussed in chapters by Praetzellis and Spencer-Wood.

Linda Gordon (2006: 443) contends concerning colonialism that “there has been no perfect domination or control (except possibly for very short stretches) and that those who wish to rule protractedly must adjust to some degree to the ruled. Likewise most forms of resistance involve some degree of conformity to the rulers.” She argues that internal colonialism is “a model that is always two-sided—about conflict and negotiation rather than

simply domination and social control.” It was impossible for reformers to enforce complete social control of working-class people’s lives because working-class people could always resist and fail to conform in some ways. (see Spencer-Wood’s commentary)

Historically in the United States, internal colonialism was usually called Americanization, which involved social movements to teach immigrants middle-class American values and practices, including gender ideology, identities, practices, and power dynamics (Spencer-Wood 1996: 435–436). In this volume, Camp’s chapter concerns attempts by Pacific Electric Railway Corporation reformers to coerce Mexican workers to Americanize, while chapters by Praetzellis and Spencer-Wood include examples of voluntary Americanization. These are all internal colonialism in the sense that adoption of gender ideology had to be voluntary, since only public conformity to American-gendered behaviors could be forced by companies. Camp’s chapter shows that reformers who implemented Americanization programs of internal colonialism in companies used rewards and punishments to pressure their employees to adopt white middle-class standards of housekeeping. While the company could monitor conformity to housekeeping standards, they could not be certain that the values underpinning those practices were adopted. In contrast, as explained in Spencer-Wood’s chapter, in most reform institutions, such as social settlements, participation in programs was voluntary, so the adoption of middle-class values and practices was also voluntary, another form of internal colonialism.

Many reformers worked in private institutions on public urban landscapes to materially “civilize” non-Western people with dominant Western domestic ideology and practices, whether through external or internal colonialism. Many aspects of the domestic sphere, from housekeeping to what Western ideologies consider the most intimate matters concerned with sexual practices, childbirth, and the care of the body, have all been subjects of public concern and discourses in Western empires attempting to impose, to differing extents, their dominant “separate-spheres” gender ideology on indigenous people in cases of external colonialism, or on foreign immigrants or minorities in cases of internal colonialism. Chapters in two sections in the volume separately analyze how Western reform of domestic and intimate bodily practices was central to external colonialism and internal colonialism.

This volume offers a number of compelling examples of the vital role that reorganizing the domestic sphere and regulating intimate behaviors played in external and internal colonialism campaigns. Many dominant Western ideologies have historically assumed that women belonged only in the home and needed to perform housework to middle-class standards. This belief underpinned domestic colonialism programs that taught Western middle-class methods of housekeeping in institutions ranging from overseas missions to domestic social settlements. Colonization also involved decisions about which social groups deserved or did not deserve education in Western domestic practices such as sanitation, which was important in preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Training in Western domestic practices was a major method for assimilating non-Western people, whether in overseas colonies or in immigrant communities in Western countries. However, the colonized indigenous and minority women were not passive recipients of colonialism but were often

active social agents in deciding which domestic beliefs and materialized practices to refuse, resist, or subvert and which ones to adopt and/or modify or combine in unique ways with non-Western domestic beliefs and material practices (Spencer-Wood 1994, 1996).

Chapters in this volume include some analyses of colonizing nations and companies that could enforce their domestic interventions on indigenous and minority workers and other analyses of reform movements where voluntary participation in internal colonialism led to resistance as well as adoption of Western domestic practices among the diversity of people in different communities. Several chapters challenge depictions of marginalized or impoverished groups as passive recipients of domestic rules and regulations imposed by external or internal colonizers. Although some colonizers attempted to impose Western domesticity, research has uncovered resistance by some aborigines and immigrants to such imposition.

The case studies in this volume demonstrate that domestic rules and restrictions are never set in stone but are instead constantly renegotiated, providing hope that both modern social movements and the historical research conducted in this volume can shift and alter deeply entrenched gender, racial, and class stereotypes that continue to shape Western culture today. This volume builds on previous historical archaeological research analyzing negotiations between reformers and participants in reform programs over the material content of those programs, from sewing classes and Swedish-type sloyd carpentry classes to women's use of spaces in YWCA (Spencer-Wood 1994, 1996).

## Book Organization

The book is logically organized according to ways that personal, private, intimate, and domestic affairs became political and public in the past, either by bringing aspects of the public sphere into the supposedly private domestic sphere or by transforming aspects of the domestic sphere into the public sphere. As a whole, the volume flows logically in four sections. The first section examines how women brought public business and political matters into the domestic sphere, domesticating public business and making aspects of private life political. The second section addresses ways that external colonizers attempted public control over domestic spaces and intimate bodily practices of the colonized and colonizers alike. The third section analyzes different ways that men and women transformed private domestic, intimate, and bodily practices into public legal matters, organizations, institutions, and professions. The last section provides case studies of internal colonialism concerning immigrant or working-class domestic and private practices.

The first section of the volume, entitled "The Private Is Political: the Public Sphere Inside the Domestic Sphere of the Home," includes three chapters analyzing ways that women made the personal political by using domestic spaces and artifacts for public purposes, from public sales of women's domestic products from their homes, through social status display at teas, to birthing the wom-

en's rights movement over tea on the parlor table. The chapters discuss the creative ways women renegotiated patriarchal gender ideology that limited women to domestic roles.

In the first chapter, "The Proud Air of an Unwilling Slave: Tea, Women and Domesticity c. 1700–1900," Annie Gray analyzes the evidence that Englishwomen publicly displayed their prestige through their pivotal role in controlling household tea ceremonies, starting in the seventeenth century. Important for archaeologists is the documentary evidence that women selected household teawares. Since tea was identified with, and controlled by women, teawares reflected their decorative preferences, which Gray relates to class.

In the second chapter, "Domestic Production for Public Markets: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Deerfield, Massachusetts, c.1850 – c.1911" Deborah Rotman analyzes how, around the turn of the century, women and men manufactured and sold their homemade craft products in supposedly private house parlors and the liminal domestic-public space of their porches, in the context of women's long history of household production for public markets. Craft production was motivated in part by the Arts and Crafts movement ideology, which opposed industrial capitalist factory production and sought a return to the colonial pattern of combining the domestic and public spheres in household craft production and sales (see Spencer-Wood's commentary). While many crafts were perishable, such as baskets, Arts and Crafts furniture, metalwork, and pottery could be found in archaeological excavations. Rotman also discusses Deerfield women's participation in reform organizations for temperance, domestic urban missions, and municipal housekeeping in voting on school board issues, including overthrowing a committee paying poor wages to teachers, who were predominantly women (for background see Spencer-Wood's chapter). Finally, women influenced the public construction of the municipal water system in ways that were revealed by complementary archaeological and documentary data.

In the third chapter, "Troubling the Domestic Sphere: Women Reformers and the Changing Place of the Home in the United States, 1854–1939," Kim Christensen analyzes how two reform women from different times and places changed the meaning of ordinary domestic artifacts and architecture by using them for social reform. Christensen first looks at how female reformer Matilda Joslyn Gage, founding member of the National Women Suffrage Movement (NWSA), in the second half of the nineteenth century plotted "nothing less than revolution over...gothic paneled cups of tea." Excavations found a predominance of gothic white ironstone-type teaware symbolizing the Cult of Domesticity, which was used in the house by Gage and other feminists while they created the very public women's rights movement. Second, Christensen explores the symbolic domestic reform meanings and uses of apparently ordinary domestic artifacts excavated at the home of suffragist and domestic reformer May Cheney, from 1885 to 1939. Cheney was a leader in university teacher training and education in domestic science and was involved in the women's movements for playgrounds and the Consumer Protection League. Christensen reveals the importance of women's use of private household spaces and

artifacts to generate political change, a practice continued in women's social reform movements today.

The second section, entitled "How External Colonization Made Domestic, Intimate, and Bodily Affairs Public," addresses the centrality of attempts by colonizers to Westernize indigenous domestic practices and spaces as a primary means of colonization. Case studies examine imperial domestic colonization discourses and actions of the Spanish Catholics conquering the medieval Muslim Kingdom of Granada and parts of North America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Dutch conquest of South Africa, and British conquests in North America, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. Chapters in this section further analyze how indigenous people were not passive recipients of Western patriarchal colonizations, but often successfully resisted them or adapted Western domestic practices to indigenous gender roles. This volume expands geographically and materially beyond Ann L. Stoler's (2006) edited volume *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*. It also increases understanding of the materialization of domestic "dense transfer points" between imperial and indigenous cultures, building on Van Kirk's (1983) concept of the methods of cultural transfer involved in the "tender ties" formed in intimate relationships between imperial men and indigenous women, which Stoler (2001) argues were also "tense" ties due to colonial men's dependence on, and exploitation of, indigenous women. Chapters on external colonization analyze the importance of gender, domestic, or patriarchal colonialism in the process of Westernizing aboriginal societies, as well as resistance by some aborigines and slaves.

In the first chapter, "Gender, Ethnicity, Religion, and Sanitation After the Fall of the Muslim Granada Kingdom in Medieval Spain," Ieva Reklaityte analyzes how the "separate-spheres" Muslim ideology was expressed in the complete separation of public spaces from residential neighborhoods of narrow streets and homes that had no external windows. Excavations revealed how Christian conquerors modified these small, very private Muslim houses by combining several of them into large houses with windows that created a permeable boundary between Christian domestic and public spaces. Excavations further revealed the Christian widening of public streets and destruction of Muslim municipal sewer systems, resulting in unsanitary cities. Resistance to Christianization was evident in the documented private continuation of Jewish religious rituals in some households, which Christian men prosecuted in public as illegal. To a limited extent, public baths continued to be used by both Jews and Muslims to conduct the intimate rituals of cleansing private bodies, although the Christian colonizers considered bathing sinful. The colonizers attempted the imposition of Christian gender roles and domestic practices in a combination of gender and domestic colonialism.

In the second chapter entitled "Intimate Matters in Public Encounters: Massachusetts Praying Indian Communities and Colonialism in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," Joyce Clements analyzes how Native American concepts of private and intimate domestic affairs changed due to the imposition of English patriarchal capitalism on indigenous people in the "Praying Indian Village" of Ponkapoag, Massachusetts, USA. In public documents, Englishmen recorded the monetary costs



charged to Native Americans for adopting English medicine and practices of death, childbirth, and childrearing. Capitalism was used to impoverish Native Americans and alienate them from their ancestral lands that they had to sell to pay such debts, as well as debts for buying English goods. Clements analyzes how male English colonists imposed patriarchy that condoned systematic male violence against women, enforced by the ideology of the sexual double standard in a sexist colonial judicial system that publicly punished adultery by wives while not punishing adultery by husbands. Ponkapoag women were not passive recipients of English patriarchy but instead drew on their matrilineal tribal organization that encouraged wives to resist domestic abuse. Analyses of excavated Native American burials revealed how Indians combined tribal and English burial rituals and practices, sometimes expressing transitional renegotiations of gender roles and power relations.

In the third chapter, "Reforming Bodies: Self-Governance, Anxiety, and Cape Colonial Architecture in South Africa, 1665–1860," Shannon Jackson discusses the shift in the early nineteenth century from the older Dutch East India Company to British colonial control of bodies and domestic spaces. The Dutch retained open medieval/corporate house plans that closely connected and blended private and public spaces and activities, including public sales of domestic products by wives in their homes. The British found Dutch houses offensive and changed them in part to discourage miscegenation by segregating the domestic spaces of white colonists from those of nonwhite servants and the public spaces of the streets where prostitutes mingled with men. Analyses of extant colonial houses revealed the shift from Dutch to English constructions of domestic spaces and their relationships to public spaces.

In the fourth chapter on external colonization, "Missionization and the Cult of Domesticity, 1769–1850: Local Investigation of a Global Process," Angela Middleton makes a comparative analysis of religious missions around the world and identifies two types: missions that were live-in total institutions controlling all aspects of aborigines' lives under conditions similar to slavery versus household missions where missionary families offered part-time domestic training in their home and/or a school. Within this context, Middleton analyzes a Protestant household mission that sought to westernize indigenous domestic and private material practices in New Zealand in the nineteenth century. Middleton's chapter provides a global context for the importance of missionary wives in teaching Western material domesticity as an essential aspect of colonization processes. Excavations recovered evidence that English missionary wives on the New Zealand frontier maintained their "respectable" Victorian dress and tea ceremony. Remains of sewing equipment testified to the sewing classes run by the missionary wives to civilize aboriginal women by teaching them Western domestic skills associated with the Cult of Domesticity and the sanctity of women's domestic role in the home. Documented large lots of clothing and excavated trade beads were traded with the indigenous people, and the beads were also given as rewards for learning domestic skills or to read or write English. Initially the missions were dependent subjects of the politically sovereign indigenous population, but missionaries later gained politically



powerful positions. Syncretic religious forms developed combining indigenous and Protestant rituals and beliefs.

The third section, entitled “Transformations of Domestic and Private Bodily Matters into Public Concerns and Organizations,” examines how domestic, private, and intimate matters in Western countries were transformed into public concerns in a variety of ways by women and men. In the first chapter “Western Gender Transformations from the Eighteenth Century to the Early Twentieth Century: Combining the Domestic and Public Spheres,” Suzanne Spencer-Wood provides a temporally deep and geographically expansive overview of the many different ways that men and women changed Western patriarchy by combining and conflating the domestic and public spheres in Europe and America. An overview of Western patriarchy is provided as the foundational historical context for the volume as a whole. Spencer-Wood’s framework of power heterarchy reveals that men used their legal “powers over” women to enforce patriarchy, while women used cooperative “powers with” each other and male allies to transform the “separate-spheres” gender system toward greater gender equality. Most of this chapter provides global historical background about reform movements researched in other chapters. In a great diversity of domestic reform movements, women developed many alternative gender ideologies and discourses to legitimate two main strategies for raising the status of women by (1) applying men’s scientific-industrial technology to transform housework and mothering into domestic professions akin to men’s public professions and (2) making it acceptable within the dominant separate-spheres gender ideology for women to have public professions, organizations, and institutions. An archaeological survey of women’s institutions in Boston found that reformers materially conflated domestic and public spheres by establishing women’s institutions both in houses and in large institutional buildings that dominated areas of public urban landscapes previously associated with men. Many domestic reform movements were symbolized and implemented with material culture that was new or was given new meanings. Historical research established that domestic reform movements created a major turn-of-the-century social transformation in the Western world. Domestic reform arguments and the demonstration of women’s public citizenship in the municipal housekeeping movements were important in achieving female suffrage. Some reformers redefined Americanization to include the preservation of minority cultures, promoting more cultural hybridization during internal colonialism.

In the second chapter, “Decently Dressed: Women’s Fashion and Dress Reform in the Nineteenth-Century United States,” Carol Nickolai discusses normative clothing for middle- and upper-class “ladies” as well as men, as the context for innovations in women’s dress styles in utopian communes, and men’s and women’s dress reform movements. Nickolai found that new dress styles in utopian communes remained private within those communities and ranged in meaning from creating gender distinctions to creating gender equality. While men’s and women’s dress reform movements both sought to free women from unhealthy bodily deformations caused by tight corsets, male dress reformers were not viewed as challenging gender distinctions. In contrast, some reform women viewed dress reform as part of a

political movement to free women from material restrictions on their physical movements. Nikolai found that dress reform was not adopted by most women, as their desire to be viewed as “respectable” women tied them to fashionable dress styles for “ladies.” Nikolai found that dress styles changed not as a result of reform but as a result of women’s new roles in World War I.

In the third chapter, “Mina Miller Edison, Education, Social Reform, and the Permeable Boundaries of “Domestic” Space, 1886–1940,” Anne Yentsch analyzes how Mrs. Edison evolved during her life from the young private wife of a very public and famous inventor to a mature reformer who exemplifies wealthy women who often participated in and led several women’s organizations and domestic reform movements. Mina worked for several reforms in New Jersey, New York, and Florida, including temperance, kindergartens, playgrounds, municipal sanitation, and suffrage. Mrs. Edison provided leadership in a wide range of organizations, including the City Beautiful movement and the nature conservation movement. Mina held public meetings in public spaces of her private home and garden in Florida as part of her work in the National Federation of Women’s Clubs and women’s public movements for community beautification and nature conservation. Landscape archaeology revealed how Mina changed the layout of the Edison garden, while documents revealed how it became renowned for preserving a great variety of tropical species, especially rare orchids. Yentsch’s research revealed that Mrs. Edison became a reformer in part because her natal family participated in Chautauqua camps, where many domestic reformers gave lectures and classes. Yentsch shows that Mrs. Edison brought some public activities into her domestic sphere and also left a large imprint as a “domestic” wife on the public space of her Florida community.

In the fourth chapter, entitled “Ethical Practice and Material Ethics: Domestic Technology and Swedish Modernity in the Early Twentieth Century, Exemplified From the Life of Hanna Rydh,” Elisabeth Arwill-Nordbladh discusses a Swedish archaeologist and reformer who in the early twentieth century was involved in creating public cooperative laundries as well as small loans to support women’s dairying businesses on small farms. Feminist consciousness-raising has led to excavations of a few preserved old agrarian washing jetties that have now been recognized as important aspects of Swedish heritage. By transforming domestic tasks such as hand washing into public cooperatives, reform women combined the supposedly separate domestic and public spheres, challenging the separate-spheres gender ideology, roles, identities, and relationships. Arwill-Nordbladh also found evidence of the globalization of reform, as American domestic reformer Christine Frederick’s application of Taylor’s industrial principles to housework was advocated by Swedish reform women.

The fourth section, entitled “Internal Colonialism: Public Reform of Domestic Material Practices,” provides examples in the United States of public methods used in attempts by white middle-class reformers and men’s public companies to materially change private practices and uses of domestic spaces by racialized minorities, immigrants (Orser 2007, Spencer-Wood 1999: 285), or working-class whites. A major theme of this section is concerned with the historic tensions among the

goals and actions of both male and female middle-class reformers. Internal colonialism is concerned with *both* reformers' attempts to exert social control by imposing middle-class standards of housekeeping on minorities *and* the responses of those minorities. In her commentary, Spencer-Wood theorizes internal colonialism as a continuum from the extreme of company enforcement of middle-class moral domesticity among its workers, through company coercion using rewards and punishments, to the other extreme of voluntary participation in domestic reform programs. In this volume, the chapter by Hadley Kruczek-Aaron analyzes how a US Representative who was a reformer pressured renters on his land into practicing, to some extent, his domestic reforms of temperance and lack of status-display ceramics. Stacey Lynn Camp's chapter analyzes how a company coerced its Mexican immigrant workers to adopt middle-class domestic practices. Mary Praetzellis' chapter analyzes the popularity and effects of kindergartens.

In the first chapter, "Making Men and Women Blush: Masculinity, Femininity, and Reform in Nineteenth-Century Central New York," Hadley Kruczek-Aaron analyzes documentary and archaeological evidence that nineteenth-century US Representative and temperance reformer Gerrit Smith, in Smithfield, New York, pressured his family and white tenants to adopt, to some degree, his reforms against status-display tableware and for temperance. In this case study of internal colonialism, excavated evidence shows that Smith's tenants adopted his reforms to differing extents. Some tenants, and Smith's wife, bought both plain ceramics in line with Smith's reform, as well as fancier transfer-printed tableware and expensive teaware. A neighbor who owned his house did not adopt Smith's reforms, and Smith's own children demonstrated differing degrees of intemperance, evident from alcohol bottles deposited in his house yard. This chapter is particularly interesting in researching the efforts of a famous male reformer and the adoption of some of his reforms by his tenants, alongside some archaeological and documentary evidence of resistance from neighborhood residents and Smith's family members.

In the second chapter, "Sisters Across the Bay: The Archaeology and Influence of Two Late Nineteenth-Century Free Kindergartens in Northern California," Mary Praetzellis provides a historical and archaeological analysis of the Silver Street Kindergarten in San Francisco, founded by famous kindergartner Kate Wiggin in 1878, and the West Oakland Free Kindergarten, founded in 1886 by Elizabeth Betts, a graduate of Kate's kindergartner training school ("kindergartners" was the historic term for kindergarten teachers). In America, kindergartens were among the most popular forms of socialized working-class childcare developed by reform women (Spencer-Wood 1994, 2002). Kindergartens and other middle-class reformers' programs for working-class families can be viewed as forms of internal colonialism because many participants were working-class or poor immigrants who willingly adopted middle-class values and practices in pursuit of upward mobility.

In the third chapter, "From Reform to Repatriation: Gendering an Americanization Movement in Early Twentieth-Century California," Stacey Lynn Camp examines how a trolley company pressured its Mexican migrant railroad workers to adopt middle-class Anglo-American domestic practices. In this specific case of internal colonialism, compliance with Anglo-American standards of hygiene, food prepara-

tion, and household design and organization was rewarded by free trolley trips to San Francisco. Failure to adopt Anglo-American domestic practices was punished by a lack of rewards. Although a company reformer documented her frustration in attempting to Americanize Mexican workers, archaeological evidence showed that the Mexicans adopted Anglo-American toys for their children and were learning to read and write English.

The company-coerced Americanization contrasts with the voluntary participation of immigrants in kindergartens, day care, and social settlement programs in large cities (Spencer-Wood 1996, 2002). The chapters in this section provide a range of examples of internal colonialism, from upwardly mobile immigrants who willingly adopted middle-class values and practices in kindergartens, to evidence of resistance by tenants to coercion by their landlord to adopt his domestic reforms.

In her feminist commentary on the volume, Suzanne Spencer-Wood discusses the implicit and explicit applications of feminist theories involved in the other book chapters. Examples of several feminist theories are drawn from different chapters, and discussion addresses how many chapters implicitly draw on more than one kind of feminist theory, often combining a number of different theoretical approaches. Comments on individual chapters bring out additional relevant information and historical context. Further, feminist theories are applied to develop the general historical context of the Western gender system that led to the development of women's social reform movements.

Taken together the edited volume flows from ways that women used domestic spaces for public political purposes, through patriarchal and domestic colonialisms in external colonizations, to ways that reform women applied aspects of men's public sphere to the domestic sphere and ways that domestic and intimate bodily matters were transformed into men's public legal matters and women's public organizations, institutions, and professions; and ending with case studies of internal domestic colonialism. The volume is brought together by this introduction and the final commentary on the feminist theories and themes running through the chapters. This introduction's gender focus contrasts with the additional insights gained from the commentary's focus on feminist theories analyzing gender power dynamics.

This volume expands the geographical and temporal scope of previous volumes on domestic reform and domestic colonialism. Chapters range from the medieval period to the early twentieth century and span from America to Europe, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific islands. In contrast to other volumes focusing on colonization or domestic reform in single cities, countries, or continents (e.g., Deutsch 2000; Hayden 1981; Spain 2001; Strasser 1982; Stoler 2006; Van Kirk 1983), this volume provides international comparative historical contexts for *both* external patriarchal colonization *and* internal domestic colonialism. Further, this volume focuses on material culture expressing social reform ideas communicated between cultures and continents that transformed Western patriarchy from the nineteenth century into the twentieth century. This volume not only focuses on material culture, it provides a broader geographical range and greater temporal depth than previous volumes on domestic reform.

This volume developed out of a session at the 2008 World Archaeological Congress in Dublin co-organized by Stacey Camp and Suzanne Spencer-Wood, entitled “Intimate Encounters: The History and Archaeology of Domestic Reform.” A few additional chapters were added to enlarge the scope of the volume. Although we started soliciting chapters together with the plan of coediting, Stacey did not have time to continue, so Suzanne became the volume editor, leaving this introduction coauthored.

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**Part I**  
**The Private Is Political: The Public**  
**Sphere Inside the Domestic**  
**Sphere of the Home**



## Chapter 2

# ‘The Proud Air of an Unwilling Slave’: Tea, Women and Domesticity, c.1700–1900

Annie Gray

This chapter draws upon data from museum collections, cookbooks and visual sources to examine the changing nature of the tea ceremony in England, particularly among the urban middle class. It argues that by 1700 women had taken active control of tea-taking, using it to challenge prevailing attitudes towards the role of women and to forge social networks founded on commensality within the household environment. Furthermore, it suggests that tea became a tool for female emancipation as women took control of tea ceremonies for public audiences as well as their families. The definition of domestic reform is expanded here beyond the explicit movements of the nineteenth century (Spencer-Wood 1987, 1991b, 1994) to include more subtle pressure to change habits and attitudes. These pressures are visible in the material culture associated with the domestic sphere, and a study of the changes and continuities within such artefactual groups can inform interpretations of the acceptance of, or resistance to, domestic reform.

## Introduction

She stood by the tea-table in a light-coloured muslin gown, which had a good deal of pink about it. She looked as if she was not attending to the conversation, but solely busy with the tea-cups, among which her round ivory hands moved with pretty, noiseless daintiness. She had a bracelet on one taper arm, which would fall down over her round wrist. Mr Thornton watched the re-placing of this troublesome ornament with far more attention than he listened to her father. It seemed as if it fascinated him to see her push it up impatiently, until it tightened her soft flesh; and then to mark the loosening – the fall. He could almost have exclaimed – ‘There is goes again!’ There was so little left to be done after he arrived at the

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preparation for tea, that he was almost sorry the obligation of eating and drinking came so soon to prevent his watching of Margaret. She handed him his cup of tea with the proud air of an unwilling slave; but her eye caught the moment when he was ready for another cup; and he almost longed to ask her to do for him what he saw her compelled to do for her father, who took her little finger and thumb in his masculine hand, and made them serve as sugar-tongs. (Gaskell 1854, 120)

Elizabeth Gaskell, Unitarian, social reformer, and a protégé of Dickens, did not waste metaphors. Her books consider the social status quo, most particularly in the mill towns of northern England with which she was familiar, but they also concern the status and role of women. The women who populate her books struggle with financial problems and emotional trauma, and are under constant threat of mental and physical damage. For much of the narrative they stand alone, finding their eventual places as wives, mothers, spinsters and widows by their own actions. Gaskell uses strong quasi-feminist language on occasion, and her observations of the actions of men are filtered through the female experience (Uglow 1999). In the quote above, this is particularly evident, as Thornton—the passive observer—imbues the scene with sexual undertones, objectifying Margaret so completely that she becomes an element of the material culture with which she is interacting. The identification of tea and its materiality with women was well established by the eighteenth century (Congreve 1694), and this passage illustrates quite how far this could be taken. Margaret is described almost as a slave, subservient to her father, as befitted a daughter in the Victorian middle-class ethos. Thornton's fantasy of Margaret in bondage does not extend to himself, however, and dissolves in tatters as she later rejects his marriage proposal and place at his own tea table. As will be made clear in the rest of this chapter, while men may have wished to believe they allowed their wives status only by their own actions, tea was one area where patriarchy could be—and was—contested. Female control of the tea table gave women genuine and independent power allied to, but not reliant on, the social standing of their husbands. The association of tea with women still reverberates in the twenty-first century society, especially in the UK, where gossiping women supping tea form a staple of the less imaginative elements of the advertising industry.

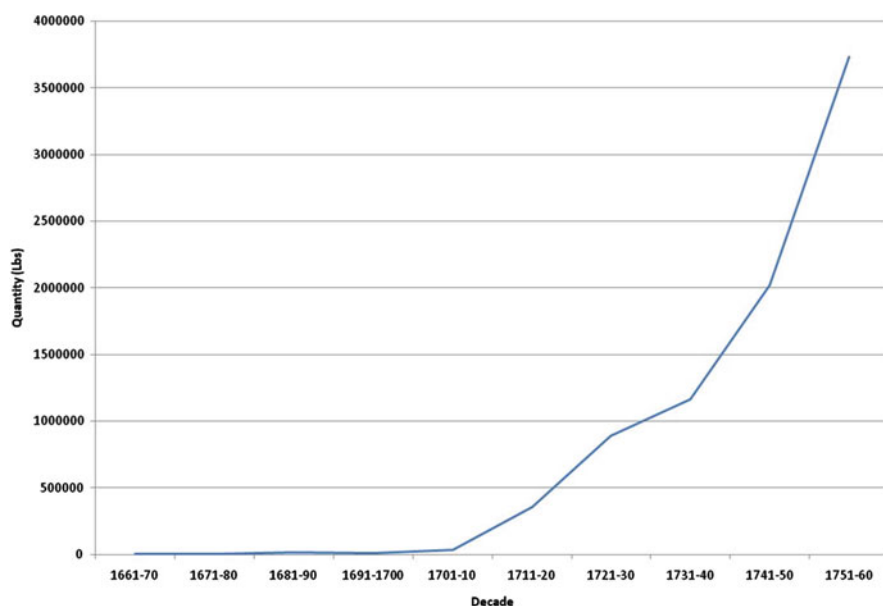
This chapter emerges from research into the gendering of the dining experience in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the extent to which this was promoted by women and to what end (Gray 2009). Women were themselves active participants in changing the way in which the domestic realm was viewed and were quite capable of challenging supposed behavioural norms. The material culture associated with women's activities can be used both to show the impact of domestic reform discourse upon everyday activities and to explore potential resistance to mainstream pressures on women. The choice of the materiality of tea as the main case study here is driven by the undeniable gendering of the beverage and continued gender associations throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

## Background

When tea was first introduced to England in the 1650s, there was no indication that this elite, alien beverage would come to form a majority drink and play an integral role in reshaping the social landscape of all classes. Equally, there was no intrinsic reason why it should become associated so overwhelmingly with women. Yet even by the 1690s, just three decades after Pepys recorded drinking the first documented cup of tea in England (Pettigrew 2001: 8), Congreve (1694) already felt able to refer to ladies retiring to '*their tea and scandal, according to their ancient custom*'. Although this applies in an English context, it indicates that tea was a feminised drink from its earliest consumption, belying suggestions that it was regarded as masculine until 1720 (Yentsch 1991: 224).

The traditional and much-repeated explanation for the spread of tea focuses on Portuguese princess Catherine of Braganza, who married English King Charles II in 1662, with a dowry that included a chest of tea (Moxham 2003: 18). She certainly established tea-drinking as part of the pattern of female courtly behaviour (Hohenegger 2006: 77, Ukers 1935: 44), and in a classic top-down emulation model, aristocratic ladies supposedly adopted the habit following her lead (Ukers 1935: 44). Later, as the price of tea dropped, so did its consumption spread lower down the social scale. Emulation theory has, however, long since been discredited (Pennell 1998), and fashion is too easy a term to use in attributing cause for the rise in popularity of particular items or trends. That the myth of Catherine's solo responsibility for the introduction of tea to England has been so widely repeated seems to be a function of the coffee-table nature of much of the literature on tea and is indicative of a reliance on secondary literature. Tea was certainly known in England prior to Catherine's arrival (Hohenegger 2006: 77), being advertised for sale in coffee houses as early as 1657–1658 (Ukers 1935: 44), and while its promotion at court undoubtedly did it no harm, it cannot be asserted as the sole reason for its popularity—Mary II was a dedicated chocolate drinker but consumption remained low compared to its competitor.

At this stage, tea was just one among many choices of drink, including, as hot options, coffee and chocolate, both introduced around the same time. Supplies to England were initially sporadic, dependent on individual trade agreements in the Far East, and the market was difficult to predict. East India Company (EIC) records suggest that on more than one occasion, imports risked flooding the market and had to be curtailed the following year (Chaudhuri 1978: 390). By 1717, a permanent base had been acquired by the EIC in Canton (Brown 1995: 56), and from this point onwards, tea imports grew steadily (Fig. 2.1), with up to 85% increases in volume from one decade to the next (Chaudhuri 1978: 388). Duties were slashed in the 1740s, but rose again to finance the wars of the 1750s. They were finally and definitively cut—from 119 to 12.5%—in 1784, when the Commutation Act was passed in explicit



**Fig. 2.1** Chinese tea imports by the East India Company, 1660–1760 (after Chaudhuri 1978)

recognition that tea had become a necessity for all. The significant leap in imports which followed was, however, as indicative of the virtual extinction of the market in smuggled and hence unrecorded tea as it was of an actual rise in consumption (Emmerson 1992: 11).

By the nineteenth century, therefore, tea-drinking was part of everyday life throughout society, with consumption continuing to rise throughout the century (Fig. 2.2). The grades of tea differed by class, but its consumption was universal. It has been argued that the pressure to find new sources for imports and maximise profits was a key driver in the expansion of the empire into such territories as Assam and Burma (Macfarlane and Macfarlane 2003). By the 1880s, the combination of mechanisation and the application of the factory system in the Indian tea plantations meant that supplies could be guaranteed, and sales of Indian tea rapidly eclipsed those of China (Pettigrew 2001; Macfarlane and Macfarlane 2003). Tea was widely sold, not just in specialist outlets but in grocery stores and chandlers, and by the end of the nineteenth century could increasingly be bought in branded, sealed packets, intended to reassure consumers that the tea was not adulterated and that it was a set weight (Pettigrew 2003: 93). Tea was drunk throughout the day, but became particularly associated with the mid-afternoon when its consumption formed part of visiting rituals among the leisured upper and, in the nineteenth century, middle classes (Devereux 1904). The formalisation of tea-taking itself forms part of the gendering of tea, the subject of the rest of this chapter.

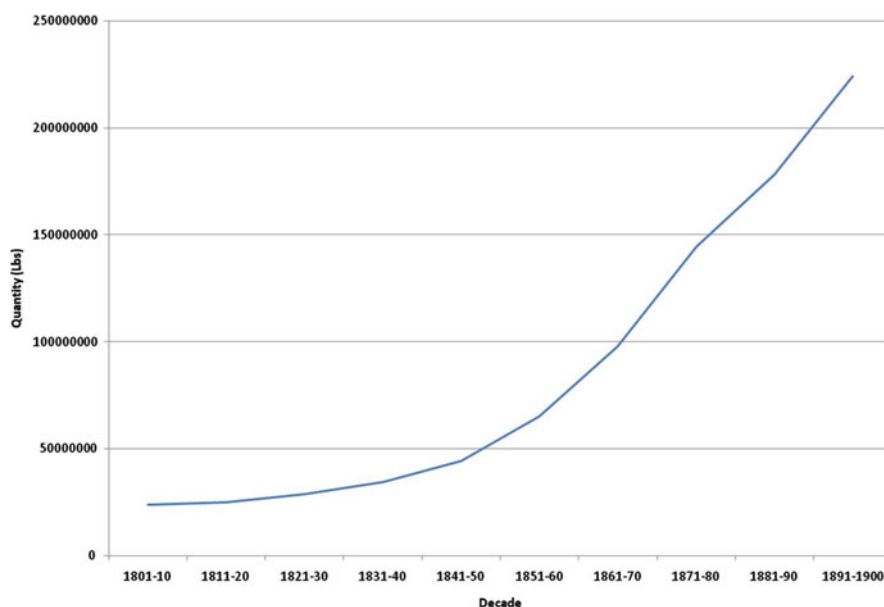


Fig. 2.2 Tea imports, 1800–1900 (after Burnett 1966: 26, 132)

## Gendering Tea, 1650–1800

Of the three hot beverages introduced around the mid-seventeenth century, tea was most readily associated with the domestic setting. Earlier depictions of the upper classes had included eating and drinking, but by the early eighteenth century, a new vogue had developed for conversation pieces based around the consumption of tea (Brown 1995). In some cases, the same pose is repeated with different families, and the elements present on tea tables rapidly coalesce into a recognisable set of tea-related items. In examples such as Van Aken's *An English Family at Tea*, painted in c.1720 (Tate London), these elements are proudly displayed: a kettle, tea bowls and saucers, a teapot, a slop bowl, a milk jug and a lockable tea caddy. In this particular example, the gendering of tea is made particularly clear. A languorous maid holds the kettle, the caddy is shown open at the mistress's feet, and a man-servant makes clear that there are less overtly feminised alternatives as he carries in a chocolate pot. What Shields (1997: 104) called the '*gynarchy of the tea table*' is made clear.

A key reason for the popularity of tea in the home was its practicality for the domestic setting. Tea drinkers could, with little assistance, gather around the tea table without the need for constant attendance. This proved a popular draw among aristocratic ladies (Shields 1997: 104; Ukers 1935: 44), who would later lead the way in promoting one-course dinners which also alleviated the need for servants. Servants were a well-established source of tension (especially when it came to

giving inconvenient evidence about adultery in court cases), and although means by which served and serving could coexist were continuously evolving, notions of privacy were also changing (Girouard 1978), to the extent that servant-less occasions were becoming both viable and desirable. Whether the proliferation of items designed for consuming tea followed from its domestic associations or was a cause of it will probably never be fully established, but the tea service grew in size far more rapidly than the associated material culture of its rivals. While the elite favoured silver for teapots and, to a lesser extent, sugar bowls and milk jugs, ceramic wares were of fundamental importance in the shape of tea bowls and saucers. As the domestic market developed, teapots and other tea-related items were also increasingly manufactured in soft-paste porcelain and, by the late eighteenth century, bone china. While porcelain was popular among the upper and middle class, hand-painted polychrome creamware was a less costly alternative for the middle and lower classes, followed by plain earthenware and pearlware, often at this time still with blue monochrome hand-painted Chinese-style designs (Pettigrew 2003: 21–23; Goss 2005).

A significant aspect of the association between tea and women was the close identification of ceramics with women. Imported ceramic goods were by no means unknown in England before the Restoration but were shipped in increasingly large quantities in the latter half of the seventeenth century. Often forming ballast for dry goods, including tea, they later became lucrative products in their own right and were generally intended for domestic use (Draper 2001). As such, their purchase and care fell within the remit of women. The debate over women and the domestic context in the late seventeenth century continues to fuel research (Kowaleski-Wallace 1995; Richards 1999), but it is generally agreed that women largely controlled their domestic environment (Berry 2005: 195). This does not mean that men did not buy china and other exotic goods—they certainly bought tea—but that the context within which most fine ceramics were used was one in which women dominated. China and women were immediately linked in visual and literary culture. Women were compared to china vessels, easily broken and delicate, as well as hollow and passive, waiting to be filled (Kowaleski-Wallace 1997: 60). Inevitably, china came to stand as a metaphor for virtue. Hogarth's *Harlot's Progress* (1732) leaves the viewer in no doubt as to the moral turpitude of the central character as the tea table crashes to the floor, breaking its ceramic contents. Elsewhere, china also formed a focus for debate over the desirability of women having access to consumer luxuries. Ceramics could be viewed as a dangerous investment—one careless movement and they were gone (Richards 1999: 71). They represented a change from externally exhibited wealth—houses, clothing, carriages and jewels, designed to be seen in public—to a more private and domestic display. It has been suggested that women promoted this as a way of de-objectifying themselves, focussing attention on external objects and not on items so intimately and personally associated with their physicality (Kowaleski-Wallace 1997: 57). That said, public wealth displays continued to be important. Records indicate that men made most large ceramic purchases (Larsen 2003: 135; Vickery and Styles 2006: 26), for example, full dinner sets or expensive display items. However, although legally women had little control



Fig. 2.3 The Tea Table, c.1710 (Lewis Walpole Library)

over household finances, with, for example, husbands owning their wives' inherited property until the 1880s (Spencer-Wood 1991b: 238), it does appear that women often selected the ceramics purchased by their fiancées or husbands (Spencer-Wood 1995: 122; Spencer-Wood 2012 forthcoming). Wedgewood explicitly marketed to a female audience (McKendrick 1982), and his showrooms were visited by women, as indicated in publicity puffs appearing in England and repeated verbatim in the United States in the 1760s (Smart Martin 1994: 175–176). Portable goods such as teawares were also among the few possessions which could belong outright to a woman, and therefore be willed to her children, in particular daughters. Almost a century before Wedgewood's recognition of the importance of the female market, in 1698, the example of Lady Rawlings' gift of a small milk bottle for use with tea (Griffiths 2007: 279) suggests active engagement with the materiality of tea to reinforce maternal bonds.

Given the sometimes negative connotations of ceramics when placed in a feminine context, it is unsurprising that the link between women and tea was not always a positive one. Figure 2.3 contains the established materiality of tea at the time—the tray with its bowls, elegantly dressed ladies and table positioned on a richly coloured carpet. In the background, truth and justice are being chased by eloquence (Brown 1995: 78), framing nicely the niche with its collection of display ceramics. This is a very popular illustration among commentators on tea, showing a move away from the simplicity of broken china as a metaphor, and towards a more targeted attack on



tea as being itself an agent of moral laxity. The ladies are engaged in ‘tea and chit-chat’, not only oblivious to the allegorical goings-on in the background but also to the more immediate issue of the male eavesdroppers at the window. They are allowing themselves to be spied upon in a domestic, feminised setting, with the implication that they have forgotten social and class norms. An alternative reading sees the ladies actively corrupting the men, encouraging their idle eavesdropping while at the same time excluding them from the scene, casting them in the role of servants and disrupting gender norms as well. Gossip was seen as a social ill, not only in the sense that it engendered time-wasting but because unrestrained female talk might lead to the destabilising of male reputations (Shields 1997: 106). The depiction of the eavesdroppers, negative for all the reasons listed above, also therefore indicates the powerful draw of the feminised tea party, with its power to make or break not just reputations, but with that familial alliances and political fortunes.

Tea was irrecoverably branded a feminine drink by the early eighteenth century. Its associative value led to polemic attacks on women via tea, such as the infamous pamphlet by Jonas Hanway (1757: 17) which declared:

Some of the most effeminate people on the face of the whole earth, whose example we, as a wise, active and warlike nation, would least desire to imitate, are the greatest sippers.

This was not a majority view, but does show the vitriol with which tea was attacked. Other publications accused it, together with coffee and chocolate, of drying women’s reproductive juices, causing social ills and generally leading to doom and destruction (Duncan 1706).

### *Effeminate Sippers Fight Back*

The negative associations of tea, china and women were fought as soon as they became commonplace. Gendered satires of the type of Fig. 2.3 coexisted with conversation pieces in which tea was used as a marker of wealth and pride in a family’s social standing (Lawson 1997). Even in this context, however, tea was a gendered beverage. Not only was it associated visually with maids and mistresses, but the presence and positioning of the tea caddy in paintings were often indicative of the route which women would take in combating the negative associations of tea and promoting alternative views of feminine behaviour. Items such as caddies were solely intended for tea, and in paintings of this type were almost universally shown in close proximity to the dominant female sitter, the mistress.

The generally accepted reason for the regular depiction of tea caddies in this way is that the mistress of each house kept the keys in order to avoid theft (Pettigrew 2003: 90). However, coffee and chocolate were also pricy commodities at this time, and there is no evidence to suggest that they were handled in a similar manner. There would have been little point as, in order to prepare them, the raw materials had to be given to a servant to remove and prepare out of sight. The keeping of tea in ornate and highly visible boxes was a means by which mistresses could assert



control. In the context of the overall household, they were able to emphasise the servant/served divide through restricting access to tea, thereby strengthening their authority. At the same time, they were able to demonstrate that control and, through that, their efficacy as a household manager and ability to shoulder responsibility to their husbands. One reason for the popularity of tea in the home may well be that the choice of it over other alternatives forced the locked caddy to the attention of servants and husbands alike, enabling women to use tea as a means of promoting a positive view of their actions as female head of the household. Women used this type of materialised process to increase their power by organising teas (Yentsch 1991: 224), which could encompass not only female circles but mixed company, and in which women could play an important role as what Goodwin (1999: 177) terms a 'social gatekeeper'. In their role as hostess, they controlled the gathering, both dictating and observing behaviours and through that judging the suitability of individuals to be included in the social network. By the nineteenth century, the manufacture of tea chests was in decline, and control of the keys devolved to the housekeeper. By then, the caddy had fulfilled its purpose, and women were increasingly viewed as responsible domestic overseers (Beeton 1861).

Both female writers and men who opposed the misogynist anti-tea party used this regulatory aspect to argue for a different view of the association of tea and women. In this reading, far from encouraging men into dangerously indolent and immoral ways, women were a disciplining force, presiding over a domestic sociability which echoed the sobriety of the (positive views of the) public coffee house (Clery 1991). Domestic women acted to cultivate, rather than emasculate, savage man. The china vessels of the tea equipage were promoted in this context as indicative of the refined virtues of women, who were thereby able to demonstrate their self-control. They became as well a tool of class differentiation, with the introduction of specific teawares, such as black basalt ware, designed to show off ladylike characteristics, in this case pale, unsullied hands. China moved beyond the context of tea and became an increasingly fundamental part of a successful dinner service for public acquaintances as well as family, with the development of full *à la Française*, which relied for impact on highly decorated, multi-shaped ceramic plates and dishes (Brears 1994).

In addition to the active female appropriation of the material culture of tea in order to combat the negative view of women, writers such as Defoe lauded the uplift that hot beverages and their accompanying material needs had given to the economy (Pettigrew 2001: 37), undermining the view that money spent on china was money wasted. By the 1750s, tea had become accepted as a popular drink with strong domestic and female connotations. It was drunk throughout the day, especially after dinner and at balls, with teawares forming part of the inventory of assembly rooms and corporate venues (YCA c.1779–1785). It was an important addition to the repertoire of social occasions upon which men and women could meet and mingle in an upper-class context. Diaries and commentary of the time show the development of visiting patterns centred around tea in the afternoon (Penrose et al. 1983), including among the middle classes. The 'tea ceremony', as it is often termed within archaeology (Roth 1988: 444), was a recognisable fixture for visitors to spa towns

and part of the pattern of sociability for the leisured classes. By the late eighteenth century, visual and written depictions of daytime tea-drinking suggest that the ‘tea ceremony’ included not only the consumption of tea but also a range of light snacks, usually bread or biscuits. As the upper classes increasingly deserted the semi-public assembly room balls and retreated to more private occasions, these teas became a significant means by which potential marriages could be brokered and familial and business alliances cemented (Goodwin 1999: 176–181, 187–192). In all such pictures, it is women who control the teapot, having successfully gained control of domestic sociability through the medium of the tea table.

## Tea and Sociability, 1800–1850

The importance of tea-taking in a social context should not be underestimated. Once tea had been linked with the civilising, refined notion of femininity and driven away from the previous spendthrift, gossiping stereotype, it could be used as a positive promotional tool. The reinvention of public Stuart pleasure gardens, in particular Vauxhall, was due in large part to the active promotion of tea-taking as a pivotal activity in the gardens, one which emphasised the domestic and private as a means of combating negative views of the public nature of the garden and its denizens. They had a relatively open admission policy and were seen as a way in which the lower classes could be educated as they were encouraged to emulate their betters in drinking tea and forgoing gin (Conlin 2006: 722). For a while they flourished, though tension continued to exist between the view of them as encouraging sobriety and sociability, and, inevitably, fostering effeminacy and idle gossip:

All innocent within the shade you see  
 This little Party sip salubrious Tea,  
 Soft Tittle-Tattle rises from the stream  
 Sweeten’d each word with Sugar and Cream

(Moxham 2003: 41). Their betters, meanwhile, deserted the tea gardens, having the means to recreate the experience of tea in the open air in their own private grounds. Many of the new buildings which characterised the late eighteenth-century private pleasure grounds were used for hosting tea parties (Felus 2005), especially after dinner, in a reinterpretation of the earlier habit of taking dessert (the banqueting course) in specially constructed architectural whimsies (Paston-Williams 1993: 138).

The first quarter of the nineteenth century, in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars, and with England coming to terms with social upheaval and new political ideals, saw a majority discourse which increasingly emphasised the role of women as wives and mothers. Having fought to illustrate their potential for civilising man, women now found themselves given carte blanche to civilise away, provided this fell within the context of the home. Without rehearsing arguments which have been explored elsewhere, it is fair to say that in the first half of the nineteenth century, women’s roles became more proscribed and their geographical situation more iso-

lated than had necessarily hitherto been the case (Colley 1996; Howarth 2000). This is not to suggest that this was wholeheartedly accepted—one purpose of this volume is indeed to examine the ways in which women negotiated their position in the changing social landscape of the time—and women's situations differed by geography, class, religious belief and a whole host of other factors (Barker and Chalus 2005: 1). However, within the urban, middle-class context with which this chapter is primarily concerned, a tension is apparent between concepts of passive domestic angels (Clark 1988) and hard-working housewives who aspired to be like the '*commander of an army*' (Beeton 1861: 1).

In the light of the focus on women as domestic creatures, it is unsurprising that the material culture of the home took on more significance for middle-class women than it may have had previously. For women in landed, aristocratic families, small objects such as teawares had significance because they were among the few items that a new wife would have had discretion in purchasing. For middle-class wives, they were important as objects over which full female control could be exercised, and through that beliefs and desires expressed in material form. Additionally, the context within which middle-class wives operated was more altered by the discourse on domesticity than was that of landed aristocratic women. The old aristocracy had always seen female duties as being to provide an heir (and spare) and then play a full and active role in administering the home and estate (Horn 1991; Larsen 2003). The breadth of activities depended on the individuals involved, but usually included charitable works, running the domestic workforce (Spencer-Wood 1991a: 238, 250) and playing an active role in family affairs such as canvassing in elections where a family member was involved, hosting balls for political and matrimonial advantage and, increasingly, considering the educational and welfare provision for the estate workers. Middle-class female expectations would come to encompass a similar range of activities, albeit on a smaller scale, but at the start of the nineteenth century, these roles were still fluid, and women's acceptance of them was by no means certain.

The materiality of the home was therefore of crucial importance in communicating acceptance—or not—of prevailing public discourse about domesticity. For middle-class women, the choice of wares and the use of tea as part of the daily routine was a means by which networks of friendship and support could be initiated and subsequently maintained. Turning back to Gaskell, the ladies of Cranford explicitly negotiate their social standing through tea (Gaskell 1853). Meanwhile, when the lead character in one story loses her money in a banking crisis, she is able to maintain a certain rank despite entering trade, by selling a better grade of tea than the grocer. The scarce hard data that exist on market penetration, as opposed to literary references, suggest that tea was sold even in the most rural of areas (Berry 2005: 200), so crucial had it become.

The usefulness of tea as a means of demonstrating political allegiance was grasped by women early on. In America, tea was eschewed by those supporting moves for independence (Roth 1988) as it came to symbolise British oppression. Although both men and women boycotted it, the actions of women occasioned most comment, as was also the case in the 1790s and 1820s anti-slavery movements in



**Fig. 2.4** Teawares: bowl, 1820s (York Castle Museum); cup, Anstice, Horton & Rose, c.1811–1820 (Norfolk Museums Service); teapot, Neale, 1785; teapot, Minton, 1800s; teapot, Lowestoft, 1760s; teapot, Edge Malkin, 1880s (all Norfolk Museums Service)

England. In the latter case, sugar was boycotted, the most blatant occasion for the demonstration of which was during tea-taking (Colley 1996: 291–293). Women could thereby demonstrate their personal choice to support the political anti-slavery campaign to the men present in mixed drinking situations and in feminine contexts use it to reinforce group identity.

The choice of designs on offer to consumers from the second half of the 18th century into the first half of the nineteenth century was vast (Fig. 2.4). Manufacturers were quick to see the opportunities for marketing to women, and makers' catalogues as well as examples in museum collections and excavated contexts indicate that wares were available for every budget. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, it does not appear that matching sets were regarded as obligatory. Both the Don and Castleford Pottery pattern books (Castleford Pottery 1796; Don Pottery 1807), aiming at a mid-range market, list items individually. It would be entirely possible

to form a matching set, but the only pieces specifically labelled as such are those at the end of the catalogues, which are also the most elaborately designed. This suggests that matching sets were marketed as being more upmarket and more costly, but care should be taken not to automatically equate this with class status. Visual depictions of tea-drinking suggest even upper-class tea-drinking, at least in an informal context, took place on occasion with mismatched ceramics (Brown 2008). However, increasingly, teawares are shown as matching, and by the 1880s, sets seem to have been regarded as a necessity (Bosomworth 1991).

The focal point of a tea set was the teapot. Pots were bigger than other pieces, making them more suitable for cartouches and complicated designs, and they were also physically rendered a focal point by the simple fact that the teapot was in constant use. It was also a distinctive shape, and in illustrations of the domestic setting, both sympathetic or satire, the teapot is often used as a visual shortcut to illustrate a more general presence of tea. The pots and bowls shown in Fig. 2.4 indicate some of the choices available to consumers. Pattern analysis (Gray 2009) suggests, unsurprisingly, that Chinese scenes gradually declined in popularity after the cessation of the English-Chinese china trade in 1791. (The American China trade continued to flourish into the early nineteenth century.) They were eclipsed by floral designs between c.1790 and 1820, with a surge in British landscape and building depictions in the 1820s which Brooks (1999) also notes on plates, suggesting it is indicative of patriotism in the wake of the Napoleonic wars, and of support for land-oriented political reform. Florals are a regularly occurring design motif throughout the nineteenth century and are linked explicitly to the domestic context. Flower gardens came to symbolise the country retreat in an urban context, and the prolific use of flowers for interior decoration, especially on the table, demonstrated the control of nature (Pomata and Daston 2003). The choice of flowers was largely apolitical while still demonstrating feminine mastery of their physical environment. Wall (1991: 79) comments on the use of a gilt floral tea set as a counterpoint to ironstone gothic panelled wares in the context of the nineteenth-century New York, suggesting that the former was used competitively to negotiate status at feminised tea parties, while the latter reflected a more communal experience of familial dining. However, as she points out, the prevalence of ironstone wares is more apparent in an American context, and the same conclusions cannot necessarily be drawn in an English context.

## *Afternoon Tea*

The period 1820–1860 was a key one for the development of tea into a formalised, highly gendered and named occasion, in the shape of what became known as 'afternoon tea'. The inevitable creation myth dates its introduction to 1842 and credits its invention to the Duchess of Bedford. However, the term does not seem at that time to have been in use, and there is no material difference between depictions of afternoon tea and its predecessors. The edible accompaniments which supposedly mark

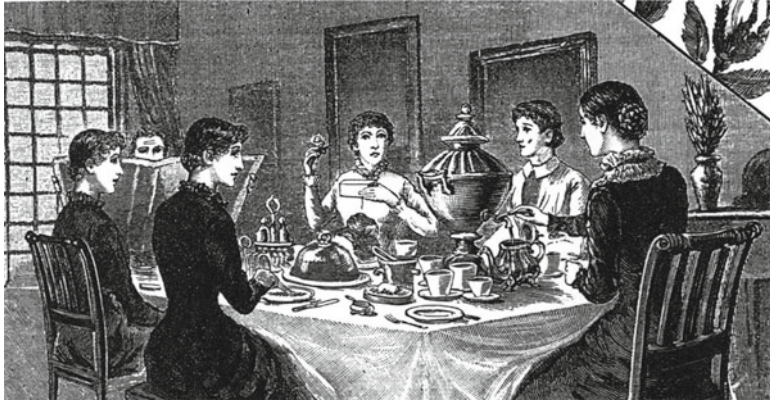
the difference (Hopley 2009: 58) were certainly a part of earlier tea-drinking habits, and tea was widely drunk in the afternoon as part of the eighteenth-century visiting rituals. The appearance in print of what Pettigrew (2001: 102) terms '*a national institution*' occurred concurrently with the appearance of tea in advice books in the 1860s and the codification of food-related actions, including tea-taking, in line with middle-class requirements. 'Afternoon tea' was a direct continuation of the late eighteenth-century 'tea ceremony'. Its reinvention with a time-specific name and aristocratic associations through a creation legend typify the mentality which both Shackel (1993) and Young (2003) associate with the middle class.

The labelling of tea and the development of it as a formal occasion did not preclude its continued use by middle-class women to negotiate status. Indeed, by demonstrating their ability to host small social occasions, newly codified and therefore given formal status, they were able to enlarge their control of the domestic environment. By the late eighteenth century, cookbook writers had largely stopped assuming a male or mixed readership for their books and now addressed a female audience. In the second half of the nineteenth century, reformers successfully argued that women should control the household, including dinner, and that decisions about dining and home furnishings would fall to them (Beeton 1861; Spencer-Wood 1991b: 250; Beetham 1996). Study of changing dining style suggests that women, especially middle-class women, were instrumental in bringing about a far-reaching change from the long-standing format of *à la Française*, wherein many dishes were served on the table at once, to *à la Russe* which had the more linear format familiar to restaurant diners today.

## Private to Public, 1850–1900

In the late Victorian period, the use of tea by women changed again. Having used the materiality of tea to first promote positive views of women as refining and civilising, and then take control of the domestic environment, women now used the domestic associations of tea to enable the movement of women back out of the home. The use of tea in the home as a gendered occasion for the formulation of friendships and alliances also continued, although as etiquette books codified the behaviours associated with afternoon tea, a stronger masculine element was introduced as it was defined as a mixed occasion. However, it is not certain how many men really attended. Devereux (1904: 35), aiming at the bachelor about town, advises his readers not to dread afternoon tea, despite the risk of being the lone man in a room full of ladies. Those ladies were entirely in control of the tea-taking situation. The same was also true of breakfast, at which tea formed a focal point (Fig. 2.5). In both middle- and upper-class contexts, breakfast was served in a buffet style, in an echo of the older, *à la Française* serving style once used for dinner (Beeton 1888). The tea urn, placed at one end of the table in front of the mistress, formed the focus of diners and enabled the server to assert her status both as provider and organiser. This fitted well with the middle-class ethic of useful work for





**Fig. 2.5** Breakfast, 1885 (The Girl's Own Paper)

women and built once more upon the idea of wives commanding the household. As the first meal of the day, this reinforced the role of women in the household early on. If tea was taken after dinner then the same message could be conveyed as one of the last acts of the day.

Depictions of afternoon teas and high teas (Fig. 2.6) suggest that the use of the teapot as a tool for female self-expression formed a continuity throughout the various types of tea on offer by the end of the century. Afternoon teas in particular were a means by which gentility could be demonstrated and patterns of consumption negotiated. In Fig. 2.6, all of the accoutrements of domesticity are present—flowerpots, ornaments and stained glass (Fitts 1999; Karskens 2003). The teawares and the food being served form a focus for visitors, and it may well be that, contrary to assumptions that after dinner wares were more elaborate (Fitts 1999), sets intended for afternoon tea were the more exotic as they were so much in evidence. Other tea-taking occasions, such as tea as a meal in the form of high tea or meat teas, involved more food and came to stand in for formal dinners. All these forms of tea were labelled and codified by advice book writers (Mellish 1901), masking continuities from earlier periods and placing them firmly within the female, domestic sphere.

### *The Domestic in the City*

Just as the concept of the private sphere has been challenged and shown to encompass a wider set of boundaries than initially suggested (Spencer-Wood 1991a, b; Rotman 2006), so too should the domestic sphere be understood to include more than just the physical environs of the home itself. Within the domestic environment, women were expected to command the household, including dealing with suppliers and hiring and firing staff. For the middle classes, while the apparent



**Fig. 2.6** Afternoon tea (Beeton 1888: 1439)

aristocratic ideal of the leisured wife was embraced, the associations of indolence and conspicuous consumption were rejected (Young 2003), and a balance reached whereby middle-class wives sought to be useful, often through charitable work or campaigning. Tea played a role both in enabling women to be involved through an activity which had proven feminine associations and in being a tool by which middle-class ethics could be promoted to working-class women. Figure 2.7 shows a Jubilee tea in a rural village, typical of the teas organised for the deserving poor throughout England on the occasion of both Jubilees (1887 and 1897). These large-scale teas were a way in which middle-class organisers and working-class participants could demonstrate their patriotism and loyalty. They also provided a forum for the former to educate the latter. Accounts of the organisation of these and earlier coronation feasts (Hallack 1838; Anon. 1887) show that men organised the events, including flowers, but that women were called upon to wield the teapot, demonstrating their adherence to the middle-class ideal.

Jubilee teas allowed women to participate in large-scale public activities within a proscribed set of rules. By the end of the century, tea became a tool for physically extending the boundaries of the home into urban and other areas, allowing Victorian patriarchy to be challenged in new ways. Initially, the new spaces of tea consumption were an extension of domesticity, rather than a break with it. Tea was served in spaces such as ocean liners, train restaurants and refreshment rooms and hotels where it represented home and as such helped to alleviate any worries over travel and the dangers it could represent. However, it was eagerly seized on by women as a tool of liberation. Molly Hughes' (1946) travels in America as a young teacher in the 1880s are peppered with references to tea on the move, creating a secure structure within which her unchaperoned existence could take place without fear of raising social indignation.

Serving tea in hotels and other environments aided in the creation of a domestic environment. Men who owned commercial establishments used the domestic, feminine associations of the tea ritual to show that these public places were respectable.





**Fig. 2.7** A Jubilee Dinner at Minehead (Somerset County Council)

The public commercial tea rooms which started to appear from the 1870s (Pettigrew 2001, 136) were deliberately conceived of as feminine spaces, initially catering to a perceived desire in the working classes to emulate the upper-class afternoon tea. They emphasised the domestic in the heart of the urban public landscape, by now largely a place of work (Wall 1994), physically situating a reminder of home near the workplace. However, while the aim may have been to remind working women that their focus should be the domestic environment, by extending the home into the city they also opened up a new space for middle-class women. Statistics on the market for tea rooms are not available, but literary evidence from the early twentieth century (Woolf 1925) suggests that the middle class used tea rooms as a legitimate means of escaping suburbia, and increasing their visibility, at a time when the rights of women were finally being legally asserted. Adverts for tea rooms stressed their suitability for middle-class consumers (Pettigrew 2001, 136). The sociability they encouraged has in turn been viewed as fundamental to the women's suffrage movement and rise of feminism (Macfarlane and Macfarlane 2003). The selling of tea by suffrage shops can also be viewed as a deliberate way of deflecting criticism of the more violent elements of the suffrage movement by acting as a reminder of refinement and femininity (Mercer 2009). Of course, the purchase and sharing of suffrage tea was also a means by which women could come together, using tea once more as a crucial tool in the female arsenal. The extension of tea from the domestic to the public sphere occurred at the same time that reformers were transforming many of women's domestic tasks into new women's public professions and institutions (Spencer-Wood 1994, 1996).

## Conclusion

Study of tea from the period of its introduction to the end of the nineteenth century reveals strong continuities across time. Tea was rapidly associated with women and remained a feminised drink throughout the period. Through its material culture, tea was used by women as a means of asserting personal and group identity and challenging negative views of femininity. Tea as an occasion was infinitely flexible, and as a drink it was consumed throughout the day, both as part of formal meals and less formally in private or as part of visiting rituals. The invention of afternoon tea codified the use of tea as a tool of sociability but did not preclude its use outside this. Women were able to use the associative value of the teapot to move outside the home as its powerful domestic and feminine links acted as reassurance that they were still adhering to the middle-class norm. Even today, tea retains some of these associations, with self-expression through a mug replacing the possibilities of the ever-present teapot.

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# Chapter 3

## Domestic Production for Public Markets: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Deerfield, Massachusetts, c.1850–c.1911

Deborah L. Rotman

### Introduction

The prescriptive separation of gender roles during the Victorian era in America idealized domestic spaces as a “woman’s sphere.” The household was codified as a private locus for raising children, a space for the production of goods for family use, and a place that served as a cultural counterpoint to the public economic sphere of men (Wall 1994). Distinctions between public and private spaces did exist, but these separations were rarely as complete as social prescriptions advocated. At least until the mid-nineteenth century, rural women produced farm products for public markets, from eggs, butter, and cheese to textiles (McMurry 1988; Spencer-Wood 1991a: 237, 2007: 41).

In Deerfield, Massachusetts, in the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century, the demography of the village had been shaped by Civil War fatalities and significant out-migration by men as the result of a declining agricultural economy (Abel 1987; Reid 1988). Consequently, the population was predominantly female, and, therefore, a rigid separation of public/men and private/women activities and spaces could not be attained. The Arts and Crafts movement and attendant heritage tourism played a critical role in not only the economic revitalization of the village in the waning decades of the nineteenth century but also in transforming gendered social relations within it. Women in particular engaged in craft production as a means for generating an income for their households in the absence of men. This chapter explores domestic production for public markets and the ways in which the economic activities of Deerfield women challenged the cultural norms for a separation of public and private spheres.

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## Gendered Divisions of Labor in a Rural Agricultural Economy

The prevailing ideological force structuring gendered social relations for many families in the nineteenth century was the cult of domesticity, particularly among the white middle and upper classes (e.g., Ryan 1985; Hayden 1995: 54–63; Beetham 1996). Domesticity idealized separate gendered spheres of activity—the public economic arena for men and the private domestic residence for women.

With the industrialization of cities, middle-class and elite private homes became separated from commercial workplaces, effectively ending the integrated family economy and creating a consumer economy for the middle class (Wall 1994: 19, 2000). Thus mid-nineteenth-century ideals “stressed the separation of public and private, the protective role of the household, and the importance of order and hierarchy in domestic life” (Spain 1992: 124). Spaces were “reorganized making new areas in houses and yards more isolated and private (i.e., feminized)” (Yentsch 1991a: 196). This separation of the home and workplace affected women’s power and status. In the context of society as a whole, “women’s political and economic power declined as their productive activities were moved out of the household and into wage labor” (Hautaniemi and Rotman 2003: 138). Within the family, however, their symbolic power was enhanced (Wall 1994: 9) as they became moral guardians of the home and nurturers of future capitalists and patriots (Rotman 2009; see also Spencer-Wood 1996: 418–420, 1999: 172).

Rural families, such as those in Deerfield, organized men’s and women’s roles differently. Prior to the middle decades of the nineteenth century, farms were the most common centers of production, with all members working together to maintain the household (McMurry 1988; Spencer-Wood 1995; Hautaniemi and Rotman 2003). Limited market forces were operating, but individual households provided for the majority of their needs, and an exchange of labor or goods among neighbors supplied any missing necessities (Worrell 1982; Stewart-Abernathy 1986). A climate of close interdependence and a high degree of self-sufficiency existed (Rotman and Nassaney 1997).

While cultural prescriptions advocated for distinct tasks and spaces for women and men’s labor, the physical and economic interdependence of home and farm in subsistence farming precluded the establishment of rigid boundaries between the spheres (McMurry 1988: 57). Members of rural households interacted and labored in many different physical spaces that were always used in ways that were much more complex than simple dichotomies of public/private, agricultural/domestic, and male/female would suggest (Spencer-Wood 1989; Conkey and Gero 1991; Wylie 1991). These social distinctions could be very real, yet did not always result in mutually-exclusive spaces (Borish 1995: 88; Rotman 2006, 2007). Women commonly tended the cows and chickens in agricultural spaces; men were expected to provide firewood to domestic spaces. In addition, when circumstances demanded, both males and females crossed task and space boundaries to get the work done (Hautaniemi and Rotman 2003). Women and girls went into the fields to plow, plant, and harvest (Sommestad and McMurry 1998: 61; Gibb and King 1991: 112–114;

Stewart-Abernathy 1992); men and boys cooked, washed dishes and laundry, and sewed in the house (Osterud 1991: 186; Stine 1991: 498). Daily life was guided by kin-based productive relations (Wolf 1997) and reciprocal forms of exchange (Kulikoff 1992).

By mid-century, such rural social arrangements were supplanted by “one based on competition, market orientation, capital accumulation, and profits” (McMurry 1988: 57). New agricultural technologies such as reapers and mowers reduced labor requirements dramatically while increasing yields. Fewer individuals could now manage a larger number of acres. Successful farmers added to their landholdings and farm sizes grew. Farming also became more specialized, for it was more cost-effective and profitable for farmers to focus on one or two primary crops rather than continue to tend to a broad spectrum of livestock and agricultural pursuits (McMurry 1988: 6). Unfortunately, not all farm families were able to meet the increased capital requirements and, coupled with the overall decline in the importance of agriculture in later years, often meant that laborers moved away from rural areas to seek jobs in the surrounding towns and cities (Paynter 1990: 6). This trend has continued to the present, as highly industrialized agribusiness spends large amounts of capital to completely mechanize agriculture, driving smaller family farmers and laborers out of farming.

Social and gender relations in rural settings were thus changed as agricultural practices underwent transformation. As farm production became progressively more specialized, tasks formerly completed by women were appropriated by men as these activities became more significant to farm revenues. Butter and cheese making as well as egg production are examples of activities along the province of women on integrated farms that were appropriated by men for large-scale productive operations (McMurry 1988: 61; Yentsch 1991b). Many farm wives reported to reformers, however, that they were happy to be relieved of the arduous labor involved in household cheese production (McMurry 1987, cited in Spencer-Wood 1995: 124). For most of the nineteenth century, women’s earnings from household production belonged to their husbands, so that women’s domestic production amounted to domestic servitude (Spencer-Wood 2006: 154). Additionally, as standards of housekeeping increased and expectations of a life containing more than work arose, women directed their energies away from nonmechanized farm work and toward fulfilling new ideals of domesticity (Hautaniemi and Rotman 2003). During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the separation between work and family on specialized farms grew more pronounced (Sommestad and McMurry 1998: 6) and rural gender relations bore greater resemblance to their urban middle-class counterparts (Wall 1994).

Concurrently with the transformation of agricultural practice and more rigid divisions of labor by gender, patriarchal authority was weakened as fathers were unable to pass on viable farms and their children sought economic opportunities elsewhere (Folbre 1985). The previously clear control and structure of the family began to unravel, and gender became the primary means of redefining and reestablishing order during the mid- to late nineteenth century (Coontz 1988: 189; Sommestad and McMurry 1998; Paynter 2000a, b; Hautaniemi 2001; Rotman 2006, 2009).

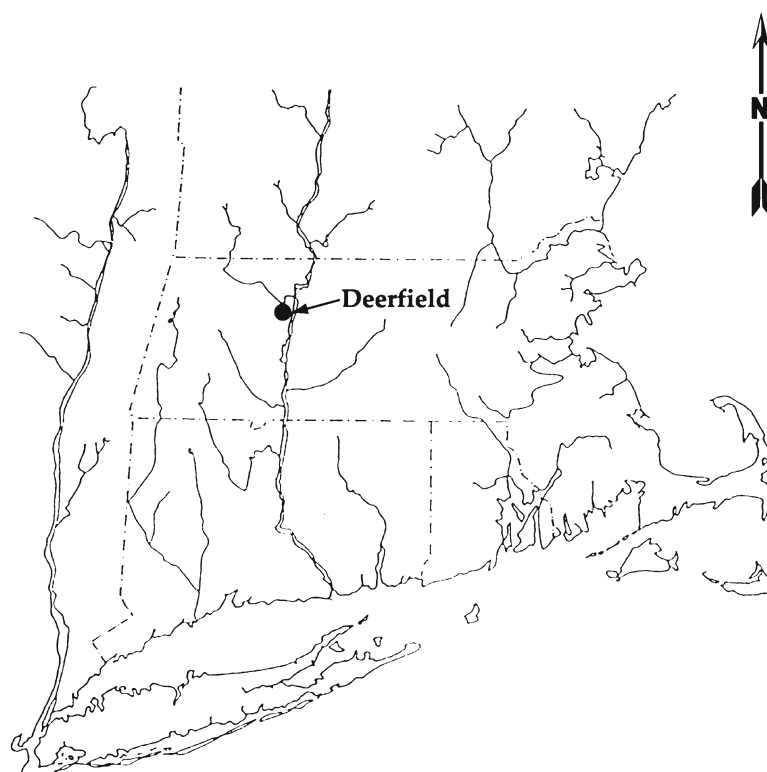


Middle-class women were especially active historical agents in this process. Although they were increasingly excluded from political and economic transactions, new opportunities for education and wage work for young women and new responsibilities in child-rearing raised women's aspirations. "Female leadership in religion and reform [was] an active attempt to claim a distinctive space in American society. Women sought power and influence in religious associations, new family ideologies, and a rearranged domestic order that gave them control over reproduction and moral ascendancy over men" (Coontz 1988: 186; see also Spencer-Wood 1991a, b, 2003, 2004).

With increasing separation, gendered social relations were often defined as public versus private, production versus consumption, active versus passive, culture versus nature, and men versus women, but that view distorts social reality (Lamphere 2001; Nixon and Price 2001). Such binary oppositions belie the fact that an artifact can be an aspect of production *and* consumption, public *and* private, or male *and* female (Wurst 2003: 227; see also Beaudry 2004; Spencer-Wood 1989, 1995: 130). Rejecting a rigid binary structure "allows us to conceptualize more than two genders and to see age, marital status, class, and race as key aspects of gendered social relations" (Spencer-Wood 1995: 129–130; Wurst 2003: 230; see also Beaudry 2004). Furthermore, the ideologies that shaped gender relations were themselves fluid and often an amalgam of several related ideals (Rotman 2006, 2009; see also Spencer-Wood 1991a: 237).

Spain (2001) observed in urban centers along the eastern seaboard that "public" and "private" do not capture the complexities of gendered social relations during the particularly dynamic time of the mid- to late nineteenth century, especially with regard to women's involvement in domestic reform activities. She identified a *parochial* space; that is, "the world of the neighborhood as opposed to the totally private world of the household and the completely public realm of strangers. . . . The boundaries between domestic, community, and paid work [were] porous, just as they [were] between private, parochial, and public spaces" (Spain 2001: 6–7). Significantly, parochial space extends the porosity of public and private – and their associated gender roles – beyond the boundaries of a discrete household to the communities in which they were situated.

The women of Deerfield were not merely passive consumers of the cultural milieu in which they lived but actively engaged it to empower themselves and shape their worlds. As members of a rural village, they were well acquainted with the fluidity of agricultural labor and interrelation of associated spaces; that is, performing whatever tasks needed to be done rather than rigid separations between male and female laborers. They were also accustomed to contributing to the domestic economy of the household by selling excess butter and eggs and through other productive activities rather than laboring only for family consumption. Consequently, their participation in craftwork under the Arts and Crafts movement was a logical extension of familiar patterns of social and economic interaction, the deep history of which was emphasized in the recreation of the colonial past in the village through the "preserving, restoring, producing, and promoting remnants of Deerfield's preindustrial era" (Miller and Lanning 1994: 438). For



**Fig. 3.1** Southern New England, showing the location of Deerfield, Massachusetts

domestic reformers, the Arts and Crafts movement was part of a nostalgia for the greater gender equality of farms, where women as well as men produced goods *both* for consumption *and* for public markets (Spencer-Wood 1991a: 237). Further, in the relative absence of men, women had considerable latitude in shaping new gendered social relations in the village, particularly with regard to challenging a rigid separation of public and private spaces.

## Changing Social Relations in Deerfield

Deerfield is a rural town in the Connecticut River Valley of western Massachusetts (Fig. 3.1). Settled in the 1670s, the village plan followed a nucleated form present in early New England. House lots were centered along a main street and surrounded by open agricultural fields (Melvoin 1989: 63) (Fig. 3.2). In Deerfield, this linear arrangement of houses, along which the population of the village was concentrated, was known colloquially as “the Street.”



**Table 3.1** Summary of households along the Street, Deerfield, Massachusetts, 1820–1910

Census year	Total # of households	# of female-headed households	% of female-headed households
1820	40	4	10.0%
1830	43	4	9.3%
1840	42	6	14.3%
1850	47	7	14.9%
1860	45	7	15.6%
1870	46	6	13.0%
1880	44	12	27.3%
1890 <sup>a</sup>			
1900	44	16	36.4%
1910	43	17	39.5%

<sup>a</sup>Data incomplete

The residents of Deerfield were affected by the processes of intensification of agricultural production in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the growth of industrialization in neighboring towns and decline of agriculture in the nineteenth century, and attempts at economic revitalization through museums and educational institutions in the twentieth century (Sheldon 1972). Class and gender have arguably been powerful social forces in the village (Hautaniemi 2001; Rotman 2001, 2006, 2009; Hautaniemi and Rotman 2003). The Arts and Crafts movement was particularly instrumental in reshaping gendered social relations and challenging the separation of spheres along the Street (Miller and Lanning 1994; Harlow 2005).

The gendered division of men’s and women’s activities in the village underwent radical transformation during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Hautaniemi and Rotman 2003). Up until the 1860s, a woman in Deerfield acquired property only through inheritance of her father’s or husband’s estate. In 1864, 17% of the property along the Street was owned by women who had inherited (Mackenzie 1974: 8) (Table 3.1). Frequently, a widow shared the inheritance with her brothers or sons—often receiving the house (in a rule called widow’s thirds), while the farm acreage went to the men (Coontz 1988: 83). This pattern of inheritance illustrated assumptions about the proper allocation of space and resources by gender and demonstrates that domesticity was a powerful force in shaping the separation of public and private spheres.

Such inheritance practices had two significant consequences. First, while the woman undoubtedly controlled private domestic space, she was left without a means of deriving an income for herself (Mackenzie 1974: 12). Second, male heirs were often left without homes and had to build or buy residences for themselves elsewhere. As the agriculturally-based economy declined and financial opportunity left the village, so did increasing numbers of men (Folbre 1985). As the nineteenth century progressed, the population along the Street became smaller, older, and increasingly female (Miller and Lanning 1994: 436) (Table 3.2). Social and economic transformations in the village resulted in a distinct spatial residential patterning in which women were concentrated along the Street. Thus inheritance patterns reflected both the ideals and realities of gendered social relations, reinforcing gender separation under domesticity.

**Table 3.2** Summary of the population along the Street, Deerfield, Massachusetts, 1820–1910

Census year	# of females <sup>a</sup>	% of population	# of males <sup>a</sup>	% of population	Total population <sup>a</sup>
1820	120	58.0%	87	42.0%	207
1830	119	48.8%	125	51.2%	244
1840	89	47.1%	100	52.9%	189
1850	116	59.8%	78	40.2%	194
1860	113	58.6%	80	41.4%	193
1870	117	57.4%	87	42.6%	204
1880	97	58.8%	68	41.2%	165
1890 <sup>b</sup>					
1900	58	52.3%	53	47.7%	111
1910	66	58.4%	47	41.6%	113

<sup>a</sup>These figures are estimates. Summer residents and tenants were often absent from or difficult to identify in the Deerfield census enumerations

<sup>b</sup>Data incomplete

Idealized forms of domesticity could only be fully operationalized, however, when both women and men were present in the household, since gender roles were very much defined in opposition to one another (Spencer-Wood 1991b). Consequently, in the absence of men to fill public and economic roles, women in the village were not as constrained by domesticity (Rotman 2009). Rather, they incorporated elements of other gender ideologies into their lives, such as domestic reform and equal rights feminism (Spencer-Wood 1991a: 237–238; Rotman 2006, 2009). Similarly, they may have differentially adopted aspects of these ideologies according to their unique personal circumstances and the demography of the household (e.g., the presence of young sons who would assume culturally-defined masculine roles as adults) (Rotman 2006, 2009).

Female home ownership along the Street increased to nearly 30% by 1884 (Mackenzie 1974: 8). Many of the women were Civil War widows or “spinsters.” The decline of agriculture and attendant out-migration left few eligible husbands. Also, women who had inherited property in the 1860s had died, leaving their former ancestral homes available for purchase by “outsiders” (Mackenzie 1974: 44). A new group of female property owners emerged, many of whom were also widows or otherwise single. Not native to Deerfield, they came from Boston and elsewhere, with independent incomes to purchase country homes in which to reside during the summer seasons (McGowan and Miller 1996: 152). Significantly, these women introduced nonagriculturally derived wealth to the Street (Mackenzie 1974: 36).

Two nonnative arrivals, Margaret Whiting and Ellen Miller, further altered the economic landscape by establishing the Blue and White Needlework Society in 1895 (Mackenzie 1974). The Deerfield Society of Arts and Crafts and the Society of Deerfield Industries were similar organizations founded a few years later. As members of these groups, many Deerfield residents produced traditional rugs, embroidery, and jewelry for market sale as part of the Arts and Crafts movement. The Deerfield Basket Makers, for example, consisted of a group of women who wove palm leaf, reed, and willow baskets. Another group, the Pocumtuck Basket Makers, worked in raffia and often “looked to Indian basketry for inspiration” (Batinski 2004: 189). These groups created important economic opportunities for village women wherein they produced crafts in their private homes for sale in public markets. Miller and Lanning (1994: 448) noted that “As early as 1901, the Deerfield Society of Blue and White Needlework earned about \$2,000 each year; all of Deerfield crafts in this year pulled in some \$4,500. By 1908, the combined industries brought in between ten and fifteen thousand dollars to the town annually.” These activities not only revitalized the local economy but reshaped gendered social relations and challenged traditional separations of public and private space in Deerfield.

## Craft Production and Reimagining Gender

Village residents were differentially motivated by class, education, ideology, and need to participate in craftwork. Notably, there was a clear split between the leadership of the Blue and White Needlework Society (largely urban women who

summered in Deerfield) and craftworkers who were primarily year-round residents. This conflict may be rooted in socioeconomic differences, since the former were largely independently wealthy women while the latter were working class residents, many of whom had been born and raised in Deerfield. The residential patterning along the Street reflected the mixed socioeconomic status of village craftworkers.

C. Alice Baker, for example, was a single woman, author, and educator who had attended the local Deerfield Academy as a young girl and had lived in Cambridge and Chicago. For Alice and other seasonal residents, “the colonial and craft revivals meant opportunities for investment that dovetailed nicely with increased cultural prestige” (Miller and Lanning 1994: 446).

For other women, however, producing craft goods provided sources of sorely needed income. Eleanor Arms, a single woman and longtime village resident, was responsible for the care of her elderly parents, her alcoholic brother, and his motherless children. She “relied on weaving money [to keep her] in groceries, milk and oil . . . [and participated in craftwork] to just get money for the sake of money” (Miller and Lanning 1994: 446). Other women joined the movement “out of a need for a pleasant creative outlet or a determined view of themselves as serious artists” (Harlow 2001: 14).

The number of artisans was not static but fluctuated regularly as individuals chose to participate some years and not others or as summer residents moved in and out of the village. Consequently, although motives could be identified for a few individuals, it was impossible to quantify how many women were involved in craftwork out of necessity or for other reasons.

Miller and Lanning (1994: 447) tabulated the scale of involvement in community craftwork. In 1901, the Society of Blue and White Needlework paid 34 women for contracted work. Out of 44 households, at least 23 of these women lived on the Street or shared the last name of a Street property owner. In that same year, the Society of Deerfield Industries listed 33 members, 31 of whom either lived on the Street or shared the last name of a Street property owner. In 1914, 13 of 57 residences, just under one quarter, contained spaces converted to commercial uses.

Some village women – particularly those who were not native to Deerfield – may have subverted the ideals of domesticity by buying into the community and reuniting public and private spheres through their involvement in craftwork. Gillian Naylor (1971) asserts that “the Arts and Crafts movement was built upon and expressed, especially in its earlier years, an ideology of radical social reform, so that the movement was concerned . . . with the ethics as much as with the aesthetics of design.” Madeline Yale Wynne and Annie Putnam were two Deerfield women who were particularly influential in bringing both the artistic aspects and political ideals of Arts and Crafts to the village. Wynne, for example, arranged touring exhibitions of Deerfield craftwork and brought in speakers on art or politics, including women’s suffrage (Harlow 2001, 2005). These activities illustrate that the ideas of equal rights feminism were present concurrently with the ideals of domesticity, shaping social roles and gender relations (Rotman 2006, 2009).

Although craftwork was dominated by women, it was not women’s exclusive domain as men were also involved. Some were seasonal residents, while others





**Fig. 3.3** Pocumtuck Basket Makers on the Porch of Madeline Yale Wynne and Annie Putnam's Home, 1901. (Wynne is pictured near center, facing right, with her gray hair pulled into a bun.) Photography by Frances and Mary Allen. Courtesy of Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Memorial Hall Museum, Deerfield, Massachusetts

lived in the village year round. Dr. Edwin C. Thorn and Caleb Allen were furniture makers (Batinski 2004: 189), while Chauncy Thomas was a potter (McGowan and Miller 1996: 120, 187). Cornelius Kelley was a blacksmith who entered his and-irons in the annual fair that featured the collective craftwork of the village (Batinski 2004: 189). Two other men were known to be basket makers, and a few were weavers, but the specific identities of these craftsmen remain unknown (Elizabeth Harlow, personal communication, 2005). In addition, Deerfield artisans did not produce crafts that were exclusively along “traditional” gender lines. Wynne and Putman, for example, were both expert metal smiths.

Similarly, the crafts were not produced in exclusively public spaces; rather, work was undertaken individually in their homes as well as collectively in centralized locations. Some women worked on embroidery or quilts in their parlors or converted bedrooms for part-time craft production. Others, like Wynne and Putnam, worked in studios to privately pursue their craftwork (Harlow 2001: 11). Yet simultaneously, these women made their porch available to the Pocumtuck Basket Makers for communal production of their wares (Fig. 3.3). In this way, Wynne and Putnam empowered other women in the village toward economic self-sufficiency and autonomy while simultaneously assuring efficiency of production of wares for sale. Their ability to do so was no doubt facilitated by their status as wealthy women. The individual or communal production of wares may also have been grounded less in ideology and more in the technicalities of the craft. Metalsmithing was an individualized pursuit, whereas basketmaking was more conducive to collective involvement.



For those who participated in craftwork, their homes were no longer only private domestic spaces but now also defined as loci of production and distribution in the public economic realm. Indeed, Ellen Miller's home was one where "the work of selling took place, in the 'permanent showroom' in 'a small front parlor.' . . . Other furnished rooms in the house served as showrooms too, displaying items as if in use on beds and tables" (Elizabeth Harlow, personal communication, 2005; Batinski 2004:188). Production of goods under the rubric of the Arts and Crafts movement blurred the boundaries between public and private spheres, economic and domestic activities, and male and female roles within the home and community.

Batinski (2004: 192) argued that Deerfield "did, in fact, break with tradition because of the conspicuous role of women," but that they "were stretching rather than remodeling traditional roles." Such an assessment excludes village women as agents of social change. The annual exhibition of village wares drew thousands of visitors to Deerfield each summer (Miller and Lanning 1994: 448). Eleanor Arms not only received critical success for her weavings but "counted among her patrons First Ladies Edith Crow Roosevelt, Grace Goodhue Coolidge, and Eleanor Roosevelt" (Miller and Lanning 1994: 446). The scale of production required to meet demand required "working with the habits of modern industrial capitalism and commerce... But as if mimicking the contemporary managers of sweated labor, they sought efficiency by organization according to divisions of labor and by employing time studies to determine costs and profits" (Batinski 2004: 192).

Domestic production for public markets was more than a "stretching of traditional roles"; it was a transformation of gendered social relations within the village as craftworkers actively engaged with the capitalist world system. Craftwork did indeed draw upon some traditional forms of social organization in which women participated in collaborative labor and the production of goods for market sale. Engagement with customary forms of economic interaction, however, does not mean that the underlying social relations of village craftwork were identical to those of the agricultural labor that preceded it. Indeed, they were fundamentally different. Women's roles were not defined in opposition to men nor did village women have to defer to patriarchal authority within their households or the community. Rather they crafted not only raffia baskets and braided rugs but also the unique social relations that met their particular economic, political, and labor needs as single women in a rural village undergoing agricultural decline. They operated within distinctly parochial spaces and relations of their own making.

Deerfield women were active in other aspects of community public life as well, engaging in domestic reform through the Deerfield Temperance Society (Deerfield Town Papers 5II: Minutes, 26 April 1834), the Franklin County Domestic Missionary Society (Phelps and Ingersol 1833), and the Dorcas Society of Greenfield (Germain 1999). These groups promoted sobriety and provided relief to the poor and disadvantaged, activities relevant to both public and private spheres. The temperance movement, for example, sought to not only reduce drunkenness but also the domestic violence and squandering of family resources that often accompanied it. In this way, temperance linked women's power in the home to their power in the public sphere (Giele 1995: 64). These domestic reform activities were also spatially

distinctive, not only confined to private households but carried out in the public arenas of churches, schools, and community centers. By encompassing both community and home, these endeavors breached the borders between public and private, highlighting parochial spaces in the village (Spain 2001).

The greater public presence of women in the village also had a political expression. By 1904, 43% of the homes along the Street were owned by women (Mackenzie 1974: 51), many of whom now had control over their own labor as a saleable resource through craftwork and wielded some degree of economic and political power. Although unable to vote in state or national elections, women in Deerfield were allowed to vote on local school board issues. In 1900, they were instrumental in overthrowing a committee accused of paying poor wages for teachers and inadequately preparing students (Mackenzie 1974: 55).

In 1911, women were particularly effective in the public arena by influencing the installation of the municipal water system (Hautaniemi and Rotman 2003). Logistical and organizational support for municipal water was orchestrated by the Deerfield Improvement Society, a group of women and men committed to civic projects, such as establishing benches and trash receptacles in the village and dealing with diseased elm trees. This organization raised funds for its various endeavors through a series of historical pageants in 1910, 1913, and 1916 (Suzanne Flynt, personal communication 1999). The “Deerfield water works” was one of the society’s beneficiaries (Quote from a privately held diary; Suzanne Flynt, personal communication 1999), and pageant proceeds helped ensure that the planned water system became a reality (Hautaniemi and Rotman 2003: 151). In this way, the pageants went beyond the expression of reform ideals to a more active role in their implementation.

Many of the women involved with village craftwork also participated in the pageants, thereby taking an active role in securing water to their own homes. Archaeological excavations revealed that women property owners influenced the placement of water spigots near their kitchen back doors to provide water for food preparation, dish washing, and laundry while households headed by men were influenced by them to have water spigots placed near barns for ease in watering animals (Hautaniemi and Rotman 2003). The involvement of village women in the municipal water project and associated pageants illustrated that the domestic reform and equal rights feminism were part of their ideological landscape. Despite having no official political power and supposedly being relegated to the private sphere, many women property owners were instrumental in shaping the very public political, social, and economic townscape of this Massachusetts village.

The negotiation of larger cultural changes in the village had other visible expressions. Historical archaeologists have routinely analyzed table and tea wares, for example, to understand the materiality of class and gender (Wall 1991, 1999; Yentsch 1991a). Analyses of ceramics from the Manse (the residence of Madeline Yale Wynne and her lifelong companion, Annie Putnam; ca. 1886–ca. 1918) were particularly informative, since it was possible to assess whether these women paralleled larger consumer patterns or deviated from them. Indeed the archaeological evidence illustrated that Wynne and Putnam chose to mix and match vessels in coarse and refined earthenware forms rather than simply purchasing matched sets of

commercially-available dishes (Rotman 2001, 2005, 2009). Importantly, these women also deliberately eschewed the fashionable and iconographic wares associated with domesticity, such as Gothic-paneled ironstone (Wall 1999), thereby clearly signaling their rejection of these gender ideals.

Madeline and Annie's consumer choices reflect the importance of class as well as gender in these decisions. Their status as wealthy women enabled them to purchase outside of the cultural norms of mass-produced and readily-available wares and to set a table according to their own aesthetic, economic, and ideological inclinations.

Collectively, the archaeological and historical evidence from Deerfield illuminates the gender ideologies to which Wynne, Putnam, and other village women had access as well as how or whether they incorporated those ideals into their lives. Analyses of social interactions in Deerfield revealed that public/private and male/female may have been *conceptualized* as distinct and separate but were much more dynamic in *lived* experience. With few men to fill public and economic roles in the village, Deerfield women were not as constrained by the cult of domesticity and "traditional" gender roles. Rather, they created new social worlds for themselves through their active participation in village life, including the Arts and Crafts movement.

## Conclusion

The participation of Deerfield women in craftwork was a natural extension of previously experienced social and economic interaction. As members of a farming village, they were accustomed to contributing to a variety of agricultural tasks regardless of social prescriptions for gendered divisions of labor. They had also contributed to the household coffers by selling butter, eggs, and other excess agricultural goods. Yet in the relative absence of men, village women were able to construct gendered social relations that met their unique economic, social, and other needs rather than conforming to the dominant gender ideologies of their day.

As the population along the Street became increasingly female, women controlled not only the private domestic sphere but were also empowered to create opportunities for themselves in the public economic arena through their participation in village craftwork. Through involvement in the Arts and Crafts movement, private residences were redefined as public loci of production and distribution, uniting economic and domestic spheres (Hautaniemi and Rotman 2003; Rotman 2006, 2009).

Activities of village women, however, were not simply confined to those of economic necessity. Their civic-oriented work in the Deerfield Temperance Society and other organizations had *both* public *and* private relevance. These activities were also spatially distinctive, carried out in public arenas like churches and schools. Women and men further blurred the boundaries between the public and private spheres through their active collaboration on the municipal water project and fundraising

through historical pageants. Village women also exerted influence and exercised power in the public political sphere by voting on local school board issues. The collaboration among Deerfield women and men exemplifies what Spencer-Wood (2003: 52; 2004: 248–249) calls cooperative “powers with” people, which she argues are more effective in accomplishing cultural change than either domination or resistance.

Residents of Deerfield village challenged the dichotomous understanding of the dominant late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century gender ideology. The domestic production of craftwork for public markets transformed gendered social relations and challenged the cultural norms of a separation of public and private spheres. Historical, archaeological, and other anthropological analyses of gender must recognize that simple correlations of male/female to public/private spaces mask the complexities of dynamic social relations.

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## Chapter 4

# Troubling the Domestic Sphere: Women Reformers and the Changing Place of the Home in the United States, 1854–1939

Kim Christensen

### Introduction

This chapter is about the ways in which women's involvement in sociopolitical reform efforts during the nineteenth and early twentieth century challenged the ideal purpose of the family household and how everyday items—domestic material culture—provided a powerful font of symbolic meaning to be applied and manipulated in various ways. Women who were not involved in the set of semi-formalized movements that we have historically termed “domestic reform” may nonetheless have reformed the function and meaning of the domestic through their political involvements and through their material worlds.

Specifically, I draw upon the example of two households which together spanned the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: that of Matilda Joslyn Gage, located in Central New York State between 1854 and 1898, and May Cheney, located in Berkeley, California, between 1885 and 1939. Both women were involved in various sociopolitical reform movements popular during their lifetimes, including the quest for woman suffrage and, in general, greater economic, social, and political parity for women. Through their daily endeavors to effect change, both Gage and Cheney troubled the restrictive prescribed meanings applied to the domestic sphere and its ideological split from the public sphere. An archaeological perspective which examines these households' material culture affords a view of how the very materials of everyday life provided a powerful symbolic resource to be drawn on in these efforts to change the meaning of home.

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## “Domestic Reform” and “Separate Spheres”: What Do We Mean?

When we speak of domestic reform in the United States, it is typically in reference to the efforts of white, middle-class reform women to apply scientific and rational methods to household work while increasing the status and economic independence of women through elevating housework and other “women’s work” such as child-care to a professional level (Strasser 1982; Spencer-Wood 1991a, b, 1994, 1996, 1999, 2004; Hayden 1995; Leavitt 2002). As Spencer-Wood (1996) has suggested, this involved the extension of the so-called domestic into the greater community, as domestic reformers argued that women’s innately superior capacity for care-work and morality made them uniquely suited to solving social problems.

The types of endeavors lumped together under the domestic reform umbrella were varied in both their scale and type and included increasing the efficiency of individual household work; creating communal kitchens, laundries, and stores; establishing settlement houses, schools, and day cares; and promoting higher education for women in childhood education and what would come to be known as domestic science or home economics (Spencer-Wood 1991a, b). “Domestic reform,” thus, encompassed quite a wide variety of efforts to improve the status of women and their domestic work while not typically challenging women’s assignment to the domestic sphere (Shapiro 1986; Matthews 1987: 90; Ehrenreich and English 2005). These reform efforts conform to what historian Linda Kerber (1976: 204) has termed “deferential citizenship”; that is, they provided a basis for women to argue for their involvement in the public sphere through their naturally superior domestic-moral roles as women and mothers rather than as equal citizens in their own right. Nonetheless, these reform efforts served to effectively bridge the ideological divide between the so-called public and private spheres and, in so doing, transformed the meanings attached to, and the place of, the home in American life.

This view of women as able to be, and indeed, responsible for conducting “municipal housekeeping” promoted by domestic reformers extended into the community the dominant view of women’s moral domesticity prevalent during the nineteenth century (Spencer-Wood 1994: 179–180). The so-called Cult of Domesticity was concerned with women’s place within the home and placed women as the moral heads of their households and as primarily responsible for the physical and moral environment of the home. Women were also responsible for producing and maintaining their household’s public image in terms of gentility and respectability (Welter 1966; Wall 1994: 4–9; Rotman 2001: 28–33; Roberts 2002). As Wall (1994: 6) notes, by the mid-nineteenth century, this view of the proper role of urban middle-class women as encompassing consumption and social reproduction replaced the previous focus on household production.

A third and competing ideology of gender in play during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been termed “equal rights feminism,” which contrasted with both the Cult of Domesticity and domestic reform (Giele 1995; Rotman 2001). Equal rights feminism argued that women were the political equals of men rather

than arguing for women's worth as based solely on their roles as wife, mother, and keeper of the home. This view most explicitly argued against the exclusion of women from the political, public sphere.

These three ideologies have often appeared to be mutually exclusive despite the fact that in practice, aspects of any and all of them may have been incorporated into the lives of women in the past (Rotman 2006). Likewise, the typical use of the term "domestic reform" to refer to a variety of organizations of reformers during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries obscures the fact that, in practice, women operating within all three of the gender ideologies identified above in fact reformed the meaning and significance of the domestic sphere through their daily lives. Thus, in this chapter, I use the term "domestic reform" to refer more broadly to these quotidian efforts which blurred the boundaries and meanings attached to the domestic, regardless of whether or not they fit squarely within what has historically been termed "domestic reform."

Attendant with a critical examination of gender ideologies and what constitutes reform is a closer look at the ideology of "separate spheres," which strictly separated women into the private, domestic sphere and men into the political and economic public sphere (Kerber 1988). While the continued use of this dichotomy by historians and archaeologists has been well critiqued (Kerber 1988; Spencer-Wood 1991b: 236–238; Wurst 2003; Rotman 2006), it nonetheless persists in having a powerful place in modern-day research and thinking. While researchers might well know that the "spheres" were not nearly as "separate" as the ideology suggests, it can be tempting to assume that households under study followed this prescription, despite an understanding of how class- and race-restrictive the Cult of Domesticity in actuality was, and the fact that past actors may or may not have wished to participate in this ideology (Spencer-Wood 1996; Wood 2002, 2004; Wilkie 2003; Rotman 2005).

Nonetheless, these prescriptive ideologies did play some part in the ideological and institutional landscape of the past, and the actors whose material culture we now study did have to negotiate, in some way, these ideals as well as the reality of women's limited civil rights and typical exclusion from men's organizations and government (Spencer-Wood 2006: 154–155). Conceptually, "the spheres" have had their uses; as feminist historian Mary Ryan (1990: 6) has argued, the public versus private dichotomy has been useful in spurring research specifically into women's lives and experiences as a counterpoint to masculinist history. Thus, attention to the separate spheres should not be jettisoned entirely, but rather it is important to interrogate if and how such a gendered separation was pertinent to any given context under study rather than accepting the dichotomy as a historical fact (Spencer-Wood 1996).

The cases of the Gage and Cheney families show the simultaneous porosity and rigidity of the concept of the separate spheres, as their reform efforts were on the one hand a reaction to the strictly prescribed separation of male and female worlds and, on the other, examples of how in practice, such spheres were in fact quite intertwined. In these two case studies, it is apparent that Gage and Cheney were not strictly bound to the separation of the spheres and yet saw their utility in redefining them to suit their own purposes.

## Case Study: Matilda Joslyn Gage

The Gage house was home to Matilda and Henry Gage and their four children for the latter half of the nineteenth century. It was situated among a constellation of sites associated with radical sociopolitical reform activism occurring in the “burned-over district” of Central New York State during the period (Cross 1950). The family as a whole was involved in the abolition movement, and based on the available documentation, it is highly likely that the family offered support to enslaved fugitives fleeing northward on the Underground Railroad (Wagner and Wellman 2004).

Of the family, Matilda Gage had the most high-profile involvement in radical sociopolitical reform movements, mainly the woman suffrage movement but also women’s rights overall (Fig. 4.1). While she was also involved in promoting Native American sovereignty, freethought, and animal rights throughout her life, she was known on the national level for her involvement in the woman suffrage movement. This fame was linked to her status as a founding member of the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) along with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1869 and decades of work toward gaining woman suffrage (Wagner 1998).

During the 1870s and 1880s, Gage organized and led the New York State division of the NWSA while also holding various high-level offices in the national organization and assisting with convention arrangements (Boland 2006: 4–5). In 1876, Gage and Anthony led a public protest disrupting the centennial celebration in Philadelphia. Refused permission by organizers to present their Women’s Declaration of Rights during the official program, they stormed onstage, interrupting the proceedings, and presented acting Vice President Thomas Ferry with the declaration. On their way out, they and a group of supporters scattered additional copies of the declaration through the crowd and went on to hold their own protest convention a few blocks away (Stanton et al. 1887: 30).

While these highly public acts, which conform to what we typically think of as “activism,” may be the most visible indicators of Gage’s reform involvement, most of her work toward reform in fact took place within her home. For a married, white, middle-class woman like Gage, her home was her office and base of operations for reform work. While she may have physically been at home, her work for reform effectively bridged the prescriptive separation of the spheres by bringing the “political” into the “domestic” and by participating in the broader realm of political discourse from the “private” sphere. Unlike single women like Anthony, who traveled perpetually, Gage pursued these reform efforts in addition to managing a fairly typical middle-class household, consisting of her husband, children, grandchildren, aging parents, boarders, and domestic servants.

Gage’s reform work at home mainly consisted of writing, both independently and collaboratively. During the 1870s, Gage was a prolific correspondent to newspapers in New York and Syracuse. She published several pamphlets over the years, including one which argued that Catherine Littlefield Greene, rather than Eli Whitney, invented the cotton gin and one in which she revealed that the Civil War’s



**Fig. 4.1** Matilda Joslyn Gage, circa 1871 (Courtesy of the Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation, Inc., Fayetteville, NY)

Tennessee Campaign of 1862 was masterminded by a civilian woman, Anna Ella Carroll (Gage 1870, 1880; Wagner 1998: 29). In 1893, Gage's magnum opus entitled *Woman Church and State* was published, which she wrote due to exhaustion with "the obtuseness of Church and State; indignan[ce] at the injustice of both towards woman; [and] at the wrongs inflicted upon one-half of humanity by the other half in the name of religion" (Gage 1893: preface). Along with Stanton and Anthony, Gage co-wrote the first three volumes of *The History of Woman Suffrage*, published between 1881 and 1887, which exhaustively documented the first decades of the movement. Susan B. Anthony apparently spent so much time at the house working with Gage that Gage's children referred to the library-cum-guest-room as "Aunt Susan's room" (Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation, Inc. 2009).

In addition to writing, Gage managed the New York state division of the NWSA, made convention arrangements, edited the NWSA's newspaper, and held meetings with other suffragists and abolitionists at the home, including Lillie Devereux Blake, Gerrit Smith, Belva Lockwood, Lucretia Mott, William Lloyd Garrison, and Wendell Phillips, in addition to Stanton and Anthony (Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation, Inc. 2009). The family's support of the Underground Railroad, additionally, would have quite literally brought politicized practice into the home by illegally sheltering and providing material support to freedom seekers. Clearly, the Gage house was not simply a domestic haven from the political cares of the world as the ideologies of the separate spheres or the Cult of Domesticity would have us believe.

### *Archaeology at the Gage House*

Excavations in the yard area of the Gage house were undertaken between 2005 and 2009 in collaboration with the Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation which owns the property. The Gage Foundation is a pro-feminist, educational nonprofit organization rehabilitating the house in order to operate the site as a historical house museum.

The excavations produced a large collection of domestic refuse which can be attributed to the Gage family's tenure of the property. One deposit, located just outside of what was the kitchen, has yielded a wealth of ceramics associated with food preparation, storage, and serving; a second deposit, a large, shallow sheet midden located behind the house, has yielded much more fragmentary household refuse. For the purposes of the discussion here, I will focus on the teawares and tablewares recovered from both of these contexts.

### **Material Meanings: The Varied Uses of Material Culture in the Victorian Home**

There is a vast literature regarding Victorian-era material culture (Grover 1987; Ames 1992; Williams 1996). Most of this literature highlights several recurring themes which link material culture to prevailing ideological attitudes: belief in the home environment to shape personal character and class-based anxiety over propriety, presentation of the self, and etiquette. As Williams (1996: 52) has stated, "A woman was charged with the responsibility of creating a household environment that would nurture taste, civility, and Christian ideals in her husband and children, thereby influencing them to be moral and productive members of society."

In material terms, these concerns were expressed in a variety of ways. Use of gothic-styled architecture and ceramics, as well as nature-inspired motifs, can be seen as expressions of the Cult of Domesticity, whereby women's domestic sphere of the home was cast as a Christian sanctuary from men's corrupt public sphere (Beecher and Stowe 1869, Spencer-Wood 1996). The elaboration of meals and an increased specialization in dining and serving wares was related to the role of middle-class women in maintaining





**Fig. 4.2** Front parlor of the Gage house, 1887 (Courtesy of the Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation, Inc., Fayetteville, NY)

the family's standing within the social structure as well as acting as guiding moral spirit of the family (Williams 1987; Spencer-Wood 1994: 180; 1999: 182; Wall 1994).

In light of this literature, the materials recovered from the Gage house excavations are fairly unremarkable insofar as they could represent *any* middle-class household. White ironstone with molded decoration forms the majority of the recovered tablewares and teawares, and the Gages owned both tea and dinner sets in the gothic pattern. An 1887 photo of the front parlor shows us that the interior of the home was also rather typical for the period, conforming closely to what Grier (1988) has termed the middle-class “vocabulary” of parlor furnishing (Fig. 4.2). What does this apparent normativity mean given the historical documentation that highlights how entrenched the Gage family was in sociopolitical reform action?

To answer this question, it is instructive to turn to studies of material culture use in known domestic reform contexts. As Spencer-Wood (1996: 407) has argued with regard to such efforts, “both innovative and ordinary material culture were consciously given new meanings to symbolize and implement cultural transformations in the construction of gender ideology, roles, and relationships”, and as a result, “these meanings of material culture can be ascertained only through the integrated contextual interpretation of documents and material culture.” This then leads us to foreground the fact that material culture is not a mere reflection of meaning but that past peoples quite actively endowed mass-produced material culture with a wide array of symbolic meanings through their daily practices (Beaudry et al. 1991; Little 1997). A closer examination of the gothic teawares and tablewares recovered archaeologically from the Gage site highlights the flexibility of meaning given the contexts in which the materials were used.

Studies of the place of tea in Victorian culture have emphasized its feminization by the eighteenth century (Gray, this volume), and in the nineteenth century, middle-class and elite men working outside of the home were no longer able to return home for meals or tea during the day (Wall 1994). These gatherings were an important means of socializing for women and could either be held for close friends and female family members or more competitively focus on maintaining the family's social status (Williams 1987; Wall 1991). Dinners, on the other hand, were almost exclusively for family members until the 1880s when hosting dinner parties became popular (Clark 1987: 154). The tightly scripted ritual of dining was intended to promote the "spiritual unity" of the family and was where women shone as moral guardians of the household (Clark 1987: 146). Diana Wall's (1991, 1994, 1999, 2000) studies of archaeologically recovered teawares from nineteenth century New York City have focused on how the use of gothic-type ceramics in particular indicated that women embraced the gender ideology of the Cult of Domesticity. Conversely, households who did not use gothic-style ceramics have been interpreted as not participating in this ideology (Wall 1999).

Utilizing a presence/absence argument such as this one would suggest that the Gage family—and specifically, Matilda Gage herself—"bought into" the gendered ideology of the separate spheres and the Cult of Domesticity. However, all of the available historical evidence suggests that Gage was, to put it bluntly, a hell raiser. While she may have had a respectable middle-class home in material terms, through the daily politicized practices carried out within it, she contested gender ideologies such as those mentioned earlier in the hopes of creating radical sociopolitical reform.

The household's material culture, then, can be seen as embodying a contradictory suite of meanings depending on the particular context in which they were being used at a particular time. For instance, the gothic dinner plates may well have represented the significance of family dinners for Gage, while at other times, meaning something quite different. The gothic tea set and muffins may have been used for both purely social tea parties held at the house and entertaining the noted reformers mentioned above who met at the house—creating her own "public" space where women were otherwise afforded none. This perceived disjunction between the known historical practices of the Gage household and their seemingly normative material culture highlights the fluidity of gender ideologies as they were operationalized in practice, as well as the fact that material culture itself provides a flexible source for meaning-making. In the case of the Gages, those gothic teacups could have signaled family togetherness, social competition, or a sociopolitical challenge to the status quo depending on the context in which they were used. As such, they are potent reminders of the ways in which the public and private, political and nonpolitical were enmeshed within a single household.

## Case Study: May Cheney

On the opposite coast, and slightly later in time, the household of May Cheney provides another example of a politically involved woman and how her reform efforts intersected with the home. Unlike Gage, Cheney was actually involved in the effort



to provide women with academic training in domestic science, although this was but one part of her influence on the lives of students at the University of California Berkeley. Also in contrast to Gage, the historical sources available focus on Cheney's activities within the broader university, state, and national spheres.

In the spring of 1883, May Shepard married Warren Cheney, a University of California Berkeley alum of the class of 1878 (Fig. 4.3). In November of that year, Cheney nee Shepard graduated with her degree in literature after some debate by the Academic Senate of the university over what name to issue her diploma in; finally, "Mrs. May L. Shepard Cheney" was decided upon (University of California Academic Senate 1883). In 1885, May and Warren had a two-story, Eastlake Stick-style house built several blocks east of what was then the limit of campus (Fig. 4.4). The Cheneys soon had four sons, arriving in 1884 (Charles), 1886 (Sheldon), 1888 (Marshall), and 1890 (John). In 1887, May and Warren jointly established the Pacific Coast Board of Education in San Francisco, with the slogan "a reliable medium of communication between teachers and school, families and colleges" and "the distinct purpose of registering women graduates of Eastern Colleges in order that the great demand for teachers in California might be met" (MacLachlan 1998: 75). May was the primary manager of the bureau through the fall of 1897. The bureau was significant because of its unique position within the state as the only service in existence to aid the growing education system in hiring trained teachers; between 1892 and 1897, the Cheneys placed over 210 Berkeley graduates alone in teaching jobs throughout California, in addition to unknown numbers of graduates from eastern colleges (Cheney 1897b; MacLachlan 1998).

In 1897, May Cheney corresponded with President Martin Kellogg of the University of California with regard to establishing an equivalent teacher placement system within the university. By arguing that a permanent university position would win the loyalty of potential future students and remove the burden of recommendations from the faculty and recorder's office alike, Cheney was successful in convincing Kellogg to hire her in the new position of appointments secretary starting on January 1, 1898 (Cheney 1897a, c).

As appointments secretary, Cheney took on a multiplicity of tasks related to placing teaching graduates with positions throughout California, including recommending students to receive their university teaching certifications, soliciting letters of recommendation from faculty members to have on file for future job placements, and maintaining correspondence with the principals and superintendents of schools throughout the state (Cheney 1898).

In addition to her official duties as university appointments secretary, May also appears to have functioned as a kind of motherly figure on campus, aiding and advocating for students, especially women. Among many involvements, she was an honorary charter member of the Prytanean, the first honor society for female students at Berkeley established in 1900 (Ruyle 1998); was a trustee of the Clubhouse Loan Fund, which provided female students with funds to furnish their group living quarters (Radcliffe 1904); and was an advisor to the College Equal Suffrage League (San Francisco Call 1904). She was also regularly turned to by university officials for help in identifying students in difficult financial positions, for instance, to receive free tickets to a symphony (Henderson 1906) or to receive clothes donated by a wealthy San Franciscan (Henderson 1909).

**Fig. 4.3** May Cheney, circa 1920 (Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley)



Beyond the university, May represented the interests of college women as a member and first vice president of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA), the precursor of today's American Association of University Women. She apparently tried to assuage the fears of many men and women that educated women would not marry and have families in her popular speech entitled "Will Nature Eliminate the College Woman?" given to various organizations between 1904 and 1906 (Powers 1904, 1906; San Francisco Call 1904; Cheney 1905). She was also involved in other progressive organizations, such as the League of Justice, which sought to tackle the issue of graft in city government, and the Consumers League, which sought to police the sanitary and working conditions of factories to protect workers and consumers alike (San Francisco Call 1909a, e). Cheney was involved



**Fig. 4.4** The Cheney house (Photo by author, 2007)

in the playground movement as well, which emphasized the necessity of providing outdoor spaces for children to play while supervised by professionals concerned with their physical, moral, and intellectual development (Cheney 1911; Spencer-Wood 2003). As an officer of the ACA, she was head of the committees of both consumer protections and playgrounds (San Francisco Call 1910a).

Cheney was also involved in the successful 1911 California state woman suffrage effort, both on campus and off. In addition to being an advisor for the university's branch of the College Equal Suffrage League, she is listed among the "well-known local women who will act as vice presidents" for pro-suffrage rallies in Berkeley (Harland 1911; San Francisco Call 1911) and as having participated in the pro-suffrage "Pageant of Progress" which represented "woman's part in the progress and development of the world" along with one of her daughters-in-law and a female student boarder (Berkeley Independent 1911a, b). The car owned by Warren Cheney's real estate company and used by the family was featured in the suffrage auto parade held in Berkeley in October of 1911, just days in advance of the state-wide vote on the issue (Berkeley Independent 1911c).

Finally, Cheney was an advocate of bringing domestic science into the university setting to provide a means of professional training for women in their traditional duties. In 1909, Cheney applauded the university's decision to award incoming students credits based on their high school studies in domestic science, including cooking, sewing, laundering, hygiene, dietetics, home economics, and nursing, and the move toward establishing a department of domestic science which would "fit graduates to teach domestic arts and sciences in the secondary schools, and incidentally fit women for a number of new professions, as well as for the oldest of all, the profession of housewife" (Cheney 1909: 281). In a 1909 article in *Sunset Magazine* entitled "The New Science of Home-Making," Cheney is concerned with women graduates' lack of preparation for handling the myriad challenges and perils of home life posed by industrialization. She viewed "the entirely new dangers which confront the present generation of home-makers," including dangerous sanitary conditions related to housing, food, and water supplies due to the removal of productive labor from the household, and "our modern system of [economic] competition," as enough to "make us tremble" and requiring knowledge of "half a dozen sciences" (1909: 280, 281, 282). University-level training in domestic science, then, was the correction so that women would be able to make educated decisions regarding their families' housing and consumption practices.

In the years that followed the establishment of domestic science at the university, Cheney, while not a part of the department or a faculty member herself, acted as a liaison between the university and domestic science teachers from beyond the campus. She is listed as welcoming and hosting both renowned domestic scientists Ellen Richards, in 1909, and Sophonisba Breckenridge, in 1910, for their visits to the campus to teach during the university's summer sessions (San Francisco Call 1909d; Oakland Tribune 1910). This is likely due in part to Cheney's leadership within the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, which had a standing interest in domestic science training for women. That Cheney was identified with the domestic science arm of the ACA is apparent from a newspaper article published in May of 1909, describing a day of pageantry at the annual meeting which met that year in Oakland. Included in the procession of members dressed to represent the various interests of the organization, including suffragists, college graduates and faculty, and "certified milk enthusiasts" dressed as milkmaids, "came the members whose tastes [run] to home economics, led by Mrs. May L. Cheney, wearing white gowns and caps and carrying each some household emblem, one a preserving kettle, another a duster, yet another a broom or a sewing bag" (San Francisco Call 1909c).

In her capacity as appointments secretary, Cheney periodically expressed frustration with the continued lack of university graduates specifically trained in domestic science and other specialized, vocational areas such as agriculture, physical education, and manual trades, at times blaming the university's lack of commitment and at others blaming the students for not taking the courses that would fit them well for the job market as it existed (Oakland Tribune 1909, 1912, 1913, 1925). Cheney saw training in domestic science both as an economic necessity for women's career options and as a social necessity given the state of American society during her lifetime.

Given that Cheney was able to pursue her reform work in part through her position as a university administrator, the connections between these efforts and her home are not patently obvious at first. However, materials excavated from the yard space of the Cheney house do seem to speak to these efforts.

### *Archaeology at the Cheney House*

Archaeological excavations were undertaken in the exposed yard areas surrounding the Cheney house during the academic years of 2006 to 2008 as part of a collaborative learning endeavor with the University of California Berkeley's Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program (Wilkie et al. 2010). Area excavations were undertaken along the southern side of the house based on the results of an initial shovel test pit survey. In this side yard, a sheet midden consisting of domestic artifacts associated with food preparation and serving was excavated, and features including garden bed edging and a horseshoe pit were uncovered. The materials recovered, when coupled with documentary sources, provide tantalizing clues as to how Cheney meshed her professional and reform interests with her home life.

### **Material Meanings: Household Objects and Domestic Reform**

Given May Cheney's ability to pursue her work and reform efforts physically outside of her home, unlike Gage, we may expect to see different kinds of evidence for her bridging of public and private, home and work. One such example can be seen in the documentation regarding May's involvement in the 1910 "Pageant of Progress" supporting the suffrage effort, with her daughter-in-law and a female student boarder; this is a clear case of blurring the boundaries of home, university, and public life. With regard to materiality, however, it is worth asking at the outset—how might we expect to "see" evidence of Cheney's involvement in the various reform efforts we know she was a part of?

Of the reform efforts Cheney was involved in, her advocacy for domestic science education suggests the most tantalizing possibility of a direct link between material culture and reform efforts. Spencer-Wood (Spencer-Wood 1991a, b, 1996) has suggested various ways in which domestic reform efforts may be seen at the individual household level in both architectural and artifactual terms: as a major part of such efforts was to increase the efficiency and thereby professional status of household tasks, evidence of room partitions and the placement of stoves and sinks within houses can indicate whether interiors were set up to minimize waste of effort on tasks. Beneath houses, evidence for the use of drains and basement room layouts based on sanitary science principles could be sought, and in trash deposits, kitchen utensils recommended by domestic science manuals might be identified.

Despite these possibilities, however, the fact remains that much of the material culture utilized in domestic reform efforts was singularly unspectacular and may not



be differentiable from material culture used in nonreform contexts. As mentioned earlier, this is because in addition to specially designed material culture, ordinary objects were also given new meanings through their context of use in reform-minded pursuits. As such, it may well be easier to identify archaeologically sites in which domestic reform was pursued at the extra-household scale, such as communal kitchens (Spencer-Wood 1991a, b, 1996; Rotman 2001, 2006).

These challenges are quite apparent in the case of the Cheney house. Due to decades of use by the University of California since its purchase from May Cheney in 1939, the house interior was extensively altered, and as such, no visible evidence remained regarding its kitchen layout or whether it employed sanitary science principles in its construction. Several artifacts excavated from the sheet midden at the Cheney house, however, may in fact be linked to domestic science efforts.

Fragments of glass canning jars and milk glass lid inserts found archaeologically and an intact shoulder-sealing Mason jar popularly used prior to 1915 found in the house prior to demolition suggest that fruits or vegetables were canned and consumed by the Cheney household (Lindsey 2010). Home canning was a popular method of food preservation beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, but by the early twentieth century, it had also become a major concern of domestic scientists. Canning was viewed as a way to ensure a healthful and varied diet regardless of season and as a way to circumvent the potential dangers of mass-produced foodstuffs. The practices of home canning, too, squarely fit within the concern for sanitary housekeeping promulgated by domestic scientists. As Tomes (1997: 48) states, “The elaborate protocol of canning summed up the need for absolutely clean hands and utensils, sterile food containers, and exacting observance of cooking procedures.”

Canning was also typically a social activity for women, and at the Cheney house may well have involved May and the other young women living in the house including daughters-in-law, grandchildren, and student boarders. Such gatherings would have spread the burden of canning work among many hands as well as provided an arena for sharing knowledge regarding correct food preparation procedures among multiple generations (Wood 2002, 2006; Puckett 2006).

Several other artifacts and one feature uncovered in the side yard can potentially be linked to Cheney’s involvement in the playground movement, mentioned above. Children’s marbles and a horseshoe pit both suggest that members of the Cheney household participated in outdoor leisure activities of the kind encouraged by the playground movement. As a comment by May in 1910 illustrates, play was seen as crucial to the proper development of children: “If the boy does not play with zest, the man will not work with zest. We have discovered that thousands of children do not know how to play and must be taught its principles” (San Francisco Call 1910b). With a household including four sons and, by 1910, grandchildren as well, the four clay and two glass marbles recovered archaeologically could have been used by any number of children living at the Cheney house.

Importantly, organizations such as the California State Playground Association also believed in the necessity of play in adults’ lives as well as in children’s. In the principles the association adopted in 1911, besides the belief that “a child has a right to a place of his own for play,” it included the statement that “We believe that adults

should be encouraged to play” (Cheney 1911: 416). As horseshoes was a game that could be played by children and adults, this feature represents an activity that could be partaken in by any member of the Cheney household. Less easily interpreted is a large metal spoon also recovered from the midden; it could easily have been part of the cooking utensil collection of the kitchen at one time and co-opted by the children of the household for digging in the side yard at another.

While the fragmentary remains of canning jars, a metal spoon, marbles, and a horseshoe pit may not present the “smoking gun” of evidence for the entangling of public reform efforts and the home, when placed in a broader context, their significance as materials employed in the contestation of meanings associated with public and private, men and women, becomes more apparent.

For instance, the sturdy metal spoon excavated, while not obviously associated with domestic reform efforts, could well have been implicated in contemporary debates over the quality and utility of household goods, especially kitchen utensils, propagated by reformers. As studied by Miller (1987), domestic science reformers desired the manufacture of efficient, high-quality, and purpose-designed utensils for the kitchen that would minimize labor for women at home and last for years. In contrast, American manufacturers, in focusing on “the inherent economic dynamics of profit-oriented mass production,” produced goods that were well-suited to mass-manufacturing methods but were typically of a quality and design inferior to that desired by domestic reformers (Miller 1987: 50). For individual women, this meant that when looking to purchase kitchen implements, attention to quality and design was crucial.

An example of the care taken when choosing kitchen implements is provided by the correspondence between Ellen Bartlett, an instructor in domestic science employed by the university to teach during the summer session of 1905 and the university’s Secretary of the Regents, Victor Henderson. The main concern of their correspondence in the months leading up to the two “cookery” classes offered by Bartlett that summer was the choice and price of equipment needed for the classroom. In addition to the custom worktables to be built and gas stoves to be bought and connected, Bartlett was quite concerned with the source of the kitchen equipment, including a wide variety of strainers, graters, egg beaters, cake pans, mixing bowls, and sauce pans, to be bought for the courses. Finding the quality of the items offered by the Emporium, a San Francisco department store established in 1896, lacking, Bartlett argued for purchasing the needed equipment from Il’s, a store which she felt had the best quality available (Bartlett 1905; Sewell 2000: 103). In the end, Henderson approved the purchase of equipment from the less-expensive Holbrook, Merrill & Stetson, a San Francisco stove and hardware firm, instead. When questioned by Bartlett as to why he had not had the goods purchased from Il’s, Henderson replied, “As the equipment is only for a summer’s work, I thought we had best get the Holbrook, Merrill & Stetson goods...” (Henderson 1905). While this exchange can be seen as but one volley in the never-ending battle over the costs of supplies associated with large organizations, it is also telling in that it shows the concern with which domestic scientists took to choosing the implements of their profession. The sturdy metal spoon found at the Cheney house might, in this light, be seen as indicative of similar care spent by May Cheney on properly equipping her household.



The pageant presented by members of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae in 1909 mentioned above also serves to highlight the significance afforded by those associated with domestic science to what we would most often think of as mundane household implements. By choosing to march in the pageant with their “household emblem[s],” Cheney and her fellow supporters of home economics provided a powerful example of how everyday objects such as preserving kettles and brooms can be charged with a multiplicity of meanings depending on their uses and contexts. Much like the teawares excavated at the Gage house, the kitchen-related artifacts recovered from the Cheney house, while appearing to be nothing out of the ordinary, are likely to have been infused with potent symbolic meaning given their association with reform efforts. Moreover, involvement in these reform movements means that the significance of these objects blurred the distinction between the domestic and public spheres.

## Conclusions: Blurring the Lines

Cases such as those of the Matilda Joslyn Gage and May Cheney houses show that historically, boundaries that at times have been seen as impenetrable were in fact crossed with great regularity. Female gender ideologies, such as the Cult of Domesticity, domestic reform, and equal rights feminism, while seemingly in opposition, were melded in the lives of women as they negotiated the meaning of domestic and public, private and political (Spencer-Wood 1991a, b: 240–241, 1999: 172). Matilda Gage appears to have embraced aspects of the Cult of Domesticity that highlighted the importance of family and household while at the same time vociferously arguing for women’s position as the social and political equals of men. May Cheney advocated for domestic science which, as a part of the domestic reform movement, did not question the assignment of women to the home sphere while at the same time pursuing political power for women through achieving the right to vote.

The homes of both these women illustrate a blurring of the lines between public and private as well. Gage brought the political into the supposed haven of the domestic through the family’s involvement in the Underground Railroad, her work toward woman’s suffrage, and through the entertainment of other reformers. Cheney’s home, incorporating aspects of her work in the domestic science and playground movements, showed an implementation of solutions to the perceived problems of greater society. Her involvement in suffrage activities with family members and student boarders shows how relationships within the domestic sphere translated into public, political involvement. Through the actions of both Gage and Cheney, the meaning of home as divorced from public and political considerations promulgated by the ideology of the separate spheres was challenged, whether intentionally or not, and in so doing the home became much more than just a feminine haven.

Finally, we can see this blurring of boundaries as well in the meanings attributed to mundane household material culture in these cases. While looking at Gage’s material culture alone may suggest she was a poster child for the Cult of Domesticity, when

placed in their contexts of use and the practices they were involved in, these household objects tell quite a different story. Items such as the family's gothic ceramics could have different, contradictory meanings depending on their context of use; while they may have reinforced the significance of family, they may also have served as emblems of defiance when used by Gage, Stanton, and Anthony while working together to plan suffrage actions. Cheney's canning jars may represent, simultaneously, the drudgery of women's housework and the promising horizon of the professionalization of housework through domestic science. Through their use, these objects were powerful tools in the concurrent deconstruction and reinforcement of domestic ideals.

Taken together, these two cases illustrate the dynamism of gender ideologies, the interaction of the domestic and public, and the meanings attributed to material culture in actual practice. While sites associated with known reformers such as these might be expected to reveal the most clear-cut evidence of boundary blurring, the subtlety of evidence for this even at these sites suggests that small-scale, quotidian practices which changed the status quo over time may also be present at other sites not so identified. The lesson to take from this is that the concept of the separate spheres, prescriptive gender ideologies, and meanings attributed to material culture need to be "troubled" by critical examination of actual practices in all of the historical and archaeological contexts which we study.

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**Part II**  
**How External Colonization**  
**Made Domestic, Intimate,**  
**and Bodily Affairs Public**



## Chapter 5

# Gender, Ethnicity, Religion and Sanitation After the Fall of the Muslim Granada Kingdom in Medieval Spain

Ieva Reklaityte

### Introductory Notes

The medieval period stands out as one of the most interesting and peculiar areas of study within the history of Spain because of the reconquest of Muslim Spain by Christians. One of the aspects of Christian colonisation of Muslim Spain was the change of the public and more importantly the public way of life that was materially expressed in alterations of Muslim domestic architecture and their construction of public spaces, especially streets and their interfaces with houses. The changes that occurred within the urban sphere were due to the distinct comprehension of domestic environment due mostly to the religious and symbolical issues that were completely unknown both to Christian women and men. If the public space was modified by men because of their social and economical everyday life, domestic space was changed since neither Christian women nor men were able to comprehend the specific Andalusian internal room distribution, the presence of an inner courtyard or a privacy of such places as a latrine. The immense potential of the research topic on the medieval urban environment can be explained as a result of the Muslim presence since the eighth century and the appearance of al-Andalus state that during the tenth century, as Richard Fletcher pointed out (2006: 77), had been the richest, the best-governed, the most powerful and the most renowned state in the western world. Nevertheless, the geographical limits and the governmental organisation of al-Andalus had never been stable due to internal and external crises and conflicts. In spite of that, Andalusians were able to create a flourishing urban culture that left remnants easily observed in present-day Spanish towns. If the internal conflicts within al-Andalus were numerous and distinct depending on the geographical area and historical period, one external

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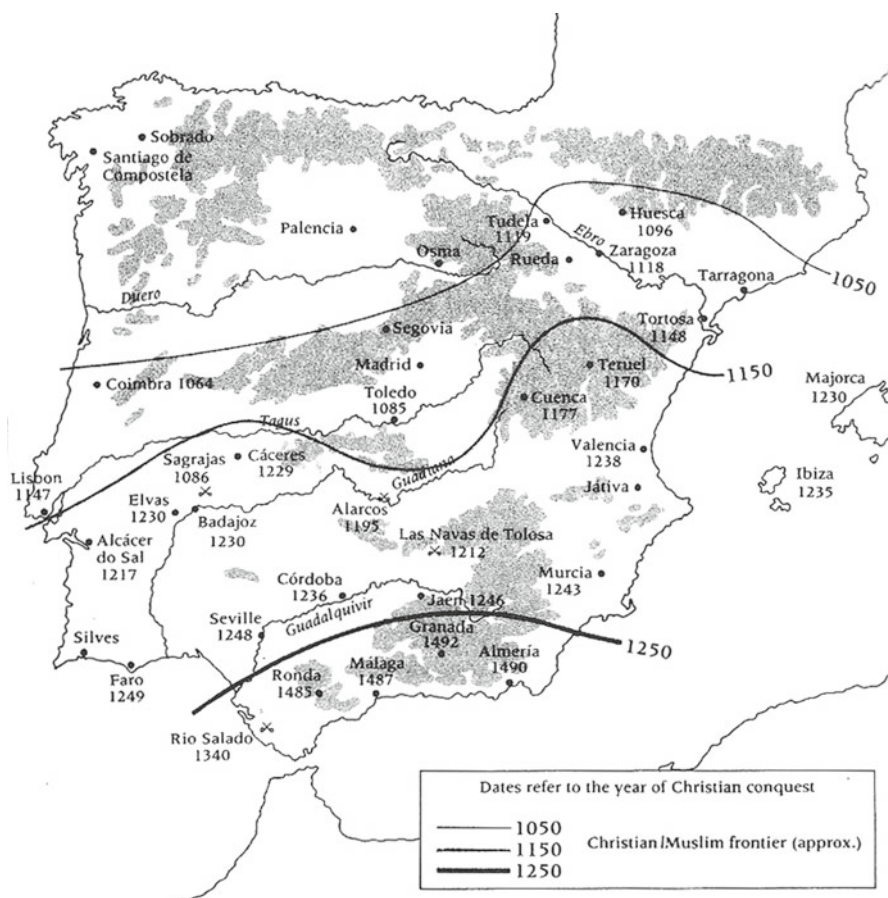


Fig. 5.1 Gradual shrinking of Moorish Spain (according to Fletcher 2006: 130)

enemy—the Catholic armies—persisted for centuries and finally caused the fall of the Muslim state. It must be said that the aim of recovery of the Muslim part of medieval Spain led by the Christian armed forces continued since the incursion the Arab people made in the eighth century (Fig. 5.1).

The process of territorial repossession was slow, and therefore, the last Muslim state—the Granada kingdom—survived until the end of the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, before the fall of Granada kingdom, the Christian intrusions into the lands of Muslims managed to triumph over such important Muslim towns as Cordoba in 1236, Murcia in 1266 or Seville in 1248, among others.

The last phase of *Reconquista* was completed in 1492 when the Granada kingdom was conquered. Most of the Muslim citizens preferred staying in the conquered cities rather than immigrating to North Africa. The situation of the Muslims that kept on residing in the conquered cities was rather difficult from the beginning, although their rights were guaranteed by the royal authorities. Nevertheless, the

revolts and internal tensions changed royal politics at the beginning of the sixteenth century—the year 1525 can be considered as a closing date when there were no Muslims left in Spain as they were forced to choose between baptism and exile. The new Christians, or Moorish as they were called, formed approximately 6 or 7% of the population of the sixteenth-century Spain (Vincent 2006: 67).

From the first moment, the coexistence of the old citizens and the Christian newcomers within the characteristic Muslim urban environment was complicated. It must be remarked that although some Muslims stayed in their houses after the Christian conquest, the major part of them were obliged to leave the town or to move into suburban areas. The Catholics that moved into the previously Muslim cities found them inappropriate for their way of life, and various modifications took place in order to adapt a Muslim city to Christian needs. It must be remarked that a Muslim man considered his family dwelling as a personal place, where his daily life was protected from strangers, and privacy was the major quality of an individual house. The extreme privacy of Muslim houses was materialised in a lack of external windows so that a Muslim man's wife and young children were secluded in a domestic space that was invisible from men's public landscape (Li' L-ma'ali 1994: 713). In addition, a Muslim house did not have a direct entrance from the main street but from a small private street—a cul-de-sac. All the compartments of the house were organised around a central courtyard and had access from it. This open courtyard was the most important place of the house, the only source of light and air, where women cooked, children played and men could socialise or conduct business. At the same time, some of the private courts had small gardens where water and vegetation were contemplated as a symbol of the Koranic paradise.

Among other characteristics of the Muslim towns that must be mentioned is the hygienic environment of some of them that had little to do with the Spanish Catholic towns of that time. Such Muslim towns as Murcia, for example, at least from the eleventh century had a subterranean sewer network assembled in order to evacuate and drain household and privy wastewater. The perfect organisation of the sanitation system allowed the citizens to have their houses connected to the public sewer network without the need of using cesspools (Navarro Palazón and Jiménez Castillo 1995: 401–412). Archaeological excavations discovered how the sewer network system was functioning, starting from the private houses which had water channels running under their latrines, which connected to small channels that subsequently poured the wastewater into canals located in nearby cul-de-sacs. Afterwards, wastewater was conducted to the public subterranean sewers installed all along the streets and subsequently passed to huge underground canals to evacuate wastewater outside the town. The town of Murcia was not the only one that had a sewer network functioning. Other towns of al-Andalus, such as Cordoba, Algeciras or Lerida, also had sewer networks of greater or lesser importance. It should be pointed out that according to ethnographical evidences from contemporary Tunis, women are in charge of the sanitation of the domestic environment. So, according to a popular saying, the face of the house is the face of the woman (Jolé 1989: 212). Within the actual society of Muslim Tunis, the private space is much more important than the public street. Therefore, the rubbish and the excrement are left within the house as

little as possible and normally deposited in the street in order not to contaminate domestic area. The corridor that separates private and public spaces is seen as a symbolic space, and the woman is in charge of its cleanliness. It can be supposed that also in the medieval Muslim town, middle-class and poor women were responsible for the cleanliness of their proper houses while men were in charge of the affairs related to the public hygiene.

## Urban Reforms

While main public edifices in al-Andalus, such as principal mosques, were vast—the Great Mosque of Granada had 1,600 square metres in contrast to the mosques of town districts that were quite undersized—some of them measured no more than 25 m<sup>2</sup>. Also, private houses and shops were of modest dimensions. The houses normally were not bigger than 35 or 40 m<sup>2</sup>, while shops only had 10 m<sup>2</sup> (Vincent 2006: 56). In Granada, the lack of dwellings was resolved by means of reusing an antique Muslim cemetery and constructing there a royal hospital along with a great number of vast residences (Vincent 2006: 61). The preference for bigger houses by the Christian newcomers explains the fact that Christian Granada expanded very quickly and surpassed its fortifications, although the number of the citizens was lower than during the Muslim domination.

A German traveller Jeronimo Münzer (2002: 109) observed the houses of Granada just after its conquest and pointed out that they were comparable to swallow nests because they were small and intricate; the traveller also remarked that four Muslim houses would fit in one Christian house. As a consequence of the reduced space of Muslim houses, it was usual that the new Christian citizens each took two or more houses for their family by modifying and joining the houses in order to gain more space. It must be said that these modifications had direct repercussions on the sanitary conditions of the towns as the cul-de-sacs were suppressed and the domestic sewers that were set up there disappeared. Also, in the Muslim towns where cesspits and not sewers were used, the cesspits were also normally placed outside the house in the cul-de-sacs. In this case, after the suppression of the cul-de-sacs, the new Christian habitants were obliged to dig their cesspits in the larger public streets, which caused various inconveniences.

In the opposite situation, when large Muslim residences were broken up and shared out to several families, the resulting new houses lacked basic installations such as kitchens, entries or latrines. Although their new habitants did their best in installing them, there can be observed that the construction materials employed were of inferior quality (Bernabé Guillamón and López Martínez 1994: 157–167).

On the other hand, as the rather sophisticated sewer system inherited from the Muslim people was neglected and left without periodic cleaning and maintenance, the Catholic men were forced to dig cesspools in order to connect their latrine with them. While an extensive sewer network of Muslim Murcia kept their citizens from using cesspits, the archaeological surveys revealed how in conquered

Murcia the Christians were obliged to dig cesspools because the sewers were already clogged up. The archaeological survey in Poeta Sánchez Madrigal Street in Murcia (Navarro Santa-Cruz and Robles Fernández 2002: 440) found within a domestic space of a previously Muslim house that the new occupants had excavated water well on a large sewer. This fact suggests that most probably the sewer was not in use because the public city sewer network had been already wrecked and did not function properly. We should remark that without sewers and with the use of cesspits, the rainwater would evacuate directly onto the streets. All these changes meant that sanitary conditions and the quality of life were getting worse. The decline in sanitation was due to the shift from the public responsibility for urban sewers in Muslim cities, while the Christians were neither used to the rather sophisticated sewer system nor had sufficient technical knowledge in order to maintain the system functioning properly.

## Enlargement of the Streets

Within an Islamic town, there can be distinguished two opposite areas—a central public one where all the economic, political and religious activities take place and a marginal private residential zone. While the public central urban area normally was relatively vast and organised, the living districts seemed anarchic. Therefore, the Christians who came to Almeria, Granada or Malaga around the turn of the sixteenth century perceived the urban environment as chaotic and disordered where the streets were extremely narrow and labyrinthine (Vincent 2006: 55). The enlargement of the streets became urgent because of common use of chariots and because of the wish of the newcomers to have the entrance to a house or a shop directly on a large public street, to ostentatiously display family prestige. Moreover, because of the disappearance of central open courtyards, the urban dwellings needed windows opened at a vast street in order to provide air and light. The town aristocracy also preferred vast avenues and squares for their social events (Cañavate Toribio 2006: 312). The Christians did not segregate the domestic domain from the public domain as much as the Muslims had. Christian houses with windows on main streets allowed the public to see into and even possibly hear conversations in domestic realms that were no longer private, as were Muslim houses that lacked exterior windows.

A German traveller, named Jeronimo Münzer, who visited Granada immediately after the conquest, stated (2002: 111): “King Fernando ordered a lot of streets to be broadened and the construction of markets, whilst demolishing some houses”. A French traveller, Antonio de Lalaing, during his voyage in 1501 observed that the same kind of alterations to the urban landscape was taking place in Granada:

The houses are small. That’s why the king and the queen ordered these narrow streets to be demolished and made wide and vast, as well as requiring the citizens to build large houses as they have in other parts of Spain (García Mercadal 1952: 474).

The main negative consequence of the embellishment of the city by widening streets and demolishing dwellings was partial destruction of the subterranean sewer network. Therefore, the sewer system collapsed, after functioning under the Muslims as a well-structured and maintained public network, from the small domestic sewers within the cul-de-sacs to the huge cloacae that evacuated dirty water outside the urban area.

The hygienic conditions within the urban environment changed not only because of the disappearance or obstruction of the sewer system but also due to the accumulation of garbage within the city walls. Private Christian waste dumps desecrated Muslim domestic and public structures alike. Since most of the Muslims were exiled, a number of dwellings were left abandoned, and consequently, they were converted into garbage dumps. Further, the defence walls and towers were transformed into garbage dumps. At the same time, some of the Muslim cemeteries that were considered worthless by the Catholics were reused as places to deposit garbage, as occurred in Alhama de Murcia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Ramírez Águila 1998: 319). Meanwhile, the Muslim cemeteries in Lorca or Almería were used as artisanal working spaces (Martínez Rodríguez 1996: 655).

## Alterations of Domestic Structures

The modifications that took place in the occupied Muslim houses were various, but one of the most remarkable characteristics of the Catholic reoccupation of previously Muslim dwellings is the building of cesspits inside them. Within the urban environment of Muslim al-Andalus, cesspits were always installed in the street or in the cul-de-sac in order not to contaminate the domestic area. The archaeological data demonstrate how the newcomers dug up pits for garbage storage within the patio or other compartments of the occupied houses.

One of the finest examples of the restructuration of Muslim houses by newcomers was documented during the archaeological surveys in Murcia (Andrés Baquero, Pinares Streets and cul-de-sac of los Peligros) (Ramírez Águila 2004: 590–591). We can observe the most significant modifications in house 2. Although the dimensions of the house were maintained, the internal distribution of spaces was changed. The open courtyard was covered up and used as an additional room. But the most significant change was produced in the bedroom, where a large pit was excavated and filled up with the objects that new habitants considered of no use. Along with other objects, there were found six containers for ritual ablutions.

The same situation, cesspits filled with garbage, was documented during the archaeological survey on Marengo street, 12, Murcia (Pujante Martínez 1999: 452–453). The reuse of a Muslim house by newcomers during the thirteenth century was the cause of the installation of two large pits of more than 2 m of diameter, one of them in the courtyard and the other one in a northern compartment of the house. There are more examples of cesspits excavated in various compartments of Muslim houses, although most of them are found in the courtyards.

The use of the central patio as a garbage storage place is very significant as it demonstrates that for the newcomers the courtyard did not have the symbolic meaning of the Koranic paradise and was no longer the heart of intimate family life. For a Christian family, the patio was an unemployed domestic place, so modifications were made in order to reuse the space for other purposes.

In the city of Murcia, on the street of San Nicolás 15, excavations uncovered a Muslim dwelling where various modifications can be observed that took place after the city was conquered by Christians. First of all we can notice that the garden located in the middle of the court was annulled, and this points out the indifference of the new inhabitants towards the idea of water and vegetation as a symbol of the eternal paradise. Furthermore, the construction of a sleeping room facing the court is completely contradicting the main principles of the Muslim house organisation where such compartments never faced the court in order to preserve the intimacy of the family (Fig. 5.2, Ventura Fernández González 2002: 501–508).

The alterations that reflect the different mentality of the new citizens can be observed in the large Muslim residence, where after Christian conquest a huge canalisation was installed in one of the rooms in order to bring water to the newly constructed cathedral of Murcia (Bernabé Guillamón et al. 1999: 638).

The excavation of cesspits or the suppression of patios can be considered only one part of the alterations that were taking place in the houses that were formerly inhabited by Muslims, while some modifications made by newcomers are even more illustrative. Very interesting domestic reorganisation can be observed in the Muslim city of *Siyāsa* (actual city of Cieza) that was abandoned by its citizens and repopulated by Christians during the years 1243–1272. The presence of Christians during this short period of time is obvious because of numerous modifications that took place in the houses and streets of this town. The building modifications were badly constructed, using poor materials and changing the utility of rooms while opening additional entries or closing other apertures. Moreover, we can observe one of the results of these modifications that are completely unusual in Muslim architecture: after closing the Muslim entrance to the latrine, the new habitants opened a new access from the kitchen, which means that these two rooms were completely opened one into another. Other evidences left by Christians are very illustrative also. A great quantity of hearths, garbage and animal bones dispersed on the pavements of different rooms; the presence of graffitis on the walls and pavements indicates that the new inhabitants were not accustomed to the hygienic practices that were usual for the Muslim citizens (Fig. 5.3, Navarro Palazón and Jiménez Castillo 2005: 109–121).

Even more, we can point out the relative frequency of graffitis made by new habitants in the reoccupied Islamic houses all over the peninsula. As P. Cressier indicated (1992: 121), graffitis were made as “a kind of common exorcism”, which has religious overtones and would probably have been performed by a man. Drawing different types of crosses or other symbols on the walls of domestic spaces, religious edifices and cisterns was not, as the author points out, a trivial act but a deliberate and significant action: at the same time, a construction of semi-defensive churches in Alpujarra was due to the potential threat of the Moors because Christians had been a small minority under the Muslims; the drawing of graffitis constituted a



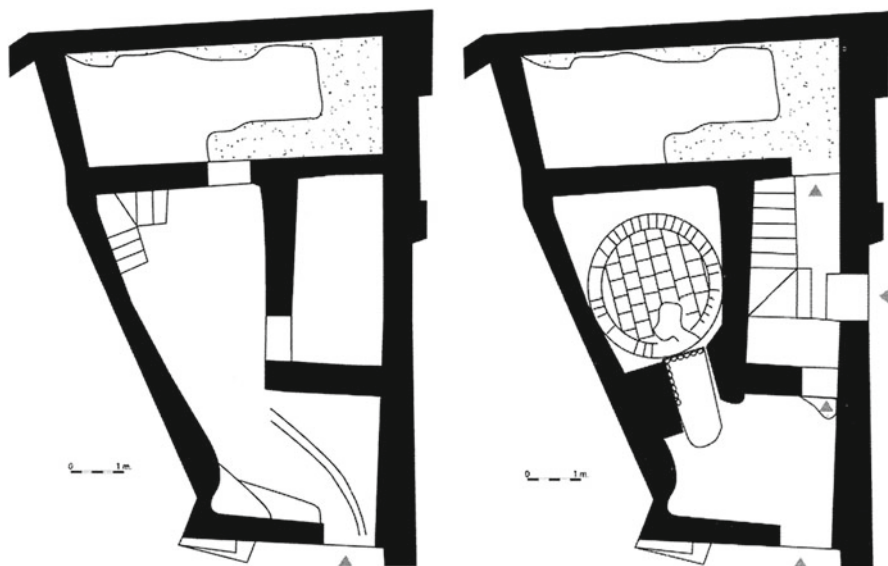


**Fig. 5.2** Former Islamic Royal residence converted into a monastery (Santa Clara, Murcia). The pool within the courtyard has been restored resembling the one that once adorned the Muslim residence

defence of a most subjective threat of enchantments and conjures that could have been performed by the Moors, even when they were gone. That means that the Christians employed magic exorcist rites on the edifices previously inhabited by Moors (Muslims). The graffiti were written before the physical appropriation of the spaces (Cressier 1992: 144).

## Modifications of Public Edifices

Apart from inner domestic alterations to houses, it must be said that after a Muslim town was conquered by the Christian armies, the public edifices, such as shops, mosques, baths and *funducs*—emblematic hotels for merchants and

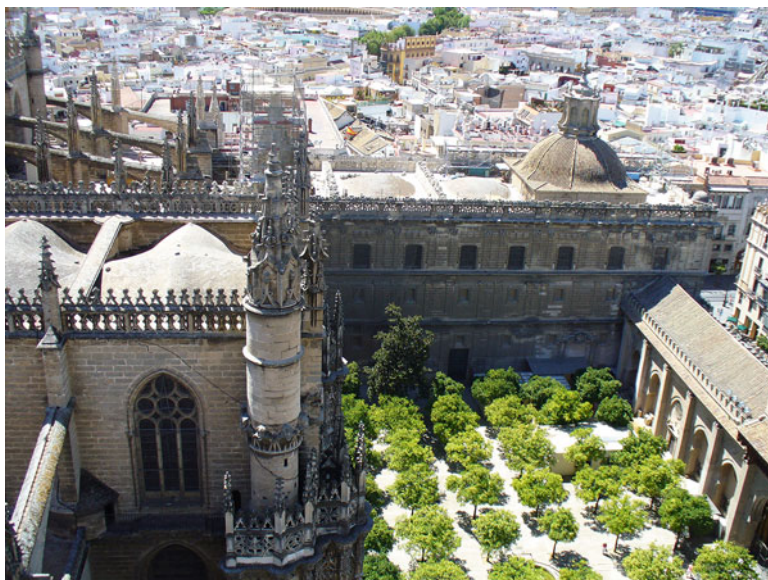


**Fig. 5.3** Alterations of domestic space: on the *right side* of the drawing, we can observe an oven installed during the Christian dominion in the inner courtyard of the Muslim house 19 (*Siyāsa*, Cieza) (according to Navarro Palazón and Jiménez Castillo 2005: 116)

travellers—were of no use for the new citizens. Most of them were given to churches or aristocracy, while most of the mosques became churches. The religious orders, especially the new orders of friars, the Franciscans and Dominicans, created in the thirteenth century (Fletcher 2006: 146) actively participated in the urban reconfiguration of conquered towns. As some of the Muslim edifices were too small to reuse them, they were directly demolished or joined to other buildings. Therefore, in Almería, a Franciscan convent was built at the end of the fifteenth century in the place of an oven, twelve houses and three mosques (Vincent 2006: 57).

Meanwhile, Muslim edifices for performing ritual ablutions were abandoned or reused for other purposes, such as shops (Hernández Benito 1990: 183). The case of the lavatory of the Great Mosque of Cordoba is somewhat symbolic—after the Christian conquest in 1236, the House of Lavatory, as it was called, was transformed into a hospital, in 1524 it became an inn, and today it is still in use as a hotel with a very significant name—The Conqueror.

The need of newcomers to erase the presence of edifices that would recall the domination of Muslim religious traditions can be observed in the conversion of mosques into churches, which became a common practice within conquered towns. Some of the mosques were even reused for other purposes, such as storage places, or were demolished and the parcel used as a cemetery (Vincent 2006: 57). The courtyard of the Great Mosque of Seville, the so-called Courtyard of Oranges, from the thirteenth century was being converted into a graveyard;



**Fig. 5.4** The inner courtyard called the Patio of Oranges of The Great Mosque of Seville transformed into cathedral. During the Muslim dominance, water cisterns were installed there in order to collect rainwater

moreover, during the seventeenth century, the victims of epidemics were buried inside the network of the Almohad cisterns set in the courtyard of the mosque (Fig. 5.4, Jiménez Sancho 2003: 918).

## The Case of Public Baths

First of all, it should be remarked that public baths played a very important role in Islamic society, not only as a part of religious practices but also as a recreational place where social encounters took place. Islamic medieval public baths, along with their predecessors in the Roman world, performed the function of a “club”, a place of financial encounters, a recreation centre and a place of gossip and social exchanges; at the same time, for women a bath constituted not only a relaxation place but also offered a possibility for women to congregate (De Epalza 1989: 11–24). Public baths have always been an essential part of the Islamic culture and highly important for women. In the first part of the nineteenth century, an Italian traveller described the significance of public baths among the women of Cairo (Nizzoli 1996: 121):

A trip to the baths for oriental women is truly a day of entertainment. The wives in more distinguished harems generally have baths in their own habitations; however

these women are always able to obtain permission from their husbands to go to the public baths one or two times per year.

In Islamic urban civilization, a bath along with the Great Mosque and a bazaar are compulsory elements in order to have a functioning city; therefore, the founder of the city of Badajoz wrote to the emir ‘Abd Allāh (d. 912) complaining that there was no Great Mosque, nor a public bath, and asked to send builders to construct these two edifices because without them the new founded city could not become a capital (Al-Bakrī 1982: 36).

At the same time, for Muslim women and men, bathing fulfils a religious duty of major ablutions—*ghusl*—and their emplacement near mosques is intended to facilitate this activity. The popularity of baths was such that in tenth-century Cordoba there were over 300 baths and one century later the number reached 600 (Pérès 1990: 341). Due to a great number of thermal installations and the fondness for them, the baths could not have disappeared at once after the Christian conquest.

Ibn Batutah (d. 1377–1378) mentioned the existence of very popular thermal baths for women and men in the Alhama (Granada) settlement (García Mercadal 1952: 230), and it seems that after the fall of the Granada kingdom, some of these baths were still in use as A. Navagero (1983: 59) testified when describing the post-Andalusian Catholic Granada. The traveller pointed out that the use of baths was much extended, mostly among women, although men also used to frequent them. Also the chronicle of Fernando del Pulgar, who was a secretary of the Catholic Kings of Spain, during the second half of the fifteenth century, serves as a magnificent source of information in relation to the final years of the Granada kingdom. The secretary narrates the continuous incursions into the lands of this last Muslim kingdom by Christian armies and adds his own commentaries about the habits of Muslims that seemed disgusting and indecent, especially those related to water. After the conquest of Alhama, Fernando del Pulgar expresses his opinion about the thermal installations that were very famous in Alhama:

These baths were the cause of too much enjoyment because of the continuous relaxation; this relaxation was the origin of bad and ugly lavishness and other cheatings that they [Muslims] were used to; and other bad actions were done in order to maintain the relaxation that is common among them [Muslims] (De Mata Carriazo 1943: 11).

Nevertheless, most of the baths stopped functioning during the fourteenth century, although some of them were still in use during the fifteenth. The most widely held opinion among the Christians was the conviction that the use of baths was a reprehensible and indecent action suitable for Muslims but not for Christians. Simultaneously, the Moors (former Muslims) themselves considered bath practice as part of their cultural identity and tried to maintain its use, as well as the performance of ablutions (Domínguez Ortiz and Vincent 1984: 92). The politics of cultural assimilation and repression were converted into a corpus of prohibitions prepared during the years between 1511 and 1513 that tried to persecute all the aspects of the religious life of the Moors, including the mode of the slaughter of animals, religious books, and the use and repair of baths that were feared as a perfect



**Fig. 5.5** Former Great Mosque of Saragossa transformed into cathedral. Various architectural modifications can be observed

place for secret ceremonies, ritual ablutions or where abortion practices had taken place (Domínguez Ortiz and Vincent 1984: 101; Vincent 2006: 57).

The fear that the use of baths by the Moorish community provoked the Christians confirms that the mutual antipathy had its grounds not only in religious differences but also in dissimilar customs and ways of life of the two communities. At the same time, we should point out that an Andalusian bath was a very functional building to be reused as a hospital or a monastery, for example, because these types of edifices had water adduction and dirty water evacuation systems and sometimes were placed strategically in the centre of the city (e.g. next to the Grand Mosques) (Azuar Ruiz 1989: 33–43). Since mosques were often transformed into churches, neighbouring baths were suitably located to be converted into monasteries (Fig. 5.5).

Also we should mention the use of baths for religious rituals by the community of Jews. In the year of the fall of the Granada kingdom, the Jews were forced to choose between conversion to Catholicism and exile. And although some of the



Jews were converted to Christianity, they secretly continued their religious practices and intended to carry on their way of life and their traditions. We know more about these practices because of the Catholic Holy Inquisition's records of their processes designated to persecute converted Jews who secretly performed Judaic rituals. One of them was related with water and cleanliness. The Jewish celebration of *shabat*, for example, required corporeal cleanliness and purity of the house. Some neighbours testified during the Holy Inquisition's processes in 1511–1512 that Jewish women cleaned their houses, changed bed and table linen, bathed and put on clean clothes on Friday afternoon. Some of the information that Catholics who had lived under the Muslims reported to the Inquisition officers about their neighbours includes interesting details. For example, one of them testified that his neighbour, a formal Jewish woman, possessed a bath tube that she used to bathe herself with infusions of medicinal plants (Cantera Montenegro 2006: 43–81).

## Final Notes

The different perception of privacy and of comfort influenced not only the existence of psychological confrontations and the reaction of mutual aversion that obstructed the peaceful coexistence in the post-Andalusian society but also predisposed some actions that can be traced by means of the archaeological data. I refer to the reforms that took place in the conquered city and which changed its morphology, adapting the city to the needs of the new inhabitants. Both domestic and public urban reforms were influenced greatly because of the mental differences (that sometimes were due to religious prescriptions) that existed between two religious communities—Christians and Muslims, and possibly Jews.

One of the practices was the enlargement of streets to the detriment of underground sewer system, as well as the enlargement of houses and suppression of cul-de-sacs. Apart from the urban modifications, there must be said that after a Muslim town was conquered by the Christian armies, the public edifices such as shops, mosques, baths and *funducs* were of no use for the new citizens. Most of them were given to churches, religious orders and aristocracy; meanwhile, edifices such as those for performing ritual ablutions or baths were abandoned or reused for other purposes.

Moreover, new inhabitants were not accustomed to the hygienic practices that were usual for Muslim citizens. Some of the domestic reforms that were taking place in the houses formerly inhabited by Muslims are quite illustrative in order to find out the differences that existed between Christian and Muslim perception of hygiene and privacy as, for example, the closure of latrines or the aperture of spaces that would leave the latrine opened to the other rooms without any sort of isolation. Apart from the modification of the streets and public spaces, the latrines were transformed as well. As a rather simple answer to the changes that were produced in the domestic latrines, we can mention that Islamic latrine seemed rather uncomfortable because of the way one has to use it, because one had to squat and could not sit down nor be on foot.

The heart of a Muslim house—a court where water and vegetation were contemplated as a symbol of paradise—was neglected and the cesspools were dug there. Furthermore, archaeological data reveal the accumulation of rubbish not only in the abandoned dwellings but also in the circular towers of the city walls and one-way streets. Even Muslim cemeteries were converted into artisanal areas or filled with rubbish that can be considered as a wish to rub the memory of anterior habitants or as an effort to destroy all the evidences of the former way of life.

The changes that could have affected the social life including the participation of women in the everyday urban life are difficult to precise. It is clear that the Muslim woman participated lively in the society of al-Andalus. In opposite of the common opinion, there were women scientists, medics, philosophers and at the same time the common or low-class women who involved themselves in the market affairs and artisanal duties (Tahiri 2003: 124–132). Also we can speak about such women as dancers, prostitutes and magicians that formed a part of the urban medieval society. The private and reclosed family life did not suggest that the Muslim women were completely subordinated to the wish of the masculine society. Also the typical picture of a docile and submissive Muslim woman within her family surroundings is far from being real according to the medieval texts—an active and influential married woman that took control over her economical, social and family life was not an exceptional case within the Andalusian society (Marín 2006: 48–49). Muslim women that usually show off the uncovered face participated also in social and economical urban life with the exception of the women of high social classes. It was normal that wealthy Muslim women would not appear in the society with the exception of greater social events naturally wearing their faces covered (Tahiri 2003: 129). It can be said that the higher social position of an Andalusian woman was more harshly was her face covered; that fact should be observed as a result of the tradition and not as a religious issue.

The private reforms that were made during the Christian occupation only reveal the change of the customs of the private or family life where such segregated feminine spaces as a courtyard lost their significance because of different cooking ways or because the courtyard seemed a too vast area to be unemployed only because it offered a symbolic and recreational space.

Here we can suppose that the urban reforms that were made during the Christian conquer of the former Andalusian town were due not only to different Christian and Muslim women place within the medieval society but it was due to distinct mental frontiers that these two societies were accustomed to. We cannot speak about a more liberal Christian woman that was a common Muslim urban dweller. The only difference that we observe through urban and domestic modifications is the change of mental convictions; for example, neither Christian men nor women understood the significance of the inner courtyard as a symbolic reflection of a Koranic paradise. Nevertheless, such typically Andalusian women segregation places, such as baths or public wells, continued being common within the post-medieval Spanish town among the Christian women. Also it is worth pointing out the segregation of the Moorish women within the post-medieval Spanish cities. Most of the Moorish-converted women interrogated by the Holy Inquisition in the



sixteenth and seventeenth centuries region of Valencia were unable to express themselves in Spanish as they only spoke Arabic (Vincent 2006: 28–29); this fact was due not only to their more limited public life but also to their social connections within almost exclusively other Moorish women. The Arabic was converted gradually in the language that was spoken within the most intimate domestic sphere and was preserved as a result of the domestic influence exercised by the Moorish women. We can observe the existence of a clear antagonism between domestic and public areas, and at the same time, it is possible to detect a fierce conflict between female culture and masculine power.

Finally, we should point out that in spite of the changes that we observed in the conquered post-Andalusian towns, the entire Muslim legacy did not vanish at once. Also all the sewer system could not have disappeared so quickly, and without a doubt, some of the sewers were still in use during centuries, especially those that were placed in the major streets. Written sources gave evidence that in Cordoba or Toledo, there were still in use some of the sewers constructed by the Muslim people (Córdoba de la Llave 1998: 154). Apart from the material legacy as the tradition of bath use, we can mention as well that Andalusian towns were not populated only by Muslims as there were also Christian citizens inhabiting it. A Polish Nicolas Papielovo during his visit to Spain and Portugal in the years 1484 and 1485 described the proximity that existed among the communities of Christians and *Saracens* that lived in the same cities of present-day Andalusia. The traveller was greatly impressed by the similarity of the customs and ways of life of these two communities:

The truth is that Galicians are rude and the Portuguese are almost the same but the inhabitants of the rural zones of Andalusia are even ruder and it would be difficult to find alike them in the entire world. And it is not surprising because they live with vulgar Saracens, are friendly with them and commerce with them, breathe their pagan, salvage and brutish air and in many ways imitate their habits; even commerce and negotiate as they do; the edifices and people look similar and the difference in education customs and aspect between Christians and Saracens can only be traced in the religion, although Christians observe their faith very deficiently (García Mercadal 1952: 322–323).

A bit earlier, Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1404) (1969: 316) also pointed out the way of life of his contemporary Spain where the Muslim legacy was present not only in the Granada kingdom but also within the Christian part of Spain:

There we find the crafts and their institutions still in existence. They are well established and firmly rooted, as far as the things required by the customs of Spanish cities are concerned. (They include), for instance, building, cooking, the various kinds of singing and entertainment, such as instrumental music, string instruments and dancing, the use of carpets in palaces, the construction of well-planned, well-constructed houses, the production of metal and pottery vessels, all kinds of utensils, the giving of banquets and weddings, and all the crafts required for the luxury and luxury customs. One finds that they practise and understand these things better than any other nation, even though civilization in Spain has receded and most of it does not equal that which exists in the other countries of the (Mediterranean) shore.

These two authors demonstrate that Muslim way of life was present also among Christians both women and men and that the modifications that were carried out within conquered Andalusian towns did not confine the newcomers from the influence of the Muslim cultural legacy.

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## Chapter 6

# Intimate Matters in Public Encounters: Massachusetts Praying Indian Communities and Colonialism in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Joyce M. Clements

### Introduction

As an academic pursuit, global historical archaeology has come of age in recent decades and provides an important perspective on international cultural encounters. Much of the research that appears in the *Contributions to Global Historical Archaeology* series, as well as the *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, and *Archaeologies: The Journal of the World Archaeological Congress*, highlights the movement of ideas and material culture across the continents. Inspired by Braudel's (1975) foundational perspective on worldwide economic systems, such research indicates the historical depth of international connections, today brought closer by technologies and international capital that foreshorten cultural differences and transformations (Freedman 2005). In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, materials manufactured in Europe came to the New World with European explorers, adventurers, fishermen, missionaries, traders, and settlers, and were exchanged for tobacco, pelts, and furs produced by Native Americans. Ideas also traveled between the two worlds, initially during exploration and trade and later during colonization, often a consequence of coercion more than accommodation, but also selectively incorporated and resisted by colonized peoples. It is within this international perspective that I read historical texts and artifacts for clues to bodily privacy and intimacy in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century New England and for evidence of cultural transformation as a consequence of colonization and colonialism.

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I use the term colonization to indicate the process of establishing a colony, involving a population movement that creates ownership and control over land, peoples, and natural resources located beyond the nation of the emigrants. Although colonies can be created in the absence of formal statehood and as temporary settlements for specific functions, such as trading, resource extraction, or processing sites, in this chapter the term implies the movement of people (primarily Englishwomen and Englishmen and their descendants) to foreign lands (the Massachusetts Bay area) for the purpose of creating a permanent settlement. I use the term colonialism to indicate the process through which the colonizers established, maintained, and extended control over the indigenous occupants of colonized lands, as well as the indigenous response to those efforts. Colonialism involves formal legal, social, economic, educational, and religious structures, as well as informal values, beliefs, and practices that underpin formal structures. In southern New England, the simultaneous imposition of patriarchy, which Spencer-Wood's commentary calls patriarchal colonialism, privileged the culture of the colonists over those of the colonized peoples, and because the process involves cultural interaction and transformations, colonialism lasts as long as cultural differences survive in a colonial context. Arguably, that process continues in the United States today, through "internal colonialism": the selective disadvantaging of minority groups, including Native Americans (Gordon 2006). In this chapter, I focus on gendered aspects of colonialism, exploring how that process was experienced differently by those whom society categorizes as women and men.<sup>1</sup> Furthering the work of earlier scholars, particularly Jean M. O'Brien (1997), Anne Marie Plane (1996, 2000), Daniel Mandell (1996), and Amy E. Den Ouden (2005), I examine private realms and intimate matters to consider how colonialism marked the lives of individual women in southern New England.

## Theories

### *Radical and Anti-oppression Feminisms*

This chapter is informed by feminist theories, specifically postcolonial feminism that examines women as gendered subjects of colonialism, radical feminism that informs my use of the term patriarchy, and Marxist feminism that shapes my understanding of connections between patriarchy and incipient capitalism.

As Chris Weeden (1998: 1) explains, "feminism is a politics. It is a politics directed at changing existing power relations between women and men in society." The assumption, of course, is that existing power relations between women and men are unequal, and women have less access to power and fewer privileges derived

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<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, I distinguish only between "women" and "men" because the historical records provide no information about other gender categories.

from positions of power. A theory is an explanation that accounts for an observed phenomenon; when the adjective “feminist” precedes the term “theory,” it can be assumed that the explanation will consider how power relations between women and men will account for the observed phenomenon. For Weeden, and for most radical feminists, the starting point of feminist analysis is the patriarchal structure of society, in which “women’s interests are subordinated to the interests of men” (1998: 1–2). Third wave or “anti-oppression” feminists, concerned with reducing discrimination along all axes of “differences,” would add that patriarchy discriminates against minority groups as well as women, children, and those men who cannot self-identify as white, Western, middle-class men.

But, what is patriarchy? Judith Bennett (2006: 55), who advocates greater use of the term in theoretical discussions, offers three definitions. The first is the ecclesiastical power of men who are recognized as leaders within Christian religious traditions, particularly the Greek Orthodox tradition. This definition generally is not the meaning applied to feminist theories or anti-oppression work. The second definition focuses on the legal powers of a husband or father over his wife, children, and other dependents. This perspective derives from early legal notions of household relationships, which were extended to the political world to support the notion that the power of kings derived from the power of fathers. This understanding often informs feminist descriptions of family relationship as well as early states. The third definition is “a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men-by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male” (Rich 1976: 57 in Bennett 2006: 55). A society is patriarchal to the degree that it promotes male privilege by being male dominated, male identified, and male centered (Johnson 2005: 5 in Bennett 2006: 55). Historical and archaeological evidence of New England’s colonial history conforms to this latter definition of patriarchy and demonstrates that Puritans used the law and economic practices to transform Native American culture into patriarchal and capitalist forms.

The phenomena described in this chapter also are scrutinized in terms of theoretical positions advanced by anti-oppression feminism that seeks to redress patriarchy’s discrimination against people on the basis of their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, class, race, physical capability, etc. In this regard, being a woman and being Native American carried particular burdens in Puritan society because it was both patriarchal and racist. Although I do not dwell upon Puritan racist attitudes, their overarching concern with “civilizing” Native Americans and maintaining their own racial purity is well covered by other scholars, particularly Amy E. Den Ouden (2005), Daniel Mandell (1996), and Jean M. O’Brien (1997). Many third wave and anti-oppression feminists follow radical feminists in that they accept the revolutionary goal to overthrow oppressive patriarchal structures and male privilege, although anti-oppression feminists extend the project to all who are classed as “other” in comparison to the dominant order that is white and male. Indeed, some of these goals were expressed by radical feminists, such as Mary Daly who wittily and scathingly criticized patriarchal religion and mandated a new language to undo existing

ways of knowing and speaking about human existence (Daly 1978, 1984, 1985). Vigorously argued by Daly (1978), radical feminism denies philosophy's categorization of women's experiences as "other" to men's, refuses to let women be objectified by men (as objects of labor, pleasure, or reproduction), and seeks to make women the subject of their own experiences.

In southern New England, belief in patriarchy meant that women who resisted its reach were judged, punished, and physically abused in accordance with patriarchal Puritan practices (see also Clements 2011). Using historical texts from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, I suggest that New England Native American women [like Canada's Montagnais (Devens 1986) and Huron women (Anderson 1991)] had greater personal agency and bodily autonomy before the arrival of European missionaries whose gender beliefs were based on virulent forms of Christian patriarchy. Furthermore, as Eleanor Leacock (1987) has long argued many hunting and gathering societies were relatively egalitarian, and in those societies women and men were valued equally. Although southern New England subsistence strategies included hunting and gathering, as well as fishing and crop production, descriptions by Roger Williams (1936), William Wood (1977), and Edward Winslow (1996) suggest that southern New England Native American women had considerable autonomy and agency. Although my conclusions are similar to and, to some degree, were prefigured by the work of historians Anne Marie Plane (1993, 1996) and Jean M. O'Brien (1997), my emphasis on the destructive consequences to Native gender relations and Native women's oppression under the Puritan patriarchs probably is more cynical and more critical than the earlier discussions. My perspective certainly forefronts the Puritan's willful oppression of people who did not conform to their own brand of Christianity, in paradoxical defiance of Christian belief to love the other as one loves oneself. I also recognize some Native American men's complicity in the loss of Native American women's power under colonialism. From a feminist perspective, this outcome is unfortunate, but explicable in terms of the seductive power of male privilege in the patriarchal Puritan colony.

## Marxist Feminisms

Although less explicit, an underlying influence on this research derives from Marxist feminism, which addresses connections between capitalism and patriarchy. The two connect in patriarchal economic systems and institutions that value and reward men's work and the products of men's labor more than they value women's work and the products of women's labor. In the phenomena described below, a fully elaborated capitalist system is not in evidence but rather a market economy that eventually forced southern New England Native Americans to sell their labor for cash. As Catherine A. MacKinnon (1989) explains, money is the medium of power in capitalist systems, and power is associated with money. Those without money, or without access to money, are those without power in capitalist systems. In such societies,



making women dependent on the sale of their labor and valuing women's work and the products of their work below the work and products of men reduce women's power and potential for independence. Ultimately, placing and keeping women in poverty reduce their autonomy, remove them from power, and render them dependent upon on those who can give them money (MacKinnon 1989).

Prior to Puritan colonization, southern New England Native American women possessed considerable autonomy because of their essential contribution to tribal subsistence. Women were the principal food producers and controlled the crops and the land from which crops were produced (Merchant 1989). They also produced herbs, medicines, footwear, and clothing; collected and processed shellfish; and performed important ritual functions, sometimes acting as shamans and ritual healers. Once women lost their control of the land and access to other essential resources, they became dependent upon selling their labor, thereby entering into a foreign market system in order to survive (O'Brien 1997). These transformations are clear in the historical records and indicate the difficulties faced by women and young girls who lost the capacity for self-sufficiency. They also reveal how war and disease sundered families, decimated kinship relations and kin-based communities, and reduced the survivors to purchasing social caregiving as a market commodity (O'Brien 1997).

## Postcolonial Feminisms

Postcolonial theory advanced from the proposition that international territorial colonization has ended, and former colonized people are constructing new identities outside the colonial experience. Problematic, however, is the potential for westerners to become interlocutors. when they speak for the colonized, instead of creating a space from where former colonized people can speak (Spivak 1990). Indeed, this is a problem with which I have wrestled as an outsider who speaks for Native Americans through the act of historical and archaeological interpretation (Clements 2005). As cultural critic Linda Alcoff warns, "there is no neutral place to stand free and clear in which one's words do not prescriptively affect or mediate the experience of others" (Alcoff 1991: 20). The implication here is that mediating the experience of others through historical interpretation is a de facto silencing of the others' views, particularly when all speakers do not have equal access to the dissemination of interpretation and experience. Yet Alcoff also observes that "a complete retreat from "speech"... allows the continued dominance of current discourses (Alcoff 1991: 20). Alcoff suggests instead that speakers should create conditions that foster dialogue and work to create a practice of speaking "with" and "to" rather than a practice of speaking "for" others. Of course, feminist archaeologists and those who study historical colonialism cannot speak with or to the people they study, so their challenge is to find a way to mediate the experiences of absent others in ways that reduce authorial or colonial privilege. Alcoff recommends that theorists analyze the effects of their words before speaking rather than retreating into silence. This is a comfortable stance for feminist

scholars who acknowledge the political underpinning of all discourse, including the production of post- or anticolonial theory.

Whether or not they speak for others, many feminists reject the notion that we live in a postcolonial era because colonization's effects are ongoing and because contemporary global economic colonization is as pernicious as historical territorial expansion. The feminist postcolonial researcher Ann Stoler (2006a, b, 2008), for example, powerfully argues that "imperial debris" leaves a residue long after the colonizers physically withdraw. As she considers the question, "what's 'colonial' about North America?" Stoler offers examples that reveal the colonization process in the United States. As she explains, American colonization involved:

European settlement, exploitation, and dominance of separate "others" that transformed social organization, cultural convention, and private life. All produced "structures of dominance" that depended on the management of sex in the making of racialized forms of rule. [And] such structures figured prominently ... in North American history ... (Stoler 2006b: 32).

Indeed, it is structures of dominance achieved through Puritan patriarchy that form the substance of the following discussion about power struggles and power lost. These concepts underpin my analysis of how the Puritans attempted to manage women's sexuality and consequently attempted to transform. Native American private life. This conclusion supports Stoler and other feminist researchers who recognize the imposition of Western patriarchy at the heart of European colonization, which depended for its success on the economic and sexual exploitation of women. Spencer-Wood calls these gendered colonization processes "patriarchal colonialism" in her commentary chapter in this volume.

## Methods and Sources

This chapter opens with an overview of southern New England's "Praying Towns" to create the historical context for the analysis that follows. The primary source for this period is Daniel Gookin, the Superintendent of Indians who managed Praying Town economic and legal affairs for more than 30 years (Gookin 1970). Gookin's history is supported by accounts by other early observers, principally Roger Williams who lived among the Narragansetts in northern Rhode Island, Edward Winslow who lived among the Wampanoags in Plymouth Colony, and William Wood who moved throughout New England. Although they present the past from the perspective of white male colonists, these accounts, and later economic records from the Praying Towns, provide sufficient detail about the social and material culture of the Praying Towns. Rereading them through feminist postcolonial theory reveals important insights into intimate matters in New England's public colonial encounters.

The analysis then moves to a discussion of a seventeenth-century adultery trial and two eighteenth-century childbirth stories to consider changing perceptions of intimacy and the role of sexual relations in public discourse. The analysis derives from sample texts in the Indian Affairs Records, a collection of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century documents curated by the Massachusetts State Archives. The

collection is composed primarily of legal petitions presented to the Massachusetts General Court by and on behalf of Christianized Indians and includes financial records maintained by the white men who served as “Guardians” and “Overseers” of the Praying Towns.

Following the discussion of intimacy and sexual relations, the analysis considers archaeological evidence of Praying Indian burial practices. Archaeology contributes to colonial studies by revealing the persistence of traditional rituals and beliefs in circumstances that preserve landscapes and the material correlates of Native beliefs. Previous historical and archaeological research on the Praying Indian Towns produced important historical information, but somewhat less archaeological data (Brenner 1980, 1986; Carlson 1986). With some exceptions, postdepositional disturbance, imprecise information about the Praying Towns’ locations, and the material poverty of Praying Town residents all hamper this research (Brenner 1980, 1986; Carlson 1986). These challenges are partially overcome by evidence from some Praying Indian burial grounds, some of which have survived because they have been visible, demarcated, and protected from development, like the Ponkapoag’s Indian Lane Cemetery (Rees 1991; Simon 1990). Others have been accidentally preserved because they have been invisible, indistinguishable from surrounding land, and located away from urban and residential development, like Ponkapoag’s Burr Lane Cemetery (Clements 1999, 2005). In this analysis, the burial ground research indicates movement of material objects across cultural boundaries and between public and private spaces and times. Ultimately, this allows a consideration of how private commemorations intersect within public rituals in a colonial context.

## The Praying Town of Ponkapoag

This analysis focuses on several Massachusetts “Praying Towns” created by the Missionary John Eliot as settlements for Indians who had converted to Christianity. Much of this research focuses on the Praying Town of Ponkapoag, where I conducted historical and archaeological investigations in the late 1990s. Although its precise location is unknown, the Praying Town of Ponkapoag was situated within the modern town of Canton, portions of which once were part of the town of Stoughton. At its inception in 1654, Ponkapoag encompassed approximately 6,000 acres of land with a resident population of about 60 individuals in twelve families (Gookin 1970). Various spellings of Ponkapoag, Puncapauag, and Ponkapaug, the community was one of seven original settlements established by the Puritan minister John Eliot, known as the apostle to the Indians. Each Praying Town had a leader, a teacher, and a minister, selected from the Indian occupants, and some of the first Praying Towns might have been fortified (Salisbury 1974). The Ponkapoag leader was “old Ahauton” described as a longtime and genuine friend to the English and counselor to the Native leader or Sachem, Chicataubut (Gookin 1970). The Ponkapoag teacher was a man called Awinian, and their minister was William Ahauton, son of old Ahauton. During King Philip’s War of

resistance (led by the leader Metacom, whom the English called King Philip), many of the Praying Indians were incarcerated on islands in Boston Harbor where most starved to death or died of illness.

Daniel Gookin, the Superintendent of Indians was charged with defending Praying Town settlements from colonial encroachment and serving as a cultural mediator among the Christian Indians, their non-converted kinsmen, and the colonists. After his death, the Massachusetts General Courts established a process whereby the Guardians or Overseers maintained written records of Praying Town economic and legal transactions and managed their land and treasury—the latter derived from money acquired by the rent and sale of Praying Town land. Despite the loss of land through sale to colonists, Ponkapoag people remained on the land during the eighteenth century, surviving as best they could with diminished resources at their disposal.

The Praying Town system, however, proved to be a Catch-22. As Indians were restricted to limited amounts of unproductive land, they lost their ability for self-sufficiency. Some Indian men served as soldiers and scouts on frontier wars, and others became whalers or laborers or sold cedar shingles for cladding houses. Some Indian women sold baskets and brooms to colonial households, and probably others sold herbs and herbal medicines. When these tasks proved insufficient for self-support, many Indians entered indentured service to pay off debts incurred during colonization. Evidence from Ponkapoag reveals that the Indians there became indebted through the purchase of tools, foods, and medicines, as well as for court costs and for funerals and burials (Clements 2005). The Praying Indian Towns were part of a larger program to “civilize” Indians living within the Puritan colony and to incorporate them within the Puritan settlement (Gookin 1970). When he began his missionary program, the Reverend John Eliot tardily addressed the colony’s primary goal to bring the natives to knowledge of God, 20 years after the colony’s birth (Salisbury 1974). Establishment of the Praying Towns facilitated the larger colonial program and initiated a process that resulted in catastrophic land loss (O’Brien 1997). At the same time, the process was not unidirectional, and Indians strategically resisted and troubled the colonists’ attempts at cultural assimilation (Den Ouden 2005; Mandell 1996). The presence of contemporary, self-identified Native Americans (Wampanoag, Narragansett, Nipmuc, Pequot, and Mashpee) in southern New England is unequivocal testimony that the Puritans and their descendants failed to obliterate Indian cultural identity and practices.

In sum, like all other Indians living in and around the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the Ponkapoags had few choices as the tide of colonists swamped their shores. Prior to the Puritan settlement, Indian populations had been decimated by diseases brought by traders, explorers, and fishermen. Following colonization, Indian subsistence strategies shifted from hunting, gathering, and horticulture to the production of pelts, furs, and wampum for trade and exchange (Cronon 1983; Merchant 1989). After King Philip’s War, existence became a choice of “give way” or “move away.” As the seventeenth century progressed, Indians resisted where possible, accommodated when necessary, and survived

by whatever means were available to them (Bragdon 2009). Both documents and artifacts from these times provide a mirror of gendered public and private matters in New England's colonial setting.

## Intimacy, Maternity, and Privacy

The seventeenth-century adultery trial of Sarah Ahauton, wife of Ponkapoag minister William Ahauton, provides an entrance into discussions of Native American intimacy (see also Plane 2000). The details of the trial are covered in a document titled *The Examination of Sarah Ahhaton Indian squaw wife until William Ahhaton of Packemit alias Punquapauge taken the 24th of October 1668 before Daniel Gookin*. A marginal note indexed the text as an "Indian squa who was committed (sic) to prison for Adultery" (Indian Affairs Records, Volume 30, Part 1, pages 152–153, hereafter IAR). The examination reads as Sarah's testimony and appears to recount the events that brought her to court as an adulterer. The court's decision was recorded in the Bay Colony's court records (Shurtleff 1968), and the events of the trial were also transmitted within the Native American community through oral and local histories (Huntoon 1893).

According to the testimony, William Ahauton accused Sarah of adultery with Joseph, a married man who also resided at Ponkapoag. Sarah reported that William had beaten her and was a womanizer, and it was his treatment of her that prompted Sarah's relationship with Joseph. In the first instance, Sarah was brought before Waban, the Native leader of the nearby Praying Town of Natick. At that time, Sarah was dismissed with a warning, but she continued to consort with Joseph. Eventually, she was brought before Squamaugg, the Native leader of her own Praying Town of Ponkapoag. When Sarah learned that she was to be whipped as punishment, she abandoned her family and village and took refuge with Metacom, a prominent local leader, whom the English called King Philip. According to the testimony, Sarah changed her mind and returned to Ponkapoag, but ran away again, this time seeking solace from her parents who lived in the northern Praying Town of Wamesit. Sarah's parents convinced her to return to Ponkapoag after which she was sent to prison in Boston, from where her testimony was taken by Gookin.

At the time of the testimony, Sarah revealed that she and her husband had resumed their marriage and were expecting their fifth child. At the conclusion of the trial, the Massachusetts General Court determined that Sarah Ahauton should be placed in the gallows with a rope around her neck and then returned to prison. On an appropriate public day, after the birth of her child, if she truly was pregnant, Sarah was to be handed over to the Indian Constable who would whip her no less than 30 times. Finally, she was fined to cover the cost of bringing her trial to court (Shurtleff 1968: 408).

There is no documentary evidence to indicate whether the punishment was carried out in its entirety, or at all, and there is a similar silence on punishment for Joseph and

William. A local history holds that Sarah returned to Ponkapoag and committed suicide rather than live with the shame of her actions (Huntoon 1983: 23). After the trial, Joseph disappeared from history but William Ahauton remained as the Christian Indian minister of Ponkapoag and appears in several other petitions from the town.

Almost 100 years after Sarah Ahauton's adultery trial, intimate matters reappear in historical texts from Ponkapoag. In January 1767, for example, Nathaniel Houghton of Stoughton petitioned the governor, council, and Massachusetts House of Representatives for repayment of funds expended for the care of Betty Pomham. According to the petition, Betty Pomham was a member of the Ponkapoag Tribe and had been raised and supported by Houghton from the time she was 16 months old, when he brought her "into his family," until her death at 21 (Indian Affairs Records, Volume 33, Part 2, Page 401; hereafter IAR 33(2)402). According to the documents, Betty was an unmarried 17-year-old when she gave birth to her son, Thomas. In the petition submitted after her death, Houghton requested repayment for raising Betty, for medical care during her illness, and for caring for Thomas after Betty's death. He also asked that the courts make "further provisions" for the child, describing him as "almost an idiot" who would never be able to support himself. Houghton appealed to the General Court because Ponkapoag Guardian Joseph Billings originally had denied the request, perhaps because Billings assumed or knew that Thomas was Houghton's illegitimate son and therefore his legal and economic responsibility. When Billings denied the petitioner's request, Houghton appealed to the Massachusetts General Court. In his itemized list of accounts, Houghton requested £3.12.0 to cover the cost of nursing Betty for 9 weeks and £16.0 for her funeral (IAR 33(2)403). Houghton also claimed £8.16.0 for boarding, clothing, and caring for Thomas after his mother's death. The General Court found substance in Houghton's argument and accepted his account (IAR 33(2) n.p.).

About three years after Betty Pomham's death, the Ponkapoag documents further illuminate Native childbirth under colonization, through the financial records of Sarah Succamaugg. The first reference to Sarah is dated December 19, 1770, when Ponkapoag Guardian Jonathan Capen spent 1 day to "get a place for sarah suck (sic) to ly in at" (IAR 33(2)563–564a). Probably, Capen spent the day visiting among his neighbors in Stoughton, searching for someone willing to accommodate the mother-to-be. A few days later, he itemized the cost of a bed and "other things" for "sarah suckamoge for lying in" (IAR 33(2)563–564a). This suggests that Capen had found somebody willing to accept Sarah during her confinement, but the host or hostess required a bed to accommodate her needs. Probably, Sarah required bedding, clothing, and personal items. In all likelihood, Sarah was fashioning blankets and clothing for the baby by the end of January, at which time Capen charged the accounts for two yards of linen and wool. The baby was born on February 4, when the Guardian paid one shilling and two pence "for bet will (sic) at lying in" (IAR 33(2) 563–564a). On February 5, the Guardian paid Thomas Mitchel £12.0.0 for keeping Sarah for 6 weeks. On the 22nd, he paid Bet Wil (sic) an additional one shilling and four pence, possibly for a postpartum checkup for the mother and child. After that time, Sarah

Succamaugg disappeared from the Guardians' accounts, and there is nothing to indicate what became of her or the baby.

## Marriage and Sexual Intimacy

Separated by a century, these three accounts represent key points in the colonization process. The significance of these events is discernible through comparison of Native American marriage, sexuality, and childbirth before and after colonization. Observer accounts provide some information on Native practices when Europeans began to settle in southern New England, although all were written by white men observing Native practices from the outside. These observers reported that southern New England Native American women exerted considerable agency in intimate matters, including the selection of a marriage partner. Puritan colonists William Wood, for example, noted that “[w]hen a man hath a desire to marry, he first gets the good will of the maid or widow; after, the consent of her friends for her part. And for himself, if he be at his own disposing, if the king will, the match is made” (Vaughan 1993: 99, my emphasis). This description suggests essential requirements for Native marriage, albeit from a man's perspective. The first requirement is the woman's wish to be married, the second is her friends' endorsement of the union, the third is the community's approval of the union, and the last is the leader's consent. This suggests the significance of marriage as a social relationship with community significance, as much as an individual bond between marriage partners.

Contrary to community appropriation for marriage, early observers say nothing of community sanctioning of sexual relations. To the contrary, early observers reported that sex between single women and men was neither uncommon nor condemned in southern New England Native American communities. Speaking about Rhode Island's Narragansett Tribe, Roger Williams claimed “Single fornication they count no sin, but after Mariage (which they solemnize by consent of Parents and publique appropriation publicly) then they count it heinous fer (sic) either of them to be false” (Williams 1936: 146). Williams continued, “They put away (as in Israell) frequently for other occasions beside Adultery, yet I know many Couples that have lived twenty, thirty, forty years together” (Williams 1936: 150). Speaking of the Wampanoag people of southeastern Massachusetts, Edward Winslow reported, “If a woman have a bad husband, or cannot affect him, and there be war or opposition between [them] she will run away from him to the contrary party, and there live; where they never come unwelcome, for where are most women, there is greatest plenty” (Winslow 1996: 64).

Neither William Wood nor Roger Williams commented on childbirth by unmarried women, nor do they report stigmatization of illegitimate children. Thomas Morton described a cuckolded man who failed to recognize the illegitimacy of his own son and puzzled over the man's indifference to his son's true paternity (Plane 2000: 14). To the contrary, Roger Williams' claim that “fatherless children” were well cared for suggests communal care for children, perhaps by matrilineal kinship groups. This practice, if it was in effect at the time of colonization, could explain the



court's lack of interest in Sarah Ahauton's children in an otherwise lengthy discussion of her sexual behavior. What is clear from these early records is women's control of their own sexuality and relative freedom in the choice of intimate partners. In terms of public and private boundaries, these observations suggest that sexual relations were private matters between individuals, although marriages were community concerns.

Within this context, Sarah Ahauton's testimony represents an ideological battlefield, with Native sexual practices pitted against Puritan concepts of morality. Indeed, Sarah Ahauton's story reveals

the ways in which marriage, supposedly one of the most intimate of social relationships, in fact often mirrored, encapsulated, and transformed some of the most public struggles of colonial states and societies; struggles between colonists and those whom they sought to colonize; struggles between European and indigenous understandings of right and wrong (Plane 2000: 4).

With this in mind, it is possible to reread Sarah Ahauton's testimony not as an evaluation of the private behavior of autonomous individuals, but as a judgment against Native intimacy, played out in a public forum. In this sense, the Puritans were not only evaluating the rights and wrongs of Sarah's sexual relations but were judging her culture's enactment of the institution of marriage. To that end, they exploited Sarah's personal story to forge cultural change, and they did so with the public and legal heft of the colonial courts. Indeed, Sarah Ahauton's seventeenth-century adultery trial reveals the central role Puritan men took in controlling women's sexual behavior and the intrusion of patriarchy's oppressive public structures into private lives. Sarah Ahauton's private relationship with William Ahauton became a matter for public scrutiny because control of women's sexual behavior was an essential element in the Puritan's colonial agenda. As a matter of public history, the trial suggests a shift in Native American gender power relations from matrilineal kinships systems and a relatively egalitarian distribution of power between women and men to male dominance within the family, in legal matters, and in public discourse.

The adultery trial also reveals differential treatment when the subject was a man rather than a woman. Following Mosaic law, the Massachusetts courts specifically defined adultery in terms of the married status of the women and ignored the marital status of the man, and they also extended adultery to include sexual relations by women who were engaged to be married (Haskins 1960: 149). The colonial definition of adultery was intercourse by a married or espoused woman with a man not her husband, regardless of the marital status of the man (Karlsen 1987: 168). As Karlsen (1987: 168–169) points out, this definition reveals the threat posed by female sexual incontinence or, to put it another way, “the essential element of [the] sin, was the woman's infidelity to her husband” (Demos 1970: 97). At issue in the woman's infidelity was her challenge to the man's right of property “in his wife” (Karlsen 1987: 168, original emphasis) and the threat that unwanted pregnancy posed to the “orderly transmission of the social estate to the next generation” (Karlsen 1987: 169). Under the sexual double standard of patriarchy, wives were held legally responsible for adultery as a capital crime because their behavior was seen as a violation of the husband's property rights. In contrast, a man's adultery with an unmarried woman was considered

fornication, and his adultery with a married woman was a crime against public order (Coontz 1991: 96; Demos 1970: 96–97).

In particular, the trial reveals the uneven hand of the law under patriarchy and the Puritan determination to control Native women's sexuality by using Sarah as an example for Native women living within the Puritan colony. The legal document thus reveals a pivotal moment in New England colonization, in that it signals the emergence of public regulation of women's sexuality under patriarchy. In this, the trial exposes Puritan's belief in men's rights to control women's bodies and their willingness to employ physical coercion to control women's sexual behavior. This trial also exposes Indian men's adoption of Puritan standards in that the Native rulers Waban and Squamaugg upheld the colonial laws imposed upon their community. These men showed their hand by staging colonial style courts within the Praying Towns and passing judgment on community members in conformity with colonial laws. If the court's decision was fulfilled, then Native men would have carried out the whipping. Ultimately, the trial reveals that William Ahauton, Waban, and Squamaugg conformed to Puritan patriarchal norms, and they did so for their own benefit. In the final count, Sarah's complaints about her husband's abuse were overlooked because the Puritan gender system admonished wives "to submit to their husband's instructions and commands" (Haskins 1960: 80). Following this logic, the Puritan authorities probably accepted that if William had beaten Sarah, it was because Sarah deserved to be beaten. Thus, all Native women had much to lose under colonial law and customs that privileged newly forming patriarchal social structures over women's traditional authority. In the final count, Sarah's relationship with Joseph was an act of insubordination that neither the patriarchal Puritans nor their Native allies would countenance (Clements 2011).

## Childbirth

If European accounts are accurate, at the time of colonization (about A.D. 1620), Native American women along the eastern seaboard gave birth with relative ease, in the company of one or two older women assistants, often in a private location some distance from the village, generally a small hut similar to structures used for menstrual seclusion (Plane 1992). After giving birth, Native women frequently observed separation rituals, during which they ate and slept apart from the remainder of the community. Early anthropologists have argued that rituals and social practices around childbirth were liminal experiences that facilitated transformation from motherless woman to "mother" (Plane 1992 citing van Gennep 1960). As importantly, childbirth seclusion rituals provide evidence of cultural practices that mark childbirth as a private rather than a social event (Wertz and Wertz 1989 in Plane 1992: 14, 24) and a time when women could achieve autonomy, rest, and privacy (Buckley and Gottlieb 1998). As anthropologists infer, it was during childbirth and menstrual rituals that women manifested a "special spiritual potency" (Devens 1986: 463–464).

For European colonists and their descendants, the birthing process was marked by the presence of a midwife or attendants, female relatives, and friends, all within the

family home (Ulrich 1991). In this public context, moreover, childbirth became the context for establishing paternity when mothers-to-be were unmarried (Ulrich 1980, 1991). Establishing paternity is essential to patriarchal concern to confirm male ownership of, and economic responsibility for, the mother and child. As noted above, however, there is no evidence to suggest preoccupation with paternity or with marking childbirth as a social event among southern New England Native communities.

Edward Winslow described a “desperate and extraordinary hard travail in child-birth” in distinction to the more ordinary circumstances in which women’s “travail is not so extreme as in our parts of the world, they being of a more hardy nature” (Winslow 1996: 60). He continued, “on the third day after child-birth, I have seen the mother with the infant, upon a small occasion, in cold weather, in a boat upon the sea” (Winslow 1996: 60). Other observers also reported the ease with which Indian women gave birth and the relatively unceremonious response of the community to a new child. Speaking of the Narragansett Indians living in seventeenth-century Rhode Island, for example, Roger Williams claimed that “in one quarter of an houre a woman merry in the House, and delivered and merry againe: within two days abroad, and after foure or five days at worke, etc” (Williams 1936: 149–150). If Williams’ time line is correct, the birth itself was quick, after which the new mother visited among the community and then returned to her customary work within 4 or 5 days. One gets the impression from this description that childbirth was a no-nonsense, taken-for-granted event for the Narragansetts.

Speaking of the Massachusetts Indians, William Wood observed:

.... a big belly hinders no business, nor a childbirth takes much time, but the young infant being greased and sooted, wrapped in a beaver skin, bound to his good behavior with his feet up to his bum upon a board two foot long and one foot broad, his face exposed to all nipping weather, this little papoose travels about with his bare-footed mother to paddle in the icy clam banks after three or four days of age have sealed his passboard and his mother’s recovery (Vaughan 1993: 114).

Wood implies that the no-nonsense approach to childbirth extended throughout the pregnancy and the postpartum “recovery,” but both accounts suggest an absence of ceremony following the birth of a child. Neither observer commented on Indian men’s interest or involvement in the birth nor its immediate outcome, and both observers imply a close connection between the mother and the infant in the days after the birth. That is not to say, however, that Indian men were disinterested in their children, and in fact observers note: “There are no beggars amongst them, nor fatherless children unprovided for. Their affections, especially to their children, are very strong; so that I have knowne a Father take so greivously the losse of his childe, that hee hath cut and stobd (stabbed) himself with griefe and rage” (Williams 1936: 29). If we allow that these observations are accurate descriptions of common cultural practices in the early days after colonization, children were loved and well cared for, but childbirth was relatively unmarked. By the following century, however, circumstances changed the way Native American women gave birth, as a consequence of the cultural hegemony of the Puritans after colonization. The stories of Betty Pomham and Sarah Succamaugg presented above exemplify how those changes impacted the lives of individual women.

Who was Betty Pomham and how did she come to live with Nathan Houghton and give birth to a child in his home? Betty, sometimes Bette, Pomham might have been the descendant of the seventeenth-century Sachem Pomham (Church 1995; Drake 1837), or she might have been related to high-status members of the Ponkapoag community, who shared her surname (Huntoon 1983: 24). Whatever her relationship to other Ponkapoag residents, however, Betty's place in the Houghton household is explicable in terms of the eighteenth-century practices of indentured service. In all likelihood, Nathaniel Houghton took Betty Pomham into his household as an indentured servant, a common practice arising from the general labor shortage in the New England colonies (Demos 1970; Den Ouden 2005; Kawashima 1986; Mandell 1996; Sainsbury 1975; Silverman 2001). Indentured service provided a way for colonists to satisfy labor needs and it offered housing and food for New England Indians. Indentured service was not limited to Indians: it provided passage to the "New World" for landless English women and men, in return for a specified period of labor. However, when Indians entered indentured service, they suffered colonial exploitation at its worst, not unlike slavery suffered by African Americans (O'Brien 1997; Mandell 1996; Den Ouden 2005).

There is no evidence to indicate whether or not Ponkapoag's Sarah Succamaugg was an indentured servant, but her story indicates changes to childbirth following colonization and reveals the cost to Indians of adopting colonial cultural practices (IA 33 (2), 563–564a.). Capitalism and the market economy rendered the intimate act of childbirth a public record and turned birth assistance into a commodity. Sarah Succamaugg's story can be read out of the Guardians Records from late 1770 to early 1771. Like Betty Pomham, Sarah probably went into indentured service to support herself and she certainly lacked family support at the time she gave birth. Although John Sycamugg [sic] appeared in the Praying Town records in 1738, and Sue and Experience "Sucomag" were residents of Ponkapoag where they signed a petition in 1754 (IAR 31(1)223, 32(2)481), it is impossible to state Sarah's relationship to John, Sue, or Experience. Like Betty Pomham, Sarah's entrance in the historical record can be read as a series of public, financial transactions, devoid of private or social relationships.

Although her presence in the colonial household was temporary, Sarah Succamaugg's story indicates a lack of kin to assist her during the time leading up to her birth. The fact that her confinement required public support through the Ponkapoag Guardian indicates her inability to pay for medical care, food, and clothing for herself or her child. Indeed, Sarah's story provides a fractured glance into eighteenth-century Native American childbirth and reflects neither the social childbirth of the colonists nor the secluded childbirth of seventeenth-century Indians. Instead, her experience suggests that colonialism prompted the intrusion of men and money into what had been a private experience for native New England women. Through the loss of kin and community to disease, war, and migration, Sarah Succamaugg was forced to purchase assistance from strangers, and in this way Native American childbirth had become monetized, public, and managed by colonial men. Reading these accounts against Sarah Ahauton's adultery trial reveals colonial men's struggle to control Native American women's sexuality and to recast previously private and intimate acts as public discourse.

Following the loss of their lands and transformations in their traditional subsistence practices (Cronon 1983, Merchant 1989), many New England Indians supported themselves by selling their labor or used indentured service to pay off debts owed to the colonists (Silverman 2001). In the eighteenth century, there might have been as many as 1,000 Indians in service or enslaved in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. Some committed suicide during their period of service (Bragdon 2009: 212), suggesting the harsh reality of indentured service within the colonial system. It is not difficult to imagine that unscrupulous colonists exploited native land loss and the subsequent disruption of their subsistence practices. These losses forced Native people into indentured service, and petitions from southern Massachusetts suggest that local white people were deliberately coercing Native people into indebtedness and then making them to work off their debts or submit their children to indenture. Following years of living with and working for white families, most Indian children eventually lost their language and their cultural identity (Bragdon 2009: 214). In 1762, the Massachusetts General Court approved a petition from Ponkapoag Guardians, empowering them to “bind out to service all those Indian orphan children that are in their care” although they did not distinguish between Indians and poor white children under the law (IAR 33(1)224. Thus, many Indian children were *de facto* slaves, at least until their maturity.

Betty Pomham’s entry into the Houghton household as an infant certainly suggests that she was placed into service in accordance with the General Court’s 1762 decision. Betty probably worked in the Houghton household, garden, and dairy in return for food and housing. In her role as indentured servant, Betty’s status would have been akin to a slave in that indentured servants provided virtually free labor that produced essential domestic products such as textiles, butter, cheese, eggs, chickens, and vegetables that were major parts of the colonial economy (Collins 2003: 49–53). As a household servant, Betty would have been required to pay for her own medical care (Silverman 2001), the cost of which would have increased her debt to Houghton. Thomas’s characterization as “almost an idiot” certainly allows the possibility that Betty did not receive adequate prenatal care, and his mother’s death at 21 hints at chronic ill health. Indeed, research suggests that one quarter of all indentured women died during their period of service, and cases of servants starved or beaten to death were not uncommon (Collins 2003: 9–10). It was common also for indentured female servants to become pregnant by their masters, often through rape and rarely through a consensual relationship or encounter. The master benefitted from the pregnancy because the mother’s service was increased by a year to compensate for time lost in childbed and childcare (Schlesinger 1968: 59–61 cited in Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 9). Such was the case for New Englander Abigail Joel who was penalized £13 for loss of service to her mistress due to two pregnancies (Silverman 2001). Within this system, a master could gain many years of additional indentured servitude through the pregnancy of their female servants. Ultimately, Betty Pomham’s case can be read as further evidence of the legal enforcement of patriarchy through the Massachusetts General Court. Here, the court clearly supported Houghton’s “rights” as patriarch and guardian of this child and compensated him for Betty’s care, ignoring the value of her lifelong labor in his

house. The petition and the court's decision reveal the danger to Native American women in colonial households and the legal support for patriarchs provided by the courts.

Sarah Succamaugg's story provides a clear example of the link between patriarchy and capitalism. It reveals the transformation of social networks and reciprocal obligation into financial transactions and commoditized community caregiving, as O'Brien (1997) eloquently pointed out in her research on the Praying Indian Town of Natick. Furthermore, evidence of the colonists' willful plunder of Ponkapoag woods and wetlands was a gendered act because Ponkapoag women were tied to the land in ways that men were not and suffered more through the loss of their lands and land-based resources than did Ponkapoag men (Clements 2005). Without the ability to raise crops, manufacture utensils, and harvest wetland medicines and herbs, the Ponkapoag women were forced to sell their labor, or the products of their labor. In this regard, the traditional gendered and reciprocal division of labor was transformed into the exchange of labor for money, and the commoditization of community support, including traditional women who assisted each other during labor and childbirth. The commoditization is poignantly apparent in Sarah Succamaugg's case when her personal childbirth experience was memorialized in a list of itemized charges against the Ponkapoag treasury.

Although two of the events under discussion were written primarily about childbirth, and the third is about adultery, read against early observers' accounts, these stories reveal transformations to private acts as a consequence of patriarchal colonialism. Working through these texts suggests that the colonists eventually abandoned their efforts to publicly manage Indian domestic affairs in that neither Betty Pomham nor Sarah Succamaugg was censured for their sexual behavior. In contrast, Sarah Ahauton's adultery trial reveals the seventeenth-century colonists' efforts to control her sexual behavior within and outside her marriage. The court's concern with Sarah Ahauton's sexual relationships is apparent in the diligent testimony that recorded the Ahauton's marital discord and the court's efforts to bring them into conformity with Puritan standards. The court's patriarchal character is explicit in the severity of the punishment they administered to Sarah and their silence about Joseph or William's extramarital relations.

Using the Indian Affairs Records as evidence of changes to social norms and structures, the documents from the eighteenth century reveal that the colonists were concerned with different Indian affairs than they had been in the previous century. The Ponkapoag records suggest general disinterest in Indian sexuality or marriage, representing what one historian has identified as widespread "loss of interest in [Indian] family arrangements" (Bragdon 2009: 85) as colonialism progressed. Having abandoned interest in Indian family arrangements, eighteenth-century descendants of the Puritan colonists turned their attentions toward Ponkapoag land and money, and again, Ponkapoag women were central to that endeavor.

To return to the case of Betty Pomham, and her son Thomas, nowhere in his petition does Nathaniel Houghton refer to a court trial or punishment for the illegitimate birth. In contrast to the inquiry behind Sarah Ahauton's testimony, the Houghton petition offers no evidence of judgment or censure for Betty's behavior. Nowhere in



the petition is there a reference to the family's attempt to raise Betty as a Christian, and there is similar silence about public censure for the young woman's sexual behavior. Unlike Ahauton's testimony from the previous century, the Houghton petition makes no reference to God, or to sin, or to any religious or moral matters. Also absent are references to Mrs. Houghton's role in the girl's care and upbringing. The greatest silence, however, is around the man who fathered Betty's child. It might have been Houghton himself, one of his sons, a relative, a farm laborer, or a visitor to the house. Marginal notes that identify Thomas as "a Molato Boy" allow these possibilities, in that the term means the child of a mixed race marriage, historically defined as the child of one black and one white parent. Social practices of the eighteenth century distinguished between Indians and African Americans and commented on the mixed progeny of marriages between Indian women and Black men because of the absence and loss of Native American men to wars and at sea (Mandell 1996). The difficulty arises in understanding how the local community understood the term mulatto and whether they considered Indians to be white or black. If Betty was considered the black parent of the mulatto child, it is possible that the father was Nathan Houghton himself. Whatever the father's race or identity, neither Houghton nor the General Court sought to secure financial contributions from him, but were, it seems, content to utilize the Ponkapoag treasury to pay the debt. In this light, Houghton's words "your Petitioner Received into his family ... [and] ... brought up and Supported at his own expense..." are particularly telling (IAR 33(1)402). So too is the phrase that Thomas Ahauton would never be able to support himself. A century after colonization, the control of Native American women had moved from sexual to economic matters. Quite clearly, this case reveals how patriarchy is embedded in capitalism, since the economic issues all stem from patriarchal concerns with the father's identity. It also is notable that the petition does not address Betty Pomham's sexual behavior, nor does it position her as the guilty agent of sinful practices. Indeed, the account presents the petitioner as the victim: a man, who brought an orphan girl into his home, raised her, and paid her medical bills and then was left with the care and raising of her orphaned son. Read in this light the concern expressed in the Houghton petition is no longer Indian religious beliefs or the role of sex within and outside marriage but with the costs to support outsiders to the colonial system.

In the same vein, Sarah Succamaugg entered history through economic record-keeping, because the pending birth of her child necessitated a bed and a room for the delivery, as well as clothes for the infant and the assistance of a midwife during the delivery. Meeting these needs came at a cost, and it was a cost borne by the Ponkapoag treasury. The century-wide transformation from public discourse to relative silence on Indian sexuality is telling. One way to read this silence is to consider it as a shift in attention from sexuality as public practice and a move toward financial consequences for the Ponkapoag community. The shift thus involves changing concepts of "public" and "private" and a new discourse on Indian troubles. This shift also reveals the continuing process of colonialism, now focused on compensation for taking care of the Indians, most of whose land the Puritans had appropriated outright or through incremental purchases.



## Some Material Correlates of Colonization: Death and Burial Practices

The archaeology of death and burial practices provides additional information about the consequences of colonization on southern New England Native American peoples and allows a reading of changes in gender roles and power dynamics. This section analyzes archaeological examples of Ponkapoag burial rituals and the material culture of death, seeing changes in gendered power relations in death rituals and grave goods following Puritan colonization. Reading from the archaeological record, researchers have long noted that Indian “conversion” to Christian belief was partial and discriminatory, demonstrated through the persistence of some traditional burial rites and the adoption of some Christian practices (Rees 1991; Tuma 1985). Archaeologists working throughout New England note that prior to colonization, most Native Americans buried their dead in flexed position, often accompanied by grave goods such as projectile points, atlatls, ground stone tools, and steatite bowls (Tuma 1985). It also was common for Massachusetts people to place bows and arrows and black and white shell beads or wampumpeague with the deceased (Vaughan 1993: 111–112).

Following colonization, Native American burials conformed in part, to English burial practices, in that the remains were placed fully extended in a rectangular wooden coffin. English style burials were fully extended in a rectangular grave but retained the Indian practice of placing the deceased’s head toward the west, in the belief that “the soules of Men and Women goe to the Sou-west, their great and good men and Women to Cautantouwit his House ...” (Williams 1936: 130). Williams described several Gods that the Praying Indians worshiped including Kautantowwit (sic), the great South-West God (1936: 124). He reported that a wise, grave, and high-status man (the mockuttasuit) prepared the body for death. Beside the grave, New England Indians sometimes placed the deceased’s coat or a skin garment on a tree and left it there to rot. The deceased’s personal items were burned after death, and the grieving community painted their faces black as a signal of their grief. When the community came to the burial, they laid the deceased at the mouth of the grave and then sat upon the ground and lamented. The deceased was then laid in the grave, and a second lamentation occurred, after which the grave was covered by the deceased’s sleeping mat, sometimes with the deceased’s personal vessels placed on the mat (Williams 1936: 203). As described by Williams and Wood, these mourning rituals were communal in that groups of mourners were performing a social display of grief. Such grief would have symbolized personal and social bereavement and united the community in their loss. When mourners blacked their faces, they were also making a highly visible and public display of grief. The placement of the deceased’s personal items in the grave introduced material culture to the grieving ritual and links the individual to objects associated with their living status and role.

Researchers have examined changes in Narragansett burial rituals and interment in Rhode Island and explored the use of grave goods under Puritan influence. Michael Nassaney (2004), for example, uses material culture to examine social identity and the influence of colonization on gender politics (2004: 334–367). Prior to colonization, Nassaney suggests that women had considerable economic status because they controlled the production of maize, one of the principal food sources. Nassaney argues that women's status was visible in ceramic motifs and effigy pestles that communicated their role in maize production. After colonization, new ceramic motifs appeared, some possibly referencing the goddess of corn. If this suggestion is correct, it indicates that southern New England Native American women were symbolizing divine support for women's social and economic contributions through food production. In other instances, ceramic decorations appear to represent female sexual organs emphasizing women's role in reproduction. Similarly, the presence of metal hoes in women's burials symbolizes connections between individual women and their important community labor. Southern Native American women also adopted the male practice of pipe smoking, as a way to resist men's efforts to subordinate them and to connect to the supernatural in new ways (Nassaney 2004: 358). These interpretations chart changes to material culture following colonization, and this work suggests that women resisted and responded to changes in social structure. More importantly, this work reveals Native women's subversive and powerful gender messages coded in ways that were known to the Native community, but unintelligible to their Puritan neighbors.

Similar conclusions can be drawn from Ponkapoag, where at least five Indian burial grounds were in use during the historical period. One burial ground contained the remains of about 44 individuals and was situated on a small knoll overlooking a stream flowing to the south (Simon 1990; Rees 1991). Three of the 44 individuals had been interred in flexed positions, and one had placed in a round pit with red ochre, following traditional patterns (Simon 1990: 8). The remaining interments had been placed in wooden coffins following the Christian tradition. There is no indication to suggest whether or not the burials represent numerous deaths from disease or interments that extended over decades, but the cemetery clearly expresses pre-and post-Christian beliefs. Although the majority of the graves were oriented toward the southwest, some faced east in Christian style (Simon 1990). Three burials contained grave goods (a pot, kettle/mug, and clay pipe), and the bodies had been adorned with European glass and Native shell beads (Simon 1990). Physical anthropologists noted that females outnumbered males by more than two to one, similar to living populations in the Christian Indian community (Clements 2005; Mandell 1996). The majority of the interred had died between the ages of 18 and 40, two were under the age of 3, and two were between 10 and 20. Six individuals had suffered from degenerative joint disease, two suffered from premortem trauma to the spine, and two had dental caries (Simon 1990). Further analysis revealed osteoarthritis as a consequence of physical labor (Rees 1991). Six of the arthritic individuals were women, with evidence of routine, strenuous activity (Simon 1990; Rees 1991). One female exhibited a developmental deformity, perhaps the result of childhood leg binding (Rees 1991), or biological etiology (Bell 1999, personal communication).

The predominance of females in the burial ground suggests that twice as many women as men were living in the Praying Town. The absence of men is explicable in terms of the gendered division of labor: men left the community to hunt, fish, participate in trading and diplomatic errands, and make war. Many men died while working away from the community, leaving a resident population of women in the Praying Towns (Rees 1991; O'Brien 1997; Mandell 1996). Indeed, at Ponkapoag, there is evidence that men left their homes to work as scouts and soldiers on behalf of the English (Clements 2005). Indian men living in seacoast towns left to work on whaling vessels (Mandell 1996). As a result of this gendered labor practice, the remaining Praying Town communities suffered skewed gender roles among adult populations. Consequently, many Indian women married African-American men whose populations were equally skewed following their migration to New England to address the region's labor shortages (Mandell 1996).

A third site contained the remains of Native Americans living in the vicinity of the original Praying Town, represented by 12 or possibly 13 individuals (Clements 1999; Dincauze 1998a, b). One of the burials followed a Christian funeral by the rector of the local English Church (Huntoon 1983). The deceased had been buried in rectangular, conifer, and hardwood plank coffins, devoid of ornamentation, and sealed with hand-forged iron nails. Prior to interment, the dead had been wrapped in coarse burial shrouds attached with plain, copper or brass pins. The deceased were placed fully extended into the coffin which was aligned east to west. From this small cemetery, archaeologists collected a musket ball, a small combed and dotted earthenware mug, and a clay pipe (Clements 1999; Dincauze 1998a, b). The musket ball suggests one of several Ponkapoag men who served in the English militia and the earthenware mug might well have been used by one of the Ponkapoag women who purchased cider through the Guardians (Clements 2005). Taken together, this small assemblage represents both persistence of ritual and transformation of material culture. All the burials were placed in row-like formation, indicating spatially clustered groups, possibly families, or perhaps several individuals who died about the same time. The latter proposition is consistent with episodic diseases which periodically struck the Ponkapoag community during the eighteenth century but also might indicate that this small cemetery was used by an aging population whose elderly members died within a short period of each other. Because there was no research conducted on the majority of the skeletons, which were identified, documented, and protected in situ, but not excavated, researchers could only determine the age or gender of the unanticipated discoveries made in the 1960s. Nevertheless, it is notable that the land containing the Burr Lane burial ground remained under Indian control until the early eighteenth century, after which it was sold to the descendants of colonists, who were gradually taking over all the Ponkapoag lands (Clements 2005).

The evidence from all these burial grounds indicates both traditional Native American and Christian rituals incorporated into private burials and community mourning rituals. They also reveal women's agency in resisting Puritan patriarchy through ideology as well as the careful manipulation of discourse through material culture. Indeed, the evidence suggests a calculated use of material culture to resist

the instruments of colonization and its oppressive colonial structures. That Native men benefitted, to some degree, from patriarchy explains the willingness of some men to collude with the Puritans in subordinating women, as Sarah Ahauton's adultery trial has indicated. Whatever the material outcome of colonialism (and the experiences of all three Indian women reveal its treachery), archaeology points to women's early, vigorous, and collective response to Puritan patriarchy. In the end, both historical documents and material culture indicate the devastation of colonialism on Native American women's private lives.

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## Chapter 7

# Reforming Bodies: Self-Governance, Anxiety, and Cape Colonial Architecture in South Africa, 1665–1860

Shannon M. Jackson

The conquest and colonization of South Africa, first by the Dutch and then by the British, resulted in the construction of Dutch-style houses expressing openness in gender and racial interactions, followed by British remodeling of houses, and the built environment in general, to increase gender and racial segregation. One impact of these changes in built form on the cultural context of the Western Cape has been struggle, on the part of the Dutch as well as the mixed-race groups evolving out of contact between slaves, indigenous groups, and the Dutch, with the liberal ideology of self-governance informing the spatial separation of public and private spheres. For the Dutch, this struggle resulted, in part, in the Great Trek (1830s and 1840s), a fleeing from the British into the interior of South Africa, as well as the Anglo-Boer Wars (1880–1881, 1899–1902). The mixed-race groups that remained in the Western Cape and Cape Town engaged in a sort of creative struggle with the racist and sexist contradictions at the heart of liberal humanism. One such response has been the creation of female-headed households and sustained participation of women in the public sphere of the workforce (Ridd 1981).

Attention to the relationship between culture and the built environment galvanized in the 1990s, offering a broad spectrum of insight about the power of architectural form to shape human practice and meaning. Lawrence Taylor, at one end of the spectrum, argued that rooms are themselves powerful; he describes ways in which “activity-specific rooms and furniture...served as physical templates for behavior” (Taylor 1999: 228) during the Victorian era. Susan Kent, at the other end, suggested “the *use* of space influences architecture more strongly and consistently than the other way around” (Kent 1990: 2, my emphasis). Amos Rapoport, in this same spirit, cautioned that behavior occurs, not *in* architecture, but in systems of meaning linked, through habit and practice, to systems of activities which are only loosely contained by built

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form (Rapoport 1990: 18). The arguments that architecture or built/material form determines behavior and that connections between the two can be reduced to functional explanation or even further reduced to ahistorical structure have, in fact, been carefully challenged by Rapoport for decades. Matthew Johnson, building on this foundation, suggests “We can start with the basic proposition that the relationship between spatial form and social and ideational structure...is not straightforward or unproblematic” (Johnson 1993: 30). He also reminds us that the same built form can have a very different effect in different historical and cultural contexts.

One of the difficulties in establishing links to architecture through behavior and meaning, for historical archaeologists, is that the situated systems of activities that produced these links in the past are, of course, no longer available for observation. Strong inferences, however, can be made when “semi-fixed-feature elements” (Rapoport 1990) like furniture and more fixed elements like architectural grammar (Johnson 1993) are aligned with classificatory schemes such as status and gender. Johnson analyzes spatial-grammatical changes occurring in traditional English architecture where homes with a standardized open-hall layout are renovated in the late sixteenth century to accommodate a more closed layout that segregates activity and adjusts movement according to shifts in the meaning and significance of face-to-face contact and abstract class boundaries. He loosely connects changes in room position and function to a broader sharpening of class and gender distinctions occurring in the seventeenth century. Once the architectural transition stabilizes in the seventeenth century, it “closes,” resulting in the integrated vernacular of fully Georgian homes “which cast their refined gaze over an increasingly segmented, segregated world” (Johnson 1993: 103).

Part of what will be examined here is a similar such renegotiation of built form occurring in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century when the English began civilizing beyond their own landscapes, taking this closed vernacular with them and casting a more anxious but “refined gaze” on colonial frontiers and subjects, such as that expressed here, by an Englishman visiting South Africa:

He strolls forth into the town, not without some slight exhibition of that mild self-appreciation and unobtrusive, though unmistakable disparagement of others which is the birthright privilege of an Englishman abroad; and surveys what presents itself to his notice with an air as of calm and lofty indifference, but in real truth with an observant eye that leaves nothing unremarked, with a mind trained to compare and to reason, with a memory ready to receive and to retain all that is really worth remembering (Cape Monthly Magazine 1861: 67).

What is proposed is a potential relationship between the organization of domestic space, systems of meaning associated with self-governance, and new knowledge about the human body as they emerged and sharpened in a colonial context—that of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Cape Town, South Africa. Johnson’s use of the term gaze is suggestive of metaphors of embodiment, which need to be considered in more detail when links between cultural meaning, domestic habit, and built form are being established. In the absence of observable practice, we can look at ways the body itself becomes, simultaneously, an object and instrument of political, economic reform connecting the English nation-building occurring in the backdrop of Johnson’s investigation to the formation of racial boundaries in newly acquired colonial contexts.

But, the following also takes to heart Johnson's statement about the relationship between meaning and built form being an inherently problematic one.

An aspect of what emerges in Cape Town in the eighteenth century is an adjustment of already established built form and an accommodation of an already racially and culturally mixed population which may have had the unanticipated consequence of deepening European anxiety and frustration rather than relieving it. If it is the human body, through its practical and meaningful dispositions (Bourdieu 1977), that lends force to built boundaries, then the accommodation of the English Georgian vernacular to locally built conditions has to be interpreted as a simultaneous accommodation to the racially mixed and racially marked bodies that penetrated and, some might argue, controlled the domestic sphere of the earlier Dutch colony. These are the bodies that literally move across thresholds, and, as Mary Douglas, drawing on Van Gennep, reminds us, there is a unique energy to unstructured margins: "The homely experience of going through a door is able to express so many kinds of entrance" (Douglas 1996: 115). The English settlers who begin to populate Cape Town in the early nineteenth century also bring with them changing sensibilities about the meaning of the human body as an object of knowledge and an instrument of political reform. These sensibilities combine presumptions of depth to the human body, a desire to train the eye (the gaze) to penetrate its invisible reaches, and an emphasis on more abstract systems of social control where entrance to interior bodily capacity eclipses the significance of the front door, which, interestingly, becomes much smaller.

Evidence suggests this translated into a thickening of built surfaces, a gradual parsing of movement through the household, and a domestic sphere increasingly separated from the public. Changes in legal and political form also show accommodation to local conditions rather than a full break with the prior colonial order. These patterns provide the interpretive backdrop to an examination of the relationship between cultural meaning and domestic architecture and the cautious conclusion that despite the meaningful coherence of built, bodily form brought to bear by the British in Cape Town, there is a failure to fully integrate the expectations associated with self-governance. And, such failure may have inspired the anxieties that later coalesced into formal segregation, contradicting and confusing the liberal-humanist principles of which the British were so proud.

## Self-Governing Cape Town

...long before 1870 the barbaric forms of deterrent punishment thought necessary in Company days for the maintenance of public order, which shocked visitors like Sparrman and Barrow, had given place to gentler methods of law enforcement (Davenport 1982: 273)

The Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or VOC) occupied the Western Cape region of South Africa for about 150 years prior to full

transition to British control in 1815. In the course of this 150 years, Dutch and French slave-owning households (most slaves came from Malaysia and Indonesia) brought individuals of differing status and cultural background into close proximity, producing new forms of language, cuisine, aesthetic proclivity, and, even, literally new populations. South Africa's contemporary "Coloureds" (the dominant population of the Western Cape) trace the origins of their own mixed-race group to this period of literal, intimate contact between the Dutch settlers, the slaves, and the few remaining indigenous Khoisan. In this respect, their heritage and basic origins are the same as the Afrikaners who later rejected their *bruin broers* (brown brothers), forcibly removing them from the center of the city in the mid-twentieth century (forced removals were a key instrument of population control for the Afrikaners who formed the National Party, or Apartheid regime). In a 1981 ethnographic account, the "Coloured" areas of Cape Town were still being described as a "thorn in the flesh of government planners" (Ridd 1981: 189).

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Cape Dutch households were conducive to intimate contact due to the fluid and flexible nature of their layout and thin separation of public and private spheres. A certain freedom of movement and ease of face-to-face access was possible in a household where walls and doors were few, or large, and where rooms were not rigidly defined by function. A Cape Dutch household, both rural and urban, fostered a perpetual flow of activity from the street or outbuilding to the courtyard and back again, with few restrictions on the movements of air, commerce, women, and slaves. A key social mechanism for the prevention of anyone "acting out of place," a place that was rigidly determined by a divinely ordered hierarchy, was the violence that is afforded patriarchal families (Shell 1994) or other, more subtle and spontaneous, face-to-face forms of coercion. Sumptuary laws also ensured status as well as gender was visibly carried on the surface of bodies (ibid.).

Burghers were those former VOC employees who resided in Cape Town as "free" merchants tied to the Dutch monopoly on trade between the Cape and the Straits of Magellan in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Cape Town's population exploded between 1701 and 1778; it went from 2,000 to about 21,000; in 1711, the slave population was about 2,000, and by 1778, it was minimally estimated at 11,107 (Davenport 1982). And, by 1786, there were some 1,200 houses in Cape Town (ibid.). The eventual limitations of the VOC's ability to control a growing land- and labor-hungry population of settlers and the demands for expansion of the frontier into increasingly hostile Xhosa territory meant the company could no longer sustain a profit from the modest supply station it established in Cape Town in 1652. The VOC went bankrupt in 1793, and the British stepped in to establish early occupation in 1795, focusing on the Cape for its strategic military position in its battles with the French (ibid.).

With the signing of the Treaty of Amiens, however, the British had to recognize the sovereignty of the French, and the Cape was then transferred to the Batavian Republic in 1802. Some British merchants (men) did remain and flourished under the revolutionary and modernizing zeal of the Batavian government. With the full dismantling of mercantilist, monopoly trade in favor of more free-market forms of

competition in the 1800s, merchant capital expanded and Cape Town became a strategic link for maritime trade with the East Indies. The British then reclaimed the Cape in 1805, and it eventually became a means of expanding the British Empire into the interior of South Africa. Its significance to the British expanded when they gained control of abundant mineral wealth east of the Vaal River. It later gained the distinction of being the “Gateway to Africa” (Pinnock 1989).

Along with a preference for free trade, the British brought with them a set of political sensibilities that stood in contrast to those of both the VOC and the settled Dutch and French population who established farms and a lively internal and export trade in wine and wheat. Ordinance No. 50 (1828), for example, removed all restrictive regulations applied to the movements of indigenous Khoisan and “free blacks,” treating them as equal in status to whites (Omer-Cooper 1994). This “legal revolution” shocked the original settlers (*ibid.*) and contributed, in part, to the pursuit of a separate Boer (Dutch) Republic in the interior. The British model of governance is referred to as liberal humanist, and it can be generalized in terms of a conviction that male individuals are naturally equipped to govern themselves. Self-governance, under the VOC, was quite alien at the Cape; administration and policy making were divided between the Chamber of Seventeen in the Netherlands and the Governor-General in Council at Batavia. The Estates-General was the highest legislative authority and often ruled from a distance with little concern for local conditions. This “gave local governments a considerable amount of discretion in their [statutes] application” (Hahlo and Kahn 1968: 574). And, prior to the nineteenth century, the Cape’s intellectual and educational maintenance was primarily controlled by the Dutch Reformed Church with its reliance on the Old Testament and belief in predestination.

Self-governance, for the British, essentially meant the instruments of social control were shifted to this-worldly private property and properly disciplined bodies amplified in their fleshy capacity for reason and homeostasis by free-market forces. Human interference in spatial order further corresponded to presumptions about the spatial makeup of the human body, particularly in terms of a functional separation of surface from interior. A properly disciplined body is one capable of abstracting away from its private self, of reflexively navigating its own interior. Disciplinary emphasis was placed on the ability to engage in detached observation, to see one-self, others, and the natural landscape in terms of autonomous objects passively available for improvement. Observation was also charged with connecting surface form with underlying structural function. So, one can interpret changing tastes in built form, particularly where the exterior of structures became more restrained in favor of interior specialization, as playing out against broader boundary conditions that separate the two.

Changes in built form occurred alongside changes in the legal structure as well, but like the built counterpart, legal boundaries had to accommodate those already in place. Contemporary South African law has been described as a complex “three-layer cake”: one layer is Roman, one is Dutch, and one is British (Hahlo and Kahn 1968), and it is often difficult to disentangle one from the other. Despite the very different legal priorities of the British, much of the earlier Roman system

(*Corpus Juris*), presumed to have a universal validity, which worked to sustain it for over a thousand years, remained in place, creating some confusion and antagonism during the transitional era. An article published in 1858 in the *Cape Monthly Magazine* responds to such confusion. By extolling the intellectual and moral virtues of the hybrid Roman-Dutch system, which draws on thousands of years of so-called legal wisdom, the article seems to be written in an effort to quiet the growing criticisms by the British. Part of the argument put forward is that English common law itself builds upon the more vague Roman system it inherited: “no state attained any national development, after the middle ages, in the municipal law of which these doctrines did not become inwoven” (*Cape Monthly Magazine* 1858: 133).

Liberal historians generally represent the era of Dutch rule at the Cape as lawless and archaic, partly as a result of its rural, slave-owning character and partly as a result of its reliance on, what seem to be, arbitrary forms of coercion and public torture. On closer inspection, this interpretation becomes problematic. Historian Robert Shell, for example, finds reference in the Dutch East India Company *Plakkaatboek* (lawbook) to legally acceptable punishment of slaves: “The owner is allowed, in the case of a slave making a mistake, to correct such a slave with domestic punishment, it is not permitted to set a slave in irons, or worse, to torture or otherwise maltreat the slave” (*Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakkaatboek*, 1602–1811, quoted in Shell 1994: 208). Shell also, interestingly, finds that slaves, women, and children are lumped together in terms of their legal rights, “Dutch authorities limited punishment of privately owned slaves to ‘domestic correction,’ the same type of punishment a husband and father could apply to his wife and children, individuals not equal to him in status (*ibid*)”. Private forms of punishment were therefore different from those applied publicly and exclusively by the company. Historian Robert Ross similarly finds the liberal interpretation curious given “the codifications and textbooks which they used were among the finest products of the greatest period of Dutch intellectual history” (Ross 1980: 5). Ross also finds, by comparison, that “as a class, the main body of slave-owners was remarkably powerless....[and] the position of the slave with regard to his master was stronger than in many other slave colonies” (Ross 1980: 7). According to James Armstrong and Nigel Worden, “trusted slaves, particularly herders, were sometimes given the use of firearms...” (1989: 158). Mixed-race “Hottentots” were also allowed to serve as commandos in loosely organized colonial militia on the frontier; “though the status of such people was not equal to the status of those of European descent, participation in commandos enabled many of them to acquire guns and horses...” (Penn 1989: 14).

Key distinctions that traditionally justified referring to the Dutch period as lawless come from the fact that there was little separation and specialization of powers in the judicial system and there was no principle of equal recognition or access to the law. A certain hierarchical ordering of society, in other words, was out of the hands of humans and firmly in the hands of the divine. According to historian Patricia van der Spuy, marital property under Roman-Dutch law was codified as community property, so, with few exceptions, ownership did not inhere in individuals, and most adult individuals were married (van der Spuy 1989). According to Martin Hall, women of the Cape Dutch gentry directly benefited from the fact that

they automatically inherited 50 % of their husband's properties upon his death. Historian Pamela Scully also addresses a contrast between the earlier Roman-Dutch system which places an "individual more firmly within a community" and the subsequent British system "which treated people as individuals before the law" (Scully 1995: 342). With the shift to more individuated forms of ownership and inheritance, and from divine to so-called natural law, some of the freedoms afforded women and the racially mixed or marked become curtailed. For instance, under English common law, widows could only inherit one third of their husbands' property and could not sell it (Coontz 1991: 83).

Scully argues that the post-emancipation era in South Africa witnessed the coordination of sex and race as newly elaborated constructs presumed to reflect the fact that particular bodies have natural (invisible) qualities that both inspire and elude human interference. These are bodies that supposedly lack the capacity of self-governance, including women and nonwhites. Under feme covert common law, English wives were considered nonpersons and chattel who belonged to their husbands, who represented the family. Scully looks specifically at the increase in legislation and criminal statute regarding race and sexuality in the nineteenth century—this despite the fact that the British emancipated slaves in 1834. Rape cases provide interesting clues regarding colonial concerns about race and gender as ways to racially distinguish rights-bearing subjects. By the mid-nineteenth century, "a man could only be convicted of rape if the prosecution could show that ejaculation had occurred" (Scully 1995: 343). This linked rape to reproduction and concern over controlling the potential racial degradation of the population. By contrast, Cape Dutch society responded to rape in terms of the collective damage caused to the honor of the patriarchal family or the honor of the husband. Full protection was afforded married women as these fell under the domain of Christian and therefore respectable moral boundaries. The death penalty would not be applied if the woman, the victim, was single. Scully interprets this as preventing its use in cases involving (non-Christian) slave or African women. A specifically British concern over equal protection under the law surfaced among particular judges and attorneys after emancipation, but a profiling of rape cases after 1850 shows contradictions with this liberal-humanist agenda. Scully (1995) finds that 81 % of the rapists of this period are working class and the majority are black or "Coloured" men. Though this might not surprise us, what is interesting is a set of cases in which white (settler) juries chose to set aside the death penalty for black and "Coloured" rapists, making claims about the unconstrained sexuality of black and working-class women, even if they were married.

Scully concludes from this that race became legitimated in new ways through the deployment of biological interpretations of sexuality as the invisible locus of human nature. She also suggests that patterns in convictions in the mid-nineteenth century reflect ambivalence among British colonialists "as to whether cultural practice alone could bring a person within the fold of European civilization" (Scully 1995: 359). The legal definitions, the abstract boundaries separating rights-bearing individuals, initially defined as private property owners, from each other, and the contracts that ensued after emancipation and amelioration were not sufficient to indelibly link the

right people (those capable of self-governance) to each other, to link particular bodies to particular places, and to ensure that the bodies of women and the racially marked could be relied upon to protect a fragile and anxious status hierarchy.

## Structure and Function in Architecture

According to Philippa Levine, writing of British colonialism and prostitution, “it was vital for colonial rule that British and native spaces be distinct, and that respectable and dangerous environments be clearly separated, just as it was necessary to distinguish among [races of] prostitute women” (Levine 2003: 306). South African historian Elizabeth van Heyningen conducted research on prostitution in the Cape, which illustrates interesting shifts in legal reform with the dismantling of Dutch control by mid-century. Prior to the influx of women from Europe, prostitutes were predominantly “Coloured” (van Heyningen uses the term “local”) and were loosely imbricated with every sector of the laboring class (some refer to this group as free blacks): “prostitutes were not members of a deviant group but formed a regular component of colonial society” (van Heyningen 1984: 93). The period between emancipation and Union government in 1910 saw both increases in the incidence of venereal diseases among the working poor and *laissez-faire* attitudes about reform. Implementation of the Contagious Diseases Act in 1868 largely failed. When European women began to migrate to the Cape in the late nineteenth century, brothels and organized crime contributed to the professionalization of prostitution and invited more careful scrutiny and legislation by a male and British public attaching larger national significance to the defense of “public virtue.” “Respectable” European women contributed to this agenda through the extension of the purity movement begun in England in the 1880s. The legislation that shows some success in publicly controlling prostitution is the Morality Act of 1885 which draws the medical profession, European women, and religious reformers into coordinated efforts to forge clearer boundaries around what is considered the most private of bodily acts (van Heyningen 1984).

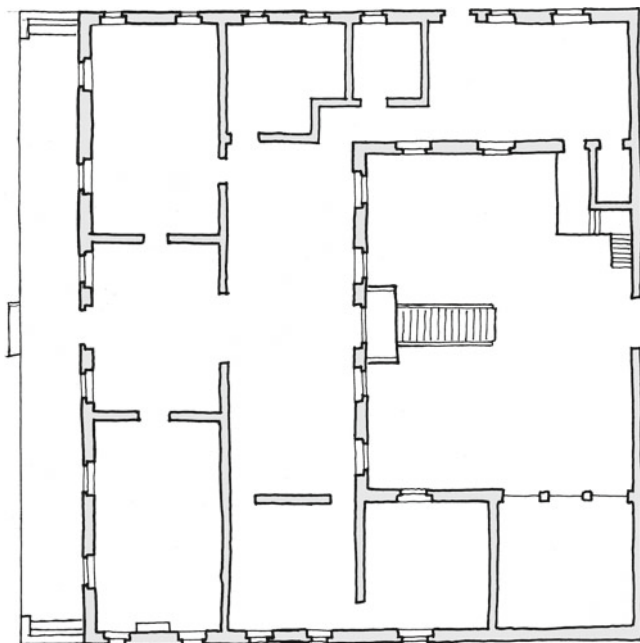
The Cape Dutch, cosmopolitan, and *laissez-faire* cultures that preceded British occupation thus inspired, on the part of the British, an intensified and sustained concern for coordinating spatial and bodily order in a way that does not leave the outcome of interaction between populations up to the chance of face-to-face, situational coercion. But the force of prior built form and the need to accommodate the ubiquitous presence of mixed-race groups at the center of Cape Town results in an incomplete structural transformation of Cape Town. Men had outnumbered women on all fronts—the VOC exclusively hired men, and it preferred to purchase male slaves. This translated into a large number of children born of European men and African and Asian slaves and indigenous Khoisan women (Shell 1994). So, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, mixed-race or “Coloured” women had become central figures in both urban and rural households; they had also become, for the British, emblematic of all forms of boundary confusion.



The British are often described as establishing a dramatic break from the prior system of order, particularly as they emancipated slaves and introduced legal and economic reforms undergirded by their more modern embrace of liberalism and individualism. Though they focus on the Eastern Cape, Margot Winer and James Deetz find, on the contrary, archaeological evidence demonstrating “there is a creation of a new English frontier form, rather than the recreation of English forms the settlers had known in their motherland” (Winer and Deetz 1990: 60). What they describe for the early nineteenth century are homes that lack the characteristic exterior gables of the Cape Dutch vernacular; they have, instead, a Georgian façade, but an “archaic” interior open-hall layout that is the *sine qua non* of Cape Dutch households.

Archaeologists have struggled to reconstruct a sense of the built environment for the earlier period of Dutch occupation in Cape Town. Evidence from Groot Constantia (Figs. 7.1 and 7.2), a functioning wine farm just outside the city, illustrates several key features: characteristic front and side gables, wide doors, large multipurpose entrance hall, and fluid movement from front to back. Martin Hall has worked to chronologically pinpoint the construction of the gables distinctively associated with Cape Dutch architecture. He writes that “only about forty standing or recently standing buildings have gables that can be attributed to a specific year prior to the Dutch capitulation in 1795...” (Hall 1994: 5). One key difficulty is the fact that central Cape Town has experienced continuous occupation and the British often sustained the structures they inherited and gradually adjusted floor plans or made additions to suit tastes and needs, and these remain hidden from view. The British also replicated some of the architectural styles of the Dutch and absorbed local expertise on the use of building materials. Some patterns can be gleaned from extant structures, archaeological excavation, descriptions from colonial-era journals, and probate records to support the conclusion that the same or a similar formal shift from open to closed occurred in Cape Town as occurred in Johnson’s transitional English context a century earlier, but appear to have done so with accommodation to the influences of prior occupants.

Eighteenth-century structures in Cape Town offered a variety of floor plans, depending on the size of lots, but evidence suggests that these began to change by mid-century, particularly in the form of increased and standardized use of the *voorhuis* (front room or hall). This is interpreted as a shift toward formalization of both function and vernacular architecture (Brink 1990). So, alongside the mid-nineteenth-century expansion of the merchant class and then subsequent “free” laboring classes, households were being “refashioned towards specialized spaces” and began to “contrast more and more with those urban and rural households that retained a communal character” in the previous era (Malan 1993: 94). One can also begin to see a gradual retreat of the “respectable” home from its earlier public orientation to the street. This retreat does not apply to the dominant model for working-class housing, built in the early twentieth century, that sustains but expands the use of the front *stoep* (step), a transitional space which allows women to literally control the threshold between street and house (Fig. 7.3).



**Fig. 7.1** Floor plan, hand-drawn by Jack Rees, of Groot Constantia, built by Simon van der Stel, the first governor of the Cape Colony, in 1685



**Fig. 7.2** Interior photo from the Elliot Collection, E4650 Western Cape Archives, of entrance hall of Groot Constantia, restored and rebuilt to resemble its original condition after a fire gutted it in 1925



**Fig. 7.3** A hand-drawn reproduction of a photo of two buildings in downtown Cape Town. The building on the left was built during Dutch period, and the building on the right was built during the English period. Drawing by Jack Rees

The British worked to create marked transitions from exterior to interior with features such as decorative wrought iron (now referred to as *broekie*, or panty lace) placed in front of windows and front steps, and exterior doors become smaller and less ornate. Again, for respectable as opposed to working-class homes, interior doors become more numerous with more panels, and fireplaces are added to private as well as public rooms. Movement throughout the house would have become more instrumental than spontaneous, particularly as narrow passageways were introduced and central staircases began to wind or constrict. The use of gables as exterior status symbols disappears, and by mid-nineteenth century, homes are built with verandahs and eventually surrounded by gates, walls, and gardens, all functioning as buffers between public and private. According to Robert Ross,

The increased stress on privacy which the English strove for meant that they built houses with halls and corridors, from which the rooms opened, rather than having a *voorkamer* [front room] opening directly to the street from which all other houses emanated. Benjamin Moodie, taking over a Dutch house at Grootvadersbosch near Swellendam, felt himself required to erect an interior partition to separate his living quarters from those of the servants and from the smells of the kitchen. (Ross 1999: 81)

The *voorhuis*, often described as a hall, was usually flanked on each side by bedrooms, so that, if all doors in this house were open, the interior life of the whole household could be rendered accessible from the outside. According to Cape architectural historian De Bosdari, the boundaries of the center of the house could themselves be rendered permeable or negotiable: “The entrance-hall or *Voorhuis*, is often divided from the main reception-room by a SCREEN....For dances, the leaves are folded one on another, and the two sides of the door then open and lie almost flush with the side-walls, thereby making the whole centre of the house into one large room” (De Bosdari 1953: 23). Rooms in smaller Dutch structures did not generally terminate; they led contiguously into each other. A quote from a British traveler’s

diary at the time reveals the sense of spatial discomfort many British would experience with households organized in this way:

In a Cape farmer's house there is no privacy. The family sit at one end of their long halls, while the other is a kind of thoroughfare for the slaves and house-servants pursuing their culinary options, who over hear the conversation and know all the most private affairs of their master and mistress nearly as well they do themselves. (J.W.D. Moodie 1835, quoted in Dooling 1994: 37)

Antonia Malan used probate records to establish the layout of whole urban blocks during the period of Dutch occupation. Archival traces of floor plans and probate records illustrate “there is no evidence for slaves and servants being provided with separate accommodation” (Malan 1998: 105). Historian Robert Shell corroborates this:

Female slaves at the Cape were forced by reason of space to be under the broad thumb of their owner and family and to share their domestic culture. The process was reciprocal, however. Cape slave women helped create a creole culture, cuisine, and language—kitchen Dutch—through the centuries-long architectural arrangements around the Cape kitchen (Shell 1994: 261).

Malan and Klose analyzed ceramic evidence from three seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sites in Cape Town (2003) which suggests the aesthetic influence of fluid and hybrid forms of contact. They find a distinctive preponderance of earlier Asian porcelains despite the Cape becoming a full British Colony in 1814 and despite a concomitant expansion of British products on the global market. They also find that the majority of refined British manufactured industrial slipware vessels, which were generally hand-painted in bright harsh colors to suit local tastes, were plates and bowls without handles. Such bowls, interestingly, became an icon for Afrikaner folk culture later in the twentieth century. They then wonder if the bowls offer a link to more communal forms of household ritual and intimacy since such bowls tend to be used for large dishes and collective rather than individual use. Would slaves, “free blacks,” and masters who lived under the same roof have eaten meals together? Another way to interpret this evidence is in terms of the power of particular populations to shape domestic ritual and sustain prior spatial patterns at the level of aesthetic form and daily habit. The dishes with their distinctly colorful hand-painted patterns of the transitional era potentially reflect the influence of slaves and domestics descended from Asia on local taste and cuisine.

Linguistic evidence establishing the evolution of Afrikaans, an informal patois that only became standardized in the 1920s, and often referred to as “kitchen Dutch,” supports the interpretation that households of this earlier Dutch period facilitated rather intimate and fluid contact between different linguistic and status groups and was heavily influenced by face-to-face contact with slaves and Khoi apprentices. Though Afrikaner nationalists of the early twentieth century claimed Afrikaans as their own exclusive language, it is actually a language of contact. The mixed-race progeny of indigenous Khoisan, Cape slaves, and Europeans who are now the dominant population in the Western Cape lays equal claim to Afrikaans as their own language (Bickford-Smith 1993).

A legal case study located in an archival source from 1744 illustrates nicely a form of intimacy between the wives of Dutch farmers, often left alone to run households, and “Vryswart” or free blacks. They would have conversed by means of a shared language. Here is the case of Anna Marais, who was left in charge of a household in her husband’s absence but aided in the maintenance of the slaveholding by a “free black” named Sinopaaij, as retold by historian Patricia van der Spuy. The case was brought by Anna Marais who fled to her uncle’s holding with Sinopaaij. It is likely that Marais’ report was exaggerated out of the fear she felt.

The story of Anna Marais, wife of a farmer, as told in *Historia* [CAD CJ 350, Criminal Process 1744: 618–642], begs but does not answer the question of relationships between slaveholding women and “Vrijswarten.” Anna Marais was eating breakfast in the “voorkamer” with the Vryswart Sinopaaij. Her husband, Francois Retief, was away on militia duty. The previous evening Anna had certainly not been alone, as she had told her companion that one of the slaves was an ape. The slave, having heard this remark, told a fellow slave that he would sleep with Anna Marais, even if he had to rape her (van der Spuy 1989: 10).

Juxtaposing such archival and archaeological traces onto actual floor plans from this period suggests that both movement and contact throughout the Dutch household were flexible and face-to-face, even where women and “free blacks” were concerned, rather than formally regulated. Since rooms were categorized according to their location in the house rather than their predetermined function, their use was negotiable. A *voorhuis*, for example, might be located along the side of a house, performing the function of a passageway, or it could be positioned between two side rooms offering, in a larger house, a place to sleep, to do business, to entertain guests, or to hold public meetings. Again, through Malan’s use of probate records for the period 1750–1850, we are able to glimpse a basic layout to the Cape Dutch townhouse, which unfolds from two centrally located rooms, the *voorhuis* and *galdery*, both of which give this structure its communal, open character and positioned the household as central to a kinship-based economy and social structure. The front rooms of the house were fluid and liminal spaces that could be used for alternating public and private functions. The *galdery* “provided the main venue for family and guest interaction, particularly eating together, and many domestic activities with family, servants and slaves together” (Malan 1993: 66).

Nathaniel Merriman describes, in his nineteenth-century (1848–1855) journals, the openness of the Cape Dutch household and the ubiquity of the mixed-race servant or slave: “They all live (family, and to a great extent, servants too) in the great ‘fore-house’ [*voorhuis*]....The Coloured woman has always her baby, and sometimes two...even...three children...playing in the room. If the baby cries, the *vrouw* [wife] will perhaps send one of her own children to nurse [take care of] it...” (Merriman quoted in Lewsen 1982: 7) (Fig. 7.4).

Malan’s research also suggests that women, both slave and free, would have had considerable economic freedom in these households. “Evidence of extensive domestic retailing, inheritance patterns, and careful reading of contemporary comments, taken together challenge assumptions about the secondary nature of women’s business in the colonial Cape” (Malan 1998: 115). Roman-Dutch law dictated that



**Fig. 7.4** Drawing of Dutch farm house interior; Elliot Collection, Western Cape Archives E3900

women's trading and retailing could only be done with her husband's permission. But the late eighteenth-century observations of O. Mentzel describe a certain informal equality established within the Cape Dutch household. Since all trade was explicitly controlled by the VOC, women came to control a sort of black market in trade out of their household (van der Spuy 1989). Men who were free Burghers would often have been craftsmen, while their wives occasionally earned more than they did trading out of the home.

Archaeologist Martin Hall uses property titles and wills from the eighteenth century to construct a kinship chart associated with the earliest gabled structures in the Cape. He finds that all of these are continuously owned by descendants of only seven families or ancestors. His data suggests a variety of things, but he essentially argues the gable is the primary symbolic indicator of the status position so heavily guarded by a small Cape gentry. He further links the gable to race and gender by pointing to the preponderance of women of European heritage, controlling, either through ownership or through their wills, the inheritance of the gabled structure. Hall also points out that spatial order for the Dutch imbricates a woman's body, with a kinship structure and an elaborate gable that announces the fertility of this relationship at the entrance of a home. He writes: "the ebullience of the gable and its associations of fertility and natural increase is contained by the second definitive component in the design of the Cape country manor house—the strict symmetry of the building plan" (Hall 1994: 27).

A certain disdain for the use of exterior gables proliferates among the British who prefer more restrained surfaces. Architectural historian Ronald Lewcock describes the earliest English settlers as having "avoided the traditional white buildings with whitewashed sculptured plaster decoration of Cape Town, which had always struck the British visitors on arrival as unusual, and introduced in their stead houses of the type most common in England at that date, relying almost entirely on



proportioning and material texture for its effectiveness” (Lewcock 1963: 38–39). An English visitor to the Cape offers first impressions of the surfaces of local architecture in 1861, remarking on the excessive elaboration of the exterior of Cape Dutch structures: “With such a principle as this as the foundation of their ideas on the subject of architecture—that mere external decoration produced by such means was sufficient compensation for the absence of grandeur in design and the employment of mean materials—it is not to be wondered at that the colonists should have made but little advance in constructive art” (Cape Monthly Magazine 1861: 68). This observer also comments on the lack of distinction attached to public buildings: “The public offices do not even pretend to any architectural effect...” (ibid).

Historians generally interpret the spatial transition from the more flexible, communal forms of the Dutch to the more formalized, specialized patterns of the British as a response to a more individualized society and the shift from a household (kinship) to an industrial economy. Such an interpretation also implies that built form is unproblematically shaped by meaning and behavior and that the “hidden pedagogy” of domestic space does or will succeed in reforming both bodies and beliefs. What needs to be considered is the possibility that the separation of form and function at the level of the built environment in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Cape Town may have, in some respects, failed to transform all bodies in the same way so that certain groups (such as free blacks or “Coloureds”) were able to sustain their ability to control “thresholds”.

## Conclusion: Bodies and Boundaries in Transition

The changes in cultural, material, and aesthetic forms that accompany the transition to British control of the Cape are the product, not just of different tastes, backgrounds, and status hierarchies, but of a different or changing model of the body as well. In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, change occurred in the locus of production from kinship network and household to an individual, autonomous body, recognized as both a legal and biological entity. And, with this shift comes a new emphasis on the creation of a dense web of constraints operating from inside-out, rather than outside-in. Such constraints ideally remove the need for arbitrary rule and violence, dispersing social controls onto the more abstract domain of achieved status and self-governance. This transition required both the reform of daily habits and the training of new layers of professional expertise associated with the medical, municipal, and military administering of nationally and racially circumscribed populations. For colonial subjects and citizens, a more self-conscious national identity was trained on the detection of disease and pathology, particularly where racial boundaries were unclear. The connection of bodily interior to surface behavior became a conceptual tool in the reclassification of populations through racial taxonomy. This was, in a way, analogous to the separation of structure and function in built form and classificatory schemes elaborated by scientists for all organisms.



According to Alexander Butchart, the African body, during the Renaissance period, “was merely a random collection of external organs...without an interior anatomy to unify them” (Butchart 1998: 56–57). Butchart reviews the travel journals and accounts of eighteenth-century naturalists to examine the interpretive frameworks being applied to African bodies. Anders Sparrman, who visited the Cape in order to document its unusual natural fecundity, described the Africans he encountered in rather superficial detail; he tended to invest more time in describing plant and animal life. J. Barrow, by contrast, begins to apply a theory of structure, that of organizing observed detail according to number, magnitude, form, and arrangement, thus attributing a relationship between observed form and structural distinction as is necessary for taxonomic classification (Butchart 1998).

The independence of specific organs was further reduced in all animals in the early nineteenth century when Henri Milne-Edwards reconceptualized the natural taxonomy devised by George Cuvier according to the concept of the division of labor (Limoges 1994). Both the morphology and the internal structure of all organisms came to be interpreted according to the interdependence of parts, subsumed into larger but autonomous systems, which then functioned according to the shared principle of increased productivity evolving out of a decrease in redundancy and a parallel increase in specialization. This meant a shift in the hierarchization of organisms according to a balance of complexity and output, rather than a great chain of continuous being. It also linked all organisms to a shared organic universe regulated by an equilibrium premised on the interdependence of structure and function. This helped to substantively challenge certain beliefs in predestination, placing all organisms and all bodies within the same natural, taxonomic framework.

Shifts logically occur, then, in medical expertise and practice. During the VOC era, medicine was, for the most part, practiced at the bedside. Butchart describes the patient, during this period, as having a body with no autonomy; the body was linked to the entire cosmos. This means the causes of disease could be as much the weather as the flora in the immediate vicinity. Borrowing from Foucault’s *The Birth of the Clinic*, he proposes: “Where bedside medicine had abstracted the body of the patient from medical space, hospital medicine fabricated a gaze for which it was the body itself that was ill, and therefore the body itself that had to be known in all its fleshy and intimate detail...” (Butchart 1998: 23). This newly trained gaze was one that could abstract away from its own act of seeing in order to terminate in the object seen, an autonomous object that linked fleshy and conceptual nature according to a division of labor of function.

A key transition in both habit and belief thus occurs when the source of disease becomes inextricably linked with the interior of the body and then, by extension, particular bodies and, by further extension, particular homes. The internal regulation of the home was connected to the internal regulation of the body since it was assumed that bodily boundary and built or human-made boundary, as opposed to cosmic boundary, could mutually contaminate. During a period of outbreak of the plague in Cape Town, a resident, for example, writes to the *Cape Times*: “Kindly inform me and the public at large as to the best method of disinfecting washing, etc. There is a grave danger attached to the sending out of wash clothes, for in the majority of cases they are taken to the dwelling-houses of the Malays [Coloureds]” (Cape Times 1901). Historian Vivian

Bickford-Smith utilizes newspapers to chronicle such racist sensibilities unfolding in Cape Town in the nineteenth century. He organizes his narrative around responses to unhealthy living conditions and the proliferation of epidemics to show a sifting of poor whites from “coloured and black slum dwellers” (Bickford-Smith 1984: 44). It was widely held that the former were not to blame for unhealthy living conditions, while the latter seemed to carry the problem in their very being. Since such bodies could not help but make such living conditions, this provided later justification for urban reform and town planning policies that focused on providing purpose-built homes specifically designed for the needs of working-class “Coloureds.”

As the medical gaze was developing into a generalizable instrument of social order, private invisible spaces were also being integrated into the built environment. The free movement of women and mixed-race colonial subjects across the thresholds of private spheres intensified anxieties about prostitution, the spread of disease, and the nature of the bodies that contaminate. Cape Town, by the early nineteenth century, was filled with such bodies. Elizabeth van Heyningen rather bluntly points out that “by the mid-nineteenth century a relatively ancient urban society existed in the mother city, in which sexual promiscuity was not only a necessary means of livelihood but was probably also culturally acceptable as loose connections were formed and broken—often violently—amongst the most wretched of the city’s inhabitants” (van Heyningen 1984: 81). By the late nineteenth century, bubonic plague and epidemic disease in Cape Town were offering imaginative metaphors for all forms of boundary confusion and disorder (Swanson 1977). For colonial administrators, faced with unsettled and unsettling frontiers and cities that proliferated plague, prostitution, and runaway speculation, the *laissez-faire* tendencies of prior Dutch control inspired both anxiety and focused adjustments in the built environment in order to discipline human contact.

Cultural geographer Jessica Dubow makes an interesting argument about the evolving sensibilities of the earliest British settlers at the Cape. She argues that “beneath the ideology and rhetoric of spatial ordering,...we may discern the traces of an anterior, and alternative understanding of colonial landscape” (Dubow 2001: 247). Dubow describes a landscape that offers its own unique form of agency; it worked its way into the bodies of settlers rather than offering passive compliance to their mastery of it as self-governing subjects asserting classificatory hubris. She is describing something she refers to as “spatial nausea”—“the experience of a space that so thwarts intellection, and so exceeds the bounds of the rational that mental unease becomes borne in the body itself: the cognitive shock of an alien landscape transferred and transformed as felt bodily symptom” (Dubow 2001: 248). Though Dubow is primarily focusing on the natural landscape of the Eastern Cape frontier where roads did not generally exist and the primary mode of European transportation was an ox wagon, her perspective offers interesting analogies to the cosmopolitan, cultural “landscape” of Cape Town.

Though the Dutch laid the city out according to a tidy grid, and though they sustained a careful symmetry in their basic architecture, they allowed a social and interior world to unfold around a volatile and fluid combination of violence, face-to-face negotiations of difference, and intimacy. The Cape Town that the British began to

rearrange was a racially hybridized city that challenged efforts to impose all forms of abstract, classificatory, and self-governing order. Because the boundaries marking the dirt, disease, and disorder, so characteristic of nineteenth-century Cape Town, were not strictly material, because these were also meaningful, they better illustrate the sense of “spatial nausea” described by Dubow. Change in the layout of domestic structures, a thickening of the exterior of private homes, and the use of public masking were a few responses to such spatial discomfort, but these did not necessarily relieve the anxieties inspired by actual bodies. The racial difference and sexual difference, something directly linked to bodily depth, the separation of public and private space, the sexual division of labor, and the organic relationship between structure and function evolved into a seemingly infinitely flexible boundary moving with the projections of anxious settlers struggling to keep their gaze refined.

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# Chapter 8

## Missionization and the Cult of Domesticity, 1769–1850: Local Investigation of a Global Process

Angela Middleton

### Introduction

New Zealand, known as Aotearoa by its Polynesian settlers who arrived in the thirteenth century, formed the final outreach of Polynesian settlement into the Pacific (Higham and Jones 2004; Horrocks et al. 2007; Wilmshurst et al. 2008) and was also the last outpost of European expansion that followed some 500 years later, after its “discovery” by Captain James Cook in 1769. By the late eighteenth century, it was the focus of intense but ephemeral commercial exploitation for sealskins, whale oil, and timber, most of this conducted from New South Wales, Australia, some 1,500 km across the Tasman Sea, where the British convict settlement of Port Jackson (later known as Sydney) was established in 1788. The first missionaries to New Zealand followed firmly on the heels of sealers and whalers, some two and a half decades before formal British annexation in February 1840 (Middleton 2005, 2008; Smith 2008).

This examination of the archaeology and history of Te Puna, one of New Zealand’s earliest mission stations, places the mission in the wider context of missionization in North America, Australia, and parts of the Pacific in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this process, two different types of mission stations are identified, both sharing the “cult of domesticity” as one of the driving ideologies in the transformation of indigenous peoples. The family home, the mission house, ceased to be a private family dwelling as Maori from nearby villages were incorporated into the household, and the domestic arts were taught as part of a “civilizing” process. In this way, the house itself became an ideal realm where public standards of domesticity had to be maintained at all times, not only modeled to Maori but also displayed to the critical eye of other CMS missionary brethren.

This can be likened to the process of internal colonialism (see Introduction), but in this case the missionaries were the immigrants, and Maori the dominant

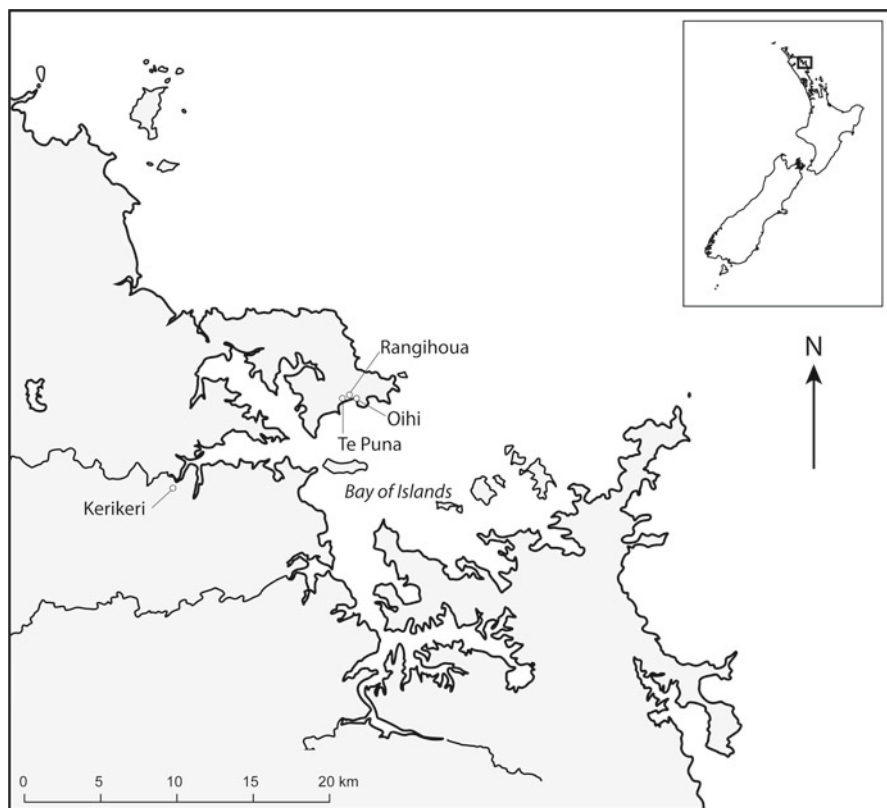
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**Fig. 8.1** Bay of Islands, New Zealand, showing locations mentioned in the text (Courtesy Ian Smith, University of Otago)

population and culture. Nonetheless, through this public household the mission began the process of imposing western domesticity, a nexus of cultural exchange. As Gordon (2006) has pointed out in relation to this concept, it was a syncretic two-way process. This is demonstrated in the New Zealand context where in the early days of the CMS, missionaries, despite teaching domestic arts, had themselves to conform to Maori tikanga (cultural practices and expectations).

Samuel Marsden, chaplain to the convict settlement at Port Jackson, had long planned a Christian mission to New Zealand's indigenous Maori and in 1814 finally brought this about, with the arrival of three "mechanic" missionaries and their families to establish the Church Missionary Society (CMS) mission station at Oihi in the Bay of Islands (Figs. 8.1 and 8.2), under the auspices of a powerful local chief. These were New Zealand's first European settlers, John and Hannah King among the number. In 1832, the Oihi mission closed and the last missionaries there moved to the neighboring station of Te Puna, itself abandoned by the early 1870s.

Throughout the life of the Oihi mission, Maori dominated the Bay of Islands, numerically, politically, and economically. They had selectively adopted European plants and animals—potatoes and pigs—and produced these commercially for





**Fig. 8.2** Oihi mission station, in the valley to the right, and Rangihoua pa, on the hill at left, 1827 (Artist Augustus Earle, 1793–1838. Rex Nan Kivell Collection, National Library of Australia. PIC T176 NK12/139)

trade with Port Jackson and visiting ships (Middleton [2007c](#)). By the early nineteenth century, firearms were incorporated into traditional patterns of warfare, continuing to focus on intertribal conflict rather than resistance to European presence, at least until after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 (Ballara [2003](#)). Nonetheless, in the early days of the Oihi mission, the missionaries were threatened and often felt at the mercy of Maori war parties gathering on the beach below the mission prior to setting out on war expeditions to the south. In these situations, the missionaries were dependent on the protection of the chief of Rangihoua pa. Efforts to move beyond the protective mantle of the pa had proven dangerous, for example, in 1815 when one missionary couple moved further up the harbor, only to be attacked and driven back to the safety of Oihi. As other mission stations were established in the Bay of Islands from 1819 onwards, this changed as missionary influences and internal Maori politics gradually altered the dynamics of Maori warfare and other aspects of society.

## The Cult of Domesticity and the Church Missionary Society

Within the CMS, European gender roles were considered the ideal, to be modeled to and emulated by indigenous societies. While mission work was considered the realm of the male, women were essential to the cause, their domestic role idealized and accentuated within evangelical Christianity and the British middle class (Davidoff and Hall [1991](#); Johnston [2003](#)). Changes brought about by the industrial revolution placed women within the home while men became breadwinners outside it; female “piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity” were emphasized in the “cult of true womanhood” or the “cult of domesticity” (Grimshaw [1989a](#): 22, [b](#); Langmore [1989](#); Wall [1994](#); McClintock [1995](#)). Evangelical Christians believed



that the proper place for a woman was the home, “the first and chief scene of their mission” (Davidoff and Hall 1991: 115). The presence of women was essential for the evangelizing, civilizing mission to model Christian monogamous family life and bring about the transformation of indigenous societies (Murray 2000: 69). Men were expected to marry before moving into the mission field in order to demonstrate this ideal domesticity and save themselves from the perils of indigenous women (Gunson 1978; Murray 2000; Johnston 2003; Middleton 2007a).

In 1792, the first evangelizing missionary voyages to India began. In 1795, the London Missionary Society was formed; four years later, the Church of England founded the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East in 1799, and in 1818, the Wesleyan Missionary Society was established (Middleton 2005, 2008). Initially, these societies worked together, their efforts in the Pacific coordinated by Samuel Marsden (Marsden 1857; Stock 1899, 1913; Elder 1932; Garrett 1982). After the early, virtual collapse of the LMS’s Tahitian mission (Ellis 1859; Stock 1899), the CMS advocated undertakings on a small scale and in 1808 engaged two “Christian artizans ... to go to New Zealand as pioneers of industry and civilization” (Stock 1899: 89). These were William Hall, a joiner and carpenter, and John King, a shoemaker, who reached Marsden’s Parramatta home in 1810 and remained there until 1814, when the Oihi mission was finally established.

The public role of the missionary home was explicitly stated in subsequent instructions from the CMS Committee to Henry and Marianne Williams, who arrived in New Zealand in 1823, establishing the Paihia mission where Henry became the leader of the New Zealand mission:

In the education of the Female Children, and in the general improvement of the condition of women in New Zealand, we doubt not but Mrs. Williams ... will readily contribute all that may be in her power; and we have the best hope that you will exhibit to the Natives the instructive example of a happy Christian family (CMS Committee in Rountree 2000: 54).

In this manner, the home of the mission family was transformed; small numbers of Maori lived within the mission house, often incorporated within the family; schools for both boys and girls were held there, and domesticity, usually considered private, became public as the skills necessary to maintain domestic standards were taught to Maori women and girls. Missionary women took on the public role of attempting to teach indigenous women that their place was in the home. But in an even greater dissonance, the missionary marriage itself became a public display of exemplary gender relations.

## **Te Puna: The New Zealand Mission**

### ***Te Puna Mission Station***

In 1832, the Oihi mission closed and John and Hannah King moved with their children to the new Te Puna mission house, their homes at Oihi now being almost uninhabitable (Fig. 8.3). Te Puna provided flat land suitable for agriculture and farming and the possibility of the mission becoming self-sustaining. At the same time, the

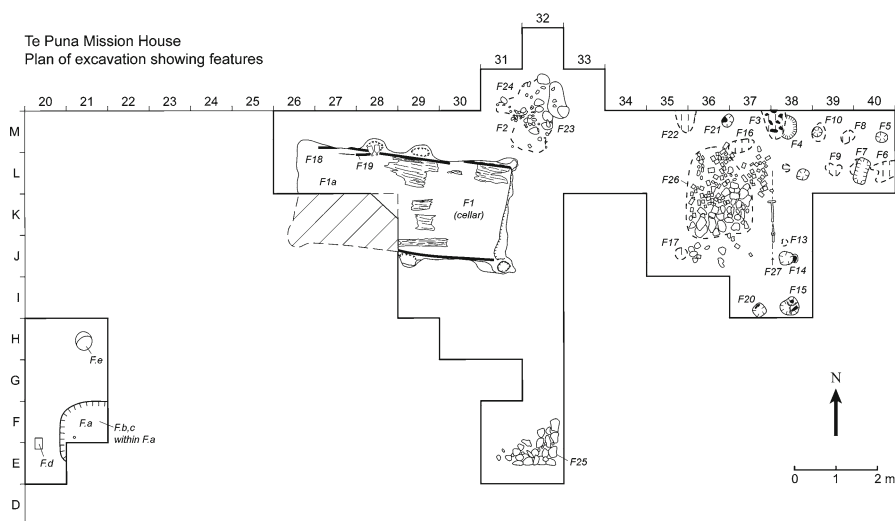


**Fig. 8.3** Te Puna mission station, c. 1839 (Artist Richard Taylor, 1805–1873. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. E-296-q-160-1)

mission to Maori of Rangihoua Pa could continue, as John King had advocated, and he could continue his role as an itinerant preacher, walking or riding his horse to visit Maori villages up and down the adjacent coast, staying away from the mission house for perhaps several days at a time. Small numbers of Maori children from Rangihoua Pa were taken into the mission, living sometimes as “whangai” or adoptive children within the family, as had also been the case at the earlier Oihi mission. John and Hannah King lived out the remainder of their lives at Te Puna, and following their deaths by the mid-1850s, several of their children remained living at the mission house, continuing to hold services and schools for the lingering Maori population until the early 1870s. By this date, Te Puna and Rangihoua Pa were situated in an isolated backwater, left well behind by the events of colonization and its consequences after 1840 (Middleton 2005, 2008).

### *Artifacts: Archaeology and Archives*

In March and April 2002, excavations carried out at the site of the Te Puna mission station revealed structural remains of the King family mission house (Fig. 8.4), in particular a cellar filled with the demolition rubble of the building itself and a mixture of artifacts including complete bottles and bottle glass, tools, nails, clay pipes, cast iron cooking vessels, buttons, thimbles and pins, and ceramic tableware (Middleton 2005, 2008). Artifacts recovered from the investigation of the mission house as well as CMS records of stores distributed to the King family point to the efforts to maintain appropriate standards of domestic dress and propriety, the external manifestation of the inward Christian values and behavior in the midst of an unfamiliar landscape, and a much larger Maori population. Artifacts from the archaeological context can also be reconnected with objects held in New Zealand



**Fig. 8.4** Plan of excavation showing relevant features, Te Puna Mission House investigation (Plan by author, 2002)

Historic Places Trust collections, donated by King family descendants, creating a wider picture of the material culture once used in the Te Puna mission house. Although missionary wife Hannah King left no written archives, daily life at Te Puna can be contextualized from descriptions of domesticity at other mission stations of the same era in the Bay of Islands and other nearby locations (Middleton 2005, 2007a, 2008), where other missionary women kept journals and letters. These archives and objects of material culture demonstrate the role of missionary women in maintaining the necessary standards of domestic and gender values associated with the cult of domesticity.

Traditional Maori society was an aceramic culture. Food was cooked in earth ovens and served in woven baskets; gourds and hollowed wooden vessels were used for liquid storage, liquids heated with the addition of hot stones. The Staffordshire ceramics and metal cooking vessels such as the “go-ashore” pot that came with missionaries and other early Europeans were innovations for Maori; the “go-ashore” was a favored item in the missionary trade accounts (Middleton 2007b). This aceramic past was transformed with the arrival of the highly decorated Staffordshire wares. The small assemblage of china fragments recovered from the Te Puna cellar evokes English table manners and tea-drinking habits, while some of the patterns depict far-distant idyllic English pastoral landscapes. Fragments of ceramic vessels from the archaeological context were matched to other complete vessels of the same patterns and sets displayed in collections held by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, suggesting that these were treasured family items, once difficult to obtain. Sherds of London-style teawares (cups, bowls, and saucers) of an unidentified pattern can be matched with a plate and sugar box of the same pattern and style in these collections. Other blue and white transfer-printed ceramics from the Staffordshire factories reinforce the concept of English domesticity and material symbols in



**Fig. 8.5** Selected ceramics from Bay of Islands mission collections. (Clockwise from *top left*) plate, unidentified “milk maid” pattern, Waimate Mission House; “Village Church” chamber pot, Te Puna mission assemblage; London-style sugar box, Waimate mission house; London-style tea cup fragments, unidentified “milk maid” pattern, Te Puna mission assemblage; “Village Church” pattern toilet box, Waimate mission house (Photographs by Author, 2005)

reproducing the social relations of England in an otherwise alien environment, objects of a certain gentility used in an unfamiliar setting, symbolic of a distant culture (Fig. 8.5).

Dress is a significant means of signaling identity and communicating social roles, one of the culturally constructed aspects of gender (Sorensen 2000; White 2005). Missionaries, and in particular missionary women, dressed in prescribed ways and went to some lengths to reproduce these values amongst Maori women and children (Rountree 2000; Middleton 2007a). Clothing the indigenous body was seen as an important part of mission work.

The main CMS school was based at the Paihia mission, where Henry Williams’ wife Marianne was considered the “exemplary” missionary wife (Grimshaw and Sherlock 2005: 180). At Paihia, the school was located at first in the mission house and later in the chapel. Schools were also held at other missions including Te Puna, although it is not clear whether this was located in the mission house itself or in one of the small outbuildings alongside. John King and his eldest son, also John, taught the men and boys, while Hannah King was expected to teach Maori women and girls sewing, embroidery, and other handwork skills, as well as the domestic practices essential for maintaining the standards expected of such a household. During its first year, John King described the mission routine: “During the week days school commences at six O’clock in the morning the natives are instructed in reading and writing and in first rules of arithmetic... Mrs King and Jane attends to the Girls in the



**Fig. 8.6** (Clockwise from *top left*) Dorset button rings and eye from a hook and eye; Dorset button bone discs; pins; thimbles, Te Puna mission assemblage (Photographs by Author, 2005)

afternoon on the Sabbaths, and... on week days school and prayers in the evenings” (John King in Middleton 2008: 96). A number of items from the Te Puna mission house cellar, such as buttons, glass beads, thimbles, and pins, point to sewing and teaching such skills to Maori women and girls, along with reading and writing (Fig. 8.6; Middleton 2005, 2008). These are the visible remains of items that endured in the archaeological context, while the associated textile items decayed.

In this manner, Maori women and girls were trained to play the role of domestic servants but were not always compliant with these expectations. At the Te Puna mission, there were complaints of ingratitude when a Maori woman abandoned the mission and its teachings to return to her own people. Marianne Williams, one of the few missionary women who kept a journal and wrote letters, was more explicit about Maori resistance to her efforts in the “civilizing” mission. Maori women in the Williams household may have carried out household tasks when it suited them, but if it did not, they simply left when they felt like it or if they needed to return home to comply with their own cultural requirements. Admonishments and scolding did not help but simply led to further departures. Williams complained because “as soon as you have cleaned and clothed them, and they are beginning to be useful, they will go” (M. Williams in Rountree 2000: 59). Perhaps the worst loss for Marianne was when the young women she had trained to cook, clean, and iron for her disappeared to the nearby beach on seeing new ships sailing into the bay; such arrivals provided a more entertaining and profitable opportunity from prostitution, much to the missions’ lament (Rogers 1998: 66; Rountree 2000: 61). The “shipping” and its influence over Maori women were seen as a great hindrance to the work of the mission.



Missionary women not only taught at mission schools but also spent large amounts of time on sewing, ironing, and related activities (White 1829–1836; Wilson 1832–1838; Williams 1842, 1844, 1846; Fitzgerald 2004). This included “stringing” or repairing day caps, an item of headwear made from muslin, embroidered or trimmed with lace and ribbons, and tied under the chin. All married women were expected to wear these, as well as older “spinsters” (Drummond 1967; Ebbett 1977; McDowell 1997: 127). Jane Williams makes regular references to caps; “Mrs. Stack kindly ironed my caps”; Jane was “busy making up caps and trimming bonnets,” bonnets being a required wear for outdoors (Williams 1842; McDowell 1997). Eliza White (1829–1836), of the Wesleyan mission in the Hokianga, spent a Saturday evening in August 1833 “mending and stringing my caps for next week” and then ironed her husband’s shirts. Portraits held in the NZHPT collections show Hannah King wearing a day cap and Eliza White, in a portrait painted before her marriage, bareheaded. In an undated photograph, Marianne Williams also wears a day cap (Middleton 2005, 2007a: Figs. 9–11).

Jane Williams also documents the amount of time associated with ironing, as does Eliza White. Marianne Williams (1844, 1846) had a whole room dedicated to this task but expected her Maori servants to carry out the work. In January 1820, Samuel Marsden ordered one dozen smoothing irons for the fledgling Oihi mission; a total of five of these were recovered from the Te Puna investigation (Middleton 2005, 2007a). Manufactured in a range of sizes, the smaller irons, such as the smallest from Te Puna, were used for finer tasks, ironing lace and caps. These archaeological finds confirm missionary concerns to maintain standards of appearance that the women’s journals document, even in such an isolated outpost of the CMS as Te Puna.

These kinds of activities can be identified not only from these associated artifacts from the mission house but also from the large supply of fabric and clothing the mission received from the Kerikeri store. In 1820, Samuel Marsden ordered thimbles, pins, needles, shirt buttons, ribbons, and a total of 216 yards of various fabrics, as well as other items, all “wanted for Mr. King and family.” At the same time, there were other voluminous amounts of supplies for the Oihi settlement including cases of hats and bonnets, woolen nightcaps, one bale each of blue trousers, “duck frocks,” and striped cotton shirts and trousers, the last several items no doubt intended for trade with Maori, as John King’s later Te Puna accounts illustrate (Middleton 2005, 2007b).

Seven brass thimbles varying in size from 17 mm in diameter and 27 mm high to 12 mm high and 7 mm in diameter were found in the Te Puna cellar and associated contexts, four of these below adult size. These were the only artifacts from the excavation that can be directly related to children and their activities. The smaller thimbles provide clues to the kind of activities expected of girls in nineteenth-century households, where needlework was an important accomplishment, as demonstrated by two surviving samplers stitched by daughters of the King family. Four glass beads of the same kind noted elsewhere as “trade” beads (Birmingham 1992; Sprague 2000) help to confirm the teaching activities of the mission, these being given as a reward for learning or for trade. While there are no supplies of such beads

noted in the mission store records for 1831 and 1832, Samuel Marsden ordered 100 cut glass beads for the mission in January 1815.

The mission teachings and schools also fostered the rise of resistance. In 1833, missionaries were alarmed to find evidence of the workings of the “Prince of Darkness” (their favored term for the “devil”) in the form of a syncretic religion known as Papahurihia, the first of the hybrid, visionary Maori religious movements. Papahurihia was both the name of the religion and its leader, a young chief from Rangihoua and Te Puna, a former school pupil of John King who was “particularly hostile” to the mission and its influence (Binney 1966, 1997: 155). Papahurihia, also known as Te Atua Wera (the fiery god), believed that the missionaries were murderers who had brought about the high numbers of Maori deaths since the beginnings of the mission through witchcraft and told his followers that their heaven had “nothing but books to eat” (Binney 1997: 155). Believers were promised a heaven where “everything is found in plenty, flour, sugar, guns, ships; there too murder and sensual pleasure.” John King reported the rituals involved in this form of worship in December 1834. The Papahurihia:

Have appointed saturday for their sabbath telling us we are under a mistake, for saturday is the ancient sabbath and that the Apostles turned monday into a sabbath for us they hoist a flag on a pole, pay little or no respect to the day, but at night a few assemble together (as the workers of darkness chooses darkness) their priest performs his foolish ceremonies and mixes portions of the holy scriptures which they have learned with their old superstitions, which causes much dispute & inquiry among themselves. (John King in Middleton 2005: 119)

This type of syncretic religious belief was typical of similar developments in other parts of the Pacific. It was symbolic of the acceptance and rejection of different aspects of Christianity. In a parallel way, items of European material culture were incorporated into Maori society but, located within a different cultural context, took on new cultural forms and meanings. Metal objects were rapidly adapted to traditional forms and uses (Smith 2007). For example, the metal axes and adzes missionaries traded with Maori for land became prized weapons of war, hafted in the traditional style of the stone adze, complete with long bone (often whalebone) handles carved with intricate decoration (Ryan 2010); nails were transformed into chisels and traditional Maori fishhook forms were manufactured from metal (Smith 2007); blankets and garments of red wool, the sacred color for Maori, were unraveled and threads rewoven into the borders of chiefly cloaks.

Te Puna provides a typical example of the New Zealand Protestant mission, consisting of a small wooden structure for a family household, located adjacent to a larger Maori population. This provides a stark contrast with the monumental Spanish missions that are so predominant in the literature of North American mission archaeology. However, at the same time, the Puritan missions of New England, followed by later Protestant missions across the continent, demonstrate a similar “household” model, dependent on the activities of the missionary and his wife and family.



## Missionization: The Comparative Context

### *North America*

In North America, nearly all the available literature on mission archaeology concerns the Spanish Borderlands and New England. While Catholicism arrived with the earliest expeditions into La Florida in the sixteenth century, further north on the Atlantic coast seventeenth-century Puritan arrivals from Britain brought religious fervor, establishing Protestant missions to the indigenous population. These Puritan missionary efforts were limited. Only “a dozen” Congregationalist ministers made efforts to convert Indian communities, with limited results (Bowden 1981: 113). Exceptions were those such as John Eliot, brothers John and David Brainerd, and John Sergeant’s Stockbridge mission. Unlike the Franciscans and Jesuits, none of the seventeenth-century Puritan missionaries lived amongst those they sought to convert, and their contact with indigenous tribes came long after other forms of cultural exchanges between English and Indian (Bowden 1981: 116). Even John Eliot’s southern New England “praying towns” (Axtell 1982; Beaudry 2006; Silverman 2003; <http://www.fiskecenter.umb.edu/Magunco%20Hill.htm>) were of limited success; in 1674, the noted “high point” of the phenomenon, only 1,100 indigenous Americans lived in the fourteen praying towns, and only about ten percent of these were baptized (Bowden 1981: 130). Puritan missionary efforts often met with obstacles, and success was slow, although father and son Thomas Mayhew (junior and senior) successfully converted much of the Indian population of Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket by the late seventeenth century (Bowden 1981; Salisbury 1992; Silverman 2003).

The Great Awakening in the American colonies of the 1740s and 1750s grew out of earlier evangelism and British societies such as the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG, founded 1701) and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK, founded 1698). During the eighteenth century, preachers such as George Whitefield and David Brainerd began the “itinerant evangelism” (equivalent perhaps to a traveling preacher) subsequently used by missionaries from the later British evangelical societies, including the CMS in New Zealand, and associated largely with the “household mission.” Missionary husband, wife, and family demonstrated “cultural models” (Marsden 2003: 175) of the civilized mode of living (and gender relations) to the indigenous population. The “Second Great Awakening” of the eighteenth century followed, along with the Evangelical Revival and evangelical missionary societies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Following its inception in 1810, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) was the most active during the nineteenth century in supporting missions to Native Americans throughout much of the USA (Berkhofer 1965). This was also the agency that sent the first band of missionaries to Hawaii in 1820. As elsewhere in the “household” style of mission, “missionary-sponsored farms and households served as models of piety and industry

for Indians to copy,” with the redefinition of customary gender roles an important part of this (Bowden 1981: 169; Berkhofer 1965: 74–80).

As in other places, archaeologists, historians, and ethnohistorians (e.g., see Bragdon 1988, 1996a, b; Simmons 1979, 1986; Silverman 2003; Rubertone 2001) have found a rich source in missionary accounts of indigenous peoples in New England, often produced in order to describe the cultural traits they hoped most fervently to change and destroy. Rubertone’s (2001) work on Roger Williams documents this significant historical figure, now considered the founder of Providence, Rhode Island, and his relationship with the local Narragansett. As with investigations at Magunco Hill (<http://www.fiskcenter.umb.edu/Magunco%20Hill.htm>), Rubertone’s work sheds light on the archaeology of an Indian population associated with missionization, concerned with the outcome of cultural engagement between Narragansett and the English. While this leads Rubertone to an interpretation of Narragansett lives and an archaeology of the “processes of cultural entanglement” (Silliman 2005: 62), it does not provide an archaeology of Williams’ missionary work, as appears to be the case with many New England Protestant or Puritan missions. An explanation for this may lie in the less visible structure of Protestant missions, dependent as some were on the “itinerant” missionary, that is, the missionary who walked or rode from the mission house to visit distant villages, where he preached, catechized, and taught the basics of reading and writing.

The monumental architecture of Catholic missions of the Spanish Borderlands appears more dominant in the literature of North American mission archaeology (e.g., see Graham 1998). Examination of Spanish Borderlands missions on both the east and west coasts of the United States demonstrates that these functioned as institutional missions in the manner of the “total institution” described by Goffman (1962; see also De Cunzo 1995, 2001, 2006; Spencer-Wood and Baugher 2001). These Catholic missions, run exclusively by men, were generally established as the controlling arm of Spanish colonization, with the aim of pacifying and transforming indigenous peoples into an “Hispanicized” peasant class of laborers (Lightfoot 2005: 59; Silliman 2001, 2004; Sandos 2004). While there was regional variation, mission buildings consisted of complexes, often with a central courtyard and usually including a church, convent or friary, kitchen, and other sleeping quarters (Larsen 1993; McEwan 1993; Thomas 1993). Missions encapsulated entire settlements where Native Americans were confined in a manner resembling slavery, and severe labor demands led to a decline in the quality of life and health (Deetz 1978; Deagan 1983, 1993; Thomas 1990; Larsen 1993; Saunders 1993, 1998; Graham 1998; Lightfoot 2005).

While Catholic missionaries accompanied the earliest Spanish expeditions into La Florida in the sixteenth century (Thomas 1990: 369, 1991; McEwan 1993; Graham 1998), it was more than two centuries afterward before the first missions were established on the West Coast, the northernmost arm of Spanish colonization extending up the Californian coast in a chain of twenty-one Franciscan missions stretching from San Diego to San Francisco. The first of these was built in 1769 (Deetz 1978; Graham 1998; Lightfoot 2005, 2006), the same year that James Cook became the first European to explore the New Zealand coastline. As in the missions of La Florida, these resembled penal institutions, where padres controlled every aspect of inmates’ daily lives

and punishment included the use of solitary confinement, whippings, stocks, and leg chains. Inmates were housed in segregated barracks, with unmarried women held in nunneries with locks and bars on the windows (Sandos 2004; Silliman 2004; Lightfoot 2005, 2006: 60). For the Spanish, the desired outcome was a pacified Indian population able to function as peasant laborers, the women trained to carry out sewing and to work as domestic servants (Lightfoot 2006).

## *Australia*

Comparisons between missionization in Australia and New Zealand have been discussed in detail elsewhere (Middleton 2010), and only key elements are reiterated here. A recent edited publication also provides more detail on mission archaeology in Australia (Lydon and Ash 2010).

While in New Zealand mission stations were established well before any formal colonization (British annexation took place in 1840), in Australia the reverse was the case. Although Britain established the convict colony of New South Wales in 1788, it seems that there was no missionary activity until the second decade of the nineteenth century, explained perhaps by Port Jackson's initial struggle with famine, lack of supplies, and huge distance from Britain. It was not until 1825 that Samuel Marsden established a branch of the CMS in Sydney (Harris 1990). As Harris (1990: 42) notes, "the missionary movement virtually ignored Australia." Another factor in this may have been that the important British evangelical movements, the Church Missionary Society, the London Missionary Society, and Wesleyan Missionary Society, did not exist at the time the settlement of Port Jackson was founded.

In the Australian historical, archaeological, and anthropological literature, educational and similar institutions such as reservations are included as missions (Birmingham 1992; Birmingham and Wilson 2010; Lydon and Ash 2010), although these did not function as Christian missions and were not founded on this basis. Australian institutions began with the Parramatta Native Institution, established in 1814 to educate Aboriginal children. By 1820, this had languished but was replaced in 1822 with a similar institution at nearby Black Town. This too folded after only 7 years (Harris 1990; Brook and Kohen 1991; Lydon 2005a). These two institutions marked the start of the practice of forcibly removing Aboriginal children from their parents to be raised within European establishments, marking the beginning of the "stolen generations" phenomena (see also Ireland 2010). Children were taken into European homes as "domestic experiments," to be raised as Europeans, in the expectation of "civilizing" them; missions also trained women and girls in the domestic arts in order to work as household servants (Grimshaw & Nelson 2001; Johnston 2003; Lydon 2005a, 2009). Similar organizations followed, such as Wybalenna on Flinders Island where George Robinson took the last of the Tasmanian Aboriginals in 1830 (Harris 1990; Birmingham 1992; Birmingham and Wilson 2010) and the later Coranderrk Aboriginal Station, near Melbourne (Lydon 2000, 2002, 2005b). As with Wybalenna, these were not missions as such but government

institutions aiming to discipline residents through “surveillance and measurement” and the imposition of discipline and Victorian morality.

In the Australian colony of Victoria, Grimshaw and Nelson’s (2001) analysis of the “civilizing mission” of evangelicals supports the argument for Australian missions as “total institutions” (Goffman 1962; Sutton 2003). Here as elsewhere in Australia, the congruence of missionary goals and state agendas led to a situation where missions appeared to run almost as prisons, missionaries and managers acting as inmates’ “jailers” and meting out “surveillance, coercion, and punishment” that demonstrated a “travesty of Christian humanitarianism” (Grimshaw and Nelson 2001: 297). In such institutions, the contrast between the situation in Australia and New Zealand is demonstrated (Grimshaw and Nelson 2001: 297–298). In New Zealand, in the early days of the missions, missionaries were effectively captives of their indigenous patrons, while in Australia this was reversed, with the indigenous peoples virtually imprisoned within missions and government institutions.

More recently, Lydon and Burns (2010; Lydon and Ash 2010) have argued differently. They point out that the Moravian Ebenezer Mission in Victoria was not only a “carceral” institution but, more than this, sited on the traditional country of its indigenous Wergaia inmates, has become recognized as an important site of encounter. As places that contributed to the survival of Aboriginal populations, descendants may now see Australian missions as “powerful symbols of home and country,” where traditional links to land are preserved. Other descendants express ambivalence about this, the cost of survival having been institutional control and the separation of children from parents with their placement into “orphanages” or “children’s dormitories” (Lydon and Burns 2010: 46).

Lydon’s (2009; Lydon et al. 2004) recent investigations of the Ebenezer Mission, established by Germans of the Moravian Protestant sect in 1859, point once again to the gendered evangelical world view, where Christian family life was modeled as the ideal and domestic space was a focus of scrutiny. Missionary wives “supervised the domestic sphere” and “Indigenous women’s domestic management became proof of missionary success” (Lydon 2009: 126). Consumption of European commodities was an essential component of this, the hawker’s visit to the mission providing an opportunity for the purchase of gown fabrics for women and “moleskins and billycocks” (trousers made from heavy cotton and round-crowned brimmed hats of felt) for young men, in contrast to traditional elders’ scorn of such consumer goods (Lydon 2009: 131). Although from a later archaeological context than Te Puna, white ware and transfer-printed Staffordshire ceramics formed an important measure of domesticity. As elsewhere, material culture was pivotal in the “civilizing” mission, whose aim was once again to produce a “docile labor force” (Lydon 2009: 162).

### ***The Pacific: Tahiti and Hawaii***

Protestant missions in the Pacific began with the LMS voyage to Tahiti on the *Duff*, which arrived in Tahiti in 1797. This voyage was inspired by Cook’s voyages to the

Pacific and later glowing accounts of the island published by Captain Bligh of *Bounty* mutiny fame. The work of the mission to Tahiti proved challenging and was considered a complete failure in some circles (Ellis 1859; Stock 1899; Davies 1961; Gunson 1978; Edmond 1997). After only a year on Tahiti, eleven of the original seventeen missionaries returned to the safety of Sydney, following hostilities with Tahitians under the control of Pomare I and his son Pomare II; the mission was also discouraged by the “defection” of several of their brethren who left to live with Tahitian women (Davies 1961: xl). Several of the original missionaries continued to promote the Tahitian mission from Sydney, working with Samuel Marsden as adviser and correspondent to the LMS (Johnston 2003: 173). After difficult beginnings, the monarch Pomare II was baptized in 1819, formalizing Tahitian acceptance of Christianity. The arrival of French Catholic missionaries in 1836 led to major French intervention and, in the early 1840s, to French “protection” following the quelling of Tahitian armed resistance (Garrett 1982: 28).

Missionaries from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) arrived in Hawaii early in 1820 (Garrett 1982; Zwiép 1991; Kirch and Sahlins 1992). The ABCFM, similar to the British evangelical societies, was stimulated by the efforts of the LMS in the Pacific and the presence in the early years of the nineteenth century of several young Hawaiian men in New England. In Hawaii, the LMS and the ABCFM worked together with the arrival in 1822 of the missionary Ellis (1859) and his wife as part of a Tahitian deputation from the LMS. Eventually, missionary couples established “household” stations throughout the Hawaiian Islands, where Christianity, literacy, and the domestic arts were taught. At the first mission house in Honolulu, sometimes accommodating up to five mission families, the small parlor also served as the schoolroom. The chiefly Tahitian converts contributed largely to the continuing success of the Hawaiian mission as they promoted Christianity to Kaahumanu and other Hawaiian royalty, and by the 1860s an indigenous Christian dynasty ruled.

The Hawaiian Missionary Society (HMS) attempted to extend its operations to Nukuhiva in the Marquesas when three young missionary families arrived there in late 1833 (Wallace 2005). They lasted only eight months on the island before fleeing back to Hawaii, traumatized by the extremes of cultural differences. As Wallace (2005: 265) notes, the mission brethren broke their own ban on working on the Sabbath, as they made secret preparations for their departure under cover of darkness. While they were fleeing from threats of attack from traditional enemies of their hosts, there was also a concern that their local supporters would use violence to prevent their departure. Here again on the Marquesas, the role of women in demonstrating an appropriate domesticity was considered essential, but failed as the three missionary wives kept themselves and their children confined to a hastily constructed mission compound, attempting to avoid the continually prying eyes and predations of the Marquesans. Missionaries feared for the sanity of one of their number, who was suffering from extreme depression. On board the ship to leave the island, the captain described the mission brethren as “fairly dried up nothing but skin and bone,” able only to sleep and eat and shuffle about (Wallace 2005: 287). As Wallace (2005: 269) notes, “the Christian culture the three HMS

families attempted to introduce to Nukuhiva was a domestic one, thoroughly embedded in the unassuming practices of daily life.” This attempt failed, although efforts elsewhere in the Pacific were more successful (Grimshaw 1989a, b; Zwiep 1991; Kirch and Sahlins 1992 I: 110).

Although, as in New Zealand, the Tahitian and Hawaiian missions were initially subject to the politically sovereign indigenous population, dependent on them for protection, food supplies, and shelter, missionaries subsequently held positions of political power. As was the case elsewhere in the Pacific, as later religious denominations arrived, they sought the support of different local political factions in order to become established. New syncretic religious forms developed here as elsewhere, as was seen with the growth of the Papahurihia cult in New Zealand’s Bay of Islands. Protestant Hawaiian and Tahitian missions, as well as others in the Pacific, followed the “household” mission of the kind seen in New Zealand at Te Puna.

## Discussion

### *Mission Station as Household: Protestant New England, New Zealand, and the Pacific*

The archaeology of the Te Puna mission demonstrates a typical example of the “household” style of mission, with the missionary, his wife, and their family displaying the model of the Christian ideal. The cult of domesticity played a pivotal part in ascribing appropriate gender relations for missionary husband and wife, to be imposed upon indigenous Maori as the civilized ideal.

In New Zealand, as in other parts of the Pacific such as Hawaii and Tahiti, missions consisted of humble wooden houses for the mission family, perhaps only one or two families forming the mission station, with a church or school building sometimes associated. Small numbers of Maori sometimes lived in the mission house with missionary families, while at Te Puna the mission served the larger Maori population at nearby Rangihoua Pa. Otherwise, the missionary “itinerated,” traveling from the mission house to preach, teach, and catechize at distant villages. While no public role was deemed suitable for women, in fact, the missionary wife’s work was pivotal in teaching not only reading and writing but also the whole range of domestic skills seen as fundamental to the mission. In this manner, the schism between the private and public realms collapsed, as women engaged in teaching the domestic arts; in some places, the home was transformed into the public schoolroom, or the schoolroom became the public manifestation of domesticity, the place where these arts were taught. The same type of mission was seen in Puritan New England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with the household mission constructed around the concept of the family, projecting the essential links between this institution, Christianity, godliness, and civilization.

Such missions did not show the characteristics of the highly regimented institutions discussed below. There was no monumental architecture, no large structures, and no emphasis on punishment. Few indigenous people lived within the mission itself. Daily routines consisted of regular hours for schooling and regular church attendance, as well as a focus on the role of the family and household, with the missionary, his wife, and their children modeling this ideology, a public display of the private.

### ***Mission Station as Institution: Australia and Catholic North America***

The “household” mission structure, as seen in New Zealand, the Pacific Islands, and Protestant New England, was dramatically different to the kind of institutions that operated in the North American Spanish Borderlands and Australia. It has been argued (Sutton 2003) that in Australia, missions formed “total institutions” (Goffman 1962; Lemert and Branaman 1997; Spencer-Wood and Baugher 2001), the kind of structures that included locks, barred windows, barbed wire fences, regimented spaces, and segregated buildings. According to Goffman (1962: introduction), a “total institution may be defined as a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life.” Such institutions include homes for the needy, prisons, asylums, boarding schools, large households with servants’ quarters, and institutions for the religious. A key attribute of these institutions in Australia was the division between inmates and staff, where officials and missionaries maintained almost total control over the movement of indigenous people (Grimshaw and Nelson 2001; Sutton 2003). Many of the same features can be identified in North American Catholic missions. Farnsworth (1989, 1992; in Silliman 2005: 65), for example, considers that North American Spanish missions shared many of the same characteristics as slave plantations.

### **Conclusion**

The mission station, whether “household” or “institution,” was a fundamental organization for transforming private European domesticity founded in gender and class roles into a public domesticity used as a tool of colonization and control (McClintock 1995: 35). The cult of domesticity (Grimshaw 1983, 1989a, b; Davidoff and Hall 1991; Spencer-Wood 1999; Johnston 2003; Wall 1994; Middleton 2007a) and the associated focus on the family and the home as a pivotal element of the civilizing (or reforming) mission appear as a unifying concern throughout both types of missions, a characteristic that is shared with some reform institutions.



Gender roles are socially constructed and closely interwoven with cultural conventions of class and ethnicity, all relating to the dynamics of the reproduction and maintenance of social systems (Scott 1994; McClintock 1995; Sorenson 2000; Spencer-Wood 1998; Wurst 2006). Within the wider CMS society, women were subordinated but played a vitally important public role in constructing and maintaining home life in the “cult of true womanhood” or the “cult of domesticity” that was central to nineteenth-century Christian ideology and the imperial mission (Davidoff and Hall 1991; Grimshaw 1983, 1989a, b; McClintock 1995; Fitts 2001; Middleton 2007a). In this process, the dichotomy between the private and public collapsed as each sphere permeated the other.

Material culture plays a special role in social reproduction, with objects linking generations and expressing traditional values (Sorenson 2000: 9). While the Te Puna assemblage demonstrates frugality, it also points to the effort involved in maintaining appropriate standards of appearance, even in a remote household where European visitors were few. This was an essential aspect of the CMS and an essential role for missionary women. Artifacts associated with women’s work like ironing point to the other parts of this process, washing and starching clothes and linen. Buttons, pins, and thimbles are the surviving archaeological evidence of hand-sewn clothing and finely detailed needlework, some of this still held in collections. Collectively, these objects provide the material evidence of missionary attempts to impose the values of Christianity and Western gender roles on indigenous Maori women.

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**Part III**  
**Transformations of Domestic and**  
**Private Bodily Matters into Public**  
**Concerns and Organizations**

## Chapter 9

# Western Gender Transformations from the Eighteenth Century to the Early Twentieth Century: Combining the Domestic and Public Spheres

Suzanne M. Spencer-Wood

### Overview of Research and Theoretical Perspectives

This chapter contributes to the increasing globalization of research in historical archaeology by advancing our understanding of the great diversity, global scope, and long temporal development of domestic reform movements that arguably created some of the largest ideological and cultural transformations in Western patriarchy, from the second half of the eighteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century. Domestic reform movements grew through national and international organizations and networks connecting reformers in Europe, America, and Australasia (Coleman 1987). Previous studies have usually focused on either America or England, a century or less, and one or a few social reform movements. The large temporal and geographic scope of the overview provided in this short chapter requires generalizations, but they have been made by carefully combining several sources.

This research is informed by several feminist theories that are discussed further in my commentary in this volume. Structuralist-feminist theory (my term) is used here to analyze patriarchal social structures, particularly ideology and laws, that men used to legitimate and enforce public-sphere male domination and female subordination in the home, in what historians have called the “separate-spheres” gender ideology (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 144; Donovan 2001: 19–23; Matthaei 1982: 29–32, 110–111). In contrast to this ideology, research from my postmodern-inclusive *both/and* feminist perspective has revealed that in many cultural practices, the supposedly separate-gender spheres were connected, overlapped, or combined. For instance, patriarchy made some kinds of women’s most private and intimate actions legal matters that men publicly and violently punished, including adultery

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and infanticide (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 150–151; Collins 2003: 53–54; Degler 1980: 15; Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 11–12). Radical feminist theory has brought to light how patriarchy has been enforced with culturally condoned male violence. From the perspective of postcolonial feminist theory, patriarchy can also be understood as a form of internal colonialism subjugating domestic women to public men (Lorber 2001: 55–56, 63–64, 77–78).

The main question in this chapter is the following: How did women reform patriarchy when they lacked any formal political or legal powers? From a third-wave feminist diversity theoretical perspective (my term), the kinds of powers available to men and women under Western patriarchy are briefly discussed using my feminist-inclusive heterarchical model of multiple interacting powers (Spencer-Wood 1999a: 178–179). This model analyzes how the predominantly middle-class and elite reform women, and their male allies, used their cooperative social agency in local, regional, national, and international domestic reform organizations to raise women's status under Western patriarchy (Spencer-Wood 1991a: 240–241).

Research from my third-wave, inclusive, *both/and* feminist theoretical perspective has revealed how the great diversity of social movements I identify as “domestic reform” destabilized, blurred, and conflated the domestic and public spheres in multiple complex ways (Spencer-Wood 1996: 426). Donovan (2001) calls domestic reformers Enlightenment egalitarian cultural feminists because they raised the status of women by transforming their devalued domestic-sphere roles and values into valorized sources of a powerful identity that was equal or superior to men's public-sphere roles and powers. Victorian women's supposed higher domestic morality, piety, and purity became the model for an alternative to aggressive masculinity (Ginzberg 1990, 12, 67–68, 81, 83, 85, 112; Robertson 1982: 117–129; Rosen 1982: 54–55; Ryan 1982: 50–58) more than a century before the development of masculinity theory in the twentieth century (Lorber 2001: 163–175). Further, domestic reform movements diminished male dominance on public landscapes by transforming aspects of the domestic sphere into new women's public-domestic professions and institutions that enlarged the scope and meaning of women's domestic sphere to include large areas of men's public sphere (Spencer-Wood 1991a: 231–237). Domestic reformers redefined the domestic sphere as practically unlimited, with a belief that all aspects of social life had “domestic meaning” (Leach 1980: 209). The new meanings that women established for their expanded domestic sphere materially transformed the dominant “separate-spheres” ideology with new gender ideologies, identities, roles, power dynamics, and material practices.

The large number of diverse domestic reform movements transformed the meaning of the “separate-spheres” gender ideology, identities, and material practices by combining women's domestic sphere with men's public sphere in multiple ways that raised women's status in both spheres. The predominantly middle-class and elite reform women fundamentally used two strategies to legitimate their social reforms. First, they created women's public organizations, institutions, vocations, and professions that they argued were natural extensions of women's domestic roles, making them acceptable within the dominant gender ideology. The reformers made the Marxist-feminist argument that women could only achieve equality by becoming economi-

cally independent of men. Second, reform women argued that domestic work deserved the same status as men's public professions (Spencer-Wood 1991a, 1994a, 1996). In addition, as pointed out below and in chapters by Kim Christen and Anne Yentsch, women's organizations sometimes met in members' homes, bringing discourse about aspects of the public sphere, such as the City Beautiful Movement, into the domestic sphere.

Research from the third-wave perspective that I call feminist diversity theory reveals how diverse reformers created a large variety of new gender ideologies and discourses that legitimated domestic reform movements. Postmodern feminist theory leads to the differentiation of ideologies from actual material practices, which did not always change as quickly as ideology (Spencer-Wood 1994a, 1996). Historians (Boylan 2002; Hayden 1981) have researched the diversity of reform women, ranging from conservative to liberal or "ultraist," and from communitarian socialist to Marxist feminist. Feminist diversity theory also leads to analyses of power dynamics and negotiations in interactions between middle-class reform women and men and working-class women and their families. Butler's (1990) theory of processes of gradual change in gender identities through small changes in daily iterations of gender performances fits the gradual changes in material gender practices in many domestic reform movements, though some sought and created more rapid changes. Lesbian feminist theory provides the insight that women's organizing was facilitated by the Victorian cultural norm of gender segregation and intense homosocial friendships among women, which we would consider lesbian (Cott 1977: 172–180).

Domestic reform is particularly interesting for archaeologists because research from a material feminist theoretical approach revealed how new and ordinary kinds of material culture were given new meanings and social agency to transform patriarchy (Spencer-Wood 1994a, 1996: 407, 1999b, 2002). Material culture, new types of buildings, and architecture were used to symbolize and implement the many different ways that reform women and their male allies combined the domestic and public spheres. Domestic reform was sometimes symbolized and implemented with new material inventions but more frequently was implemented by giving new meanings to ordinary material culture. The historical archaeology of domestic reform demonstrates that a form of material culture does not have a single fixed meaning designed by its producer and accepted by all consumers but instead has potentially multiple flexible and contingent meanings that are negotiated situationally over time and have to be identified from the specific historical and archaeological site context in order to interpret the contextual meaning(s) of material culture, from artifacts and their arrangements to built environments.

This chapter first provides historical context for this volume as a whole with an overview of women's changing legal status under Western patriarchy. More details are provided in my feminist commentary on this volume. Then an international overview of the development and huge scope of domestic reform movements provides additional historical context for other chapters in this volume that consider particular social reform movements, from the Cult of Domesticity (Middleton), dress reform (Nickolai), temperance, and moral masculinity (Kruczek-Aaron) to household engineering, cooperative housekeeping (Arwill-Nordbladh), domestic

science, playgrounds (Christensen), kindergartens (Praetzellis), Americanization (Camp), reformers who participated in municipal housekeeping and temperance (Rotman), and the example of Mrs. Edison's participation in many domestic reform movements, including kindergartens, playgrounds, temperance, municipal housekeeping, and the City Beautiful and nature conservation movements (Yentsch). These social reform movements are emphasized in this chapter to provide international complementary information within an overview of the broad scope of women's reform movements in relation to men's reform movements. Chapter sections address women's changing legal status, women's and men's powers, early domestic reform ideology and public organizations, domestic reform of the home, mothering and childhood: dress reform, public cooperative housekeeping, municipal housekeeping, and Americanization. Finally, this chapter demonstrates the new kinds of insights gained from feminist theoretical approaches concerned with gender power dynamics, complementing the nonfeminist gender approach of the volume introduction, which does not address power dynamics as much as this chapter.

### ***Historical Context: How Men Enforced Western Patriarchy by Making Women's Private and Intimate Actions Public***

Patriarchy is defined as an androcentric (male-centered) society controlled by men and fundamentally structured by men's domination of women within every class, creating two parallel male and female hierarchies. Structuralist-feminist theories analyze the mechanisms and processes in all cultural subsystems that subordinate women to men at their social level or above (Rich 1976: 57). Material expressions of patriarchy include gendered clothing that physically restricts or partly decapacitates women, gendered personal and work artifacts (due to gender segregation of occupations), and gender segregation in separate buildings or in buildings with gender-segregated entrances, staircases, rooms, and/or seating in schools, churches, and other public institutions (Spencer-Wood n.d.).

In Europe, its colonies and the nations that grew from them, men's domination of women has been legitimated by the "separate-spheres" ideology that constructed gender as an innate, unchanging, hierarchical dichotomy opposing public, moral, superior, dominant men versus domestic, physically, mentally, and morally weak, inferior women (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 143; Cott 1977: 161; Matthaei 1982: 29–32, 110–111; Robertson 1982: 26–28; Spencer-Wood 1992: 99; Verbrugge 1988: 117). Women's subordinate domestic status was enforced at marriage, when wives lost their legal existence as persons and became legally incompetent minors, dependents, and chattel of their husbands, equivalent to slaves. Under European "feme covert" common law, wives had few civil rights, could not perform public legal acts, and were subsumed by husbands who represented them in public. The husband controlled any earnings by his family and any property his wife brought to the marriage (Amott and Matthaei 1991: 97–98; Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 148,

284; Coontz 1991: 148–151; Donovan 2001: 12–20, 30, 56; Kwolek-Folland 2002: 21–25, 49; Robertson 1982: 18, 156, 275, 433–434; Stansell 1986: 21–22, 36).

Most elite and middle-class housewives performed the separate-spheres ideal of respectable domesticity by supervising housework by servants and buying foodstuffs and goods for household maintenance and sometimes teawares and dinnerware for status display (Fraser 1984: 278; Martin 1994: 175–177, 183; Matthaei 1982: 115, 139–140; Spencer-Wood 1995: 122; Wall 1994: 135–136). Wives were still considered respectably domestic even if they performed their own housework and produced income for their husbands by (1) selling their domestic products; (2) taking in boarders, laundry, or sewing; (3) working in the family farm, business, shop, or tavern; or (4) working in industrial home production, called the “putting-out system” because manufacturers supplied raw materials that were made into finished goods, often by whole families due to the below-subsistence wages (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 62–68, 248–251, 258–263, 267–274, 288; Cantwell and Wall 2011; De Cunzio 2004; Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 5, 122–4, 200–202; Jensen 1986; Kwolek-Folland 2002: 17–18; Little 1994; Matthaei 1982: 51–68; Millett 1970: 69–70; Robertson 1982: 159–161; Rotman *forthcoming*; Spencer-Wood 1991b: 237–238; Stine 1991; Yentsch 1991). By such methods, working-class wives could support their husbands’ respectable masculine identity and pride in having a “nonworking, domestic wife.” The importance attached to embodying this ideal of domestic womanhood in the dominant separate-spheres gender ideology is indicated by the fact that working-class husbands would put their children out to public occupations or seek aid from charities in preference to allowing their wives to transgress men’s public sphere (Matthaei 1982: 121–130). Adult women working in public occupations in factories, mines, foundries, mills, theaters, etc., violated the separate-spheres gender ideology and were by definition “public women” akin to prostitutes for crossing public landscapes without a male escort (Hobson 1990: 32–33; Stansell 1986: 125–127). Blue-collar industrial men’s unions argued for a male “family wage” to permit working-class women to become respectable housewives who raised children and did not perform public work (Matthaei 1982: 121–122). Yet even respectable working-class housewives traveled across men’s public sphere to shop for foodstuffs and household goods (Yamin 2001: 166).

Radical feminist analyses have revealed that European patriarchy was enforced through culturally condoned systemic violence. The husband had the right to his wife’s sexual services on demand and could lock her up and beat her “moderately”, with only light fines for causing major injury, such as loss of an eye (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 150; Collins 2003: 53–54; Degler 1980: 15; Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 77; Robertson 1982: 163, 177, 179, 192–193, 276, 349, 455). Wives were forced to submit to domestic violence because it was legal, or women could not sue for damages in court. The intimate relationship of marriage was enforced by men’s public laws making divorce by wives difficult in Protestant countries and impossible in Catholic countries. Husbands could divorce their wives for adultery, which was a crime against the husbands’ property, since they owned their wives as chattel. Additional grounds were usually required for wives to divorce because adultery by a husband was only a crime against public order

(Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 150–151, 336–337; Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 11–12; Robertson 1982: 241–246, 277, 279, 433).

The subjugation of women and their domestic sphere to men and their public sphere was legitimated by the biblical story of Eve being created as Adam's helpmeet from one of his ribs and the story of Eve's moral failing that legitimated the sexual double standard blaming women, as the daughters of Eve, for tempting Adam and all other men into illicit sex outside of marriage. The sexual double standard legitimated the cultural condoning of extramarital sex by men as natural while condemning women who had sex outside of marriage as "fallen" from God's grace, vile, and immoral temptresses, who could be arrested and incarcerated in jails or reformatories (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: xiii–xiv, 96–99; Donovan 2001: 19; Helsingier et al 1983: 23–28, 76–77, 89–91, 105–106, 167–171; Hobson 1990: 33; Robertson 1982: 241–246, 277, 279, 433; Stansell 1986: 23–25).

## *Gendering Powers*

Feminist agency theory leads to research on the ideologies and methods women used to change patriarchy when they had no political or legal powers. Men and women had different sources and kinds of power at their disposal. While men had "powers over" women and children, women only had the powers of a subordinate group. And yet these subordinate powers prevailed and are arguably more powerful than men's powers of domination (Spencer-Wood 1999a: 178–179; 2003).

Third-wave feminist diversity theory and my *both/and* feminist-inclusive perspective led me to theorize powers as plural and heterarchical, which means both ranked and unranked forms of power are included (Spencer-Wood 1992, 1995: 129–130). My model of a heterarchy of powers identifies and provides parallel names for four kinds of powers: *both* previously theorized hierarchically ranked forms of power, or domination, that I call "powers over" others; resistant "powers under" of subordinate groups; *and* nonranked cooperative "powers with" others (Spencer-Wood 1999a: 178–179). "Powers over" others include physically, mentally, or legally enforced or coerced domination based on interacting positions in a social structure, such as class, race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, age, etc. "Powers under" others include many forms of resistance, from feigning illness, foot dragging, and sabotage to rebellion (Paynter and McGuire 1991; Spencer-Wood 2011: 22–23). For instance, in the nineteenth century, many wives used real or feigned illness to resist performing their sexual duties for their husbands, in what was called the Cult of Female Invalidism (Ehrenreich and English 1973: 38–39; Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 72; Robertson 1982: 178, 239; Verbrugge 1988: 16–17). "Powers with" others are not hierarchical or coercive but rather egalitarian and affiliative, such as cooperation, accommodation, collaboration, inspiration, empowerment, persuasion, and negotiation (Spencer-Wood 1999a: 178–179).

While it is important to use traditional either/or thinking to distinguish these different kinds of powers, my feminist-inclusive *both/and* theoretical perspective

reveals that their interactions are equally important (Spencer-Wood 1995: 129–130). The three different kinds of powers can each also be what Shanks and Tilley (1992: 129) called “powers to” create change, either alone or in combination with other kinds of power. “Powers with” others are used within both the dominant social group and subordinate groups. “Powers with” others can also operate to unite different or usually opposed social groups in common causes. Women’s and men’s reform organizations used “powers with” each other and male legislators in order to create changes in laws as well as culture. Ideology is important in legitimating the use of any kind of power.

How did women, without legal or political rights, raise their status under patriarchy? Starting in the mid-eighteenth century, women used “powers with” other women, liberal men, and some fathers and husbands to slowly reform patriarchy. Major changes were created by reform women working in many women’s and men’s reform organizations and networks at local, regional, national, and international levels (Spencer-Wood 1991a: 240–241). First, reform women and men inverted the meaning of the separate-spheres gender ideology by transforming women’s domesticity from a subordinate inferior social position to a source of superior moral power. Then religious leaders empowered women to morally reform society. Reform women slowly gained civil rights by lobbying legislators through prayer meetings, petitions, testimonials, and donations (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 183; Ginzberg 1990: 48–58, 74–82; Robertson 1982: 334; Scott 1991: 22, 26, 55). Over the nineteenth century, fathers sought to protect their daughters from wastrel husbands by passing laws granting married women more control over their property and earnings (Ginzberg 1990: 102; Kwolek-Folland 2002: 50–51, 95; Robertson 1982: 159, 278, 379). In the mid-nineteenth century, Herbert Spencer (1851: 162) urged a major shift in Western masculinity by writing that “the desire to command is essentially a barbarous desire.” Wife beating came to be considered a barbaric, uncivilized practice and was outlawed by fathers protecting their daughters, starting in Europe in the 1880s and the USA in the 1980s, after the term “domestic violence” was created by radical feminists (Lorber 2001: 7–8; Robertson 1982: 151, 162–163, 167, 275–276, 456). In the late nineteenth century, divorce became easier for women to obtain on the grounds of adultery or cruelty (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 150–151, 360, 379; Kwolek-Folland 2002: 95; Robertson 1982: 241, 243, 246–247, 249, 277). Women petitioned legislators until they gained full custody rights over their children in the twentieth century (Robertson 1982: 247, 279, 379, 458).

## Early Development of Domestic Reform

Domestic reform developed out of women’s use of “powers with” Protestantism that fundamentally transformed the meaning of the separate-spheres gender ideology by associating women’s previously devalued domestic sphere with Christian morality. The separate-spheres belief in women’s innate immorality due to Eve’s original sin was subverted as women claimed the high moral ground of passionless-



ness that was sanctified by the association of Christianity with asceticism (Cott 1979a). Following Martin Luther's reformation in 1517 that empowered non-elites with the belief that everyone had equal access to God, Protestant women and their domestic sphere became increasingly identified with superior powers of piety and purity (chastity), which with the addition of submissiveness was called the Cult of True Womanhood or Domesticity by 1820 (Lerner 1993: 94; Welter 1966). The equation of women's domestic roles and identity with higher morality sanctified women's control of their domestic sphere and the expansion of women's moral-domestic values and roles into public-domestic organizations, institutions, and professions. Women's superior moral-domestic values legitimated increasing their powers *both* in the home *and* in men's public sphere.

Highly religious Protestant women created a powerfully moral-domestic identity by using "powers with" religious leaders to enforce religious norms that afforded women more rights than they had under the "feme covert" secular legal system (Demos 1970; Cott 1979b). During the eighteenth century, women and their domestic sphere were increasingly identified with Christian moral-communitarian values of social justice as men were drawn away from churches by the conflicting competitive values and practices of public-sphere capitalism that were considered biblical sins and were illegal in the Puritan theocratic colony of Massachusetts, such as usury (money lending), taking advantage of others' ignorance or necessity, exploitation of labor, making excessive profits, price gouging, raising prices when goods were lost at sea, or exporting goods needed in the colonies (Epstein 1981: 12–13, 24–25, 28, 48–50). As women came to dominate church membership, they and their domestic sphere became identified with the Christian values of love, piety, purity (sexual innocence), modesty, humility, simplicity, morality, sacredness, cooperation, and fairness, spatially expressed in the increasing segregation of women's moral-domestic sphere from men's sinful capitalist public sphere (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 209, 276; Degler 1980: 298–300; Epstein 1981: 12–13, 24–25, 28, 48–50). Femininity, domesticity, and morality were conflated as women were considered "God's appointed agent of morality" (Hale 1855: xxxv). The meaning of the dominant separate-spheres gender ideology was transformed as women and their domestic sphere became identified as morally superior due to their closeness to God's nature, and separation from men's sinful capitalist public sphere. Of course in actual practice, domestic women participated in capitalism by shopping for things such as food, tableware, kitchenware, household furnishings, clothing, and status-display items.

By the second great Protestant revival in the 1830s, the justification of women's subjugation to men due to Eve's original sin, and the Calvinist belief in predestination for heaven of only a select few economically successful men, were largely replaced with the Protestant evangelical doctrine that anyone could achieve heaven by performing good deeds, especially charitable works. The belief in women's innately superior piety, domestic morality, and Christian love made charity "woman's mission," her "calling," or "profession" (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 180, 184, 277; Ginzberg 1990: 14). In the second half of the eighteenth century, Rousseau, followed by others, argued that domestic women's superior Christian values empowered them with a higher sanctified authority to perfect



society by morally reforming or “civilizing” men and their sinful capitalist public sphere (Anderson and Zinsser 1988, 126, 179; Cott 1977, 86–87, 129, 131, 136, 140, 142; Epstein 1981, 45, 51, 62; Ginzberg 1990, 11–14; Robertson 1982, 13, 18–21, 30–32). The ideology of Enlightenment perfectionism combined with millennialism in women’s attempts to morally reform society for Christ’s second coming (Hill 1985; Porterfield 1980, 99–128, 155–88).

Having established women’s superior domestic morality, ministers and other writers around the turn of the century argued women had an obligation to morally reform irreligious men and their sinful capitalist society by participating in church-sponsored prayer groups, Sunday schools, maternal associations for raising Christian children, public missions promoting Protestant religions, religious charitable societies, service organizations, women’s auxiliaries to raise funds for churches, and visitors to the poor and sick. Women’s higher morality overcame initial fears that their respectability would be tainted by moving across men’s public-sphere landscape without a male escort and coming into contact with poor people, whose poverty was taken as evidence of vice or sin (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 177, 180, 184, 277; Ginzberg 1990: 14; Spencer-Wood and Baugher 2001). Women’s organizations proliferated in the early nineteenth century but were very predominantly sponsored by churches before 1835 (Alcott 1834, 303; Cott 1977, 130–135, 137, 142; Robertson 1982, 489–493). Many women’s organizations met in homes to plan their public charities, bringing aspects of the public sphere into the domestic sphere. Church organizations and networks provided the infrastructure for the formation of reform organizations and networks, such as the Convention of Friends of Universal Reform that met in Boston in 1840 (Spencer-Wood 1991a: 240) and the Protestant Chautauqua summer camps discussed in Anne Yentsch’s chapter.

Women’s moral domesticity empowered them to create domestic-public organizations for three purposes: mutual support, assisting poor women and children, and social reform (Ginzberg 1990, 18). Women organized maternal societies to support each other or poor women in their new role of raising Christian children who would lead the moral reform of society. Women’s higher morality legitimated them in taking the authority over childhood education from pastors and family patriarchs (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 136, 138; Cott 1977; Degler 1980: 66–69; Ryan 1982: 46, 56). Maternal societies were among the earliest community domestic reform organizations because in them women publicly cooperated with each other in learning new child-raising techniques that transformed mothering from an innate biological ability to a cultural task that had to be learned through education.

The emphasis on mothering as women’s primary moral obligation to raise citizens was first argued by Rousseau in France in the mid-eighteenth century (Robertson 1982: 11–12). In the nineteenth-century Cult of Republican Motherhood, *both American and European* reformers argued that women needed education to fulfill their sacred duty of raising the next generation of leaders (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 185; Beecher 1841: 13; Cott 1977: 149–151; Degler 1980: 74, 307; Robertson 1982: 15–17; Solomon 1985, 12). Women’s literacy increased from 20–40% in the eighteenth century, when girls at most were taught to read the Bible, to about 90% in the second half of the nineteenth century, after

public schools were opened to girls (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 139, 476n15; Degler 1980: 308; Amott and Matthaei 1991: Ryan 1982: 14; Solomon 1985: 3). Reform women established girls' academies, finishing schools, industrial schools, women's professional schools, and colleges, and employed themselves teaching both academic and domestic subjects (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 30, 187–189; Robertson 1982: 142–143, 413; Solomon 1985: 17–21). Domestic reform had given women access to powerful skills. Women increasingly wrote and read domestic manuals that successfully advocated wifely control of everyday decisions in the domestic sphere, including household consumer choices.

## Domestic Reform of Housework, Mothering and Childhood

Middle-class white women increased their status and their control over the husband-dominated domestic sphere by arguing in domestic manuals that housework and mothering were women's domestic professions that were equivalent to men's public-sphere professions. A set of new gender ideologies propounded in women's domestic manuals legitimated three major strategies. The first strategy, initiated in the early nineteenth century, drew on the Cult of Domesticity and the Cult of Home Religion to sacralize the home, women's housework, and mothering (Beecher 1841; Beecher and Stowe 1869; Handlin 1979: 11–12; Ryan 1982). The second strategy, supported by the Cult of Republican Motherhood and the later ideology of scientific mothering, transformed housework and mothering from innate functions, into elaborated complex sets of tasks. The elaborated tasks led to an increase in specialized rooms, furniture, and artifacts (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 137, 141–142). The third strategy, starting in the second half of the century, applied public-sphere scientific ideology and technology associated with men to raise the status of housework and mothering (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 138; Frederick 1923; Ryan 1982: 46). These strategies were combined to make the domestic sphere public in several ways.

At the core of the nineteenth-century Cult of Domesticity and the married identity of womanhood was moral mothering called "her most divine and sublime mission in life" and her "noblest profession" (Apple 1987: 98–99). The moral superiority of mothers obligated them under social justice ideology to work for the salvation of their children (Cott 1977: 87). The Christian belief that children were originally sinful little adults, whose will needed to be broken with whipping, was replaced with the belief in the original holy innocence of children and the early shaping of character by mothers, as propounded by Enlightenment philosophers John Locke in England in 1690 and the Swiss Jean Jacques Rousseau in the eighteenth century (Cott 1977: 84; Degler 1980: 66–69, 86–91; Halttunen 1982: 3–4; Ryan 1982: 49–50). The sentimental philosophy of Romanticism (1750–1850) argued that children, as part of God's nature, were inherently good and were best reared with love and gentle persuasion to educate them in responsibility (Degler 1980: 66–69, 89). The dominant ideology shifted from viewing children as little workers to analyzing

childhood as a set of stages requiring training (Matthaei 1982: 127; Spencer-Wood 2003). In 1847, the famous American minister Horace Bushnell advocated domestic Christian nurture to shape children and discussed the powerful influence of inanimate objects as well as parental spirit, beliefs, attitudes, manners, and actions (Handlin 1979: 8–10, 15). Bushnell argued that young children were profoundly affected by the material domestic surroundings expressing the “spirit of the house” involved in Christian nurture. Bushnell’s theological framework urging parents to create a Christian home environment led other ministers, novelists, and, most concretely, female writers of domestic manuals to develop ideas of domestic Christian landscapes, architecture, and material culture in the Cult of Home Religion (see below) (Handlin 1979: 10–12).

In the later nineteenth century, the ideology of scientific mothering transformed the moral mothering of the Cult of Republican Motherhood into a profession with the prestige and material culture of science. Doctors argued child rearing was a science, and women needed scientific maternal training because successful mothering depended on scientific knowledge of child behaviors, hygiene, illnesses, feeding, etc. (Apple 1987: 97–116). To teach scientific housekeeping and mothering skills, reformers developed the academic disciplines of domestic science and home economics (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 185–187; Robertson 1982: 449; Spencer-Wood 2002: 125; Strasser 1982: 203–212). Americans learned about the science of mothering from European doctors and scientists. At first, women’s domestic manuals included scientific mothering, followed by separate manuals for scientific mothering developed around 1900 (Ryan 1982: 46). Still, women could never learn enough scientific mothering—they needed the expert advice and supervision of their mothering practices by doctors. Mothers were told that instinctual mothering killed a large proportion of babies due to the inadequate quantity or quality of breast milk. Scientific experts claimed that few mothers could supply enough breast milk for a six-month-old baby, and even if the supply appeared adequate, a mother should feed her child at least one bottle of formula a day to make weaning easier. Childcare books by doctors and magazine advertisements both suggested that commercial baby formulas were needed either as supplements or as more reliable replacements for breast milk. The use of scientific products, such as infant formulas and baby foods, spread throughout Western society in the early twentieth century (Apple 1987: 97–116; Ryan 1982: 46). Excavations in an African-American midwife’s house yard yielded bottles with embossed labels for Liebig’s Extract Malt and Mellin’s Infant Food, the most popular infant formula (Wilkie 2003: 119–42). This archaeological evidence indicates that scientific mothering spread beyond the Anglo-American middle-class into nonwhite working-class communities. Poor urban women who made their own formula could obtain free cow’s milk at milk depots established in many large cities, often in women’s social settlements (Apple 1987: 102).

Nineteenth-century domestic manuals in Europe and America raised the status of women and their domestic sphere by materially elaborating housework and mothering to demonstrate the importance of women’s domestic roles. Domestic manuals detailed how to manage servants and care for the new material culture involved in these elaborations, from carpets, furniture, wallpaper, and mirrors to

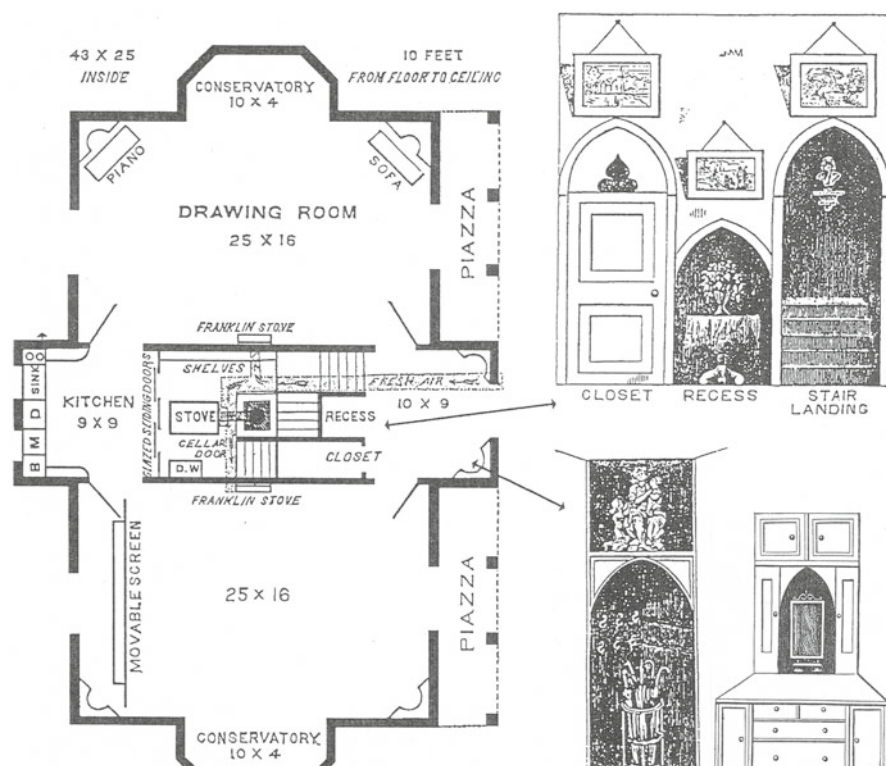
ovens (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 137–138, 141; Robertson 1982: 136–137). In addition, some manuals raised the status of the housewife's control of the home by calling her "the sovereign of an empire" (Beecher 1841: 144; Beecher and Stowe 1869: 222) in analogy with Queen Victoria.

Many domestic manuals in Europe and America raised the status of housework and mothering by arguing that they were women's most sacred professions, drawing on the Cult of Domesticity and Cult of Home Religion. Both of these ideologies identified women with superior domestic piety and self-sacrifice, developed in ministers' sermons and women's domestic manuals between 1830 and 1870 (Cott 1977: 149–150; Handlin 1979: 11; Ryan 1982: 45–70). The most popular domestic manual of the second half of the nineteenth century, by Catharine Beecher and her more famous sister Harriet Beecher Stowe, aimed to "elevate both the honor and the remuneration of all the employments that sustain the many difficult and sacred duties of the family state, and thus to render each department of woman's true profession as much desired and respected as are the most honored professions of men" (Beecher and Stowe 1869: 13).

The Beecher sisters raised the status of women's housework and mothering to the status of a prestigious male public profession by espousing the Cult of Home Religion, in which women, as the moral guardians of the family, were considered the ministers of the home, who read the Bible each week to the family gathered at a round table with a vase of flowers symbolizing the moral influence of God's nature (Handlin 1979: 55–58; Spencer-Wood 1999b: 172, 182–183). The Beecher sisters symbolized the sacredness of the domestic sphere and women's role as minister of the home by designing a gothic cruciform house with a gothic public entrance and furniture. In designing a house, the Beecher sisters crossed the border into the profession of architecture that many men argued was unsuitable for women. The Beecher sisters were among the earliest of a line of domestic reformers addressing the inconveniences of men's house designs for women's housework (Beecher and Stowe 1869: 19–21, 23–27, 36; Macdonald 1992: 42–43; Stowe 1864: 257; Vaux 1857: 236–237).

The kitchen was raised from the basement, where servants produced meals, to the center of the first floor, symbolizing the central importance of the housewife in a servantless family (Fig. 9.1; Beecher and Stowe 1869: 22, 333; Spencer-Wood 1996: 418–419). A separate stove room had shelf boxes for organizing pots and utensils, and glazed sliding doors to keep in the smells and heat. The Beecher sisters advocated a stove that could perform many tasks at once as well as stimulating air circulation in the ventilation shafts of their house design (Beecher and Stowe 1869: 32, 69–75, 172).

In historical archaeology, Wall (1994) identified women with gothic paneled white tableware symbolizing the Cult of Domesticity. Since the predominance of women acting in the public sphere to select, order, and/or buy ceramic tableware was widely discussed and documented starting in the mid-eighteenth century (Fraser 1984: 278; Gray *forthcoming*; Martin 1994: 175–177, 183, 2006, 2008; Mudge 1981: 16, 17, 21, 22, 121, 122, 124, 125, 138, 141, 143, 171, 204, 211; Pinckney 1979; Spencer-Wood 1995: 122; Vickery 1998; Wall 1994: 135–136), manufacturers

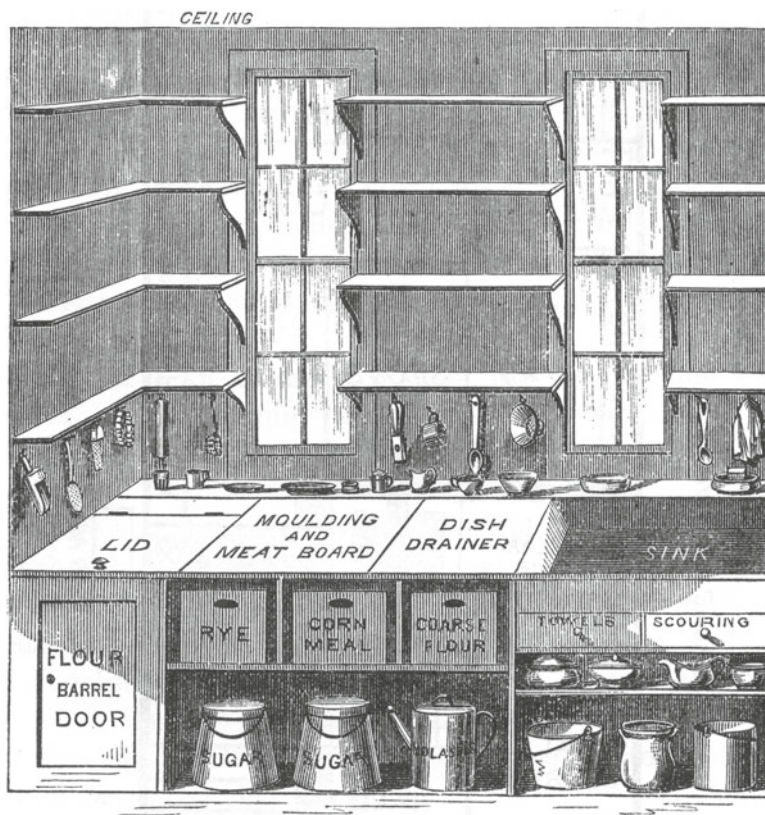


**Fig. 9.1** Beecher and Stowe's design for the first floor of their "Christian" home, including the centrally located kitchen, conservatories, public entrance, gothic doorways, niches, and furniture (Beecher and Stowe 1869: 26–27, 36)

would logically produce ceramic styles to appeal to the predominance of female ceramic consumers. The Cult of Home Religion (Handlin 1979) gave even more explicitly female-associated sacred meaning to gothic paneled ceramic tableware, whether plain white symbolizing purity, or transfer printed with romantic church ruins, or flowers symbolizing women's closeness to God's moral natural world. In the Beecher sisters' ideal house, a bay window in a parlor was made into a conservatory where potted plants and a terrarium brought God's nature into woman's domestic sphere to morally reform children. This gender ideology gave new sacred feminine meaning to ordinary redware flowerpots that archaeologists often recover (Beecher and Stowe 1869: 26, 97, 295–296; Spencer-Wood 1996: 419). These cults were successful in ideologically raising the moral status of women and their domestic sphere but did not make housework or mothering into professions.

A number of domestic manuals, starting with the Beecher sisters', advocated professionalizing housework by applying public-sphere scientific technology associated with men to rationalize and mechanize housework. In these domestic manuals, reformers designed kitchens and laundries with innovative arrangements of

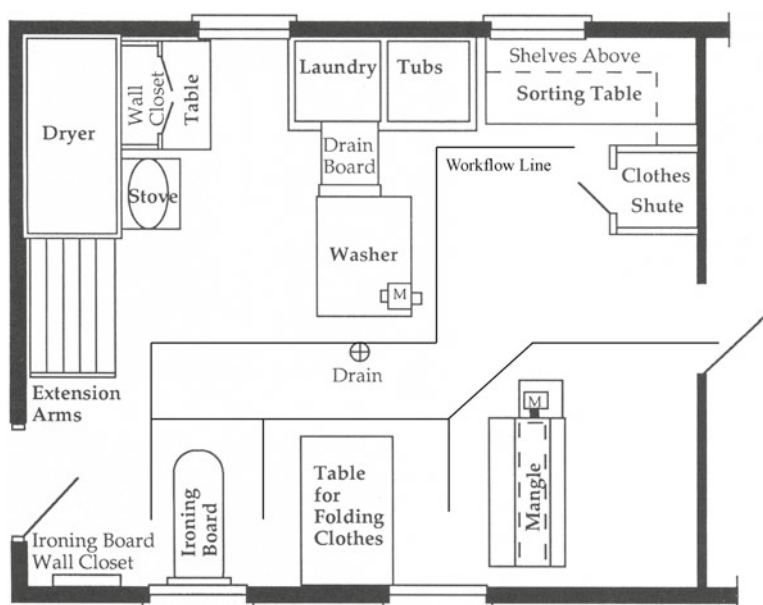




**Fig. 9.2** Beecher and Stowe's kitchen design with rational arrangement of furniture and utensils for logical sequencing of tasks (Beecher and Stowe 1869: 34)

furniture for logical sequencing of household tasks. In their kitchen, the Beecher sisters invented hanging of utensils above a food preparation surface with shelf boxes below, connected to a sink cabinet with drawers beneath, which was partly implemented in Harriet Beecher Stowe's house, along with a potted-plant conservatory (Figs. 9.1 and 9.2; Beecher and Stowe 1869: 32–36, 40). The arrangement of a sink cabinet and food preparation counter next to it is standard in modern kitchens. The Beecher sisters also initiated the logical arrangement of equipment in their basement laundry and were early advocates of neighborhood cooperative laundries (Beecher and Stowe 1869: 38–41, 334). The Beecher sisters' domestic manual initiated a trend in Europe and America of training housewives to consult scientific authority about housework and mothering (Robertson 1982: 145).

The most influential domestic manual in the early twentieth century was written in 1915 by Christine Frederick (1923), who was inspired by industrial efficiency expert Frederick W. Taylor to make time-motion studies that broke housework into sets of procedural steps with arrangements of equipment for maximum efficiency in task



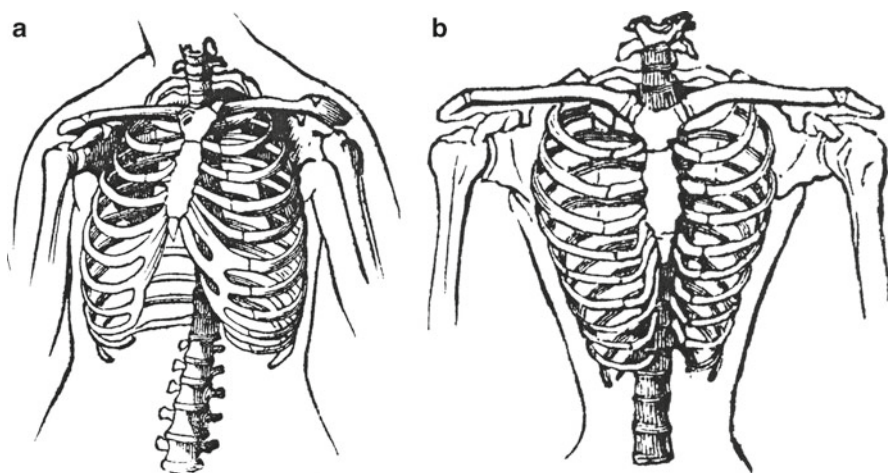
**Fig. 9.3** Frederick's laundry design with furniture arranged for efficient sequencing of tasks, following the task sequence line (after Frederick 1923: 224)

performance. Her domestic manual *Household Engineering* was immensely popular and she developed an early entrepreneurial business designing kitchens for both large homes and small apartments, since many in the elite and middle classes preferred at that time to rent apartments in what were called apartment hotels (Spencer-Wood 1996: 429). Frederick (1923) advocated the use of equipment to facilitate housework and invented the integrated kitchen cabinet and working surface that is standard today, a rack for hanging utensils, and a folding cart for moving tableware and meals from the kitchen to the dining room. Frederick also logically arranged furniture in her basement laundry for efficient operation (Fig. 9.3; Spencer-Wood 1999b: 183–184). Chapter 12, by Elisabeth Arwill-Nordbladh, points out that Frederick's ideas were also very influential in Scandinavia and particularly in the development of household and cooperative laundries in Sweden. Reform women's networks of cooperative "powers with" each other extended between America and Europe.

### *Dress Reform*

This section was written before belatedly receiving Carol Nickolai's chapter and has been revised to complement her chapter with additional information. In the dress reform movement, women made a very private and intimate subject public. Since the sixteenth century, fashionable dresses trailed on the ground and weighed





**Fig. 9.4** A. Normal uncorseted ribcage. B. Ribcage deformed by a tight-laced corset (O’Followell 1908: 24–5)

up to 25 pounds, due to multiple petticoats and layers of underwear, including corsets that were stiffened with vertical “stays”—strips of whalebone, horn, metal, or wood in cloth pockets in corsets. Many women wore full corsets even under empire dresses that were made fashionable in 1790–1815 by Empress Josephine after the French Revolution. With the invention of metal eyelets in 1828, the ideal waist shrank from 24–30 inches to the wasp waist of 18–20 inches, created by tightly laced corsets that deformed women’s bodies and often caused fainting from any exertion (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 146; Collins 2003: 122; Cunningham 2003: 22, 31; Macdonald 1992: 110; Steele 2003: 30–33, 44). Hoopskirts that reached up to six feet in diameter in 1860 made movement cumbersome and sitting difficult, despite the replacement of some petticoats with lighter hoops (Halttunen 1982: 161). In such dresses, women could not pick up anything they dropped, necessitating servants and male chivalry. Motion of the arms was greatly restricted by tight bodices and sleeves (Cunningham 2003: 22). Although tight lacing impeded movements of elite women, by the nineteenth century most working women also wore corsets, which were less tightly laced while working (Steele 2003: 21, 26–27, 48–49).

By the early nineteenth century, most doctors in Europe and America were against tight lacing of corsets because the practice deformed ribs, displaced organs, decreased lung capacity and normal breathing, limited movement, and resulted in fainting, illness, and death in childbirth (Fig. 9.4; Collins 2003: 123; O’Followell 1908; Steele 2003: 67–76). The resulting belief that women were constitutionally frail and predisposed to ill health was so widespread in the nineteenth century that it has been called the Cult of Female Invalidism (Ehrenreich and English 1973: 11–37; Verbrugge 1988: 16–17). Nonetheless, most women continued to wear tight corsets until the early twentieth century, and some wore them through the 1950s (Anderson and Zinsser 1988; Collins 2003: 398). Girls started wearing miniature

adult corsets at the age of 2 in the seventeenth century, but by 1850 less restrictive corsets were developed for girls until they reached adolescence and adopted adult boned corsets. Because women were socioeconomically dependent on marriage, mothers put their daughters in corsets from an early age so they could attain respectable norms of beauty that made them marriageable (Steele 2003: 12, 49–51).

The “bloomer costume,” named after suffragist Amelia Bloomer, was one of the earliest reform dresses that removed the corset entirely, as doctors advocated (Fig. 9.5; Petrash 2002: 50–51, 56). It consisted of a calf-length skirt over loose pants called Turkish pantaloons if wide and gathered at the ankle, or pantalets if narrow and open. The costume developed out of the short dresses over pantalets traditionally worn by girls and by females in gymnastics schools since 1807 in Sweden, Germany, and England, followed by the USA (Cunningham 2003: 33, 38). Bloomers were also worn in several Utopian communities. At New Harmony (1824–1827), women refused to wear bloomers because they felt it threatened their dignity and was imposed on them by the head of the Utopian community, British industrialist and reformer Robert Owen (Kolmerten 1988: 56, 78, 94). At the more egalitarian Brook Farm commune, 1841–1846, in the Greater Boston area, women wore “a short skirt with knickerbockers of the same material” for ease when working. They dressed in the “simpler of prevailing fashions” for evening dances and festivities (Swift 1900: 279–280). The bloomer costume was adopted by women in the Oneida commune in 1848, when helping men raise a new communal dwelling, now a historic site (Van Wormer 2006: 52). The women found the bloomer costume so freeing during the work that they continued wearing it afterward (Thorp 1949: 122). Probably some conservative Oneidan women objected to bloomers, since Utopian women were not a monolithically uniform group.

In 1850, suffragist Elizabeth Smith Miller was inspired by her father Gerrit Smith, a supporter of women’s equal rights, to design a bloomer costume with voluminous Turkish pantaloons gathered at the ankles, which she wore in Seneca Falls, inspiring first her cousin Elizabeth Cady Stanton and then their friend Amelia Bloomer to wear them, followed by Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, the Grimké sisters, Paulina Wright Davis, and Mrs. Edison’s sister, as noted in Chapter 11. Gerrit Smith felt that women would be treated by men as “playthings, idols, or dolls” until they would “throw off” their “clothes prisons” of heavy skirts that made women weak, helpless, and passive (Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 102–104). Wendell Phillips was another male reformer who supported the “rational dress” movement (Macdonald 1992: 106). When male organizers of an antislavery convention considered not allowing Lucy Stone to speak because she was wearing bloomers, Wendell Phillips said he wouldn’t speak then either, so Stone was allowed to speak in bloomers (Blackwell 1930: 104). Stone and other early feminists suffered from repeated heckling and assaults by men enforcing patriarchal rules against women speaking in public and wearing any form of pants, which were equated with masculinity (Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 99–104).

In December 1849, Amelia Bloomer wrote in the *Lily*, an early women’s newspaper she founded, defending the wearing of “pantalets” by actress Fanny Kemble, followed by additional articles that were picked up in the *New York Tribune* and



AMELIA BLOOMER, ORIGINATOR OF THE NEW DRESS.—FROM A  
DAGUERRETYPE BY T. W. BROWN.—(SEE PRECEDING PAGE.)

**Fig. 9.5** Amelia Bloomer in her bloomer costume, inaccurately depicted with gathered Turkish pants in the Illustrated London News, 27 September 1851, p. 396 (Image scanned by Philip V. Allingham at <http://www.victorianweb.org/art/costume/bloomer.html>)

other newspapers, resulting in a national fad for the bloomer costume (Lewis 1971: 180). Subscriptions to the *Lily* doubled practically overnight, and circulation rose from 500 to 4,000 copies per month (Lewis 1971: 180; Petrash 2002: 56). In response to hundreds of letters praising the costume and requesting information and patterns for making bloomers, Amelia published pictures and patterns of the costume, which was then named after her (Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 103). The bloomer costume made news as far away as England, where a lithograph of Amelia in bloomers appeared in the *London Illustrated News* (Fig. 9.5).

Although many women and reform men were very interested in less restrictive and heavy dresses, most men vociferously enforced women's imprisonment in clothing that *created* the supposedly innate female weakness and dependency legitimating male dominance and "protection" of the "weaker sex" under patriarchy. Pants were the primary material insignia of masculinity, and women who wore them threatened to materially and symbolically invert the male dominance and female subordination at the heart of patriarchy. So men made laws that allowed them to arrest and punish women who wore trousers in public from the seventeenth century in Europe and America to 1944 in the USA (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 145–147; Collins 2003: 26–27, 385).

Men derided women in bloomers for "wearing the pants in the family" and suggested their husbands should wear petticoats (Macdonald 1992: 106). Elizabeth Cady Stanton's family was mortified that she wore bloomers—her husband talked about women exposing their legs (which they were not supposed to admit to having), while her father wrote that "no woman of good sense and delicacy" would "make such a guy of herself" (quoted in Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 103–104). In 1851, the *New York Times* noted the appearance of six bloomers in the city on the same day and the hostile derisive crowds of men that heckled them (Petrash 2002: 48). When Anthony and Stone wore bloomers to the New York City Post Office, a crowd of jeering men and boys surrounded them until a male friend brought a policeman and a carriage to rescue them. Suffragists wore bloomers for 3–6 years but stopped due to ridicule and harassment by men (Blackwell 1930: 105–106; Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 102–105; Lewis 1971: 180). The bloomer costume returned to popularity as an acceptable special-use costume when young women needed the freedom of movement to increasingly participate in bicycling, sports, and gymnastics in the last decades of the nineteenth century (Petrash 2002: 60).

Due to most men's "aversion and disgust" over bloomers and many women's concerns for dressing respectably, dress reformers switched by the 1870s to a campaign against tight corsets because they were unhealthy (Macdonald 1992: 106). Starting c.1850, the ideology of the Cult of Real Womanhood critiqued the delicacy and invalidism caused by fashionable dresses requiring tightly laced corsets, and advocated maintenance of good health through exercise, sensible dress, and daily baths, noting that fewer than 25% of Americans bathed once a year and many never bathed (Cogan 1989: 29–60). In her domestic manuals, Catharine Beecher (1841: 96–98) argued against tight corsets and for suspending clothing from the shoulders to prevent the weight of skirts from pulling on the waist (Beecher and Stowe 1869: 160–164). In their 1869 domestic manual, the Beecher

**Fig. 9.6** Beecher and Stowe's loosely laced, nondeforming reform "waist" or corset hung from the shoulders (Beecher and Stowe 1869: 164)



sisters advocated, designed, and provided a drawing of their relatively loose-fitting and flexible boneless corset that hung from the shoulders, which they had not patented (Fig. 9.6; Beecher and Stowe 1869: 160–164). Following the Beecher sisters, Catherine (Madame) Griswold of New York patented corsets to prevent stooping by students, seamstresses, etc., and a doctor-endorsed “abdominal corset” with “all weight suspended from the Shoulders, preventing any pressure on the Spine or Kidneys” (Macdonald 1992: 115–116). Many doctors continued to advocate dress reform, arguing that tight lacing caused the widespread invalidism of women, preventing them from fulfilling their innate roles as mothers (Clarke 1873: 25; Ellis 1884: 7; Macdonald 1992: 107).

With the powerful endorsement of doctors and famous reformers such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman (Yentsch [forthcoming](#)), dress reform became increasingly popular, led by the elite New England Women's Club Dress Reform Committee, founded by Julia Ward Howe in 1867, and Sorosis, a network of American women's clubs interested in domestic reform founded by New York journalist Jane Croly later that year. The dress reform committee opened a store on Winter Street in Boston to sell dress reform undergarments and held a mass meeting to display them on large dolls, since life-size replicas of the human form were considered immodest. The committee requested a number of inventors to design nonconstricting “healthful” foundation garments to be sold at their store. Conflict occurred because the middle-class committee expected women to donate their inventions to the store, while working-class inventors usually needed royalties for their patented corset designs. Inventors Mrs. O. P. Flynt and Susan T. Converse, who invented the “emancipation waist,” both withdrew their corsets from the committee's store due to the failure to pay patent royalties (Macdonald 1992: 107–115; Scott 1991: 117). Beecher and Stowe (1869: 158–166), Ellen Swallow Richards (1907: 55; 1910), Frances Russell (1892), and many other domestic reformers advocated dress reform to eliminate tight corsets and heavy petticoats that crippled women and made housework more arduous (Spencer-Wood 1991a: 252).

Women's ill health became an increasing concern that doctors and health reformers sought to address with exercise and nutrition programs (Verbrugge 1988). American women's colleges worked to prevent women's physical breakdown from mental exertions, as predicted by Dr. Clarke (1873), by requiring student participation in gymnastics



and sports. Tight-laced corsets did not permit the required physical activity as women's sports and bicycling became popular among young women in Europe (Robertson 1982: 339) and at American women's colleges in the later nineteenth century (Verbrugge 1988: 139–192). The transition away from traditional ankle-length skirts began with women patenting special garments so they could cycle without their long skirts getting wrapped around the pedals, throwing them to the pavement (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 202; MacDonald 1992: 105–6, 200–6). In the 1890s, about 30 women's patents combined bloomers or culottes in some way with skirts to meet the combined needs of practicality and modesty for women participating in the bicycle craze and the popular women's gymnasia, both of which increased women's health and independence (Macdonald 1992: 105–6, 200–6). Culottes and bloomers became socially accepted clothing for the increasing numbers of women riding bicycles in public.

A small-waist and ankle-length skirt with crinolines and bustles persisted in early twentieth-century fashion (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 146). However, corsets went out of style in France around 1910, when tailored suits became fashionable as increasing numbers of middle-class women became economically independent by working in the new professions created by reform women. Since France was the fashion leader for Europe, England and its ex-colonies soon followed (Robertson 1982: 339). In a risqué style of 1912, narrow ankle-length skirts were often slit almost to the knee, revealing colored stockings or boots (Steele 2003: 151). During World War I, women's increasing participation in the workforce and resulting economic independence and freedom, as well as increasing competition of heterosexual women for the dwindling number of men, were all factors contributing to women's acceptance of new fashions with mid-calf skirts, silk stockings, and short hair, which was previously a mark of prostitutes. The shortening of fashionable skirts and loss of bustles were also given impetus by the practical needs of middle-class women's new professions. In the 1920s, even shorter flapper dresses developed, and the new ideal of thinness temporarily led to the binding of breasts for a boyish figure. Cosmetics and nail polish, previously associated with prostitutes, were glamorized by Hollywood and adopted by young women. In the 1920s, trousers became fashionable women's attire for sports as female athletes wearing pants were valorized by the media (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 201–3). Women's new activities led to changes in fashion, including replacement of the corset with the less restrictive rubber girdle, a change doctors and dress reformers applauded. In the 1940s, women war workers wore pants, followed by some actresses playing career women. Then the feminist movement in the 1970s resulted in the widespread acceptance of women wearing pants, although some conservatives still try to turn back the clock by deriding Hillary Clinton's pantsuits as “wearing the pants in the family” (Williams 2010: 9).

### ***Transforming Housework and Mothering into Women's Public Institutions and Professions***

From the nineteenth century into the twentieth century, reformers increasingly transformed women's private mothering and housekeeping tasks into new women's

public professions, organizations, and institutions that often physically dominated parts of men's public urban landscapes (Spencer-Wood 1994a, 1996). Many different domestic reform movements spread and developed through national and international organizations and networks, from Sorosis, the National Federation of Women's Clubs, National Council of Women, and national and international kindergarten and playground organizations, to the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the International Council of Women (Spencer-Wood 1991a: 240–1).

Many of these reformers were Marxist-feminist in arguing that women's liberation from subordinate status in the domestic sphere required women to become economically independent from men. These reformers viewed women's economic dependence on men as the root of gender inequality. Women's public professions were legitimated by two new gender ideologies. In the Cult of Single Blessedness, developed in Europe and America from 1810 to 1860 but still discussed as late as 1910, women argued they should not marry men but instead marry professions as a calling equivalent to nuns who are called by God to renounce men and marry Christ. This ideological discourse argued that professional women would be freed from economic dependence on, and subordination to, men. This ideology legitimated an increase in the percentage of unmarried women from low single digits in the early eighteenth century to double digits in the USA and Western Europe by the late nineteenth century (Chambers-Schiller 1984: 1, 3–5, 18–23, Hajnal 1965: 101–4; Spencer-Wood 1999b: 172). In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Cult of Real Womanhood argued that women needed to be educated, maintain health and physical fitness, marry carefully, and be trained in a profession in case they needed to support their family (Cogan 1989, Robertson 182: 376). Through both of these ideologies, women transformed their identity from purely domestic to *both* domestic *and* public.

Women argued that their innately superior domestic values and skills, such as manual dexterity and attention to detail from sewing, made them best suited for public professions that were considered natural extensions of women's housework and mothering. Such arguments, and the fact that women were paid a quarter to two-thirds of men's wages, transformed a number of male professions into female professions, such as teachers of young children and older girls, nurses, sales clerks, office clerks, bookbinders, bookkeepers, bank tellers, telegraphers, telephone operators, librarians, postal clerks, and patent office employees. Primary school teaching was the most common "respectable" and underpaid white-collar employment for unmarried women (they had to resign on marriage) (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 193–5; Baron 1987; Collins 2003: 107–10; Robertson 1982: 339). Reformers also created many new women's public professions in institutions, such as day nursery workers, kindergarten teachers, playground supervisors, kitchen garden teachers, girls' physical education teachers, dietitians, nutritionists, public health nurses, social workers, physical therapists, and supervisors of girls and women in charitable homes, reformatories, and prisons (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 195–6, 248–9, 293–4; Collins 2003: 99, 107, 199–203, 242–6; Reinhartz 1992: 78; Robertson 1982: 329, 376, 395–6, 410, 420, 513; Spencer-Wood 1994a: 179; Verbrugge 1988: 16–17, 139–92).



Reform women argued that training was needed for their new domestic and public professions, including scientific housekeeping and mothering, thus connecting the public sphere to women's domestic sphere (Strasser 1982: 203, 207). After 1865, reform women established and taught in classes and/or schools for many women's professions. Reform women taught domestic science and scientific cooking in grade schools, industrial schools for girls, and social settlements. Home economics developed from the requirement that students perform the institutional housework at Mount Holyoke Seminary since Mary Lyon founded it in 1837. In 1869, Iowa State College adopted the Mount Holyoke plan and in 1872 added the first college instruction in home economics, founded by Mary Welsh (Spencer-Wood 1994a, Strasser 1982: 203, 209–10). As a discipline, home economics was taught by women in secondary schools and state colleges and universities, but not in most elite women's colleges (except Wellesley College, where many reform women taught). In the last three decades of the century, scientific cooking schools were established in Europe and America, and classes in cooking, home economics, childcare, hygiene, and laundry became part of the curriculum for girls in some public schools and colleges (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 185–7; Robertson 1982: 142–5; Strasser 1982: 203–12). Women, and a few men, wrote textbooks for education in professions from kindergarten teaching to domestic science, scientific cooking, and home economics (Andrews 1925; Bailey 1914; Frederick 1923; Peabody and Mann 1877; Wellman 1923). A few men taught home economics in universities (Andrews 1925), although most teachers were women. Concern for scientific and sanitary food preparation led to advocacy of home canning and scientific measurements in domestic science/home economics. Canning jars and a large durable spoon excavated in the house yard of suffragist May Cheney have more than ordinary meanings because of her involvement in the home economics movement (Christensen, forthcoming).

## Public Cooperative Housekeeping

The cooperative housekeeping movement expanded the meaning of women's domestic sphere into the public sphere by transforming private domestic tasks into public urban businesses, institutions, and professions. Since the Enlightenment, the ideology of cooperative housekeeping argued that cooperation involved a more efficient division of labor that was also social, and therefore more pleasurable, than the drudgery of isolated women and servants performing the same tasks in individual homes. Cooperative housekeeping was symbolized and implemented predominantly with ordinary material culture that was given new meanings, as well as some new material culture (Spencer-Wood 1996: 407).

First ordinary material culture was given new meanings by being used in the most widespread type of cooperative housekeeping, by unmarried women living together in homes established by reformers, starting in the early nineteenth century for destitute widows, and homes to guard or restore the morals of working women,

unemployed women, and wayward or “fallen” women. Colonial houses of industry and industrial schools charitably employed poor women and children in spinning, often for room and board (Anderson and Zinsser 1988, 180–1; Cott 1977, 134n; Ginzberg 1990, 38, 60; Hayden 1981, 152–3; Scott 1991, 13; Wertheimer 1977, 16–17). In Catholic countries, orders of unpaid nuns cooperatively cared for orphans, the sick, the poor, the old, and female convicts in prisons (Robertson 1982, 329). Protestant women’s church auxiliaries provided a training ground for women to organize a wide variety of religious charitable organizations and institutions, including orphanages, hospitals, and asylums for the insane.

Women’s public charitable organizations and institutions were early types of domestic reform because they were viewed as natural extensions of women’s superior moral–domestic values and sanctified roles such as mothering, nursing the sick, and creating a home (Ginzberg 1990, 16–17, 59–60; Verbrugge 1988, 122). Domestic reformers created many public homes for poor and/or disadvantaged women and/or children (Anderson and Zinsser 1988, 179–81). These homes usually involved cooperative housekeeping by the inmates, as they were called. Matrons were employed to supervise women’s cooperative homes and improve inmates’ morals by training them in respectable domesticity (De Cunzo 1995, Spencer-Wood 1994a: 194–5). Reform women were practicing a form of internal colonialism by trying to teach middle-class domesticity to working-class women, who were not passive recipients of reform, but often resisted and rebelled against attempts to indoctrinate them, and negotiated with reformers to increase their social agency (Spencer-Wood 1994a). For instance, working women living in the Chicago YWCA Central Home protested against the middle-class managers who guarded their morals by not allowing men on the premises, and gained some rights of self-governance, and the admission of men to the downstairs parlor for social events (Meyerowitz 1988: 87–8).

In America, women’s organizations successfully petitioned male legislators to incorporate their institutions and make them public, from children’s hospitals and homes for destitute or elderly women to homes for unwed mothers established by moral reform societies. Women’s organizations also successfully petitioned for municipal funding of their charitable institutions, which were needed as cities grew rapidly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries without providing any welfare services. Incorporation made women’s organizations equivalent to men’s businesses, circumventing the civil death of wives in common law by providing them with male legal and civil powers that allowed them to own property and invest funds they raised. Women’s organizations served as a safety net for employing middle-class benevolent women who fell into poverty through death of a husband, or his inability to support his family (Barker-Benfield 1977: 104–5; Ginzberg 1990: 22, 48–58; Lebsack 1984: 197; Scott 1991: 2, 19).

Reform women criticized men’s large impersonal institutions, such as orphanages, hospitals, industrial schools, houses of industry, workhouses, prisons, insane asylums, and reformatories, and sought to make them more homelike with matrons (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 180–1, 274; Huey 2001: 126–7, 129, 132; Robertson 1982: 498; Spencer-Wood 2001: 108; Wertheimer 1977: 16). My survey of domestic reform sites in Boston found that reformers implemented their ideology of homelike

institutions by often establishing women's cooperative homes in a house. However, a few cooperative homes, such as the YWCA and the Grey Nun's Home for Working Girls, were so popular that new buildings were constructed for them that occupied an entire city block. In these cases, women's supposedly domestic institutions visually dominated the surrounding area of men's urban public landscape (Spencer-Wood 1994a).

Cooperative housekeeping by women working together in Utopian communes preceded and inspired the development of some nineteenth-century urban public cooperative housekeeping businesses and institutions, ranging from bakeries, pie shops, cook shops, and cooked food delivery services to neighborhood cooking and dining cooperatives, cooperative stores, laundries, day nurseries, kindergartens, and public kitchens, where reformers cooperatively cooked "scientific" food that was sold inexpensively to the poor. Large-scale cooperative cooking was materially implemented with large ovens, stoves, and pots. Cooked food delivery services transported food to individual homes in specially designed metal or glass dishes stacked in insulated buckets. Starting in the 1890s, many childcare cooperatives and some public kitchens were operated by reform women who lived cooperatively in social settlements while offering a great variety of classes and clubs for children and adults in the poor immigrant neighborhoods where settlements were located (Spencer-Wood 1991a: 264, 269–73; 1994a, b, Strasser 1982: 207).

Lesbian feminist theory raised new questions resulting in research finding that social settlements were predominantly gender segregated like the rest of Victorian society, in which intense homosocial friendships between women were normative (Cott 1977: 172–80). Women's social settlements created female-dominated communities of homosocial, and sometimes homosexual, relationships among reform women that we would consider lesbian and were called "Boston marriages" at the time (Deutsch 2000: 109). Social settlements provided unmarried women with opportunities to mother children, from day nurseries and kindergartens to playgrounds, clubs, and classes.

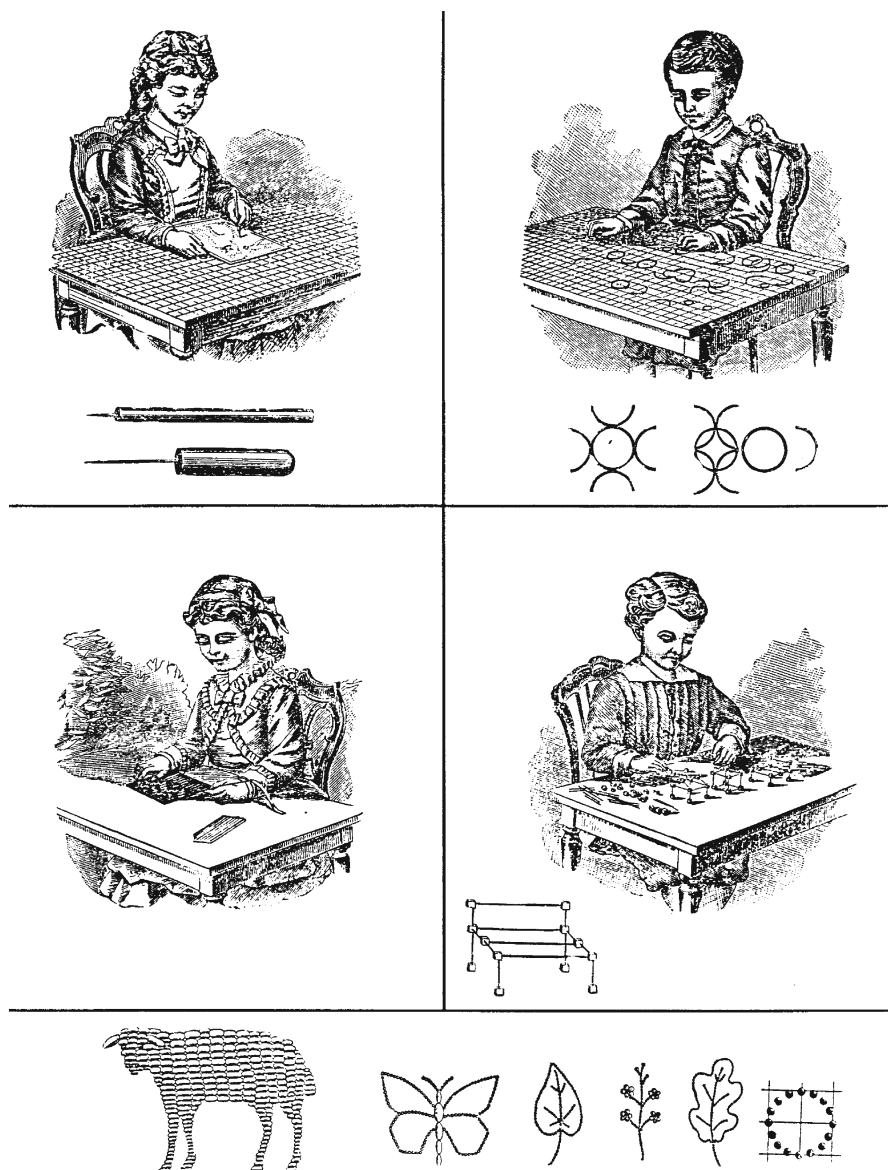
Of the diversity of public cooperative housekeeping institutions, the history of cooperative laundries is a relevant context for their development in Sweden, as detailed in Chapter 12. Perhaps the earliest cooperative laundry was established by the Cambridge Cooperative Housekeeping Society, which was organized in 1868 by Melusina Fay Peirce, wife of Harvard professor and founder of the philosophy of pragmatism, Charles Peirce. Zina, as she was called, was inspired by a Marxist worker's cooperative store in England to organize several Harvard faculty and their wives into three public housekeeping cooperatives: laundry, store, and bakery. The cooperatives failed in 1872 because domineering husbands prevented their wives from participating in the cooperatives. Further, the husbands that Zina appointed as the Council of Gentlemen supervising the CCHS responded to her goal of transforming housework into a business by changing the organization of the cooperatives from three egalitarian groups using affiliative feminine "powers with" each other, to a masculine capitalist type of hierarchical organization with Zina in charge of running the cooperatives, resulting in decreased cooperation among other women. Material culture also contributed to the failure, as large-scale equipment bought for the laundry could not

be economically used with the small loads resulting from lack of participation. Bread went stale on the bakery shelves for lack of a man and wagon to deliver it to wives who lived in houses that archaeological survey showed were mostly within a 15–20-minute walk. The archaeological survey materialized the concrete effects of the separate-spheres gender ideology that labeled women who crossed men's public sphere without a male escort as "public women" who were out of their proper sphere and therefore not considered respectable. Harvard faculty wives and their respectable maids would not traverse men's public landscape alone to buy bread at the store. Melusina became famous as a theorist of public cooperative housekeeping, which was the first pay-for-housework movement (Spencer-Wood 2004). In 1880, the wealthy widow Pauline Agassiz Shaw founded Boston's North Bennet Street Industrial School as a cooperative laundry, supplying hot water, tubs, and ironing facilities for poor women living in cold-water flats who took in laundry (NBSIS 1881: 10).

The international development of the kindergarten movement provides additional historical context for Mary Praetzelis' chapter on two kindergartens in the San Francisco area and part of Chapter 11 on Mrs. Edison's participation in the kindergarten movement. The kindergarten was invented in Germany in 1838 by Friedrich Froebel (1782–1852), after learning about experiential education at Johann Pestalozzi's school in Switzerland. Kindergarten was a program of experiential and spiritual learning for young children that included nature study, growing plants in individual garden plots, songs, stories, games, a logically sequenced set of "gifts" of blocks of increasingly complex shapes, iron rings and beads, iron paper weaving and pricking tools, iron rods for constructing models of crystals with cork or peas, and shells and seeds (Fig. 9.7; Peabody and Mann 1877). Such distinctive artifacts, if excavated, could identify the yards of Froebelian kindergartens.

One of Froebel's students, Mrs. Carl Schurz, immigrated to Watertown, Wisconsin, where she established the first German-speaking American kindergarten in 1855. Through an accidental meeting of mutual friends, she in turn inspired Elizabeth Peabody to establish the first American English-speaking kindergarten in downtown Boston in 1860 (Spencer-Wood 1991a: 265–6). Elizabeth's kindergarten was for middle-class children because she needed to support herself, and she wrote a book on kindergartens with her sister Mary Peabody Mann (wife of Horace Mann, a famous educational reformer). The first public kindergarten for working-class families was established in 1873 in St. Louis, Missouri, by Susan Blow, a leader in the movement (Hayden 1981: 97).

Starting in 1877, Pauline Agassiz Shaw established the first two kindergartens for poor children in Greater Boston, expanding to 31 by 1883. Many were located in, or became, social settlements and also often taught poor children personal hygiene and middle-class house cleaning methods. Most immigrant parents welcomed the help from their children in cleaning house. Shaw convinced the Boston School Committee, which had attempted a kindergarten in 1879, to adopt 14 of her kindergartens in 1888, followed by steady expansion. Boston's kindergarten settlement, Elizabeth Peabody House, included children's gardens on vacant lots cooperatively donated by male owners (Blodgett 1971: 279; Spencer-Wood 1991a: 266–8; 1994a: 190–3; 2003: 37).



**Fig. 9.7** Advertisements for Froebelian kindergarten “gifts” with durable parts that archaeologists could recover, including paper pricking needles (*top left*), paper weaving needles (*below left*), metal rings (*top right*), wire model parts (*below right*), shells, and seeds (*bottom*). Children’s clay products could also be excavated (Peabody and Mann 1877: [publisher’s ads 1884], 14, 16–18, 21, 26, 36–37; Palmer 1916: 130–131, 136–137, 146–147)

Kindergartens were among the most popular cooperative housekeeping programs because they assisted working women with childcare and offered free education. Middle-class practices and values in kindergartens, such as hygiene, can be viewed

as forms of internal colonialism but were welcomed by the many upwardly mobile working-class parents. The earliest American public school kindergartens were established in the 1880s in the East and then spread to the West. Reform women used the “moral suasion” of women’s mothering expertise to convince many public schools run by men to adopt kindergartens. In the USA, kindergartens grew rapidly from c. 10 before 1870 to about 5, 000 across the country by 1900 (Prochner 2000: 29–39; Spencer-Wood 1991a: 266).

Just prior to World War I, American kindergartens began to adopt some of the methods and equipment of the Italian doctor Maria Montessori’s schools for training children’s perceptions and cognition, such as metal cutouts of shapes, weights and scales, etc. (Spencer-Wood 1991a: 234). This process was no doubt influenced by Montessori’s well-publicized visit to the USA arranged by Mrs. Edison (Yentsch *forthcoming*). However, Montessori’s emphasis on individual freedom in learning processes was rejected in favor of the more rigid routines for learning designed by Froebel for the use of his “gifts.” Both Froebel and Montessori drew philosophically on Rousseau’s contention that all knowledge is learned through the senses (Spencer-Wood 1991a: 266). Frank Lloyd Wright (1943) said that he learned everything he knew about architecture by playing with Froebelian blocks in kindergarten.

## From the Moral Reform of Society to Municipal Housekeeping

The late nineteenth-century municipal housekeeping ideology and social movement used arguments from the eighteenth century, by Rousseau and ministers, that women’s innately superior moral mothering and housekeeping were needed not only in private homes but also to morally reform men and society (Anderson and Zinsser, 1988: 119,126,128; Cott 1977: 148–49). Protestant middle-class moral domesticity legitimated women’s organizing, from the early nineteenth century, to fundamentally alter Western gender ideology by raising the morality of men and their public sphere to equal the morality of women and their domestic sphere (Ginzberg 1990: 11–15).

In domestic manuals from the 1830s to the 1890s, mothers’ moral influence over their sons was valorized for creating a new ideal of moral masculinity subjugated to loving maternal morality, replacing the earlier more aggressive masculinity (Ryan 1982: 58–9). “Respectability” was defined in terms of women’s virtues in order to morally control husbands, sons, and the social order (Ginzberg 1990: 22; Ryan 1982: 19–20). In what was called the “self-reverence” movement, many women’s organizations and popular domestic manuals advocated a single moral standard of behavior for both sexes, including premarital virginity and fidelity in marriage, which was the higher feminine moral standard (Ginzberg 1990, 12; Rosen 1982: 54–5; Ryan 1982: 50–8). The new moral masculinity involved charity, broadly defined as kindness to others, and chastity or purity as a form of self-mastery.



Comte glorified male chastity, which became a point of honor with some men as much as it was with women. The self-reverence movement was most prominent in the predominantly Protestant countries of America, England, and Germany. It also importantly advocated a new feminine ideal of bravery to eliminate the stereotype of clinging incompetent women. Women were considered innately pure because they were believed to have a low sex drive by nature (Robertson 1982: 117–29). Some abolitionist men valorized women's superior domestic morality as the model for a new moral masculinity and joined women in spurning the corruption of politics for "moral suasion" (Ginzberg 1990: 67–8, 81, 83, 85, 112). Moral masculinity advocated an alternative to aggressive masculinity long before the analysis of alternatives to hypermasculinity by postmodern masculinity theory (Lorber 2001: 163–75).

Since macho valorization of nonmarital sex and deflowering of virgins persisted among some aristocrats, military men, elite men, politicians, and businessmen, the women's moral reform movement acted to create equal ostracization of "licentious" men and "fallen" women (Ginzberg 1990: 19). As early as the 1840s in New York and other urban American newspapers, Female Moral Reform Societies published lists of prominent men who visited brothels (Rosen 1982: 8). The moral reformers pointed out that men were to blame for the "fall" of women from God's grace into prostitution, rather than the opposite, as claimed in the sexual double standard. In response, some men, including journalists, impugned the respectability, morality, virtue, delicacy, and taste of female moral reformers (Female Moral Reform 1836: 2, cited in Ginzberg 1990: 27). Starting c.1775, reform men and women also established reformatories where "wayward girls" lived cooperatively and were reformed into moral-domestic women by performing domestic work to support the institution, while being trained for the stigmatized occupation of domestic service, which was considered the only "respectable" occupation open to them. Women could be sent to these institutions by their families or the courts (Cott 1977: 151–3; De Cunzo 1995, Ginzberg 1990: 13, 19–23; Hobson 1990: 117–124; McCarthy 2010: 135). Irish Magdalene Asylums were renowned for their cruelty and exploitation of inmate labor in profitable commercial laundries well into the 1960s (Finnegan 2001, McCarthy 2010: 197).

Temperance movements were related to moral reform, since drinking alcohol was associated with immoral behaviors, including extramarital sex. In charities assisting poor women and children, reform women and men also learned that poverty was often caused by intemperance of the male head of household, who drank his family's meager earnings (Boylan 1984: 504; Clinton 1984: 58–9; Spencer-Wood 2010: 115). In response to increasing alcoholism in the USA, Protestant revivals in the 1820s and 1830s preached temperance as a social distinction imparting higher morality to the middle class, in comparison to the intemperate working and elite classes (Johnson 1978: 137–8; Reckner and Brighton 1999: 67). As discussed above, this higher morality was associated with women and the new moral masculinity. Men first organized the American Temperance Society around 1820, and women soon joined but were not allowed to speak, so they established their own organizations by the 1840s. By 1840, the temperance movement shifted from advocating moderation to advocating abstinence

(Johnson 1978: 80–2). By one estimate, temperance reform resulted in a rapid drop in American annual alcohol consumption per person over 15 years old, from 7.1 gallons to 1.8 gallons from 1830 to 1845 (Rorabaugh 1979: Appendix Table A1.2). In the early 1850s, respectable mothers in temperance organizations in dozens of American communities entered saloons with hatchets and axes to break barrels of alcohol, often supported by men in government who found that saloons were scenes of brawls and other disorderly behavior. The Women's Christian Temperance Union, founded in 1873, argued in their Home Protection movement that prohibition was needed to prevent domestic violence by drunken men returning home from saloons. The WCTU developed from groups of women in Midwestern American towns who publicly prayed outside saloons until they closed or the proprietors poured their liquor down the gutter (Okrent 2010: 13, 18). The World WCTU, founded in 1883, became one of the largest global reform organizations, peaking at 372, 355 women in 1931 (Gusfield 1955: 222; Robertson 1982: 423–4).

Temperate and intemperate households have been archaeologically identified from the percentages of bottles for alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages, which were inversely correlated, at 11 house sites in Colorado, Utah, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska. Prohibition became law in these states between 1914 and 1918, until the repeal of national prohibition in 1934. In Skagway, Alaska, a prohibitionist priest's privy pit dating from 1898 to 1933 yielded a percentage of liquor bottles within the range of variation of the intemperate households, showing that prohibition was not enforced against alcohol consumption in private households. Racism and classism led to the enforcement of prohibition only to control public drunkenness of Irish and German immigrant men, as well as Native American men (Spude et al 1993: 85, 88–105; 129–35). Interestingly, this enforcement of prohibition did not address the domestic violence concerns of the WCTU. In this volume Anne Yentsch's chapter mentions Mrs. Edison's support of temperance reform, while Hadley Kruczek-Aaron's chapter discusses how archaeological and documentary data revealed that temperance reformer and US Representative Gerrit Smith was more successful in decreasing alcohol consumption by his tenants than by his children.

The municipal housekeeping movement's ideological discourse argued that women's physical housekeeping as moral mothers extended from their homes to the analogous public urban community households of municipalities. Women argued that they were the moral housekeepers of municipal households. In this ideological discourse, physical dirt and disorder were considered sinful and immoral, and cleanliness was next to Godliness, making women moral housekeepers. Municipal housekeepers argued that it was their moral duty to clean not only homes but men's dirty and immoral public-sphere landscapes (Scott 1991: 107; Spencer-Wood 2003). Reform women came to realize that the cleanliness, health, and morality of their families were inseparable from, and dependent on, conditions in men's public capitalist sphere, including municipal services. Reformers argued that women's housekeeping and mothering expertise was needed to physically morally reform men's sinful capitalist public landscapes (Scott 1991: 121–125). As the innately superior housecleaners, reform women organized community cleanups by children in poor neighborhoods without municipal services, and gained appointments from male

governmental officials as street inspectors, garbage inspectors and collectors, and factory inspectors (Addams 1981: 203; Scott 1991: 162; Spencer-Wood 1994a: 179–80; 1994b: 126; 2009: 41–42). In this volume, chapter 3 by Deborah Rotman discusses a case of municipal housekeeping in creating a town water system, while Anne Yentsch's chapter discusses two municipal sanitation system reforms.

Reform women convinced male officials in cities and towns to morally reform men's public urban landscapes of stone with green spaces that would bring people, especially youth, into contact with God's morally reforming nature, which was associated with women (Spencer-Wood 2003). Some women's organizations created playgrounds to prevent juvenile delinquency by providing a moral alternative to boys' playing and gambling in the streets (Spencer-Wood 1994b: 129). In the American City Beautiful movement, women's civic organizations gave prizes for the prettiest lawns, planted trees along roads, and instigated the creation of parks. Planting trees led women's clubs to study and work for forest conservation (Beard 1915: 312; Scott 1991: 145; Yentsch *forthcoming*). The City Beautiful movement inspired the English Garden Cities movement (Hayden 1981: 147, 230), and both spread to Australia (Freestone 2000, Garnaut 2000).

The origin of the playground movement in America provides additional international historical context for Chapters 4 and 11 in this volume. The earliest supervised playground in America was a sand garden (large sandbox) created in the yard of Boston's Parmenter Chapel in 1885 by the women of the Massachusetts Emergency and Hygiene Association, inspired by Dr. Maria Zakrzewska's visit to a Berlin sand garden. Playgrounds for young children were so popular that they had to be fenced to keep out older children, who negotiated with reform women to be admitted in order to "mind baby in the sand" (Brooks 1908: 4; Spencer-Wood 2003: 48–49). Reform women also used their "powers with" male governmental officials of "moral suasion" to get their assistance in constructing playgrounds.

Contrary to Cavallo's (1981: 23) inaccurate claim that the American playground movement developed out of a Boston playground for older boys created by Joseph Lee in 1901, this playground was actually inspired by model playgrounds for older boys created (1) in 1894 by Jane Addams at her Chicago Hull House social settlement, (2) in 1897 by the women of the Providence Free Kindergarten Association, and (3) in 1899 in Boston by women of the Massachusetts Emergency and Hygiene Association (Rainwater 1922: 34–36, 56, 59). Reform women supervised men that they hired to organize play for older boys, inverting the normative gender hierarchy in which men supervised women.

Cavallo (1981) emphasized the male leaders of the Playground Association of America but also mentioned that Lillian Wald was one of the settlement leaders who founded the organization, and she became secretary of the Parks and Playground Association of New York (Cavallo 1981: 36). In this volume Anne Yentsch's chapter discusses Mrs. Edison's participation as an early member of the national association. Christensen's chapter relates excavated marbles and horseshoes in the house yard of May L. Cheney to her leadership of the playground committee of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae. Women participated and provided leadership in many organizations in the playground movement (Spencer-Wood 1994b).

Histories and articles document how reform women's organizations spread the development of playgrounds from Boston, New York, Washington DC, and Chicago to Los Angeles, San Francisco, and innumerable other cities and towns across the country. Reform women convinced city governments to: develop playgrounds in schoolyards and parks, hire kindergarten teachers to supervise them, and in many cases hire reform women as municipal playground directors (Spencer-Wood 1994b: 129–135, 2003: 37–50). The first two playgrounds in San Francisco were established in 1898 by the California Women's Club after studying the advantages of playgrounds in cities to the east, especially Chicago (Strother 1909: 2). The first annual meeting of the Playground Association of California in 1909 was a three-day conference of Playground Workers organized by Mrs. May Cheney and Mrs. E. L. Baldwin (Beard 1915: 136–137). Reform women's organizations formed a cooperative network empowering each other to spread popular programs such as playgrounds, children's gardens, and kindergartens across the country.

As the innately superior child rearers, reform women successfully argued they were considered best suited as municipal elementary school teachers; members on local school committees, state boards of education, state boards of charities, and federal bureaus for children, women, and welfare; creators and supervisors of children's gardens, vacation schools, and playgrounds; juvenile justices; and juvenile parole officers. Through the municipal housekeeping movement, women gained school suffrage or municipal suffrage in many American States in the final decades of the nineteenth century. In Europe, a few women were elected to parliaments and appointed as government ministers (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 293, 299; Ginzberg 1990: 187–189; Robertson 1982: 144–145; Scott 1991: 138, 141–162; Spencer-Wood 2002).

Finally, municipal reformers worked for social justice for women and children, lobbying for minimum wage laws, a 10- and then 8-hour work day, child labor laws, protectionist legislation limiting kinds and amount of work by women, sanitary factories, women's trade unions, and the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act that criminalized the widespread adulteration of food for capitalist profits. The ideology of social justice, also called Christian socialism or the social gospel because it was based on the Christian ideal of fairness, was initiated by an Italian priest in 1840 but was most realized in the 1840s in England, subsequently spreading to the rest of Europe and America around the turn of the century (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 287–93; Masters 2005: 208; Scott 1991: 160–162, 166, 168, 170; Shelton 1902 cited in Yentsch *forthcoming*).

Municipal housekeeping was instrumental in increasing women's civic political participation through "powers with" each other prior to women's suffrage. Reform women ideologically argued and demonstrated that women's domestic morality was needed to reform men's sinful capitalist public sphere. Women's domestic-public institutions and landscapes came to visually dominate and domesticate large areas of men's urban public landscapes (Spencer-Wood 1994a, 1996, 2003). The need for women's innately superior morality to reform men's corrupt government was a key argument successfully used by domestic reformers in their "moral suasion" of men, including politicians who voted for women's suffrage (Clinton 1984: 183–187; Rothman 1978: 127–132; Spencer-Wood 1991a: 241; 1994a: 184–187; Spencer-Wood 2003: 52). However, traditional androcentric

historians overlooked municipal reform because they considered women's clubs historically insignificant (Scott 1991: 157).

## Conclusion

Domestic reformers created predominantly homosocial organizations, networks, and communities in domestic-public institutions that allied with men's organizations to transform the meaning of the separate-spheres gender ideology in ways that raised women's status in *both* the domestic *and* public spheres. Domestic reform was a diverse set of predominantly middle-class social movements that developed overall from women's organizations for self-improvement of mothering to institutions attempting to improve the lives of all women and their children, especially poor and working-class women. The explicit goals of domestic reformers included "breaking down barriers which for so long had interposed themselves between women" (Clisby 1890: 130) by sharing middle-class privileges such as childcare in order to assist working women with their double burden of public work and housework. Kindergartens, day nurseries, well-baby clinics, and free milk stations were among the most popular programs at social settlements (Spencer-Wood 1996: 411).

Reformers were not a monolithic group, and some programs were self-serving attempts at internal colonialism, such as classes and schools in housekeeping established to train servants to Anglo middle-class standards to solve the "servant problem." However, the high demand for servants meant that training was not required. And working-class parents would not send their children to classes they felt were training for the stigmatized occupation of domestic servant (Hayden 1981: 124–126, 320n53). Historians' arguments that domestic reform was just about social control of the working class and Americanization of immigrants (e.g., Karger 1987, Lissak 1989, McBride 1975) are too simplistic because working-class people and immigrants were not passive recipients of reform but could and did vocally refuse to participate in programs that they viewed as just serving a middle-class agenda or purpose such as Americanization, which is a form of internal colonialism.

The voluntary nature of participation in reform programs meant that participants had the power to cancel programs by not participating and to increase programs through their participation. Because most reformers in settlements viewed their programs as experiments to be modified with neighborhood feedback, they quoted negative as well as positive comments about their programs in settlement reports, which are unusual in actually quoting working-class women's and men's voices (Spencer-Wood 2002). Middle-class reformers who established public kitchens, including Ellen S. Richards, Mary H. Abel, and Jane Addams, responded to working women's and men's voices by shifting from a Yankee menu to offering ethnic foods, after quoting negative reactions of immigrants to the Yankee menu (Hayden 1981: 124–126). While reform women viewed their Yankee menu as scientifically cooked nutritious food, immigrants viewed it as an attempt at Americanization and rejected it by saying

“You needn’t try to make a Yankee out of me by making me eat that!” and “I’d rather eat what I’d rather” (Addams 1981: 102; Hunt 1912: 220).

Women’s social settlements were on the cutting edge of the American melting pot, using “powers with” immigrants to promote the preservation of their cultures through ethnic craft fairs, dances, plays, and lectures in foreign languages while also teaching English, civics, hygiene, and job skills for occupations such as typist, dressmaker, printer, or sloyd carpenter (of the Arts and Crafts movement), to allow immigrants to become economically independent healthy citizens (Spencer-Wood 1996: 435). Both the statements and actions of reform women in Boston settlements indicate that they viewed themselves as using “powers with” immigrants to create a pluralistic-inclusive American society. As the 1916 Denison House settlement report put it:

“While we interpret the glory of America to these newcomers, let us not fail to interpret their aspirations and endowments to the native born, that the word *Americanization* may cease to mean to the majority of men the impossible task of shaping alien minds and hearts to the old colonial pattern. Let us not rob America of some of the best gifts these foreign-born citizens have to offer her, in our blind efforts to make them over into something too much like ourselves! ...only by the united wisdom of all sorts and conditions of men can we attain the better social order” (Denison House 1916: 11–12, 18).

This quote shows that reform women defined the better social order as diversity rather than uniformity and redefined Americanization as a two-way dialogue between immigrants and the native born in order to create a richer, more pluralistic society. American culture was transformed by the social agency of reform women in international networks of social movements that created new women’s domestic-public institutions and professions, while working to improve the living conditions and status of all women and their families.

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## Chapter 10

# Decently Dressed: Women's Fashion and Dress Reform in the Nineteenth Century United States

Carol A. Nickolai

*Strive as you will to elevate woman, nevertheless the disabilities and degradation of her dress, together with that large group of false views of the uses of her being and of her relations to man, symbolized and perpetuated by her dress, will make your striving vain.*

Gerrit Smith

### “Wearing” Identity: Ideology and Clothes

In the spring and summer of 2008, the American media was full of a controversy involving the families of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in the state of Texas, USA (New York Times 2011). The almost iconic representation of the FLDS became the women of the group in their distinctive dresses and hairstyles. These women wore “prairie” style dresses with below the knee skirts, identical except for their pastel colors, and their long hair in nearly identical braided styles. Some small differentiation based on age and status—married/unmarried and adult/child—existed.

The FLDS provide a particularly uniform example of the way that people have long used personal items—clothing, jewelry, and hairstyle—to indicate their position, or their desired position, in social space. In a system where material culture is used to negotiate both personal identity and place in the greater social space—occupation and class status, for example—knowledge becomes a commodity. One way to approach the study of social space and material culture is to use Bourdieu’s (1985: 196–202) suggestion that “the social world can be represented as a space (with several

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dimensions) constructed on the basis of principles of differentiation or distribution” of power, both economic and cultural. Bourdieu further proposes that since social relationships can be defined through the relative positions of agents and groups of agents inside the social space, individuals of higher economic classes can be expected to display this through their organization and accumulation of material resources, as has been demonstrated by research in historical archaeology (Brenner and Monks 2002; Spencer-Wood 1987; Wall 1991; White 2005). Individuals with greater cultural capital as well will be able to display more “fashionable” or culturally prestigious items in greater variety (Wurst 1991). The meanings of these artifacts are not equally fixed: like all statements, they can have multiple meanings (Nickolai 2003a; Spencer-Wood 1996: 407). Material culture studies examining the social context and meanings of objects can increase understanding of the feelings, behaviors, and attitudes of the people who created and used them. These things are as true in establishing group identity and position, for example, by ethnicity or gender, as for individuals.

In nineteenth-century America, this cultural capital would have included the knowledge of clothing fashion, and the means to obtain and wear it. While almost anyone might be aware of current fashions, only those with sufficient funds were able to actually possess the items. Consequently, one way, as true today as 150 years ago, to promote group cohesion and distinctiveness from the rest of society is to create standard clothing: whether explicitly uniforms, as many schools and the military use, or implicitly distinct clothing styles, such as the FLDS so successfully use. In addition, standard clothing styles also provide some equalization within the group (Anderson 1991).

## Gender, Sex, and Dresses

Sex and gender are among the most fundamental experiences of human life. Some social scientists have attempted to question and clarify these terms by pointing out genders are culturally constructed categories that describe ideal behaviors; genders are defined, in part, by their relationships to other genders (Gibbs 1987; Preucel and Hodder 1996). Material culture, including clothing, without an inherent sex or gender are nonetheless often associated with one gender exclusively or used to express identity (Gilchrist 1991; Nelson 2002; White 2005).

Gender distinction and definition is one of the key cultural hallmarks of nineteenth-century America with a differential distribution of power: since men had the most access to economic capital, they also had more power. The cultural construction of femininity was created by the Cult of True Womanhood and the Doctrine of Separate Spheres, which promoted the belief that the proper sphere of women was in the home—as dutiful wives and moral mothers—and which grew throughout the century. Since this mostly limited women to their own homes, it also severely limited their access to economic capital, except through their fathers and husbands (Cott 1977; Welter 1966). By making women the authority in the home, the doctrine of separate spheres asserted that women and men could be “separate but equal” by creating cultural capital available only to

women; cultural capital separate, if less important than, the economic and cultural capital available only to men (Nickolai 2003a, b).

The domestic reformers continued the argument that wives rather than husbands should control the household, leading to the elaborate Victorian notion of separate spheres. Thus, reform women increased the cultural capital available to women without disrupting the “separate but equal” principle of gender organization and hierarchy (Spencer-Wood 1991b: 237, 1996: 415).

This dominant gender ideology maintained that women and men lived and acted in separate social—and to some extent physical—worlds. For much of the nineteenth century, this ideology was remarkably stable, partly because anyone questioning it was labeled an “enemy of God, Civilization, and the Republic” (Welter 1966: 169). While the extent to which this was acted out in the families of the Victorian era has been the subject of some debate, most scholars agree that the ideology of separate spheres does reflect popular beliefs about sexuality and labor (Robertson 1997).

Even so, this ideology was neither monolithic nor universal in the nineteenth century, and a number of researchers have shown it was not always played out according to the prescriptive literature (Cott 1977; Motz 1983; Nickolai 2003a; Spencer-Wood 1996, 1999b). While most upper-class women subscribed to the ideal, they did not do the work of the domestic sphere: they hired working women to fulfill their feminine duties of cleaning and cooking. The majority of these working women were unable to restrict themselves to woman's sphere due to their need for cash income; in fact, they often saw the middle-class women who were living out the ideology as idle and sinful—a perspective shared by many advocates of domestic reform (Preston 1987; Spencer-Wood 1994a: 180). More recently, the concept of a private domestic sphere has itself been questioned, since much of what happened there was intended for display to the public, thereby reinforcing the family's position in society (Little 1997; Spencer-Wood 1991a: 237–238).

Identity is not monolithic but has multiple fluid aspects that interact complexly, from internal identifications to the external performance of different aspects of identity or affiliation in different cultural contexts and situations (Spencer-Wood 1999a: 285); it is a largely private experience played out in public. Clothing, jewelry, and hair were, and still are, among the primary forms of communication about both group and individual identity, especially for women. The nineteenth-century emphasis on particular forms of clothing served to reinforce group cohesion and identity both for ascribed statuses, such as gender, and voluntary ones, such as church membership. Creating a shared material world is an important way of generating and strengthening group identity, and clearly differentiating members from nonmembers is an important part of the construction of group identity (Anderson 1991). Hence, an examination of material culture, and how it changed over time, can also illuminate the development and extension of “women” as a social group into how women viewed themselves and were viewed by society.

In the nineteenth-century United States, many reform groups—both civil and religious—used women's clothing as a public statement of their affiliations, religious and/or moral views. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw a flowering of movements, created, sponsored by, or concerning women (Spencer-Wood 1991b). One of the unique elements of these reforms is that they often

transformed private aspects of life into public discourse. Over time, they extended into the public realm using community improvement organizations, among other things, to apply the same standards of private domesticity to public space (Fischer 2001; Spencer-Wood 2003: 31–32). And while extending their private power into the public, male, domain at the same time they exported it to women beyond the upper classes of the urban Northeast (Cott 1977; Spencer-Wood 1991b: 240–241, 1994a: 191, 194–196).

## What to Wear? Men and Women

Men's dress became fixed in a style recognizable as nearly identical to current clothes by the mid-nineteenth century except that it was fashionable for men to wear corsets into the early twentieth century (Cunningham and Lab 1993; Hall 1992). Basic men's clothing standards were established early in the nineteenth century and have varied little—especially in comparison to women's clothing—over the intervening years. However, throughout the Victorian age, it was still common to dress young boys and girls alike in dresses; as boys matured, their clothing became increasingly unlike that of girls and then of women (White 2005). The changes to more “male” clothing were the result of some rite of passage, however minimal, and cause for celebration, however small. This is part of the changing notion of “childhood” and the decreasing infant/child death rate as the century progressed (Cunningham and Lab 1993; Fischer 2001).

Although elite women's clothing in the nineteenth century changed substantially, subject to changes in “fashion,” it was also considerably more complex than modern clothing. As with men's clothing, the styles would be recognizable today but not necessarily seen as appropriate for routine wear. Unlike most modern clothing, it was a complicated combination of stockings, slip or shift, corset, underskirt, one-piece dress or overskirt and blouse or shirtwaist, jacket or sweater, shawl, boots or shoes, usually multiple petticoats, hoops, or bustles, and outdoor garments as needed, just as some of the basic categories (Hall 1992; Johnston 2005). Whatever the combination of items, women's clothing always included a long, full skirt; trousers of any kind were not acceptable. In fact, the more trousers became associated with men, the more important it was that women not wear any form of them (Fischer 2001; Rubenstein 2001). An additional pressure—more so in some parts of society than others—was the awareness of the biblical verse requiring that separation be maintained between men's and women's clothing. (Deuteronomy 22:5).

Later nineteenth-century garments represent a substantial swing toward modesty and coverage compared to fashion from previous eras. For example, the relatively high-waist gowns of the English Regency period of the early nineteenth century would have been little more than a Victorian woman's undergarments. Throughout the nineteenth century, the silhouette of women's clothing changed quite notably: skirts became more full, originally by the use of many stiffened petticoats and then by hoops, and hoops became bustles, before slimming in the early twentieth century;



bodices became tight with small waists and covering more of the upper body; though initially tight, sleeves expanded to mutton chops in the 1890s and then slimmed again; and finally, after 1900, dresses became simpler overall (Hall 1992; Johnston 2005).

The increased importance of modesty as expressed by clothing covering most of the body caused the excessively low-cut gowns of the colonial era to seem outright scandalous. As a result, some portraits depicting colonial women were “retouched” by painting a lace shawl over the overly exposed chest and cleavage (Ruth O’Brien 1995, personal communication). This is particularly significant since “modest” dressing came to be associated with the republican values of harmony, order, and self-sacrifice (Fischer 2001; Rubenstein 2001).

As restrictive as some of these outer garments were, the undergarments were often even more so. Some popular styles required many pounds of clothing. Hoops were introduced in part to relieve some of this weight as the same effect could be achieved with much less fabric. This is part of the reason why they were especially popular in the South, where a full skirt using many fewer layers reduced the possibility of illness due to heat stress. The use of hoops did enable skirts to reach surprisingly large sizes, and it has been suggested that the size of the skirt was used to establish and maintain, and to some extent enforce, a woman’s “personal space” in public (Cunningham and Lab 1993). Of course, individual preference did have an impact on clothing choice and consequently on individual social relationships and identity.

The corsets used to create the smooth tight bodice and small waist could be, and often were, tightened enough to displace internal organs and to apply enough pressure to the ribs to restrict breathing; over the long term, especially in young women, they could permanently deform the ribcage (Cunningham 2003; Fischer 2001). Tight lacing and stiff stays caused corsets to be blamed for a wide assortment of physical and mental illness. In addition to reducing the size of the waist, corsets emphasized the hips and bust. The modern ideal of an “hourglass” figure for women is a remnant of the proportions created by tight lacing. These corset styles made any real exertion almost impossible for women, further confining them to a particular “role” and place in life. At least, fashion confined those women who were able to afford both the clothes and the restricted ability to do actual work (Veblen 1927). In addition, undergarments were used to hint at eroticism; the edge of a corset or a petticoat, a glimpse of a stocking covered ankle, could be a powerful reminder of sexuality (Razek 1999).

In the course of a day, an elite woman might wear several dresses: a loose-fitting morning gown or wrapper in the morning and in purely private settings, which included servants as well as family members; followed by a tea gown as “at-home” clothing for the afternoon in the home, not necessarily the same as that worn for paying visits; possibly something more formal for the evening meal and evening; and still more formal clothing for any activity that involved leaving the house. Tea gowns ranged from quite simple to relatively elaborate but without so much of the stiff and tight undergarments of formal wear. Over time, some women began to wear tea gowns intended for use in private in public, often resulting in

public disapproval. Some physicians suggested that this constant changing of clothes led to mental illness, rendering women mentally unstable (Cunningham 2003; Fischer 2001).

Of course, this represents only middle- and upper-class urban women; working class and farm women would have worn their clothing differently—more practically—and would have had a smaller variety of gowns to choose among. Physical and potentially dirty work meant these women needed more durable fabrics and styles and undergarments that did not interfere with their ability to move and breathe (Fischer 2001). Often women below the upper classes had only one “fancy” outfit—probably the origin of the cliché of “Sunday” or “church” clothes (Cunningham and Lab 1993).

The Cult of True Womanhood laid out a woman’s role precisely, and it was crucial to be “respectable” that a woman abide by these precepts. How appropriately a woman dressed and acted for each event was a measure of the status and wealth of her family, especially for marriageable young women seeking the best (wealthiest, highest status) husband and later to show off a husband’s success. “Fashionable” included not only the most current clothing styles but also current etiquette rules. “Correct” and “appropriate” clothing became a way to demonstrate shared identity among women that they could act out in public. It can also give insight into how women both experienced themselves and portrayed to various audiences in this identity (Crane 2001; Guy et al. 2001).

## Dress Reform in the Nineteenth Century

In addition to questions of beauty and health, women’s clothing was also linked to their political standing: restrictive clothing symbolized their restricted public role. As more middle-class women moved into the public sphere seeking, with some success, economic and political power and independence, they also became interested in reforming women’s dress to make it more convenient and, in many cases, healthful (Crane 2001).

Of course, individual preference did have an impact on clothing choice and consequently on individual social relationships and identity as well as those involving interaction with the group. The distortion of the female form and its detriment to health began a change in the way fashionable clothing was conceived. In addition to the need to keep up with changing fashion, and its impracticality being seen as an indication of women’s status, it was beginning to be seen as a cause of women’s political and economic repression (Fischer 2001; Rubenstein 2001). Properly putting on all the clothing required of a fashionable woman could be an extended project in itself, continuing to limit a woman’s options (Fischer 2001; McMillen 2008).

As a result, dress reform in the nineteenth century takes several distinct and sometimes overlapping paths. Roughly, the first half or so of the nineteenth century saw attempts to completely change the style and kind of outer clothing women

wore. The latter part of the century was focused on more subtle reforms in the styles of women's dress and undergarments. In both cases, the rhetoric included concern for women's health and the damage being done to it by fashionable clothes (Cunningham 2003; Fischer 2001; McMillen 2008).

### *Utopian and Perfectionist Dress Reform*

In roughly the first half of the nineteenth century efforts made at reforming overall clothing styles focused mostly on outer garments, since the most unhealthful practices, such as overly tight corset lacing, were not yet in very widespread use. A variety of groups took on the idea and challenge of dress reform for an assortment of reasons. These included religions, utopian communities, doctors and health spas, women's rights activists, and individual women. Although shorter skirts over pantalets or pantaloons were the pattern for most efforts at reform, they failed miserably in part because they violated the cultural imperative that forbade women wearing anything resembling trousers. Even though neither pantalets (loose-hemmed pants like modern pajama pants) nor pantaloons (loose pants gathered at the ankle sometimes called "harem pants") were remotely masculine in appearance, pants of any kind were strictly identified as masculine.

Many of the utopian communities of this era experimented with distinctive dress; most were looking for a plainer and simpler, or more spiritual, costume but not for "reform." Each community had its own interpretation of what this should be (Fischer 2001). For example, New Harmony, Indiana (1824–1827), one of the earliest and essentially a socialist community, sought similarity in all things so not only were men's and women's clothing similar, but children's and adults' clothing were also (Bernhard 1916). Women's clothing was to be "a coat reaching to the knee and pantaloons." These reforms were never fully accepted in the community and were not continued after it ended. A similar outfit, sometimes credited to New Harmony and sometimes to European spas, was adopted by some women for private exercise in the 1830s and 1840s. Since New Harmony's dress was probably not that widely known, these exercise outfits were probably a combination of several sources.

The Oneida Perfectionist Community in upstate New York also experimented with the not unusual combination of a just below the knee skirts and pantalets in 1848 to reinforce their separation from the secular world and increasing spirituality. Unlike the New Harmony dress, however, this was not intended to make men and women similar—maintaining the difference between men and women was important; Oneidan dress was for distinction from the outside secular world. In fact, founder J. H. Noyes viewed the goal of simplifying dress toward the more spiritual to be the "dress-no-dress" of nature: nudity. When the Oneida Community disbanded in 1881, the last of the community-based efforts at dress reform also disappeared from the cultural landscape (Fischer 2001: 57).

Overall, how many of the more than 100 utopian societies formed in the nineteenth century tried some alteration of women's (and sometimes men's) dress is

unknown, but none were able to convince women to wear them consistently. Most of the women who did adopt a new style returned to more conventional clothing as soon as possible (Fischer 2001).

The significance of clothing in the creation and demonstration of identity makes this interesting. These outfits often suspended women between multiple identities: community and society, men and women, and inside and outside. They could be a potent way to construct and perform—and prove—identity as part of the community (Crane 2001). Since most utopian communities were self-contained, little need to demonstrate identity beyond one's residence seems to have been necessary. This makes those groups that wore “their” clothing only in community but standard clothing when dealing with the outside public especially interesting. Those wearing community dress including pantalets or pantaloons all the time found themselves on the fringe of the cultural imperative distinguishing men and women and consequently on the fringe of society overall (Fischer 2001; Razek 1999).

The popularity of efforts at dress reform in utopian groups is not surprising. This brought awareness and discussion about reform, private to each group out to the public world. However, without more support from groups and from citizens willing to wear the reforms in public, even broader public efforts were doomed to failure. As dress reform gradually shifted toward health concerns, private garments and private choices were increasingly drawn into the public discourse (Cunningham 2003; Fischer 2001; Rubenstein 2001).

### *Dress Reform and Women's Rights*

The private became political in the spring of 1851 when Amelia Jenks Bloomer, Elizabeth Smith Miller, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton walked through Seneca Falls, New York, in short skirts and “Turkish trousers” (Fischer 2001). Interest in reform dress, however, peaked later that same year for the women's rights activists. They agreed that fashionable dress hindered women's economic and personal freedom, but soon realized they could not simultaneously pursue both legal/political reform and dress reform effectively—they choose the legal/political goals for their platform. It had become clear that if the audience was distracted by the speaker's clothes, they were not paying attention to the speaker's words. Indeed, more often than not, the first part of any news coverage of a women's rights activist was a description of her clothing—the preoccupation with Hilary Clinton's pantsuits during the 2008 election cycle demonstrates that this remains true. Although she had initially worked hard at politicizing women's clothing, Elizabeth Cady Stanton declared, “Had I counted the cost of the short dress, I would never have put it on...” and in 1853 she was the first to entirely stop wearing the short skirts (Fischer 2001: 102). Although the women's rights activists had made women's dress a political and public topic, they later tried to stuff it back behind closed doors as a strictly private matter—with some success.

The almost magical issue of trousers continued to create difficulties in the performance and perception of identity. In order to achieve any real gains in women's rights, these activists found they had to present themselves unambiguously as women; no other identity, and no identity confusion, would enable them to communicate their message. Any effort even appearing to reduce the distinctions between genders was firmly rejected and refused. Women needed to remain based firmly in their own cultural capital before extending influence outside of the traditional "domestic sphere." The women's rights activists did achieve political changes; the "problem" with dress reform was the clothing, not the wearer. Consequently, despite their best efforts to bring the question of female power and of identity to the public through dress reform, by the latter parts of the nineteenth century, this model had irretrievably failed.

### *Reform Dress to Improve Health*

The 1850s and 1860s saw both the rise and fall of several other forms of dress reform, but it was sometimes difficult for other reformers to separate their efforts from women's rights—since they were the first of the era to promote it (Cunningham 2003). As women's rights activists gave up dress reform, the hydrotherapy community and several religious groups took up the cause. The hydrotherapists were led by Dr. James Jackson (Fischer 2001). Together with some of the women's rights activists, he formed the National Dress Reform Association in 1856. It lasted only 9 years—disbanding in 1865—perhaps from pressures resulting from the Civil War. Like other dress reformers, they advocated a shortened skirt over pantalets believing it had "physiological, pathological, or hygienic advantages" (Sibyl 1858). The NDRA objected, as did many commentators, to the "Turkish pantaloons" because of the idea of American women wearing foreign dress, just as others objected to the high fashion coming from France. So they called their reform dress the "American Costume" to emphasize the republican American virtues of it (Cunningham 2003; Fischer 2001; Sibyl 1858).

It is difficult to be sure exactly what each reform dress looked like and who first created it. Women borrowed freely from each other and probably from the perfectionist/utopian communities, but they chose their own skirt length, even while wearing a particular set costume. So while it was the "American Costume" to the NDRA, to the women's rights advocates, it had been "Freedom Dress." And while Amelia Bloomer never intended to give her name to it, "Bloomer" dress became a popular generic term applied to any form of pantalets or pantaloons under a skirt. The "American Costume" was dead by the 1870s; however a form of it returned as the bicycle costume. Although it violated a number of cultural rules about women's clothing, it was acceptable as a single use outfit, provided it was worn only for that use, much like swimsuits and exercise clothes (Fischer 2001).

## *New Religions and New Dresses*

Just as the NDRA disbanded in the 1860s, Ellen G. White—prophetess of Seventh-Day Adventism—began to advocate a shorter skirt and pantalets costume for her followers. Although she provided detailed patterns for her followers and completely denied any connections, her version of religious dress was very similar to other reform outfits. She defined the dress as healthy, modest, and economical, but she did not support women's rights in any way. By the early 1880s, she had realized that the dress reform was unsuccessful and stopped promoting it (Numbers 1992).

Similarly, two branches of Mormons also experimented with altering women's dress. James Jesse Strang, "King Strang" of the Beaver Island Kingdom in Michigan, published his own version of reform dress in 1852 and required it of his followers in 1855. Like the SDA and NDRA outfits, it was very similar to the others. After his death in 1856, however, the women returned to more standard clothing. Similarly, Mormon women under Brigham Young created a version for themselves, the desert costume, in the 1850s. It was never widely worn, and unlike other nineteenth-century religious dress reform, it had no restrictions about adornment—provided these had been made by fellow Mormons (Fischer 2001).

## *Health, Gender, and a New Century*

In an era when women's health was not discussed and women's modesty was comprehensive, direct discussion of women's clothing (especially undergarments) was scandalous. In the 1880s, medical dress reform shifted to focus on a number of relatively common practices with long-term implications for women's health. These debates frequently centered on the most, and least, healthful undergarments and how they should be worn, often complete with diagrams. One of the most discussed issues was the construction and lacing of corsets, and the highly sedentary lifestyle these forced on women (Cunningham 2003; Fischer 2001). These debates continued even after hydrotherapy and religious groups had ceased their efforts. Nonetheless, by being interested in an aspect less directly threatening to established gender identity construction, the health reformers were still able to bring what had been a private discourse between female family members out among the male family members and the public (Cunningham 2003; Rubenstein 2001).

While it was widely agreed that men's clothes were in many ways better than women's, reformers were concerned only with women's dress. Regardless of the reason—women's rights, health, and religion—none of the reformers were interested in blurring gender lines or appearing "male." Some reformers even argued pantaloons were more modest than the usual skirts because no part of the leg or ankle could be accidentally glimpsed, although they did roughly outline a woman's legs. Of course, some women did challenge established roles. Dr. Mary Walker, for example, took up the reform dress with pants as a Civil War doctor and in the 1870s began wearing barely modified men's clothing. Despite her own belief that they



were just clothes, her outfit challenged cultural beliefs about men and women and the cultural capital of domesticity as demonstrated by skirts (even those with pantallets or pantaloons). Even though Dr. Walker was not attempting to “pass” as a man, there are a number of other women who not only tried but succeeded in passing as men; while some cases are well known, there are surely many more that remain undiscovered or unreported (Cunningham 2003; Fischer 2001).

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, radical dress reform was abandoned, but many of the unhealthy elements passed routinely out of style. Women's dresses after 1900 became slimmer and shorter, although an unsigned protest in the “Journal of Home Economics” in 1910 complained skirts were so narrow that women could not take a long free step. It suggested safer, moderately full skirts and clothing made attractive by quality rather than by ornamentation (Journal of Home Economics 1910).

Ultimately, what changed the profile of women's dresses—shortening and slimming skirts and simplifying undergarments—was World War I (Fischer 2001). When wool, silk, and even cotton became rationed war goods, fabric often had to be recycled from old clothes. Since a skirt's fabric could only be used to make a smaller skirt, these began to be subtly and then more obviously shorter and slimmer. Inevitably, this was part of a reduction in the emphasis on modesty, since parts of women's bodies previously almost obsessively hidden, such as the ankle, became visible. The changing skirts were also more practical for women who were increasingly doing their own housework. Middle- and upper-class women had already been bemoaning “the servant problem” for some years (Spencer-Wood 1994a: 198).

These changes were not universally accepted. Ironically, not even the previous generation of dress reformers and women's activists could see this generation of reforms entirely positively. Feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman pled in a 1918 article in the *Independent*: “it may be possible to make women's garments cheaper, but in the name of that ancient power known as Common Decency let us not try to make them any scantier” (Gilman 1918).

## Public, Private, and Progressive

Throughout the nineteenth century, women's proper and appropriate clothing was debated with increasing openness in the public sphere. Efforts to revise it completely introduced questions of gender distinctive clothing and its importance into public discourse as well, even if only as a background to other issues. The correct portrayal of gender was of immediate concern to women; the Cult of True Womanhood made the role of middle- and upper-class women very clear and made their representation of identity very dependent on particular clothing—especially fashionable clothing. Ultimately, this is where dress reform fails: whatever else women are or are not willing to do, it remains a vital part of their culture that they dress “like a lady.” Gender divisions were zealously maintained by both women and men, largely because clothes are a distinctive and highly visible demonstration of identity and group membership (Crane 2001; Rubenstein 2001).

Another aspect of dress and health reform addressed class and status questions directly, if inadvertently. Since fashionable women's clothing made it difficult to perform many routine tasks, it clearly divided the economic classes: women who wore less fashionable but practical clothing did the actual work of maintaining a household, while the women in fashionable dresses gained the credit for their domesticity. The implication here is clear, women who had the cultural capital to know and adopt fashion were part of families with the economic capital to pay an outsider to do the household work while the women were relatively idle—that is, engaging in the rituals and “proper” behaviors expected of women of their class. Dress reform failed to alter this situation. Although it was intended, by some reformers, partly as practical clothing for working women, it was worn primarily by middle- and upper-class women (Crane 2001).

The discussion of corsets and other undergarments brought the most private issues into public discourse. This made what was worn under clothes—generally hidden and very private—a part of the broader discourse about fashionable outer garments. Thus, the most private of topics, especially in the body-conscious and overly modest mid- and late nineteenth century, became a topic for public discussion, and women again increased the importance of their knowledge of the world of fashion and clothing (Burman and Turbin 2003).

Most medical doctors of the era, and the hydrotherapists 40 years earlier, were men, which illuminates an interesting twist to the problem of how threatening reform dress was to the gender system. When reforms were advocated by men, such as “King Strang” for the Beaver Island Mormons or hydrotherapist Dr. James Jackson, they did not challenge gender roles. Male reformers were not interested in changing gender or power issues, and rarely alter male dress as part of their model. As long as it remains within their community, it reduces the infringement on gender identity because it remains “private.” However, when women advocate the same changes, it presents a substantial challenge to gender and power, partly because it can only be “public.”

This reflects one of the most interesting elements of the Progressive movement: it frequently crossed the line between public and private—bringing what had previously been private into the public sphere. The City Beautiful movement, for example, encouraged the establishment of parks and landscapes such as giant house yards and further attempted to embellish towns with the kind of landscaping that had previously been used on private property (Spencer-Wood 1994b: 127–129, 2003: 33–37). Similarly, the temperance movement pulled what had been a frequently private event, alcohol consumption, pursued largely in the privacy of the home into the public sphere as an event to be aware of and regulated publicly rather than through more customary, and private, means as it occurred among the upper classes from whom many of the women active in these organizations were drawn. Alcohol consumption among the middle and working classes followed different patterns and unspoken rules.

These issues, and others, all share the trend of taking previously private events and turning them into public issues. And not just any public issues, but issues led primarily by women. Against this backdrop, it is perhaps surprising that women did

not also pursue the more radical dress reform of the earlier part of the nineteenth century. They realized quickly, however, that in order to be heard, they had to present themselves as “normal” and “respectable” women—and the only way to do that was to maintain the appearance of conventional womanhood. Reform dress failed partly for the simple reason that it was a very public statement of political position, of sentiments otherwise held and discussed privately. The fundamental failure of dress reform was simple and direct: no matter what was discussed publicly or privately, women simply refused to wear it (Fischer 2001).

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## Chapter 11

# Mina Miller Edison, Education, Social Reform, and the Permeable Boundaries of Domestic Space, 1886–1940

Anne E. Yentsch

As part of a major restoration project, every scrap of information that could be found about the landscape of the Thomas Edison winter estate in Fort Myers, Florida, was collected, collated, and analyzed (Rosenblum 2002). Material evidence, in all its forms, was utilized (newspaper articles, letters, postcards, photographs, magazines, oral histories, diaries, biographies, books, and journal articles by professional botanists, avocational botanists, and local gardeners). Initially, the focus was on a famous inventor whose work spoke directly to the common man: electric lights, records, motion pictures, and national defense. His wife stayed in the background. Mina Miller was a very young woman when she married Edison, raised to live in a woman's world, and not to venture far into the spaces perceived as masculine. As more information appeared, it became clear that she grew from a homemaker into a reformer who helped transform American culture by making it laudable for women to act as active agents for public change in their communities (Spencer-Wood 1994a: 177, 1996). Mina Miller Edison was actively redefining the positions of women in public arenas—places that can be seen as political microworlds. When the placement and borders of Mina's public activities are mapped, they stand well beyond her home and are complemented by her conversion of domestic space into public space.

Archaeologists assume a fundamental link between life events and change in the material record; sometimes the linkage is clear and undeniable. It is less clear how shifts in self-identity affect artifact distributions or the archaeological features that reveal the practice of space. Here evidence of Mina Miller Edison's activities during her passage from young bride to older widow is analyzed in tandem with her command and use of space. Particular attention is paid to the influence of Chautauqua women and the reform movements they supported, a topic not fully touched upon in earlier studies of Mina Miller Edison. It also focuses on the transition from masculine

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work space to feminine landscapes at her estate. Following Mina across her garden shows that nature was one medium that swept her into a wide sphere of public activity, social activism, and national influence. What this essay shows is that she gained a stronger sense of self as she matured and, as she did so, had a stronger and more visible influence in different facets of her life. But, to see these, I had to dig deeper into a history overlain with myths: myths about Thomas Edison the inventor, myths about her role in his life, and myths that obscure women's acquisition of civic power.

## The Influential Mrs. Edison

When an Indiana paper, the *Critic* (1886), described Mina as “one of the most beautiful women in the country,” she had just become engaged to Thomas Edison, and the myths that would surround her life had just begun. The public was fascinated by her husband, and she too caught their attention. Reporters were especially curious about Edison's work habits, his long working nights, and how Mina coped with the disruption of normal home life. One reads anecdotes about her trips to his lab to bring him home or remind him to eat, meals she sent to the lab so he would not forget to eat, and the cot she slept on while he worked till 1 or 2 or 3 a.m. (*Jackson Citizen Patriot* 1891; *Arizona Republican* 1894; *Olean Democrat* 1894; *Algona Republican* 1896). Usually she is presented as a gracious helpmeet, an ideal wife, an excellent role model for other American wives, and a domestic rather than a sociable woman (*American Monthly Review* 1902; *Cedar Rapids Republican* 1902; *Des Moines Daily News* 1914).

As time passed, short aphorisms about wifely behavior attributed to Mrs. Edison begin to appear. It is serious business when she asserts that women should not wear short skirts (*Massillon Evening Independent* 1916; *Oakland Tribune* 1916). By the 1920s and 1930s, the tales about her wifely accomplishments portray a self-sacrificing woman, beatific, unapproachable, and formidable—an icon of womanly virtue—and the only person her husband would obey (*Bucks County Gazette* 1913; Swain 1926; Ludwig 1928; Crowell 1930). Increasingly, simply meeting Mina or seeing her garden brought cachet (*Boston Daily Globe* 1899; *New Castle News* 1932, 1935; *Monessen Daily Independent* 1936) while befriending her made one respectable and/or creditable: dramatic reader Ida Benefy Judd (*Logansport Reporter* 1908), bird writer and lecturer Gladys Fry (Harrison 1935), and clairvoyant mind-reader Sinnett (Thurber 1941). Her name helped the Davey Tree Surgeons sell services (*Rotarian* 1928) and the Dodsons sell birdhouses (*Garden and Home Builder* 1924). In 1947, word of Mrs. Edison's terminal illness and death went out over the AP wires and made news across the nation (*Augusta Chronicle* 1947; *Daily Mail* 1947; *Lowell Sun* 1947; *NorthWest Arkansas Times* 1947; *La Prensa* 1947; *Times Picayune* 1947, *Trenton Evening Bulletin* 1947, *Vidette Messenger* 1947, *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin* 1947, *Winnipeg Free Press* 1947). But much of what Mina was about was never publicized, covered in conventional accounts of her husband's life, or

**Fig. 11.1** Mina Miller Edison in her New Jersey garden (Photograph courtesy of the Thomas Edison National Historical Park)



discussed in personal interviews (*Tipton Tribune* 1930). A more shadowy if realistic image of her appears if one looks at what Mina Miller Edison did rather than what she said (Fig. 11.1).

## The Early Years

Mina was a cherished daughter in a large, close-knit family similar to many others of that era (Ryan 1983). She was the dutiful daughter of a charitable mother and father strong in their faith, active with social reform, and deeply involved with educational innovation: adult education, teacher training, initiation of summer school classes, and Sunday school teaching strategies (Scott 1999). The value of giving generously to those who loved her and to others in need was stressed by both parents (Miller 1886, 1887; Hendrick 1925).

Like other middle-class parents, Lewis and Mary Miller retained control over both their sons and daughters. Additionally, Mina's six brothers kept an eye on her, while an older sister counseled her to wait a year before marrying Edison (Miller 1885). Mina was not encouraged to venture far or experiment with independent

social action. This ill prepared her for marriage to a brilliant, eccentric working-class man well acclimated to masculine machine shop subculture who spent most of his time in the company of men (Millard 1990). He held few religious beliefs; was shrewd, controlling, independent, chauvinistic, and commercially inclined; had an acerbic, biting wit; and was intensely energetic when it came to experiments in his workshop (Millard 1990; Baldwin 1995; Israel 1998; Stross 2007). If Mina's husband, Thomas, was larger than life and accustomed to the public eye, Mina had internalized the era's feminine values: work quietly without recognition or remuneration to make life better for others.

As a gently raised and deeply religious young woman, Mina was supposed to marry a spiritual scholarly man—George Vincent, the son of her father's partner at Chautauqua. She also had a mind of her own and could not have been fully reconciled to marrying Vincent—a graduating senior at Yale—as she mentioned other possibilities in letters to her future sister in law. Sent to a finishing school, Mina likely benefited from her younger sisters' educations at elite Wellesley College. Her younger brothers attended Yale; her older brothers attended Midwestern colleges. Her father was both inventive and ahead of his time. He gave his daughters financial training and helped them run youthful businesses.

Strong reform women in Mina's family provided role models for her later public work. Her mother marched in the original 1873–1874 Ohio Temperance Crusade, not stopping when saloonkeepers soaked her with water (*Portsmouth Times* 1874; Stewart 1890). Her uncle, Jacob Miller, was a noted philanthropist. Her aunt, writer Emily Huntington Miller, was on the committee that formed the National Women's Temperance Union in 1874 (later called the Women's Christian Temperance Union or WCTU), founded the Chautauqua Women's Club in 1887, taught at the Evanston College for Ladies, and became Dean of Women at Northwestern University (Leonard 1914: 563).

### *Chautauqua Summers*

Most importantly, Mina spent the summer months, from age nine, at Chautauqua. Her father and the patriarchal Rev. John Heyl Vincent organized Chautauqua as a vacation retreat melding recreation, education—science, music, and literature—and religious study. Originally designed for Sunday school teachers, its offerings soon included liberal arts; it held a special appeal to women (Kilde 1999; Rieser 2003; Scott 2005). Women writers were featured in different courses of study (Coman 1894; Bates and Coman 1902). Lectures and articles included discussions of women's roles (Cobbe 1884). Under George Vincent's direction (Scott 2005), specific weeks were targeted to specific topics—labor movements, women, social settlements, etc.—although his father, John H. Vincent, was emphatic that women should reserve their talents to honoring or ennobling the interior world of the home (Vincent 1886). Mina's father, however, believed women with strong messages should be welcomed as public speakers and favored women's suffrage (Hurlbert 1921: 78;

Rieser 2003: 93). It is not clear whether either man was fully mindful of the number of progressive women who visited.

Few historians have rigorously tackled the issue of progressive women speakers in the Chautauqua programs (Kilde 1999). Hurlbert (1921) briefly touches upon the topic, Hayden (1981: 121) mentions speeches by famous sanitary reformer Mary Livermore and two other women who later created domestic reform institutions. More recently, a few writers have further addressed this issue (Kleiner 1989; Damon and First 1999; Crocker and Curie 2001; Northrup 2009). A closer look at women teachers and speakers listed in yearly issues of the *Chautauquan* when cross-checked with biographic information indicates a number of prominent progressive women were present in the 1800s. Mina's mother, Mary Valinda, attended some of their lectures and left one outraged when the speaker wore pants; a family scandal also ensued when Mina's sister wore bloomers (Venable 1978: 5). Mary Valinda did not encourage her daughters to be feminists, and there is little overt indication that Mina, with the exception of temperance, adopted their beliefs or causes while she was a young married woman.

## Fort Myers Honeymoon and the Winter Estate

Mina's world turned upside down after she met a reputed wizard and older widower, Thomas Edison, who courted and quickly married her. He gave her the choice of a townhouse in New York or an already furnished mansion in Llewellyn Park near his new industrial complex. Within hours of their wedding, he helped her board a train to his retreat in Fort Myers, Florida. Here too awaited an already furnished new home, prebuilt and shipped from Maine, one duplicated a few yards away by the Gilliland dwelling (Fig. 11.2). Gilliland and Edison, business associates, discovered the area when a fishing guide took them up the Caloosahatchee River (Smoot 2004).

Fort Myer's main street was sandy and weed-filled (Grismer 1984: 117). Residents could hear wolves howl, panthers yowl, and alligators' mating rites. Described as a "muddy or dusty cow town depending on the season," Peter Matthiessen writes that the community had no law, no education, no chivalry, culture, morals, or good manners (Matthiessen 1991). There were whiskey drinkers, Sunday hunters, and unrepentant card players who wore scruffy flannel shirts, old Stetson hats, and swore readily. Seminole Indians visited often, camped in backyards, slept on porches, and washed clothes and hung them to dry on rose bushes (Hendry 2000). Cracker cattle barons and their cowhands that used Fort Myers as a base for cattle drives provided one economic base, while commercial hunters supplied another (Grismer 1984). The town was also a major distribution center for the infamous bird hunters who shot countless exotic birds for feathers for women's hats (Grinnell 1887: 179). The *Jacksonville News* (1886) termed the area "that dreadful 'saraso' country" and insisted Edison was mistaken if he thought it was delightful.

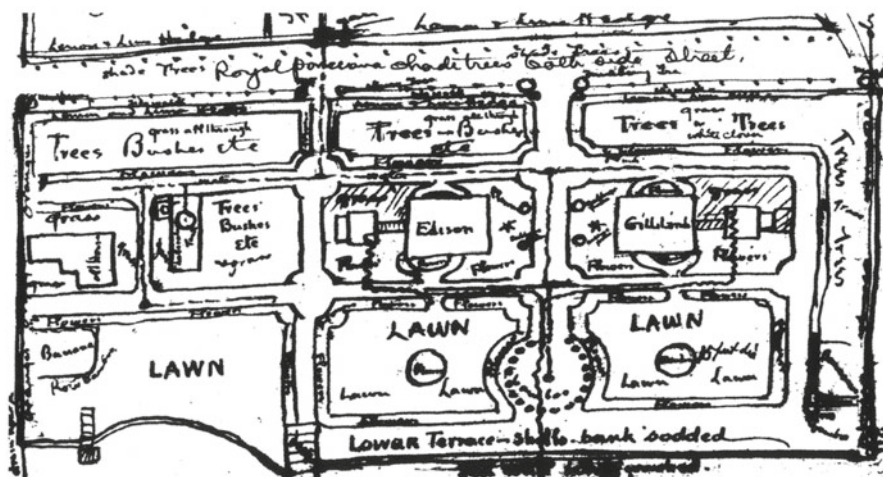


Fig. 11.2 Landscape plan for the estate in the 1880s as drawn by Thomas A. Edison (Photograph courtesy of the Thomas Edison National Historical Park)

According to Albion (2008), Mina was not impressed: no running water, no sewage, and no ice; tough beef—no other meat; a rude kitchen where strong winds roared through cracks; and no carriage horses or carriages; no civilized roads, only sand-paths. The winter estate lay behind a picket fence off a well-used cattle trail. Imagine a postage stamp of civilization set among palmetto trees and saw grass. The couple slept at a local “hotel” until the houses were finished (*Fort Myers News* 1886). They were accompanied by Edison’s 12-year-old daughter, the Gillilands, some of Edison’s staff, and, later, by Mina’s parents (Smoot 2004: 36–37).

Mina’s son later wrote of the Fort Myer’s estate as a “little paradise which you have made out of sand and pine trees” (Edison 1928), but that was far in the future. Edison hired a surveyor and landscape architect to take control of the waterside grounds by overlaying them with a rectangular grid which divided the waterside portion into thirds: (a) laboratory, electrical system, work buildings, warehouse, men’s privy, staff housing, and large water tank; (b) two simple four-bedroom dwellings with wide verandas and grass foreground; and (c) riverfront park with fruit-bearing trees (Fig. 11.2). The land across the road was mostly left as wilderness. Edison desired a quasi-self-reliant retreat where he and his staff could leisurely work and fish. There were no outdoor areas for women—no cutting garden, herb garden, laundry nook, chicken house, or kitchen work yard—and not much in the way of a kitchen or kitchen equipment. Edison and Gilliland, in fact, selected the household furnishings from chamber pots to bed linens, cooking pans, plates, and forks (Yentsch 2002).

The emphasis on economic activities and masculine practicalities, seen in both plants and laboratory functions, contrasted with Mina’s father’s view of nature. Lewis Miller’s Akron, Ohio, factory was in town, well away from his residence. He planted exotic trees at his hillside home, grew familiar plants, and kept a greenhouse.



He grew flowers for his church and its Sunday school (Hendrick 1925). Miller was a brilliant organizer, a quiet man but a gregarious one who loved trees, nature, and good fun. When Miller helped lay out the camp grounds at Chautauqua, he created a park-like setting with amenities, a curving picturesque landscape in which both industrialization and the unfamiliar “Other” were distanced (Schlereth 1984)—a contrast to the intermingled work-live-play space designed by Edison, the intruding wilderness, and the inescapable presence of cow hunters, piney woods rooters, Everglades hunters, Indians, African Americans, and Spanish Cubans (Grismer 1984).

## Social Networking: 1890–1905

In the 1880s, the Edisons only spent two winter seasons in Fort Myers; in the second winter, Mina’s father stayed in Florida with Edison when Mina, in the early stages of pregnancy and concerned about her marriage, returned home. There must have been conflict at the start about Edison’s extended working hours, which he easily quashed despite the loneliness and deprivation it brought Mina. Age differences were another factor, something George Vincent bitterly noted in his diary: “A man not yet forty and a maid not yet nineteen [should] not be left alone” (Baldwin 1995: 159). Mina worried that she and her children would not prove worthy of him (Edison 1912b). His views of women could not have been comforting once she learned of them: “Woman...is an undeveloped creature...and vastly man’s inferior” (Edison and Marshall 1912: 259). In a letter dated April 26, 1887, Mina’s father assured her that Edison did love her and reminded her of their difference: Edison’s mind was fully matured, while Mina’s intellect, still evolving, was not. “I am thoroughly convinced that he is true to you...try and meet him with wit...explain to him fully what you do like to do...show your true Christian influence.” One should note that he did not encourage her to find interests of her own outside her home, but rather to focus on seeing the good side of events and on nurture noting, “It is in your power to make all around you happy and delighted.” Mina’s mother, however, also urged her to make friends and invite them into her home (Miller 1891).

Mina had, in fact, already done so by turning to her church, its auxiliary Ladies Guild, and temperance work. Mina gave a formal luncheon for 200–300 women when the First Council of the National Federation of Women’s Clubs met in New Jersey in 1891 (Wood 1912: 45–48) and was a member of the Women’s Club of the Oranges. It is ironic that her husband has been given sole credit for giving these women the first public preview of the kinetograph or movie camera since he consistently thought of guests as “outsiders” and was not happy to see them in his home (Baldwin 1995: 364). Most women would recognize Mina’s hand in the afternoon’s entertainment as well as in the luncheon and the flowers that decorated her home. Another clue that she was a member of an enlarging and feminist social network was her presence, as a guest, at Sorosis meetings (*New York Times* 1892, 1897a).



Mina often spent time at Chautauqua after she married. According to Rieser (2003: 197), women at Chautauqua “refused to replicate their roles *exactly* as they were at home.” The rigid boundary between public and private did not exist, and the two often intermingled (Kilde 1999). Chautauqua space was liminal, unregulated by the same constraints at work in women’s home communities. It offered ways of learning that encouraged women to test gender boundaries even when that was not the intent (Kleiner 1989; Kett 1994; Kilde 1999; Scott 1999; Rieser 2003). Leaders who developed new modes of education, recreation, and childhood play introduced these to new audiences at Chautauqua, which sped their diffusion across the nation. In this sense, the institution was a distribution center where feminists, antifeminists, and average women crossed paths (Scott 1979). Women involved with the push to make home economics a science networked at Chautauqua (Ewing 1896), and the first summer music festivals occurred there. Progressive ideas were absorbed (Rieser 2003).

Chautauqua was a hub of activists and energetic reformers both male and female. Women’s participation began quietly with lectures on Sunday school teaching, primary education, and natural history in the Bible. Linda Gilbert spoke on prison reform, and Miss M. E. Wilson discussed temperance in 1877 during a week of lectures on the church and reform (*Chautauqua Assembly Daily Herald* 1877). Women in the Home Missionary Society met in 1884 and heard from women such as Miss Mary A. Sharp who served in Liberia (Armstrong 1884). Among the few women who spoke at Chautauqua in the early 1880s were unusually strong women: Esther Jerman Baldwin, teacher, writer, translator, and advocate who successfully pleaded for women physicians to care for Chinese women and children living in the mountains near Fuzhou. She also gave birth to six children while living abroad (Willard and Livermore 1893: 48–49). Women and young girls like Mina Miller and her sisters came into further contact with different cultures through the spellbinding performances of an Austro-Russian woman, Madame Lydia Mary Marmeoff von Finklestein Mountford, born and raised in Jerusalem who had an intimate knowledge of Palestine. She successively role-played biblical patriarchs and more ordinary folk, presenting both legends and traditions of the Near East (Long 2002). While neither Baldwin nor von Finkelstein, who also spoke, came out on stage endorsing changing women’s values, their personas bespoke female empowerment and agency.

The women appeared before Chautauqua audiences that were broad-based and included protestant housewives inclined toward suffrage, anti-suffrage, and without much thought of suffrage. Chautauqua’s members came from 8,000 communities in every state (Gatto 2000) and many foreign nations. Women whose work extended beyond the domestic sphere came too—poets, writers, singers, musicians, missionaries, teachers of all varieties, teachers in training, librarians, settlement house workers, free-lance journalists, syndicated journalists, and apprentice reporters. These dynamic individuals often spoke to younger girls through the Outlook Club (Adams 1896). They trained teachers and librarians, formed formal associations, organized conferences, and built informal networks much like those seen earlier at the Troy Female Seminary (Scott 1979). The information conveyed to women in Chautauqua lectures, classes, literary circles, and social gatherings was reiterated in the

*Chautauquan* which, beginning in 1890, featured series of articles by well-known women on domestic service, education, suffrage, women's legal affairs, working conditions for women, women in public office, women's lives in foreign countries, and women's associations in specific cities. While women's work appeared infrequently in the *Chautauquan* essays initially, the second issue carried the transcript of a speech by Chinese missionary Susan M. Thwing (1880) who cleverly argued for mixed educational classes while noting that women's position had retrograded from what God originally intended. Gradually the women's network at Chautauqua strengthened, expanded, and adopted varied interests.

Leaders of the women's temperance movement spoke frequently and met often (Martha McClellan Brown, Mary A. Livermore, Frances Willard, Jennie Fowler Willing, and Letitia Youmans), although they may have subdued or masked their pro-suffrage sentiments, collaboration, and recruitment actions. By 1900, members of the Chautauqua Women's Club were especially active. Nationally, club members gradually began emphasizing the civic, political, educational, and social issues of the time (Blair 1980). Although well-educated, knowledgeable women were not supposed to speak publicly of their expertise, suffrage advocates occasionally lectured (Susan B. Anthony, Carrie Chapman Catt, Anna Howard Shaw; Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, and Zerelda G. Wallace) (Kett 1994: 153). Pro-suffragists more often worked behind the scenes or on behalf of other social reforms (Jane Addams, Mary Antin, Rachel Foster Avery, Leonora Kearney Barry-Lake, Maude Ballington Booth, Helen Campbell, Katherine Bement Davis, Grace Dodge, Kate Field, Florence Kelley, Lucy Peabody, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Julia Ward Howe, Belle Kearney, Lucia Mead, Rose Pastor Stokes, and Emma Booth Tucker) (Hurlbert 1921; Kleiner 1989). Their reform activities also taught them political techniques that could be efficiently wielded on behalf of suffrage (Freedman 1979).

While Maria Parloa taught the first of a series of traditional cooking classes at Chautauqua in 1879 (*Greenville Advance Argus* 1879; Bevier and Usher 1906: 47), Nellie Sawyer Kedzie-Jones, head of Kansas State Domestic Science Department, taught women chemistry, physics, science, technology, and mathematics under the guise of "domestic" science in the 1880s (Bevier and Usher 1906: 27). Once Emily P. Ewing became Dean of the Cooking School, she gave science a major role by hiring women to teach hygiene, the botany of food plants, sanitation, nutrition, food safety issues, and healthy diets. She convened the Domestic Economy Conference in 1896 (*American Kitchen Magazine* 1896) and in 1895 brought together a dozen women from a dozen states at Chautauqua to form the Cooking School Teachers League, and began to blend chemistry, biology, and hygiene under the rubric of household or domestic science (Ewing 1896)—both moves no doubt influenced the Lake Placid Conference in 1899. Anne Barrows, Alice P. Norton, Ellen Swallow Richards, and Marion Talbot also taught domestic science and reformed cooking techniques during this era (Braggins 1895; *American Kitchen Magazine* 1901).

Other outstanding women lectured at Chatauqua at annual teachers' retreats: Alice F. Palmer (historian, Wellesley President, and University of Chicago Dean; *New York Times* 1902), Katherine L. Sharp (librarian and protégé of Melville Dewey; Krummel 2004), and Ella Flagg Young (student and associate of John

Dewey and a well-known Chicago educator (McManus 1916). New departments arose that spoke to women's other needs. Starting in 1886, classes on women's health and calisthenics (Emily M. Bishop, Millie J. Chapman, Mary E. Green, Eliza Mosher, Rose Pastor-Stokes, and Gwyneth King Roe) became part of a broad women's exercise movement. Charlotte Perkins Gilman espoused the aesthetic (uncorseted) dress reform movement (Blanchard 1995). Members of the College Settlements Association were often on campus (e.g., Mary H. Mather); many women attended the American Library Association's annual conferences frequently held at Chautauqua as well as those of the National Educational Association (Hyde 1880).

The Kindergarten Movement was especially strong, in part, because Froebel disciple Matilda Kriege (1872), who managed Boston's first Froebelian kindergarten from 1867 to 1872 (*National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* 1904, volume 12: 350), began training kindergarten teachers at Chautauqua in 1875 (Hurlbert 1921: 67–68). Her Boston school began under the guidance of Mary Mann, wife of educational reformer Horace Mann, thus linking reform and primary education together. Subsequent instructors included Froebel authority Maria Kraus-Boelte (Hurlbert 1921:179; Kraus-Boelte and Krauss (1881), Alice H. Putnam, Elizabeth Harrison (1889, 1890, 1900), Anna Bryan (1890), Amalie Hofer (*University of Tennessee Record* 1906), and Alice Temple (1919). Frances Newton, who led the Chautauqua Kindergarten Department starting about 1890 (Adams 1896), also cofounded the Mother's Union and helped reorganize the Sydney, Australia, kindergartens (*Kindergarten-Primary Magazine* 1913). Alice McClellan Birney formed the American National Congress of Mothers (later renamed The Parent-Teachers Association, Haar 2002: 30) with the assistance of Chautauquan Mary Louisa Butler (*New York Times* 1897b). Both the Playground Movement (Frost 2009: 89) and the Nature Study Movement took hold (*Chautauquan* 1903, Kohlstedt 2010).

Impetus for the latter can be seen in Vincent's statement (1886: 220) that Nature was a textbook, a laboratory, and a teacher for Chautauquans. Cornell supplied two teachers to lecture on natural science in 1898 (Roberts 1899: 262). Anna Comstock taught botany and nature study classes (Kohlstedt 2010: 84, 172); Alice G. McCloskey (1903) and Florence Merriam Bailey introduced women and children to environmental education and conservation (Bailey 1904; Kohlstedt 2010: 93, 270). Women trained in geology took youngsters on field trips (Adams 1896). Materials prepared by Julia E. Rogers, Martha Van Rensselaer, Comstock, and McCloskey became part of the curriculum. The institution became the center of circulation for the *Junior Naturalist*. The *Chautauquan* excerpted portions of Harriet Mann Miller's dozen books on birds (Olive Thorne e.g., Miller 1890, 1891). The Chautauqua Press published a book by Florence Merriam (1889) and promoted her other works as well as Mabel Osgood Wright's (Wright et al. 1897). Women who could not be present on the New York campus picked up these publications and used them in places as far away as California (e.g., Dr. Cloe Annette Buckel, Jensen 1971: 266). The importance of women's work within the early years of the conservation and nature study movements, however, has been downplayed (Merchant 1985). Finally, in 1911 Mina's sister-in-law, Louise, organized the co-ed Bird and Tree Club,

eventually the Bird, Tree, and Plant Club, which handled much of the extracurricular nature-related events at Chautauqua.

This brief history of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century women at Chautauqua indicates various aspects of a woman's life that we might expect to discover in Mina Miller Edison's lifetime: the importance of the home; nature, charity, and social reform; teaching children; and woman-based alliances that included men whenever it was feasible to do so. We might note that the women discussed above could all be described as strong-minded and highly motivated. Many were well-published writers.

There are basic contradictions and inconsistencies between the ideologies of domesticity and progressive liberalism. Neither Edison nor Mina's mother was conflicted about women's role in society; both believed in separate spheres or "true womanhood." Yet, as seen above, Mina saw and heard enough during her years at Chautauqua to know these views were not necessarily shared by educated, intellectually motivated women. Her later actions show she took Chautauqua's teachings to heart, and they took her to places and organizations endorsed in the *Chautauquan*.

## An Expanding Domestic Sphere: 1900–1915

While Mina was a member of the Ladies Aid Society in the 1890s and gave parties to benefit charities and their programs (e.g., a cantata for her church's fresh-air fund supported care for TB patients, *New York Times* 1891), these activities were held at her home in its public spaces. Mina's life changed as her children grew up: Madeleine married, Charles attended MIT, and Theodore went to prep school. Lewis Miller firmly believed in the value of leisure to renew and refresh adults and children, so it is not surprising that in 1907 she was among the first members of the Playground Association of America, which was founded in 1906. The organization's goals included constructing city playgrounds—sites of enculturation—where children could be familiarized with American values and improve both physical and moral health (Mallery 1910, Brett et al. 1993, Spencer-Wood 1994b, 2003). This work drew Mina out into a circumscribed public sphere, and she joined its Board of Directors in 1913 (Edison 1930; Braucher 1947). She worked with this organization (later known as the Playground and Recreation Association of America in 1911, followed by the National Recreation and Park Association in 1964) throughout her life. The organization's title belied its link with social reform; it did not require work in the public sphere, and it was a natural follow-up to the Miller family's interest in leisure time, its involvement with and its management of an amusement park outside Akron (Francis and Francis 1993). Her husband knew, approved, and spoke proudly of her work (Braucher 1947). Presumably, like many men, he saw this as a logical extension of women's domestic sphere activity (Spencer-Wood 1991: 234–236, 1994b: 126).

A woman's self-identity was indelibly linked with her husband's. To assert one's self as Mina Miller Edison or Mrs. Thomas A. Edison implied her husband's

approval of what she did since society conflated the individual man with his collective family. Husbands had a long history as the legal representatives of their families (Spencer-Wood 2006: 154–155). Mina represented Edison when she attended a dinner in 1902 honoring Marconi, while Edison stayed home (Seifer 2001: 207). Edison, who was totally wrapped up in his work, truly held little or no responsibility for the social or charitable endeavors of his family (Stross 2007). Yet when Mina persuaded him to sponsor a lecture tour by Maria Montessori, he became the responsible party, while Mina's role became invisible. When Mina funded construction of the Lewis Miller Memorial Chapel in 1904–1905 or donated a thousand dollars for a bell tower in her father's name, the entire family gained honor. But, there were differences between donating books in her married name to help establish a local library and taking a stand in terms of community action which could bring her into political space. At the same time, worthy men, local ministers Mina respected, supported extending the domestic sphere into the community realm: "Housekeeping is not a man's forte and consequently the household side of a municipality, the cleanliness of streets, the disposal of water... is but an aggregate form of domestic service, is not as satisfactory without the help, cooperation and counsel of woman" (Roeder 1906: 25). This avenue of women's reform activity was called "municipal housekeeping" (Spencer-Wood 1991: 235, 1994a: 179–180).

Civic organizations bridged the divide. When women acted together in associations, the affiliation was corporate or institutional; their husband's sentiments, public esteem, and honor were not necessarily at risk. One might think of this as encroachment into men's political domain, a step toward annexation rather than appropriation. That Mina was involved in this, there can be no doubt. She served as a manager of the Women's Exchange, was a founding member and subsequent President of the West Orange (NJ) Improvement League (1912–1919), presided over the Visiting Nurses (*Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* 1913: 224), set up a local Red Cross, worked on behalf of the National Housewives League, and joined the Orange Orphan Society, the Orange WCTU, and Women's Club of the Oranges (NJ) (Leonard 1914; Howes et al. 1939). It is likely that she was also a member of the Consumer League of New Jersey which was especially active in the Oranges by 1901, 2 years after its formation by Florence Kelly (Shelton 1902). Its goals—fair, safe, healthy working conditions, limited working hours for women and children, minimum wages and reasonable prices—fit well with her other organizations (Shelton 1902).

In 1905 Mina belonged to three of the seventeen charities protesting local sanitation. A spokesman described health inspectors who routinely ignored unhygienic plumbing: Three families had to chip through ice in a basement to obtain bathing water after pipes froze. The inspector's solution: bathe in the cellar. Some families had to draw water from fire hydrants; others had no interior water closets. Many were unconnected to city sewers, so their ad hoc drainage simply flowed beneath tenements, creating backed-up kitchen sinks and foul, miasmatic smells (Charities Organization Society 1905: 705, 920, 1035–1036). To find out about these conditions, women had to enter less savory neighborhoods and intrude upon areas normally connected with masculine activity (plumbing, sewage, engineering, building

inspection, garbage collection, and conversing with “others” to obtain details). It is doubtful Mina did any on-site investigation and the charities did not seek radical changes. They wanted improvement of an already existing system. They were insistent, not confrontational.

The West Orange Improvement League, formed with her assistance in 1911, initially took up noncontroversial issues. It encouraged gardening among local children by enticing them with prizes for the best piazza vine, window box, flower bed, lawn, etc. (*Municipal Journal and Engineer* 1911; Hartman 1911: 191). Its members slowly moved further into the public sphere by talking directly with local mayors, city councils, state senators, representatives, and other officials. In addition Mina campaigned for and convinced women in the community to vote for a new school building, but when stormy weather kept many from voting, the measure failed. That did not stop Mina who, with others, persuaded the town to hold a second election. The following month, more women voted and the appropriation passed (*Trenton Evening Times* 1911). In the latter cases, she worked within the community’s larger political sphere (voters and officials).

Mina unquestionably had time available for these outside activities. Edison left her alone for long periods of time early in their marriage—Baldwin (1995) and Israel (1998) note his neglect. He boasted of 20-hr work days and consistently worked so far into the night that family life suffered. Mina spoke the simple truth when she told a reporter that their household focused on Edison’s needs (Swinton 1915). An elite woman with servants to perform housework and childcare could easily find charitable activities to fill her day, but a respectable woman, alone, had a more difficult time in the evening. For many years, Mina had spent the long night hours reading and writing letters, especially to her mother. She opened her heart to her mother who was, in one sense, her nighttime companion and confidante. When Mary Valinda Miller died in 1912, Mina buried herself in reform work, but did not ignore Edison’s needs, as seen below.

Indeed, Edison did need her for he was almost overwhelmed by his need to work and unwilling to take the time to accept a medal awarded him in January 1913 by the American Safety Museum (*Muscatine Journal* 1913). When his family left for a Maine vacation, Edison began working every night (Miller 1913). Mina knew he would when she told him, “When the Cat is away, the mice will...work” (Edison 1913). He caught a cold at Monhegan Island, Maine, after he joined his family and soon retired to a Portland hotel bed until he was well enough to travel (*Lowell Sun* 1913a, b; *Washington Post* 1913b); fretted about the “unproductive” time spent in the car; and returned to work before he was well (*Altoona Mirror* 1913; *Oakland Tribune* 1913; *Emporia Gazette* 1913; *Syracuse Herald* 1913b). The cold worsened and indigestion followed. Edison’s physician declared it was caused by “anxiety to work” and directed uniformed nurses to make sure he had bed rest (*Syracuse Herald* 1913a). Finally, Madeleine wrote to her brother that father, fully dressed, was up sitting in a chair and behaving reasonably, the nurses were gone, and Mina was in “full charge” (Sloan 1913). Mina wrote Charles they had avoided surgery and stated it would be hard to make his father take up work slowly (Mina Edison 1913).



Edison returned to work driven in each morning between 8 and 9 a.m. by Mina. At this date, just the idea of a woman driver threatened many men who believed a mobile woman might “be beyond control, socially, spatially, and sexually” (Scharff 1992: 166). To attest to his well-being, the couple posed for photos where Mina, dressed in a white ruffled dress, presented a ladylike appearance in her genteel, feminine electric car, one that moved at a gentle pace and would not get a wife dirty from oil, grease, or gasoline residue (Scharff 1992). Unless one studies the publicity shots, it is hard to tell who was driving. These pictures of Mina give no hint of action. In fact, few ever do. Edison could be willful and hardheaded and was aptly identified as “The Most Difficult Husband in America” (Coman and Weir 1925b); newspapers delighted in events where Mina supposedly gave him orders (*Boston Evening Globe* 1915) perhaps because they made him human.

Mina interwove her community activities within a familial relationship that could be trying, especially when her spouse boasted how well she looked because she followed HIS diet and gave out her precise age (*Washington Post* 1913a). She offered an image of a supportive wife, one who would tell him what to do only when it was in his best interests. Church affairs fell within a women’s domain, and here Mina did exactly as she wished, always taught Sunday school, invited ministers to dinner—sometimes six at a time—and served as President of the church’s Women’s Guild despite Edison’s atheistic bent (Venable 1978). It was probably easy to persuade the Women’s Guild to buy an Edison movie projector, and it began showing films on Friday nights in 1913—nature films, comedies, good drama suitable for adults and children—for a small fee; everyone had a good time (Herben 1913).

The crusade for cleaner streets was more difficult. Mina campaigned for these after the town scavenger, who picked up street trash, lost heart because he could not keep up with the stream of cans, papers, boxes, etc., that folks tossed out. They paid little attention to an antilittering law that Mina and the West Orange Improvement League got passed in 1911. This did not stop the league from complaining; it wanted the law obeyed. Things came to a head when Mina and Mrs. Russell Colgate began walking the town, observing, and recording homes where folks tossed trash into the street. The ladies, described as “Wealthy Women Detectives,” took the lists to the City Council and demanded action. They enjoyed their work, although it took them further onto the streets and into the public domain, where women were supposed to limit their actions (*New Brunswick Times* 1913; Saegert 1984). A year later, a new garbage collection contract made provisions for collecting trash from behind houses. Mary Plume Douglass (1915) wrote that people now pointed with pride at their streets.

Mina was unenthusiastic about her “public work” when she wrote Charles (Mina Edison 1913), but was ready to begin her club work again. Meanwhile, some 700,000 women in the National Housewives League had grown more concerned about food labeling, additives, contamination, accurate weights and measures, and the freshness of refrigerated food, and Mrs. Julian Heath thought action was needed (Heath 1913). In 1913, Mina’s chapter led the way in a series of national protests against egg prices. They did not picket stores. There was no confrontation between buyer and seller, owner and customer. Instead, the women set up a competitive market exchange where they undercut the grocery store prices on eggs by 20 cents

(approximately a 50 % mark down). League ladies staffed the store, hefted cartons of eggs, and waited on the rich and poor, white and black, native-born and immigrant customers. Word quickly spread with snippets in some newspapers and more information in others (*Evening Tribune* 1913; *Times Picayune* 1913). The protest got favorable national coverage because it was a nationwide problem. “Mrs. Edison Aids Egg Market Fight” was the headline in a Portland newspaper (*Oregonian* 1913). Another in Reno announced that Kansas City women had begun their boycott, while women and schoolchildren in Chicago were starting theirs (*Reno Evening Gazette* 1913). Despite protest from merchants, legislation was quickly introduced into the United States House of Representatives as Bill 13305 (United States House of Representatives 1915: 297–304).

Mina also took up a health campaign, popularly known as Mrs. Edison’s fight against skeeters, to rid homes of mosquitoes and their related diseases through the use of fumigating stoves provided by local health boards (*Grand Rapids Tribute* 1911). Her interests were truly diverse. Mina contributed time and money to the Boy Scouts for more than 20 years (*Boy’s Life* 1913, 1930), was actively involved in bringing the Girl Scouts to New Jersey (Lurie et al. 2004: 316–317), and supported the Woodcraft nature clubs (Bond et al. 2006: 28). She was among the first annual members of the Archaeological Institute of America in New Jersey and a member of New York’s prestigious Cosmopolitan Club, the School Garden Association, Audubon Societies in Florida and New Jersey, and various art and music societies (Leonard 1914).

These were not the topics Mina chose to discuss when reporters or magazine writers interviewed her (*Indianapolis Star* 1912). Her name appeared in papers when she accompanied her husband to a social event or when she hosted a tea or dinner (often in New York City) in someone’s honor or for national meetings of her favorite charities: the General Federation of Women’s Clubs; the National Tree, Plant, and Fruit Guild; and the Playground and Recreation Association [of America]. One can say tentatively that Mina was a genteel activist and circumspect in most of her reform endeavors during this phase of her marriage.

## Creating the Tropical Garden: 1906–1915

One has to include the grounds of the Florida estate as part of Mina’s arena of modest behavior because the additions she initially made were small in scope and quite different from the sweeping changes made later. One of her first steps was installing new kitchen appliances: a gas oven, an electric stove, a new kitchen sink, an improved ice-box refrigerator, and a more workable kitchen. Once the family recovered the Gilliland property, sold by Gilliland in 1891 after a bitter dispute with Edison, they built a pergola linking the two homes (Rosenblum 2000). Fig. 11.2 and 11.10 show the location of the Gilliland home. When the McGregors acquired the Gilliland home and a third of the original Edison property in 1897, they planted shrubs, fruit trees, and ornamental flowers that broke the visual symmetry between

**Fig. 11.3** The wading pool, the main allée, the open spaces, and the 1886 laboratory, without decorative planting, can be seen in this circa 1906 photograph (Photograph courtesy of the Edison-Ford Winter Estates, Fort Myers, FL and the Thomas Edison National Historical Park)



the Edison and Gilliland cottages as did their fence. Local newspapers described the McGregor property: “One of the most beautiful residence properties in town... beautiful ornamental and flowering plants, cocoanuts [sic] and other tropical fruits” (*Fort Myers Press* 1906). With the original acreage restored in 1906, the spatial divisions allotted to dwellings, work area, and riverfront almost returned to their original configuration. Classical design elements, such as a central allée, and traditional plants that northern industrialists used to express power were set aside (Yentsch 2002).

In 1910, Edison built a simple bathhouse and concrete swimming pool. It gave children and adults a safer, less muddy place to swim—it was a thoroughly masculine creation, delightful to swim in once the alligators that occasionally appeared in it were removed. Edison’s hand is apparent in other projects such as the cement wading pool (Fig. 11.3), the water storage tanks (visible in Fig. 11.7) the electrical system, the irrigation system, and the acquisition of river boats (Yentsch 2002).

While female competency in some outdoor activities—sailing, bathing, rowing, biking, fencing, archery, gymnastics, calisthenics, and expressive dance—was encouraged at places like Chautauqua, this was not the usual attitude (Henderson et al. 1989); women found their identities inside their homes or, in a modest step outdoors, in their gardens (Scourse 1983). However, wealthy genteel women rarely did the manual labor. They hired male gardeners and groundskeepers, told them what to do, and expected fine results. Watering, pruning, lawn mowing, fertilizing, frost protection, and detailed knowledge of optimum growth conditions eluded many women. Perhaps this is why Mina kept trying to grow northern flowers in

South Florida. She sent quantities of flower seeds suited to a temperate climate to the caretaker together with expensive, prestigious Canadian roses (Yentsch 2002).

Although the “bones” of the garden remained intact, its overt display of power no longer resided in the 1886 symmetrical classical design. The pre-1900 rigidity was moderated; an Arts and Crafts ambience began to appear. The rustic arbor framing the point where land and river met had a particularly feminine flair both in its form and the flowers that twined around it. The Edisons had softened it with clumps of bamboo, flowering trees, and tropical shrubs. Mina added a bed of African red-hot poker with long flowery spikes and planted South African plumbago with masses of tiny flowers and heat-loving fig marigolds. Vines such as Peruvian Canary bird, Brazilian flame vine, Mexican cup and saucer, or scarlet bougainvillea grew by the porch. However, Mina was never able to get the caretakers to successfully plant drift beds of flowers and bulbs beneath the trees (Edison 1912a).

Research in a cultural landscape report (Yentsch 2002) indicated Edison planted stately royal palms thrusting up 50 to 80 feet into the air. He collected fishtail, fan-leaf, feather-leaf, traveler, umbrella, queen, princess, piccabean, and peach palms. Always he grew plants with potential industrial uses. Exotic fruit drew South Florida horticulturalists like honey draws bees, but most specialized in one particular type, whereas Edison set out many trees with interesting fruit such as sapote, loquat, litchee, papaya, cocoa, guava, mango, Malay apple, and tamarind. He grew coffee plus plants with medicinal properties like the Asian ginseng or odd, eccentric behaviors such as exploding seeds. Edison had a Victorian’s obsession with acquiring and collecting plants and grew many newly introduced cultivars, but his motives went beyond accumulation and display to observation and learning. Although few of Mina’s traditional plants survived a summer in the hot Florida sun, she watched and learned as her husband’s selections thrived. Many of his, however, originated in the subtropics or tropics—South Africa, Africa, Brazil, Burma, Ceylon, India, Java, Peru, Malaysia, Madagascar, Mexico, and the West Indies—and left a durable imprint at the estate. They created such a bold vista that it was, in the words of daughter Madeleine’s friend, “almost beyond reason” (Baldwin 1995: 313).

A core belief within Arts and Crafts philosophy was that integrating nature’s beauty into daily life encouraged healthy, moral living and offset the negativity of technology and its attendant social traumas. They believed, as did others, that “the garden is a statement about our place in the cosmos” (Riley 1990: 60). They were as fascinated with leaves as with flowers. Mina’s deft hand can be seen in her cactus, caladiums, crotons, dracaenas, sensitive plants, rosary vines, and ferns. Mina built a harmonious garden expressive of that style, one that sustained spiritual needs and attracted migrating birds, water birds, and song birds. As years progressed, she filled the garden with scents, plants, and microhabitats for birds, bees, and butterflies (Yentsch 2002).

The Edisons’ tropical pre-World War I garden anticipated by 20–30 years a transformation in Florida gardens. The Edisons had to learn by trial and error, through personal contacts with regional botanists and specialized gardeners, and by searching the botanical literature (e.g., the pamphlets of John Kunkel Small or John Gifford’s 1911 book on the Everglades). Their garden was an extraordinary

achievement for its era, perhaps equaled only by the tropical garden of the Koreshan utopian community at Estero (Yentsch 1992, 1993, 2002) (where the Edison staff assisted). Most Floridians had little interest in macroscale decorative landscaping. Edward Bok's 1920s Lake Wales' estate, also built on Arts and Crafts principles, was a singular exception. James Deering began Vizcaya in 1916, but its landscaping was finished well after World War I (Jackson 1997). There were at least a dozen other men working with tropical plants, especially those with economic value, but most of the botanical gardens they developed were products of the 1920s and 1930s (Andrews 1950). West Palm Beach gardens were in their infancy; few women gardeners paid attention to the climate's demands in their selection of plants possibly because the importation of tropical plants and their acclimatization were a scientific inquiry still in its infancy (Yentsch 2002).

## The War Years: 1915–1918

As the country began to prepare for war, Navy Secretary Josephus Daniels asked Edison to run the Naval Consulting Board. Mina announced she hoped he would only participate in an advisory capacity, while Edison said, "I'll see what my wife says. She'll know whether or not I can do it" (*Salt Lake Tribune* 1915a). It was a busy year. The Fords, the Edisons, the Firestones, and John Burroughs, following up on a 1914 group field trip into the Everglades to record bird calls, ventured further in the fall: the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco and the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego (Smoot 2004: 116–124).

Mina spoke on the record about her goals as a wife in one interview and off-record of her work on sanitation reform and the 1915 suffrage referendum (Swinton 1915). New war support groups were organized. Mina became an Honorary Chairman for the National "Made in U.S.A." League whose goals centered on patriotism, accurate labeling, and full employment of men and women (Grant 1915). With Navy encouragement, the Daughters of the American Revolution took the lead in forming a Women's Section of the Navy League and recruited prominent women. The *Salt Lake Tribune* (1915b) reported Mina's place on their National Committee, a group drawn from the heads of ten well-known organizations (*New York Times* 1915). She was an active vice-chairman of the War Relief Committee, and her wartime service brought honors (*Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine* 1923: 280).

By 1917, Mina had immersed herself in the war effort, devoting hours to research on when, where, and how the Germans sank ships. It was an invaluable contribution to Edison's analysis of nighttime shipping (Israel 1998: 453) which also kept her close to her husband. That summer, Mina insisted it was essential for her to be on the patrol boat *USS Sachem* while Edison was aboard conducting antisubmarine warfare experiments. After some behind-the-scenes maneuvering, Edison's manager telegraphed Secretary Daniels to that effect (Hutchinson 1917), and Mina went to sea the next day. It was only a year after the Naval Reserve Act of 1916 was

amended, allowing women to enlist in the Naval Reserve Force and serve ashore (Godson 2002: 60–62). Mina soon wrote to her son that she wanted to be home and disliked life about ship (Conot 1980: 417). She was on a vessel whose crew did not want her there at a time when it was normally illegal for women to be aboard navy vessels (women were not assigned to naval war ships until 1978; Godson 2002). Furthermore, the work they were carrying out was experimental and dangerous. This extraordinary experience, undoubtedly stressful, might be seen as honing a woman's inner strength and self-respect and was a remarkable achievement in its time.

In January 1918, the couple went to Key West where Edison put in more long hours aboard ship. Their son Theodore too was working for the Navy, but stationed on a small uninhabited key. Mina worried about their safety, found the Key West ambience a bit unsettling, did not like fishing on the open ocean, and felt there was not much she could do (Mina Edison 1918a). Somewhat discouraged, she left Edison behind and sailed on to Fort Myers. Her children, deeply supportive, wrote to cheer her (Sloan 1918; Theodore Edison 1918b).

During the summer, Edison took time off to vacation with his vagabond camping buddies—Henry Ford, Harvey Firestone, and John Burroughs. Mina went to Chautauqua and to visit her son at Camp Coult where Theodore served in the tent corps (*Evening News* 1918). That fall, she supported The American Committee for the Independence of Armenia, an endeavor also promoted by Navy Secretary Daniels (Balakian 2004: 312), and found creative ways to raise money for the Red Cross (Woods 1919). The War's end in December gave Mina a respite from the war-related volunteer work. She and Thomas both took it easy during their two-month stay at the winter estate in 1919. Some critical structural repairs, primarily to the water systems, were made after they left. In July Edison deeded the Florida estate to Mina (Smoot 2004: 330, fn32).

Shortly afterward, he went on his third all-male vagabond vacation, camping in the relatively tame upper reaches of New York, Vermont, and New Hampshire. A contemporary account gives detail: Chauffeurs, servants, a professional photographer, and a Cadillac touring car held the furniture with a Ford turned into a portable kitchen with plentiful food, tableware, glassware, forks, spoons, and knives; an oven and gas burners situated on the running boards; and a sliding shelf where Ford's Japanese chef could cook dinner (Barrus 1922: 354). This was a civilized camping trip. The men were exploring neither the "wild" wilderness that was a proving ground for manliness nor rugged terrain, like the isolated areas of the western parks, where women, in men's eyes, seemed to need protection, and few women adventurers made their way (Olds 1985; Gottlieb 1993: 285).

Mina, however, was traveling in the Rocky Mountains in the footsteps of spirited women adventurers like Mary Schaffer, Mary Adams, and Grace Seton-Thompson (Seton-Thompson 1900; Schaffer 1911). She left in July accompanied by her 21-year-old son Theodore. The two toured remote areas of the Canadian Rockies and explored Glacier National Park, a primitive spot with tracks, but no roads. They stayed in Park hotels, camped in separate tents, and slept between woolen sheets atop spruce boughs. Whether or not they had a guide, Theo and Mina were definitely



exploring a region perceived as masculine. Incorrectly perceived might be the better wording because Mina found British women renting vacation cottages in the park and met a number of women travelers (Edison 1919b). Still, these journeys could be seen as contesting space (wilderness) and calling into question traditional gendered behavior. It is clear from Mina's letters and her sister's letters that most women were traveling with fathers or husbands whereas Theodore, still in college, was Mina's companion (Mina Edison 1919a, b).

Daughter Madeline wrote, "Don't worry about anything and stay as long as you can. Don't cut your time short because you think you ought to be with Father" (Sloan 1919). Her oldest son, Charles, simply wrote that he loved her, that "having you away makes a far far bigger hole than you will ever let yourself believe. If I were to tell you...you would say I wasn't honest...Father is well and busy as ever" (Charles Edison 1919). However, when Mina received no letters from Edison and only one telegram, she began to think he was deliberately staying out of touch. Mina fretted, then worried, and finally wrote: "I am thinking of letting Theo return without me. I guess that would please you...have expected a letter at every stop...am trying to understand that I have had my day" (Mina Edison 1919a).

Clearly whatever had happened—mail delayed at the post office or letters left unwritten—it was not the end of their marriage. Mina had tended, nurtured, and coziered her husband until he did not remember how to hang up his own jacket or straighten a bed. She bought his clothes, ordered groceries, managed the servants, and remembered important events. She sent enough food to the lab that Edison could share it with his night workers (Millard 1990: 33). She was gracious when he gave his employees half a day off, but worked the day long on his 64th birthday (*Abilene Daily Reporter* 1911). Did Mina really think there were serious problems in the marriage or did the missing letters make her more aware that she would not always have her older husband, now in his seventies, standing behind her? Her father and Uncle Jacob, after all, died at age 60 (Hendrick 1925).

Every woman, widowed or not, needs some life of her own, some autonomy, a spot where her self-identity is not wrapped around a man. She needs social approval simply for herself alone. Are there hints in Mina Edison's use of space and her sense of place that she began to do more to create a singular self-identity, one that was more independent of Edison's dominating persona?

## Slipping Smoothly into the Public Domain: 1920–1931

Mina did modify her life. At Chautauqua, where her identity was her own, Mina made a series of changes that began with her own home and garden and flowed outward. First, she asked Ellen Biddle Shipman to redesign the Miller Cottage garden, planted trees, set out bird houses, and landscaped neighboring Miller Park. She took over the presidency of the Bird and Tree Club in 1921 and invited well-known environmental advocates to speak (Norton 1922). She became involved in

administrative work, joining her brother on Chautauqua's Board of Directors in 1922. Soon thereafter, she took her place on the Board of Directors for the Audubon Society (Baldwin 1995) and helped organize the John Burroughs Association, also becoming one of its directors (American Association for the Advancement of Science 1922).

Her work at the community level in New Jersey has not been thoroughly studied, but we do know that representing the New York Bird and Tree Club, she planted a white oak tree in 1921 in honor of Theodore Roosevelt's 62nd birthday—an event that started a nationwide trend (Nicholson 1922). In the late 1920s, she wrote letters and worked hard for passage of the prohibition amendment (Edison 1931). Because of the financial structure of Edison's enterprises, in these years Mina rarely had much money to contribute toward a cause, but she could give time and effort. She sent a phonograph, modest funds, and pairs of lovebirds to Berry College (O'Malley 2010, personal communication). More importantly, Mina helped them raise funds by arranging for Martha Berry to meet the Fords (Bryan 2002), worked with the Berry Pioneers, and escorted Sarah Delano Roosevelt on her first visit to the college campus (*Florence Morning News* 1933).

Mina showed a playful side when she christened gutsy Opal Kunz's airplane with a "flag-draped bottle of water" (*Newark Advocate* 1929; *Salt Lake Tribune* 1929). Two years later, her young friend formed a trained women's paramilitary air unit—the Betsy Ross Corps—for national defense and humanitarian relief (Douglas 2004: 282). One has to believe Mina admired Kunz, whose husband was active in the Bird and Tree Club, or she would not have christened Opal's airplane or invited the Kunzes to visit in Fort Myers. She also attended the annual fair in Fort Myers, a yearly stop for the Johnny J. Jones Exposition. Sometimes she saw a sideshow unusual enough to draw her husband out (Robinson 2010). Sometimes she went with a few friends, and sometimes she took many (Albion 2008).

That she was creating and promoting bird sanctuaries in three states (New Jersey, New York, and Florida) is clear—a passion her mother instilled in all her daughters. But Mina was also her father's daughter in spirit. She looked out for orphans and crippled children (Bryan 2002). She constantly worked to improve education through different venues and found practical ways to merge this with her love for gardening and nature conservancy. Mina supported the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs in their campaign to establish Royal Palm State Park both in spirit and financially (Vance 1986: 77, 88).

After speaking publicly to several large women's groups in the north during 1922 and noting the need for better movies at the Annual Meeting of the Recreation Congress (*New York Times* 1922), Mina agreed to speak before Fort Myers' clubs and in 1924 spoke to the Chamber of Commerce to promote her ideas about what the town needed (*Fort Myers Press* 1924). The talk was originally scheduled for the Women's Division, but many men also gathered to hear the talk. It was her first speech to a large, local, mixed-sex audience and thus a potentially unsympathetic one. Mina's topic was the need for urban parks and taxation to buy park lands. The talk was well received and the first of a series at the Recreation Board (*Fort Myers Tropical News* 1926) and the Civic League (*Fort Myers Tropical News* 1927).

In 1928 she spoke at 8 different meetings including the Civic Club, the Junior Women's Club, and the Florida State Beautification Committee (Albion 2008: 133). Mina gave more public talks every year (Albion 2008).

In 1921, Fort Myers possessed fewer amenities than Tampa, Sarasota, or Miami. The town was isolated without a bridge across the river or a road connecting the town with northern Florida. By 1921–1922 the city began to light a few streets and improve and expand road paving. The town needed to install a sewer system, improve sanitary conditions, and integrate the subdivisions rising up around it into a single municipality (Grismer 1984). Mina drew on her experience as President of the West Orange Improvement League, with beautification at Chautauqua, 30 years of committee work, and took a direct hand in Fort Myer's governance. She organized a Round Table which met at her home to discuss community beautification, sanitary conditions, roads, bridges, and other matters of mutual interest—birds, alligators, other animals, disaster relief, tree ordinance, Royal Hammock State Park, etc. (*Fort Myers Press* 1920; Coult 1929). Basically, these activities were part of the City Beautiful movement that was considered especially suitable for women because of the belief in their closeness to God's nature and its moral influence (Spencer-Wood 2003: 33–34). However, Mina convened an unusual group which included men and women from civic organizations that rarely met together—the Woman's Club, various Garden Clubs, Rotary Club, Civic Club, and Chamber of Commerce—as well as representatives from the town and county commissioners. She combined old-time natives with Florida newcomers (Carlton 1929). The collaboration was effective. Within six months of the 1928 meeting, the staff of the Everglades Nursery planted almost 7,000 trees on 67 streets (Grismer 1984: 237); within a year, civic organizations had cleaned the waterfront and vacant lots; neighbors had opened block gardens and built bird sanctuaries (Smoot 2004: 236–237).

Mina also began to open the estate grounds to unfamiliar men and women, inviting the Philadelphia Athletics baseball team—it was her husband's “largest party”—in 1927 as well as traveling carnival folk from the Johnny J. Exposition Company (Smoot 2004: 198). In 1928, she gave an open house during the opening celebration for the Tamiami Trail—a two-lane highway that crossed the Everglades from Fort Myers and Naples to Miami—in part because her husband was an honorary member of the official Celebration Committee, but also because she was involved with plans for its beautification. This was the first time the general public had a chance to see the gardens (Smoot 2004: 217–219).

Before the War, Mina had invited the boys attending the 1914–1915 winter term on Captiva Island of the Snyder Outdoor School for Boys to visit the estate; this was a small group of privileged children who learned to fish, sail, and hunt while prepping for college (Sargent 1921; Smoot 2004: 133). A decade later, in 1927, Mina also began to entertain the town's young people, hosting a picnic for Sunday School students and inviting high school botany students and black students from segregated schools to tour the grounds (*Fort Myers Press* 1931b; *Springfield Sunday Union* 1928; Smoot 2004: 201, 213). This was followed by a field trip for school-girls from Sarasota (*Fort Myers Tropical News* 1931) and another for local high school girls (*Fort Myers Press* 1931c). Mina was quite serious about girls' educations

as well as boys, proposing a prize for the brightest girl shortly after Edison offered one for the brightest boy (*Logansport Pharos-Tribune* 1930). She made a point to take the Girl Scouts to see a rookery (*Fort Myers Tropical News* 1929a). By opening the grounds to chaperoned groups of students, she had turned the winter estate into an intermittent educational setting rather than a full-time domestic retreat.

Mina also helped local charities organize creative, playful fund-raising events such as plane rides for \$2.00 in Harvey Firestone's airplane (*Fort Myer's Press* 1930a), an idea she may have gleaned from her friendship with Opal Kunz (*New York Times* 1930). She also used a tactic that had worked successfully in West Orange (Woods 1919): placing society wives in stores as clerks-for-a-day (*Fort Myers Press* 1930b). Next, Mina spoke to the men's Rotary Club at least once and possibly more on the need for fathers to take an active role in child rearing (*Fort Myers Press* 1931d). Whereas in 1912, she saw the estate as a private sanctuary where her husband, less obsessed with work, had more time for her (Edison 1912c), Mina now displayed house and garden, interior and exterior space, both of which showed her feminine touch. She had gained substantial political influence in the town and had effectively breached many of the gender boundaries that organized the two spheres.

Now, Mina met with James Crowell (1930) to talk about living with a genius (1930) and gave a candid interview to Marjory Stoneman Douglas (1929) for *McCalls*. She also gave two interviews to Martha Coman and Hugh Weir (1925a, b) for *Colliers* since Edison did not like the first interview and demanded a better, fresher article. She wrote about the Playground and Recreation Association (*Playground and Recreation Association of America* 1911–1930) for a local club, wrote an article that still resonates about the benefits of leisure for the NPRA's national journal, and sent letters to Congress on its behalf (Edison 1930). She appeared in *Popular Mechanics* in her domestic guise (Bache 1927). Mina spoke over the radio to promote homemakers to home-executives which stirred much discussion since men were not sure what she meant (*Daily News Standard* 1930; *Salt Lake City Tribune* 1930).

The term “home-executives” was appropriate, however, for women like Mina whose homes held their offices and also served as meeting places (Christensen 2008). It was also a wise move too because anyone who attended her meetings had the privilege of seeing her tropical garden and acquired social prestige in the community. Thus, while she met with all sixteen Fort Myers' garden clubs on a yearly basis, she reserved her home for the Executive Board, the leaders of each club, at an annual meeting, and occasionally invited others for tea on her veranda (Smoot 2004).

The breadth of Mina's community outreach in Florida extended through almost two dozen clubs and associations as well as her church circle. It cut across age, class, ethnic, and religious boundaries. Through her friendship with a black woman, hairdresser Ella Piper, and her own servants, Mina built a particularly close relationship with the black community (Smoot 2004: 157–185) which was thoroughly segregated and kept apart from other city neighborhoods through legal and informal mediums of social control (Solomon 2001; Albion 2008). She had far greater access to news at different levels of society—scientific, governmental, and national—than

any other Fort Myers resident. So, she would tell people what she knew and then listen to them tell her what they were doing, making suggestions or offering advice when it was appropriate. Mina had no fear of suggesting they write a letter to their legislators or even the President. She had been doing so for years.

## Redefining Garden Space: 1920–1931

Mina worked hard in 1928 and 1929 to beautify the grounds using funds Ford offered as compensation for the 1886 laboratory (Yentsch 2002). She decided the plain cement pool, next to the chicken house and run, was one setting that begged for refinement (Figs. 11.4 and 11.5). It became her first task. Mina converted the bathhouse into an inviting, intimate “tea house” with its own Moorish fountain (Fig. 11.6). New shrubbery blended it into the gardens. Between the pool and riverbank, Mina created a lily pond and filled it with red, blue, yellow, and white water lilies. Varieties of tropical night- and day-blooming species were also planted nearby (Nehrling 1929). A local reporter looked at the grounds and saw “a fairyland” (*Fort Myers Tropical News* 1929b).

With these steps, Mina domesticated the pool’s manly substructure and made its spot on the grounds an extension of interior space. Arts and Crafts adherents favored outside areas, especially ones partially sheltered from the sun and rain because they bridged the border between home and the natural environment. The lily pond



**Fig. 11.4** Swimmers in the utilitarian pool circa 1920 (Photograph courtesy of the Edison-Ford Winter Estates, Fort Myers, FL and the Thomas Edison National Historical Park)



**Fig. 11.5** Diving board at the utilitarian pool circa 1920 (Photograph courtesy of the Edison-Ford Winter Estates, Fort Myers, FL and the Thomas Edison National Historical Park)



**Fig. 11.6** Teahouse and shaded poolside circa 1930 (Photograph courtesy of the Edison-Ford Winter Estates, Fort Myers, FL and the Thomas Edison National Historical Park)





**Fig. 11.7** Edison's laboratory circa 1918 (Photograph courtesy of the Edison-Ford Winter Estates, Fort Myers, FL and the Thomas Edison National Historical Park)

mediated the intersection between the “wild” river and the estate grounds, as did the arbor by the dock (Fig. 11.10). She increased the gardens’ aesthetic ambience, on the advice of a noted landscape designer, by having her gardener plant decorative vines to wind around standing trees, even dead trees, while other trees and shrubs were added for artistic balance. Wide flower beds enhanced the entrance to the main house; circular beds ornamented several palms. Once the electric wires were hidden underground, a stark statement of Edison’s technological prowess vanished (Yentsch 2002).

Between 1912 and 1917, a path through the mangos became an airy tree garden hosting epiphytic plants—orchids, bromeliads, and dainty ferns. When Dr. Nehrling began working at the estate in 1928, he securely wired these to tree trunks and branches. Although the initial gifts came from botanists and horticulturalists, word of her passion for orchids spread, and gifts came in from across the world (Thulesius 1997). Tropical botanist Walter Buswell (*Fort Myers Timely Topics* 1930) took a good, long look at the gardens and decided they held the most representative collection of tropical species in the area: “The public has no idea of the extent of the tropical plantings...palms, trees, flowers, shrubs, and vines...many rare orchids.”

The pièce de résistance in the renewed garden was the moonlight garden. These fall among tropical pleasures, especially when filled with drifts of fragrant night-blooming plants. According to Ogden (1998), their foliage and pale flowers emerge from the darkness in a special way. Mina’s garden, begun once the lab as shown in Fig. 11.7 was dismantled in June 1928 (Fig. 11.8) and on its way to Michigan, expressed her affection for Edison. Her aim, her oft-stated intent, was to replace the

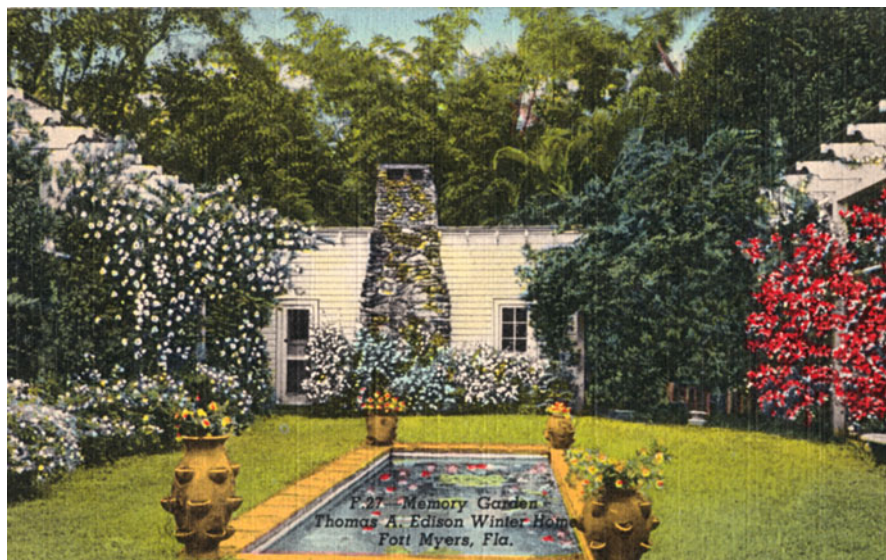


**Fig. 11.8** Workmen dismantle Edison's Florida laboratory for its move to Henry Ford's Greenfield Village museum. (Photograph courtesy of the Edison-Ford Winter Estates, Fort Myers, FL and the Thomas Edison National Historical Park)

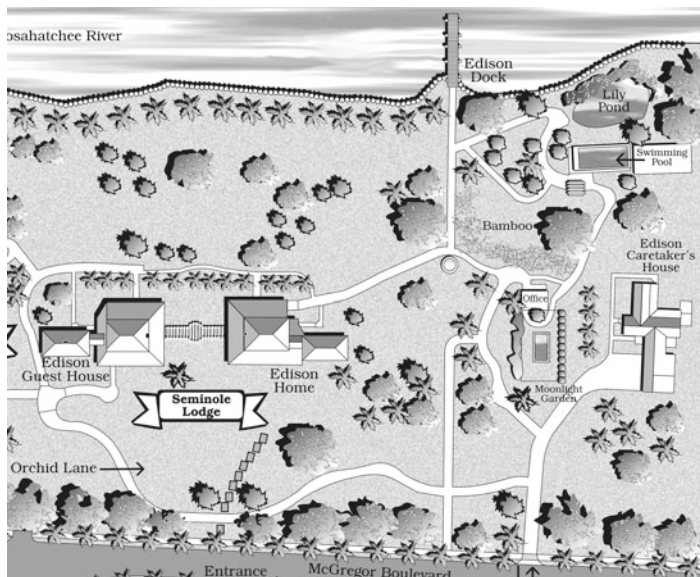
building and the foot of underlying soil—both now in Ford's museum—with a garden expressly for her husband (*Fort Myers News Press* 1936; Yentsch 2002).

When Mina asked Eleanor Biddle Shipman for assistance, Shipman, a woman's advocate, told Mina it was her belief that native plants belonged outside a walled garden, but that inside a woman could plant whatever her heart desired (Griswold and Weller 1991: 212). So, Mina filled the space where science and technology once ruled (as seen in Figs 11.3 and 11.7) with sensual, feminine, old-fashioned plants and a pool whose surface mirrored the night sky. The two women took a customary palette of blue, white, and yellow scented flowers and softened it with plants that blossomed in shades of pink. They did not use plants whose flowers were big and boldly colored (i.e., masculine). By and large, the varieties they chose were seen in flower borders in temperate regions and not ones acclimatized to South Florida (Dillon 1922: 138; Dorn and Douglas 1928; Kay and Kay 1933: 209). Hybrids that could stand Florida's heat did not exist in 1928 (Fig. 11.9). Mina's garden is perhaps most beautiful now, in its reconstruction, because over time hybrids have been developed. She struggled with it, and it gradually assumed a very different appearance than what she desired. What Mina did accomplish, however, was a successful conversion of the work areas of the 1886 grounds to decorative sites that a woman





**Fig. 11.9** Hand-painted postcard from a 1930s photograph showing the Moonlight Garden which replaced the laboratory seen in Figures 11.2 and 11.3. (Postcard from the author's collection)



**Fig. 11.10** Contemporary site map showing the Edison portion of the Edison-Ford estates in Fort Myers. Note the absence of formal symmetry shown in Figure 11.2 . Decorative elements added by Mina Miller Edison include the lily pond (*upper right*), the swimming pool additions (*below the lily pond*), the moonlight garden (*lower right*) and a sinuous path close to McGregor Blvd that wove its way through trees hung with orchids. (Photograph courtesy of the Edison-Ford Winter Estates, Fort Myers, FL and the Thomas Edison National Historical Park)

would enjoy (Figs. 11.2 and 11.10). They no longer expressed Edison's work ethic; they expressed her beliefs yet still kept their wild ambience (Ludwig 1928). Marjorie Stoneman Douglass (1929), recognizing Mina's "ownership" of the gardens, concluded, "It is as if...the green, shadowy estate behind the long picket fence were a projection of Mrs. Edison's personality."

## Benevolence, Conservancy, and Honor

After Edison's death in late 1931, Mina was not sure she could return to Fort Myers in 1932. She was grieving deeply and did not want to mar enjoyable memories by adding sorrow. So, in remembrance of Edison's birthday, she sent flowers to all patients in the Fort Meyers Hospital and those under home care (*Fort Myers News-Press* 1932a). Then, she got her sister and Edison's cousin Edith together, ventured south, and convened the Ladies Guild to discuss opposition to billboards, nature education, scarcity of local birds, and protection of Seminole lands in the Everglades (*Fort Myers News-Press* 1932c). She continued to speak at local meetings where she had spoken earlier; her message was consistent: beautify the community, encourage temperance, improve education, and save birds. Mina became deeply involved with local schools and spoke to a number of different classes touching upon nature and birds. Over the years, the estate had become an excellent field laboratory for bird study where one could observe robins, jays, cardinals, flickers, white heron, blue heron, bluebirds, blackbirds, mocking birds, flycatchers, solemn pelicans, sandpipers, and different species of wild ducks (*Springfield Sunday Union* 1928). That summer, Mina sponsored summer bird classes at the estate for 80 schoolchildren (*Fort Myers News-Press* 1932b).

Mina took to heart John Kunkel Small's (1929) argument for preserving Florida's ecosystem and focused her efforts on environmental preservation in the 1930s. While we do not know precisely how she proceeded with the campaign to preserve the beauty and uniqueness of Southwest Florida, information in her clipping books and newspapers shows a number of trips to different island and coastal areas. Some were to places she had visited earlier with Edison. Whereas he had seen spots ripe for commercial development (*Fort Myers Press* 1925), she saw bird havens and places of beauty in need of protection. In 1935, the *Fort Myers News-Press* gave Mina credit for saving the mangrove islands above Pine Island in San Carlos Bay.

The woman I found as I worked my way through a set of "domestic" documents—ones rarely used by male historians—was not only formidable but well educated, graceful, with a strong sense of self. She presented herself as helpmate to her spouse—as all good wives did in that era—yet, she clearly came to have a life of her own. It did not reflect Edison's values; it accorded well with those of the Miller family and bespoke Chautauqua teachings. It was not as apparent in the early years of her marriage as it became in midlife.

As Mina moved outward into the community, she found herself in places where progressive women could influence civic affairs. Certainly she was not the first nor

the most noted among Florida's early women activists (e.g., Julia Allen Hanson, May Mann Jennings, Mary Barr Munroe, Marjorie Stoneman Douglas, Ruth Bryan Owen Rohde) who gained both authority and group recognition. These women too possessed enough prestige within women's organizations that their authority bled over; they had the power to act effectively and influence political outcomes at state and local levels. Mina, however, was one of the few who came to play on a national stage, campaigning for President Hoover (*Salt Lake City Tribune* 1928; *Springfield Daily Republican* 1928), involved with the effort to establish a national Department of Education (Fess 1921), working with members of the National American Suffrage Association (1928), speaking on national radio (*Chester Times* 1932), and sometimes crisscrossing the country to speak to various women's groups or at national conventions of her favorite organizations (*Evening Tribune* 1918; *Oakland Tribune* 1940).

Gerda Lerner (1975) explained that the enforced marginality of women's social roles is among the reasons why their lives are often overlooked. This is especially true for many wives of famous men. The problem is one of seeing, of context (Scott 1984), and, among some researchers, of ignored and unread texts. Society assumes—less so now—that mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters are quite happy to bask in a man's brilliance. The *Fort Myers Press* (1931a) clearly stated that Mina was different and that she worked hard to improve their city.

## Inviting the Public onto the Estate: 1935

More Florida tourists came as far south as Fort Myers during the later 1920s, and they all wanted to see the home of Thomas Edison and catch a glimpse of the wizard himself (*Springfield Union* 1928). The Edison caretaker happily offered informal tours of the grounds. Mina did not like this. The Edisons hired a gatekeeper, strung barbed wire atop their fence, and planted a tall hedge. The public, which sometimes stood three deep, complained it was hard to see inside (Douglas 1929: 22; *Federal Writers Project* 1939). Technology and society had changed dramatically from 1886 to 1887 when men and women unfamiliar with electricity believed Edison had magical capabilities and kept as far away as they could, requesting different hotel rooms and refusing to unload his boat (*Evening Gazette* 1887; *Janesville Daily Press* 1887). But the public's need was not Mina's need, and she saw no reason to let them enter the grounds (Yentsch 2002).

Yet, garden clubs raised money by opening their members' gardens for a fee. In some communities, including Fort Myers, more formal institutions co-opted this approach. As her local church offered garden tours, Mina unlocked the privacy of her own estate and welcomed visitors. In the early 1930s, the tours were a local event, but as word spread that the Edison garden had been opened, other Floridians came too. The 1935 and 1936 tours brought several hundred visitors in easy driving distance. In 1937, 400 toured the grounds, while Sarasota sent a special bus of garden devotees. In 1938, hundreds of people from across the state went through the garden. The last tour schedule on file is for 1942; their end was possibly a casualty of gas rationing and World War II (Yentsch 2002).

Mina made well-organized lists of what to exhibit and provided botanical guides, willing and able to answer questions or provide information about virtually every plant (*Fort Myers News Press* 1936). Initially, she highlighted the exotic plants: the African Fetish tree with its almost phallic fruit, the African Tulip tree with its scarlet bell-shaped blossoms, the Australian Bottlebrush tree with its brilliant red flowers, the lavender-blue flowered Golden Dewdrop with its showy orange-yellow fruit, and the finger-nail orchids on the mango trees. The Moonlight Memory Garden was simply there to be seen or not (Yentsch 2002).

However, visitors came with different ideas. A Midwestern journalist wrote that what pleased him most was standing on the same piece of ground where the 1886 laboratory had stood. He stood there and mentally recounted the inventions Edison worked on at the old workshop. Clearly, the spot served as a metonym for advances in technology. Over the years between World War II and the twenty-first century, the Memory Garden lost its flowery feminine air; overgrown trees and a bust of Charles Edison dominated the space. No one saw it in the moonlight. Anyone could see it during daylight hours if they paid the price of admission because Mina had made the whole estate—houses, gardens, labs, and all—public when she transferred ownership to the city of Fort Myers for use as a botanic garden (*Landmark* 1947).

## Women's Power and Prestige

This chapter points out how little is known about Mina Miller Edison in contrast with the research on her husband's life, inventions, and ideas. Accounts of the Florida years understandably have difficulty separating events in the life of one Edison from the other and treat the two individuals as a unity (Thulesius 1997, Smoot 2004; Albion 2008). Biographies by John Venable (1978, 1981), Neil Baldwin (1995); Paul Israel (1998, 2001), and Raymond Stross (2007) depict Mina in some depth as a wife and mother, but do not adequately convey her as a well-rounded individual with satisfying interests and civic responsibilities outside the home. Earlier biographies reveal their era and their male bias by a lack of sensitivity to her place in Edison's life and in their assumption that she held a minor, supporting role, one they easily dismissed.

Until recently the trend among male-focused histories and archaeologies has been to overlook or minimize women's contributions to the accumulation of wealth, landscape design, the Playground Movement, political activism, civic governance, municipal housekeeping, town planning, the City Beautiful Movement, early conservation activism, preservation of the environment, etc. (Spencer-Wood 1994a, b, 2003, Freeman 2002, Merchant 1985, 2010, Yentsch 2009, 2011). The dominant paradigm for studying power relationships has revolved around "power over" rather than "power with" of women's social agency or "power despite" male domination (Spencer-Wood 1991: 275, 1999: 178–179, 2004: 249). Germaine Greer (2009: 1) suggests this happens because to take the wife into consideration displaces a great man's male admirers; it presents the possibility she "might have been closer than



they could ever be, understood him better than they ever could.” “At best,” she concludes, “a wife should be invisible.” Thus, Mina and many other women do not appear within conventional accounts. Men note women’s charitable work as simply that—a set of unspecific associations that denote a particularly valued spirit among their wives and mothers (e.g., the biographies of Edison by Baldwin, Israel and others cited earlier). Little attention is paid to precisely what women were doing, the goals or effects of their charities, and the methods women used to achieve their aims. This is among the reasons that Mina Miller Edison is still known primarily as a domestic spirit.

Another reason rests in the power of myth making. Edison was a superb publicist (Stross 2007). He benefited in various ways well beyond the scope of this chapter when Mina was presented as a wonderful helpmeet and nurturing wife to a hard-working inventor with little thought for anything beyond what he could invent next. Mina also had an acute sense of her own strength and power within the home, and she stressed these. The well-known women journalists who wrote articles about her were both formidable and related to powerful newsmen—Nixola Greeley Smith, Marjorie Stoneman Douglas, and Ann Swinton—and one suspects they wrote precisely what they wanted to say. They were sensitive to women’s values, goals, and strengths, and within their articles, one catches glimpses of a remarkable, complex woman (Douglas 1929; Swinton 1915).

Women had three ways to influence the political direction of local, state, and national governance. Some campaigned for suffrage; some worked to influence influential men; and some actively tried to shape bureaucratic policies on women and girls as well as topics of special interest (Freeman 2002; Spencer-Wood 1991: 239–241, 2003: 52). Although Edison came out for suffrage in 1912, he opposed the methods used by militant English suffragettes (*Lowell Sun* 1913b) and, in an ethnocentric outburst, gave his opinion that American women had as much intelligence as male Slavic immigrants who could vote after naturalization (*Syracuse Herald* 1913b). So he thought, why not women. Mina left the campaigning to others, discussed the topic at women’s luncheons (Swinton 1915), and entertained well-known suffragettes and feminists like Catherine Seton Thompson in her home (Seton-Thompson 1916). Primarily, she concentrated on reforming the cultural codes that constrained the quality of life for women and children. This can be seen in the cagey reasons, based on need, access, and space, she gave for which women should vote: (1) a woman with property; (2) a woman who works in education or for the government to prevent salary discrimination; (3) a woman who wants reform, but has no political influence; and (4) a woman who wants to improve the living conditions and quality of life for herself and her family and finds she is helpless to do so (*Indianapolis Star* 1912).

In Mina’s era, political action revolved around social places where men talked with one another and bonded with each other in familiar, social milieus—barber shops, corner bars, workshops, polling places, and at meetings of Boards of Directors. These were sites of contention where the different interests of the wealthy, middle class, and working class intersected. Respectable women were not seen in the first three locales and very rarely in the fourth. Women lived in small, feminine,

social microworlds made up of the church, women's clubs, charities, and, of course, home. Meetings within these worlds had clear borders and did not put women's respectability at risk. This was Mina's starting point.

Freeman (2002) concludes that women did not enter politics as a group, but rather slipped in the doors and filtered through politically based organizations. Through this chapter, one can see Mina doing precisely that without, apparently, appearing resistant to men's power. As she did, she tested the boundaries for women in public space, in an ever-widening spiral. Freeman also notes that some women encouraged others to follow and showed them ways to do so. Here too we see Mina at work.

We do not perceive Mina Miller Edison as a woman with political power because of overarching American myths. Myths serve a purpose—and they survive because they fit society's values and expectations. People want to believe in them, and eventually, they become part of common knowledge, accepted and uncontested. Since Mina was presented as a caring woman, highly sympathetic to Edison's needs, she was readily awarded the respect society gave wives and mothers. Independent women with their own intellectual interests were seen as women who were resistant to masculine power (Simmons 1989: 166–167). These stereotypes were viewed as diametric as much as biologic male/female or private/public spheres were considered antithetic. Within Victorian myths that depended on binary logic, one could not be both (Rosaldo 1980). In reality a wife or mother could have interests of her own; independent women retained the capacity to nurture. Mina called attention to this contradictory view of women's behavior in words reminiscent of Antoinette Blackwell's (1875) warning that mothers who concentrate all their effort in the home create places where everyone suffers: "It is those of us who go out and strive while others are sitting cozily at home, who are doing the world's work" (*Billings Gazette* 1929).

Beginning in the 1920s, Mina took the opportunities she found to gain public influence and prestige, overcoming the fact that these were normally a male privilege. The uses she turned them to, however, were those dear to her heart. Her public self grew and matured; she eventually stood among the more revered women in the nation. Mina Miller Edison began married life in Fort Myers not even 'owning' her own kitchen, but eventually gained control of and reordered the estate's riverside landscape to suit her needs. She left a record of her identity that can be read in both social reform movements and material remains.

Men are often seen as commanding public space, but Spencer-Wood's (1996: 427, 2003: 28, 2005) research has shown that women and their organizations also created establishments and public green spaces that made visible imprints on urban landscapes. Mina's archaeological imprint would extend far beyond the confines of the Edison estate. If we were to take a map of Fort Myers and identify the route of the 1930s garden tours, her church, parks, neighborhood gardens, backyards, schools, church, and streets, and then look at the other areas in Florida where her conservancy work had some influence, the archaeological imprint would be huge, but incomplete. She helped arrange for the lighting on the peace monuments along the Hudson River Parkway, a scenic preservation project first begun by Women's Clubs of New Jersey (New York Legislative Documents 1922). She helped

West Orange get cleaner streets, better sanitation, and more schools. She greatly influenced the landscape at Chautauqua. Often one hears that we need to study more what ordinary people did and less about elites. Basically this is a sound approach, but it is also good to take a macroscopic view now and then to consider how wide reaching, how deep into the public sphere a woman's influence could reach when it breached the traditional limits of the two spheres.

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# Chapter 12

## Ethical Practice and Material Ethics: Domestic Technology and Swedish Modernity in the Early Twentieth Century, Exemplified from the Life of Hanna Rydh

Elisabeth Arwill-Nordbladh

### Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss questions about materiality: how different material phenomena can be involved in an ethical, or more precisely, feminist process concerning public interventions in the material construction of the family, home and household and their related contexts during the last century. A background is Suzanne Spencer-Wood's (1996: 407) definition of material feminism as a theoretical approach focussing on material culture not just as a product of behaviour but also as an active social agent used by feminists to symbolise and implement their transformations of culture by combining the supposedly separate domestic and public spheres in order to raise women's status. Reform women gave new meanings to material culture that they used as social agents to change gender ideology, identities, roles and practice. The theoretical approach also relies on discussions concerning ethical practice and ethical materiality as it is highlighted by Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman (2008a, b) in their anthology *Material Feminisms*. Materiality is understood in this chapter as something physical in a broad sense, including domestic animals and the human body. Special attention will be paid to material phenomena as an active and significant factor with a historicity, a force and a value of its own, *material agency*.

Based on the life of the archaeologist and feminist Hanna Rydh (1891–1964), I will present three different Swedish examples involving public alterations of domestic materiality, which can be placed at different scales of social structure. These include

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cases on a family, farm and household level, on a community level such as a village, municipality or town and finally on a large national-state level. Dolores Hayden (1981) defined domestic reformers as material feminists because of their use of material culture, whether architectural spaces and/or artefacts, to raise the status of women's domestic labour by rationalising it in the home and socialising it into public cooperative housekeeping enterprises, from childcare to public kitchens. In many ways, such an attribution suits Hanna Rydh. Among her many emancipating projects, three examples are shown here: she first developed public funds to increase poor farm women's household production, followed by municipal cooperative laundries and, finally, being engaged in a government delegation on domestic issues, she took part in developing scientific methods to rationalise various domestic tasks. Public-sphere men's industrial technology was used to rationalise and mechanise housework in these last two reform movements, which were earlier implemented in the USA (Spencer-Wood 1991: 250–255, 259, 1999a: 180, 183–184, 2004). This chapter reveals that in Sweden, the application of Taylor's industrial technology to increase the efficiency of housework was inspired by its previous use in the USA.

The methodological approach is that of a scientific biography. With such an approach, the life of an individual makes abstract concepts concrete, and variables like discourse, gender, class, nationality, regionality, geographic mobility, profession, family affiliation and individual character are given substance and colour. A biographical approach also allows an intersectional analysis of such variables and a discussion of relations between structure and the individual. To summarise, a biographical approach makes it possible to write a concrete person-based study around historically and culturally situated practices, where also the individual's life choice is involved in an interpretative discussion.

From the perspective of ethical theory, in this case feminism, the discussion is intended to show how the practices connected to the three examples had various material and ethical consequences in relation to women's emancipation. It underlines the opinion that feminism is historically situated, intersectionally sensitive, contested and not uniform. From the perspective of modernity, the discussion implies that modernity has an ambiguous character, affecting individuals differently in relation to different scales of social complexity.

## **Some Theoretical Remarks: Materiality, Agency and Feminist Perspective**

In recent years, discussions about practice and agency have increasingly attracted attention, both within archaeology and more widely within scientific community. Social philosophers such as Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens have examined social and human experience from a structure–agency perspective and thereby emphasised the two-way direction between practice and agency (Sewell 1992). A closely connected topic is that of the object or thing. Within structure–agency discussions, it is usually pointed out that the object which is both the prerequisite and the means for material agency should not be perceived as a passive reflection of the action but can possess an

active position of its own, as pointed out by Spencer-Wood (1996: 407) in historical archaeology. Through engagements and interactions between man and object, the material things can be understood as *secondary agents* in the terminology of Alfred Gell (1998: 36) or as *actants* in the meaning of Bruno Latour (2005: 54–55). Such an approach confers on tangible objects a value of its own and provides objects a self-acting position in social dynamics. This approach can be elaborated even further, as it is done, for example, by Karen Barad (2003), for whom matter is given an even stronger position in the actor–object relation. According to Barad, the acting human cooperates in her discursive practice with the object, or rather the material phenomenon or *apparatus*. Barad stresses the material phenomena’s equivalent position in the dynamic relationship between actor and object by understanding the two-sided effect in the actor–object relation. The material objects’ or rather the material phenomena’s inclination to be active in the real world is called *agential realism* by Barad. The logical consequence of such an approach leads to a completely new ontology, far different from the Cartesian dualism where all humans possess a privileged position in relation to matter. Barad and others here develop a post-humanist ontology. In this chapter, I will try to approach such understandings, where material things or rather material phenomena emit agency in the equivalent reciprocal sense, but without going so far as joining a post-humanist perspective.

In addition to the inspiration from Spencer-Wood’s and Barad’s view on the active position of matter, I have also been influenced by ideas on materiality developed by Alaimo and Hekman (2008b). These authors explore discussions about materiality from a feminist perspective which includes ethical dimensions. Therefore, feminist applications can be discussed from a perspective of *ethical practices*, which also will involve *ethical consequences*. Thereby it is inevitable to highlight the connection to material phenomena. As practices can emerge from material realities, practices can also be materially defined. Practices will also lead to material consequences. Alaimo and Hekman label this field *material ethic* (2008b: 7–8).

In the interplay between ethical theory and ethical practice, Alaimo and Hekman underline that the material phenomena of practices are situated in time and place. “Practices are, by nature, *embodied* situated actions [emphasis added]”. Since Hanna Rydh through her life was driven by a feminist pathos and since she was an irrepressibly action- and result-focused woman, it might be illuminating to enter a discussion of material ethics from some of her feminist projects.

## Hanna Rydh, a Short Presentation

When Hanna Rydh was born in the last decade of the nineteenth century, Sweden was in a process of modernisation. There was a shift from a society primarily based on farming with a demographic focus on the countryside towards a state with industries and a more urban-based population. There were still big differences between social classes and regions both in access to wealth and influence and in lifestyles.

Hanna was born in a wealthy Stockholm family. Her father, a successful engineer, had founded a family business within the electric heating branch. Her mother

had been a teacher before marriage. Already as a schoolgirl, Hanna was interested in social issues. As a grown-up, she was attached to the liberal feminist movement. By that time, the demands were primarily focused to the right to vote, the right to equal education, the right to work and to take part in general matters of citizenship on equal conditions to men. The franchise was achieved 1919, and the other claims were gradually fulfilled in an ongoing process but are, as we know, still not yet fully achieved. During her life, Hanna Rydh turned her interest into various emancipating projects, and as early as in 1927 (Rydh 1927: 11), she used the word “feminist” to characterise herself (Arwill-Nordbladh 1998).

In 1919, as the first woman within her discipline in Sweden, Hanna achieved a doctor's degree in archaeology. As a female archaeologist, navigating within a masculine-oriented discipline, Hanna was together with her colleagues engaged in projects which developed archaeology towards a modern, scientific, scholarly subject (Arwill-Nordbladh 2005). However, she also took the opportunity to do research which differed from the mainstream scholarship and was more in line with her feminist interest such as her book *Kvinnan i Nordens forntid* [Woman in the Ancient North] (Rydh 1926a). In these texts, she presented an image of prehistoric women as independent, active and able, taking care of family, home and household. The importance she attributed to the archaeological knowledge in these matters is shown by a statement from the 1940s. In a speech on the contemporary social conditions of women, she stated that “If you want to work with scientific care on these issues, you must go as far back in time as the research might possibly guide you” (Rydh 1942b). This means that she believed it was important to include the historicity of a problem when addressing it.

Hanna combined her archaeological work with family life when she married a colleague. However, after only five years of marriage her husband died, and in 1924, at the age of 33, Hanna was a widow with two small sons.

Historiographically, it is possible to place Hanna Rydh within the modernistic discourse. Here she represented a specific version: she had an optimistic belief in the progress of society, with the personal development of the individual as one of the driving forces. But a democratic and well-functioning society was achievable only if there was equality between women and men, with the same access to education, right to work and possibilities to take part in political work. Education was here seen as crucial. In school and at university, through apprenticeship within a profession, in the domestic work through courses and handbooks and in classes and courses for political training, women should get the possibility to be equal citizens with the same rights and obligations as men.

Hanna's feminist approach can best be understood as a kind of gynocentric feminism, where she acknowledges differences between women and men and highlights female experiences and feminine values, especially those associated with family and home. However, that did not imply that women should be confined to a domestic sphere. In contrast to many other feminists of her time, she did not accept that the biological differences between women and men were crucial for differences in life-worlds. The inegalitarian relations were linked to social interpretations of biological differences, interpretations that were especially linked to the relations between

parents and children and rooted in the distant past (Rydh 1926b: 49). It would be possible to change an unequal society but not under conditions that forced women to renounce their feminine sphere and accommodate themselves to a male-designed society. The prime way to solve the problem was to change the social circumstances through information, education and by promoting political and technical reforms in favour of women and children. In these discussions, however, she does not propose that social change could be promoted by changes of the masculine norm, for example, by men sharing housework duties (Arwill-Nordbladh 1998: 165–168).

In this chapter, we meet Hanna Rydh in the 1930s and 1940s. By that time, her life had taken “an unexpected turn” (Rydh 1929). In 1929, she had remarried. Her husband, Mortimer Munck af Rosenschöld, was undersecretary of state at the Ministry of Education and Ecclesiastical Affairs. In 1931, he was appointed county governor in the counties of Jämtland–Härjedalen. By then, the family had grown with the birth of a daughter. In a small scale, Hanna could keep up with her archaeological projects, but as a county governess, she was mainly devoted to various regional cultural and social tasks (Lundström 2005).

The united counties of Jämtland–Härjedalen are situated in the middle of Sweden but are nevertheless counted as a part of the northern provinces. In the first half of the twentieth century, the regional economy was based on a combination of forestry, small-scale farming and cattle breeding where a specific kind of transhumance, the so-called *fäbodväsendet*, was prominent (Festin and Rydh 1948, Granberg 1948a; Granberg 1948b, Skuncke 1948).

The Saami people of the region mainly practised their traditional reindeer herding. Their lifestyle was based on the seasonal subsistence cycles of the reindeer according to well-adapted practices, but it was also segregated and controlled by strict rules by the national authorities (Granberg 1948c, Thomasson 1948, Lundmark 2002). Generally the population density was low, and villages and farms were scattered within long distances. Economically it was a low-income region. During the worldwide economic depression in 1929, the Swedish forestry industry was severely affected, and the hard times remained for several years. So far, the forestry industry had provided a small amount of cash for the families. Without this income, times were very harsh, and in remote villages, there could be sheer need. The new county governor and governess started their mission with many extensive travels in the vast county, and they soon learned about the prevailing poverty and need (Fig. 12.1).

## Feminist Practices

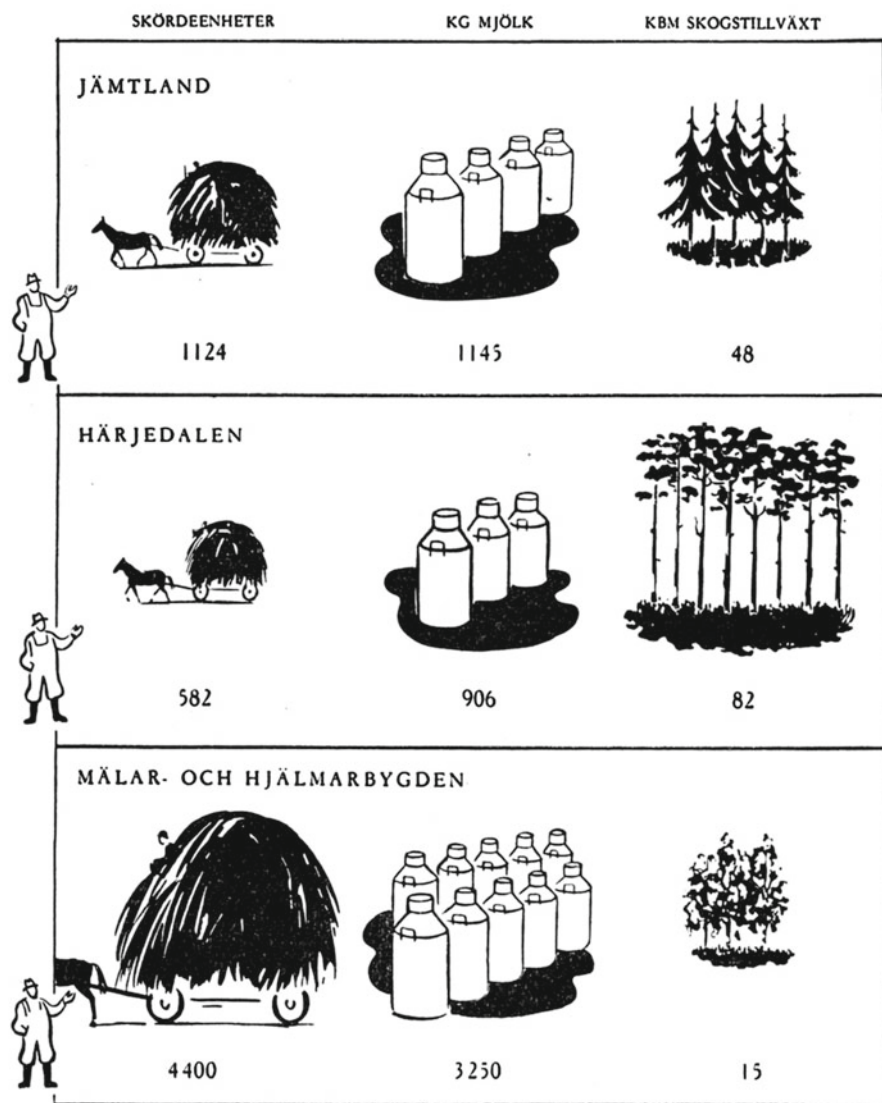
### *The Cow Fund*

With her result-focused mind, Hanna Rydh instantly started various social projects. One platform for such projects was the county district of the Red Cross. As county governor, Hanna’s husband was an obvious choice for president, and Hanna was



## JORDENS OCH SKOGENS ÅRLIGA PRODUKTION

*fördelad per person av jordbrukarebefolkningen*



**Fig. 12.1** In 1948, Hanna Rydh edited a popular book presenting the counties of Jämtland and Härjedalen in the north of Sweden. She was the co-author of an article discussing the regional subsistence. This table illustrates the yield from forest, field and cattle per year and capita in the northern regions of Jämtland and Härjedalen compared to the fertile regions in the Mälär and Hjälmär areas in the middle of Sweden. It is interesting to note that the table was published one year later than Figs. 12.8 and 12.9 in this chapter. Situated in another context, the official report of a governmental delegation, the two types represent widely different layout styles. (Jämtlands läns Hushållningssällskap 1945, p. 17) (Published by courtesy of Hushållningssällskapet i Jämtlands län)

elected vice president. She also soon became chairman for the association's Social Section, Section I, and in the minutes of a meeting in January 1933 can be read:

Since the Section in view of the general emergency felt obligated to take measures for alleviation of the worst consequences [of the distress], the District Board decided with gratitude to sanction the initiative taken by the Section. Section I was also commissioned to enter into the business as an independent body. Section chairman Dr. Hanna Rydh Munck af Rosenschöld gave account of the programme followed so far and the plans for the near future (FAJ 1933: Meeting Records of January 16, 1933. Jämtland-district of the Swedish Red Cross).

As an independent unit, the Social Section offered Hanna full freedom of movement to initiate and implement a range of social projects. The most original and one of the projects that lead to great practical significance for those receiving aid was "The County Governess Cow Fund" (Lundström 2001: 53–56, 2005: 73). Hanna Rydh got the inspiration from the Poor Relief Board in a small remote parish, who once bought a cow for a large family instead of giving support in the more traditional way. This procedure was considered to solve many problems for the settlers "who didn't want to receive poor relief but on the contrary strove with all their might to care for themselves, but for whom it was infinitely heavy to overcome the first difficult years as settlers" (Rydh in Svenska Röda Korset [the Swedish Red Cross] 1938, here quoted from Lundström 2001: 53).

As seen, it was initially stated that the aid was aimed at smallholders, settlers or crofters with many children, where income was short and not sufficient to buy the cattle needed. However, the farm was supposed to have enough pasture and winter fodder for a cow. For farms in the forest or mountain areas, this was generally not a problem since a specialised harvesting custom had been practised for generations, setting its marks on the landscape. The aid system had two variants, cows for loan and cows for instalment. The cows for loan would cost nothing, and the family only had to pay a small fee for insurance. Soon enough, many of those who had borrowed a cow wished to buy the cow by instalments. A small monthly sum was agreed on, usually 5–10 SEK depending on the cow's original purchase price. If the cow bore a calf, the calf would belong to the farm (Fig. 12.2).

There was a set procedure for obtaining a cow. The family, usually represented by the husband, made an application where the wish was motivated. In addition to this, a local "trusted" person such as the vicar, the district nurse or the like attached a letter of confirmation that the family was of good conduct and was able to care for the animal. The Red Cross sent money to this proxy, who was responsible for purchasing the cow. After that, the borrower signed a contract. The actual purchase of the cow was done with care, so one was sure she was a good dairy cow, preferably old enough that she was known to have produced healthy calves. On the contract, the cow was described by name, age and particular characteristics for identification. Each borrower also received a personal letter where the loan conditions were described. The correspondence surrounding forest worker A. L. Westerberg in Borgvattnet can serve as an example. On May 14, 1940, Westerberg writes to the Social Section and asks if he can borrow 250 SEK to buy a cow.



**Fig. 12.2** The Cow Fund distributed more than 300 cows in the regions of Jämtland and Härjedalen for more than 20 years, starting in the middle of the 1930s. This photo shows one of the first families who got a cow from the fund. The family lived in the northernmost part of Jämtland. The picture indicates a close relationship between human beings and animals, of all ages. Photographer unknown (Published by courtesy of Jämtlandsdistriktet av Röda Korset, Föreningsarkivet i Jämtlands län)

I currently have no cow, but as I have hay enough to feed a cow it would be highly advantageous if I could get one, especially as I have a rather large family to support, namely my mother-in-law, who takes care of the household and three children. Respectfully. A. L. Westerberg (FAJ 1915–1943: 11652 A1–3).

At the same time the local vicar O. Lindgren sends a letter where he assures that

Westerberg is a responsible man, who tries to provide for himself and his family, even though his health is not the best. Since he also has children, who would need strong nourishment, I would at the very warmest recommend him for obtaining the requested loan. He has arranged for buying a good cow, who is seven years old and finely developed, for which is requested 300 crowns. As he has 50 crowns of his own, he needs 250 to be able to buy the cow. It would really make me pleased, if he could borrow the requested 250 crowns (FAJ 1915–1943: 11652 A1–3).

Two days later, Westerberg receives an answer from Mrs. Ebba Johansson, the volunteer at the Social Section who administrated the Cow Fund.

By the conveyance of the Chaplain Lindgren we have received your application for a loan of 250 crowns for the purchase of a cow. Normally we can not grant such large loans, but now as we happened to have such a big sum available, it was possible. I will send the money to the Chaplain in addition to the contract, which you must sign. As you can see, you must pay instalments of 5 crowns every month, but you may pay in the end of the month. The loan is moreover completely interest-free. It is, however, most important, that you take care of the instalments, as we are depending thereon to extend new loans. If you don't pay duly, you will not be allowed to keep the cow. But I hope that everything will go well for you, and that you get a really good cow (FAJ 1915–1943: 11652 A1–3).

Already on May 18, the contract is signed, and the seven-year-old cow Blomma [flower], white with red dots, comes to the Westerberg family. On the contract, Ebba

Johansson has written later: “The loan fully paid the 4th of December 1944”. As we can see, it took four and a half years to pay off the cow. Since a cow can, with proper care, live up to 20 years (Israelsson 2005: 124), the family would probably have several more years together with Blomma and her calves.

Accordingly, the fund had two ways to maintain its economy. The first, as brought to the borrowers’ attention, was by repayments so the money could be circulated to others. The second, and perhaps more important since it made it possible to expand the scheme, was by fund-raising among the public. Hanna Rydh herself donated money to the first two cows (Lundström 2001: 53). She had won first prize in a table-setting contest organised by a popular lady’s magazine, and with that money, the Cow Fund was established. Also later, when she, for example, received honorarium for lectures or other events, she gave the payment to the fund. *The County Governess Cow* was followed by *Doctor Lundholm’s Cow* and *Doctor Westerlund’s Cow*, donated by two of the district’s doctors. Now the newspapers started to write about the project, and it soon became known nationwide. The ingenious move that the cows could be individualised and given a personal relationship to a sponsor or donor resulted in buzzed-about collection campaigns. Various places of work challenged each other, and *The Tempo Shop Assistant’s Cow*, *The HandelsBanken’s Cow* and *The Lady’s Magazine’s Cow* soon appeared.

The Cow Fund was most active during the 1930s and 1940s, but it did not close down until the early 1960s. By then, it had conveyed more than 300 cows (Lundström 2001: 56).

By tradition in Sweden, the prestigious horse, necessary for the forest industry and treated as a good working companion, was an important part of the masculine domain. The care of cows, sheep, goats and poultry, on the other hand, was part of the female sphere. In the areas of Northern Sweden, cattle breeding and the handling of dairy products were the most significant feature within the farming economy. The dairy products of the farm were often an important part of the food supply over the year. A good know-how and competence attached to this production was a way for women to earn social prestige and good reputation (Sommestad 1992: 29–34). To be deprived of this practice was also to be deprived of a possibility to distinguish oneself within the local community. Even if the families’ request for the loan often was made by the husband, the Cow Fund attracted attention to the world of women. It was made visible, important and interesting. As the care of cows was an important part of female identity (Kaarlenkaski 2009: 127), the daily tending could strengthen and affirm the individual’s self-image. It is well known that domestic cattle, in the mutual meeting with the keeper, can develop a deeply individualised interplay both with the human being and the rest of the flock. This would create strong emotional and supportive bonds between the human being and the animal (Børresen 1995: 109–112) in a relationship of mutual agency (Haraway 2008: 177; Birke 2009: 26–30; Kaarlenkaski 2009). Just as important, the farmers’ wife could provide for the family’s daily life with the nourishing milk and its products such as butter and cheese. If some surplus was at hand, these products could be sold, adding very needed cash to the household. All this probably gave women self-confidence and personal strength.

The Cow Fund was a personalised project that offered help to self-help and was tailored for the individual family. The surrounding local community which asserted social control provided a certain guarantee for successful managing. A document sample of more than 200 distributed cows shows that the instalments seem to have failed only in two cases (FAJ 1915–1943: 11652 A1–3). Given the input from the donors and sponsors—which even could be the staff of a major bank office—we here see a self-running economic system which existed side by side of the banking system. This system put into practice demonstrates a small-scale social project where the involved material phenomena have a female profile and highlight feminine values. It may be a coincidence, but from the very beginning, with the money won at the competition on how to arrange a beautiful dinner table, the Cow Fund had feminine connotations.

It is interesting to note that the project with the Cow Fund resembles of today's microfinancing: small loans to low-income people for self-employment projects in order to generate income to care for themselves and their families (<http://www.grameen-info.org/> 2010), of which there nowadays are several types. One pioneer example is the micro-loans or credits organised by the receiver of the Nobel Peace Prize of 2006, Muhammad Yunus. Another example is the international foundation Hand in Hand. Both organisations specifically want to promote women's entrepreneurship by supporting self-helping projects based on locally initiated ideas. Hand in Hand, with its combination of local small size enterprises and widespread geographic presence, integrates a more holistic approach by including, in addition to female job creation, support to education to eliminate child labour, health and hygiene awareness programmes, green environment programmes and Citizens' Centre programmes (<http://www.grameen-info.org/> 2010, <http://www.hihseed.org/> 2010).

## *The Laundry*

Hanna Rydh was deeply affected by women's hard working conditions. Particularly the women of the countryside within the farming economy had a heavy workload (Rydh 1939). The care and responsibility for the children, the household and processing of the farm's products filled the days (SOU 1947b: 49–56, Fig. 12.1). Hanna especially considered the washing of home textiles to be a heavy burden. Although the work was physically strenuous, it was supposed to be a female task even if men or young boys could participate in some stages (Fig. 12.3).

In the traditional peasant society, the procedures for washing the textiles of the household followed a specific rhythm. Two or three times a year, a whole week was devoted to laundry. The textiles, which were usually made from linen or wool, were placed in big tubs and left to soak for one or two days. After that, they were washed in water mixed with locally produced potash from birchwood and warmed by an open fire. This procedure included batting the cloth with wooden implements like washboards and batting rods, in order to get it clean. It usually took a full day and





**Fig. 12.3** Washing by the river in favourable weather. This scene at the Swedish countryside from the early twentieth century shows some typical traits linked to the washing practice: the joint work, the running water, various implements like tubs for soaking, kettles for boiling water and batting tools. The picture also shows the social dimension, with two elderly maids working hard at the waterfront. The women are dressed in their working clothes, and the man, dressed in his white summer hat, is paying a visit to a female working domain. Photo by Josua Walthén (Published by courtesy from the City Museum of Gothenburg)

required a lot of water. So far, the work was often done at the yard of the farm, and consequently much water had to be fetched. This was a heavy task. A yoke with two wooden buckets full of water could weigh as much as 60 kgs. The next step was to rinse the cloth. For this, so much water was needed that it was easier to bring the washing to a lake or a stream with running water. In general, the village or community had arranged public communal places for this task by building special wooden jetties or platforms, but sometimes the rinsing was done from rowboats. Rinsing, which once again included the batting practice, could be a risky and dangerous task, particularly during wintertime, when it often was done through holes in the ice. The ice might break, and the heavy fabric could be pulled away by streaming water. After rinsing, the wet and heavy cloth was brought back home to get dry. In the summertime, this was usually done outdoors, for instance, in the garden or in other suitable places (Fig. 12.4).

During winter, the laundry was dried indoors. It was common to arrange a spacious and airy empty room for this purpose, for example, in the attic or in a barn.





**Fig. 12.4** Temporary rooms were created in the garden when the lawn of the orchard was filled with swaying towels, spreading their characteristic scent of half-dry, clean textile. Often children could assist in these practical and innocuous tasks, as we can see in this photo from the 1920s. The clean laundry was also a symbolic flag of a neat and tidy home. Photographer unknown (Published by courtesy from the City Museum of Gothenburg)

Once dried, the cloth was ironed or mangled (Rosén 1993: 228–231). Despite the hard labour, washing still could be experienced as a joyful event since there were many elements which needed shared work. This was often combined with jokes and even moments of festivity (Olsson 1967: 158–159). By the washing tub or the rinsing jetty, people of different ages gathered with a common aim, promoting community feeling. The washing practices in cities and large towns followed the same pattern as described above, with one major difference. There the labour was often performed by professional washing maids who carried out this work for a living (Henriksson 2000). The domestic task of laundry was turned into a public occupation in this situation.

The many site-specific tasks that were involved with the long washing process also affected the understanding of the landscape, giving it additional meanings and connotations. The domestic work of washing was merged with various public spaces. Only a few washing sites of the old agrarian society are preserved today, but during recent years, the category has been acknowledged as part of the Scandinavian cultural heritage, and thereby some are now protected (Morger 1990: 9–10; Magnus 1990: 28). A few archaeological excavations have been performed on the site of washing jetties. As expected, due to the difficult preserving conditions, the outcome was sparse from the perspective of artefacts and specific features. Among the few artefacts that were found, the dominance of fishing equipment and caps and bottles for alcohol breweries and a few children's items, like a chewing gum, indicate that the place was used for varied purposes other than what was originally intended.



**Fig. 12.5** City washing by one of the canals in central Gothenburg at the end of the nineteenth century. The authorities of the city had constructed a wooden jetty, specially used for rinsing the laundry. In the city, much laundry was done by professional washing maids, and the different stages of the washing process were performed in public to a greater or lesser extent. The soaking and cleaning procedures were usually performed in the seclusion of the yards behind the impressive house facades, while the rinsing was done in the public room that the jetty constituted. Being in the centre of the city, the quality of the water was probably not the best. The picture is arranged by a professional photographer, and probably the women were instructed not to face the photographer who is not known (Published by courtesy from the City Museum of Gothenburg)

Moreover, the documentation of a rich amount of memory-keeping practices like place names, stories and lore, the mapping of a task-specific landscape and the conscious-raising attitude within archaeology give a valuable contribution to the field (Fig. 12.5) (Kjellström et al. 2010).

With the introduction of modern washing technology, the heavy, wet, cold, risky and time-consuming work could disappear. It was also in line with modernity's demands on an improved personal hygiene. One way to promote this was to arrange cooperative laundries. These public communal laundries were made possible by the invention of the laundry machine by American Shaker women for their planned cooperative laundries, which, along with Marxist workers' cooperatives in England, inspired Melusina Fay Peirce to organise the first women's urban community cooperative laundry in 1869 in Boston (Spencer-Wood 1987: 13–15, 1991: 255–256, 2004).

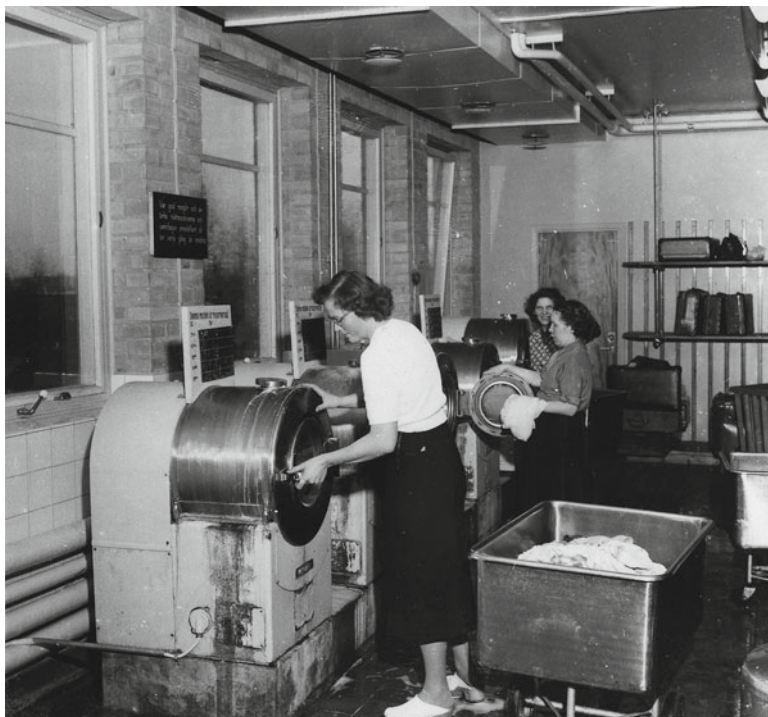
One of Hanna Rydh's many reform projects was to influence Swedish public opinion in favour of cooperative and communal laundries or washing houses. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Hanna's pocket diary informs us that she, while

travelling around the country for different purposes, also used the time to inform and advocate for the benefits of cooperative or communal laundries. When she in 1937 was elected president for the Fredrika Bremer Association, one of Sweden's most influential women's organisations, she brought this issue with her (Rydh 1939). By then, this topic was already on the agenda in society. The "hygiene issue" was a big question (Nordström 1938; Rydh 1939: 8), and the National Housewives' League, an organisation directed towards housekeeping, as indicated by the name, included the washing issue in their campaigns to ease the burdens for the housewives in the countryside (Hagberg 1986: 150–161). As a result of this and other lobbying, in 1939 the government granted a specific sum of money for trial projects for cooperative or community laundries in the country (Hagberg 1986: 160; Rosén 2008: 2). Cooperative laundries and their successful promotion by women's organisations exemplify women's "powers with" each other and their ability to use persuasive "powers with" men to gain their assistance (Spencer-Wood 1999b: 178–179, 2004: 156).

In the Swedish countryside, there had long been a male tradition of working together in joint projects like road maintenance, lake conservancy, building cooperative power stations and the like. Historian Ulla Rosén (1993: 238) proposes that these joint ownership associations have evolved from the shared work of the traditional village communities of earlier centuries such as haymaking. Now "[t]he cooperative laundry associations implied a new dimension as it primarily was directed towards women" (Rosén 1992: 30). In this way, the cooperative or communal enterprises with their organisational roots in the old tradition of local autonomy linked domestic reform and modern technology to local self-government.

To establish cooperative laundry rooms, it was necessary to have a sufficient number of interested people subscribing for shares to use the laundry. Approximately 200 stakeholders were appropriate. The laundries were of two kinds, the so-called self-managed laundries where the individual housewife did her own washing and the so-called handing-in laundries where staff took care of the work. For a successful outcome, it was important to get support from the local municipal politicians or other influential groups as negotiations and arrangements were needed in order to find a suitable piece of land for the construction near roads with water pipes and electricity installed. If the laundry was owned by the municipality, it was common to combine it with other projects for public benefit such as public baths or a fire station (Rosén 1992: 30). Once the idea of public cooperative laundries was established, it also spread to towns and cities, and in the middle of the century, it was generally included in one form or another, when new suburban areas were planned (Figs. 12.6 and 12.7).

These new practices needed new material phenomena. Hanna was active also with these matters. *Calor*, the electric heating company which Hanna's father had founded, produced not only electric systems but also machinery, equipment and systems for washing, sterilisation and disinfection. These products were designed for larger public institutions such as hospitals or the like, but they could easily be converted and adapted to the needs of a cooperative laundry. Since the Board of *Calor* consisted of Hanna



**Fig. 12.6** A cooperative laundry in the suburban area of Guldheden, Gothenburg, built in the late 1940s and early 1950s. A new female meeting point had been created, where the laundry was washed, dried and sorted. The new modern fabrics demanded other and faster washing programmes. Machines, timers and efficiency created a working environment where there was no place for children. The photographer from a daily newspaper is unknown (Published by courtesy from the City Museum of Gothenburg)

Rydh's brother, her cousin and Hanna herself, she had the best possible opportunities to target product development towards practical and efficient solutions for washing. As early as in 1935, Calor presented machines that were suitable for shared laundries, and recurrent advertising in the 1930s assured the public that the company could provide expertise information for the founding of community cooperative laundries. By the middle of the 1940s, according to the advertising, about 160 shared laundries had been established and equipped with Calor's products (Rosén 1992: 30). In addition to washing machines, such equipment could include spin dryers, hot table mangles and ironing presses (Calor 1942).

A glimpse of Hanna Rydh's active participation within these matters can be seen by a letter written to her by David Hummel, district doctor in Gäddede, a small municipality in the northernmost part of Jämtland. The local medical centre had just moved into a new building, and Hummel now wished to "send Dr Rydh warm





**Fig. 12.7** Women from a suburban area in Gothenburg, Sweden, are working together in a modern cooperative laundry. Every woman is taking care of the laundry of her own family. Photographer unknown. (Published by courtesy from the City Museum of Gothenburg)

thanks, for the great kindness in putting in a good word for us to Calor. Because of that we can afford to order both a washing machine and a spin-dryer. That will definitely save the personnel much hard work” (Hummel 1938).

With its complexity of chemical, physical, mechanical and social problems, the washing area belongs to one of the more interesting technical issues. Curiously, the field was however, as we suggested, long neglected if not despised by research. Recent years have brought a welcome shift in these regards. Through scientific explorations, all sides of the problem are intensely studied in order to reach better mechanical equipment, better detergents and more efficient ways to use them. Thereby objective research has stated, by extensive testing, that modern machine washing not only is more inexpensive and comfortable but also spares the clothes far more than the old hand-washing method (Calor 1942 no page number).

These lines can be read in a jubilee booklet which Calor published for its 40th anniversary. By pointing at the complex relations between society, economy and technique, the washing theme is lifted up to an interesting scientific problem. Consistently, Hanna Rydh tried to follow the meetings held by the *Society for washing technique*, an association which was supported by the *Royal Academy of Engineering Sciences*.

This group studied washing techniques in a scientific manner, and all sorts of washing technical matters were discussed in articles and courses. Laundry was turned from a devalued female domestic task into a public scientific field.

Hanna participated in the jubilee booklet with a short-signed article called “Calor in the service of society” (Rydh 1942a, no page numbers). Here she emphasises that over the years, the company always had felt a social responsibility regarding their products. From her earliest childhood, Hanna heard her father say that “the only task that caught his interest and the only construction that he wanted to introduce was that which filled a real need in society”. Rosén states that this socially dedicated profile was strengthened by Hanna Rydh’s presence in the board (Rosén 2008: 4).

Within research, there has been a discussion of the main driving forces in the social debate and the changes that led to an emerging technical development of housework. Was the relief of women’s workload a consequence of the labour market’s demands for a larger workforce or was it a result of social and humanitarian care to improve women’s standard of living (Hagberg 1986 *passim*)? Concerning Hanna Rydh’s contribution to Calor’s profile, the latter perspective seems to dominate (Rosén 2008: 4). In the jubilee booklet she says:

When the labor shortage appeared in the homes and also other reasons made the time ripe for the entrance of washing machines into the life of Swedish housewives, then Calor made a pioneering contribution by establishing a new division for communal and cooperative laundries. (Rydh 1942a no page number).

In these lines, Hanna relates the labour market shortage to the home and the domestic aid and not to the labour market within the industries, which was the general concern for the state level of society.

Hanna’s humanitarian perspective is clearly shown with the finishing lines in her article in the jubilee booklet. There she states:

Only she who has a living experience of what it means to get the burden of washing lifted from the women’s shoulders can appreciate the value of cooperative laundries. Only she, who has seen winter-washing by holes in the ice, only she who knows how overworked many farm workers’ wives are, can fully appreciate the joy to have been present at least in some respect, and seen the new beneficial activity grow. (Rydh 1942a no page number).

The “washing project” can be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, Hanna Rydh can be seen as an energetic and practical entrepreneur and spokeswoman for a technological revolution that would improve women’s condition. Her influential position within the women’s movement intersects with her influential position in an enterprise which developed technical and scientific methods on washing. This creates an efficient impact on liberating women from a heavy, time-consuming and sometimes dangerous domestic work. On the other hand, it could be seen as if she was lobbying in her own personal interest, so the family business would gain success. The dividing line between Hanna Rydh as a private person and as a representative of an influential women’s organisation could indeed be diffuse. This could be understood as a moral issue, and correspondence in the archives shows that she was aware of this delicate question (Langenheim 1941, 1946).



## *The Delegation for Home and Family Issues of the Population Commission of 1941*

After seven years in Jämtland, Hanna's husband retired and the family returned to Stockholm.

At that time, Sweden's demographic situation constituted a burning subject of debate. In 1934, Gunnar Myrdal, professor of political economy in cooperation with his wife Alva, published the book *Kris i befolkningsfrågan* (*Crisis in the Population Question*) where they claimed that the declining birth rate would have severe effects on society. This leads to two government commissions which investigated society's family politics and outlined social reforms about economy, residence, health care and general family politics. The second of these, "The Population Commission of 1941", attached a delegation of women as a subcommission, "*The Delegation for Home and Family Issues*". The delegation consisted of six members and one secretary, all of them authorities within the field as they were linked to women's issues by profession, association or politics. One of the members was Hanna Rydh.

The delegation worked systematically and thoroughly. Hanna Rydh's pocket diary shows that she spent many hours working hard with individual preparations, discussions and meetings. Over time, the delegation presented several official reports, and in 1947, they delivered two final reports: *Betänkande angående familjeliv och hemarbete* (*Official report on family life and home labour* (SOU 1947b)) and *Kollektiv tvätt. Betänkande med förslag att underlätta hushållens tvättarbete* (*Collective washing. Official report with proposals to facilitate the households' laundry work* (SOU 1947a)) covering 320 and 284 pages, respectively. The delegation stated that "In order to get the full effect from the measures [taken by the main investigation] it requires that the internal organization of the families functions in a satisfactory way" (SOU 1947b: 9). It was this "internal organization" which was to be studied. Three perspectives were chosen: the family as a centre for the coexistence between people, the family as a centre for consumption and the family as a centre for labour. The laundry issue was seen as such a big question that it required an investigation of its own (SOU 1947b: 13). The delegation's main focus was on matters of consumption and labour.

At the very beginning of the report on family life and home labour, it is stated that the foundation for family life is the heteronormative social order. "Family-raising is founded on the attraction a man and a woman feels for each other—erotically or well matched by temperament, general interests etc." (SOU 1947b: 14). It can, by the way, be noted that this heteronormative starting point was not based on religious ideas, as could have been expected, but that it was an entirely socially founded norm. As the home per definition was the centre for family life, the focus of the investigations was consequently turned to the housewives within the home-labour sphere even if the categories of unmarried young women, unmarried older women and married and employed women also were treated in special sections. There was a broad selection of themes for discussion. The Marriage Act; household economy; child-rearing based on modern psychological findings; investigations of various household tasks in relation to consumed time split between households in

the countryside, in towns and in cities; the cleaning of the house; cooking; care of clothes; and home craft are just a few of the chosen topics. The different themes were investigated thoroughly in order to identify problems and suggest solutions.

An important part of the delegation's work was to bring forth facts as the basis for their discussions and suggestions. In doing so, they used official statistics, surveys, opinion polls and market investigations and research "concerning the nature and functionality for products of consumption [... which had been illuminated] by the well equipped technical testing laboratories from the industries" (SOU 1947b: 238). But this was not sufficient, and the delegation needed more specialised and concrete information about, for example, cooking, household equipment, furniture and material for home use. The delegation also lacked "norms for the working methods within the homes" (SOU 1947b: 239). Thus, the delegation commissioned various experts to

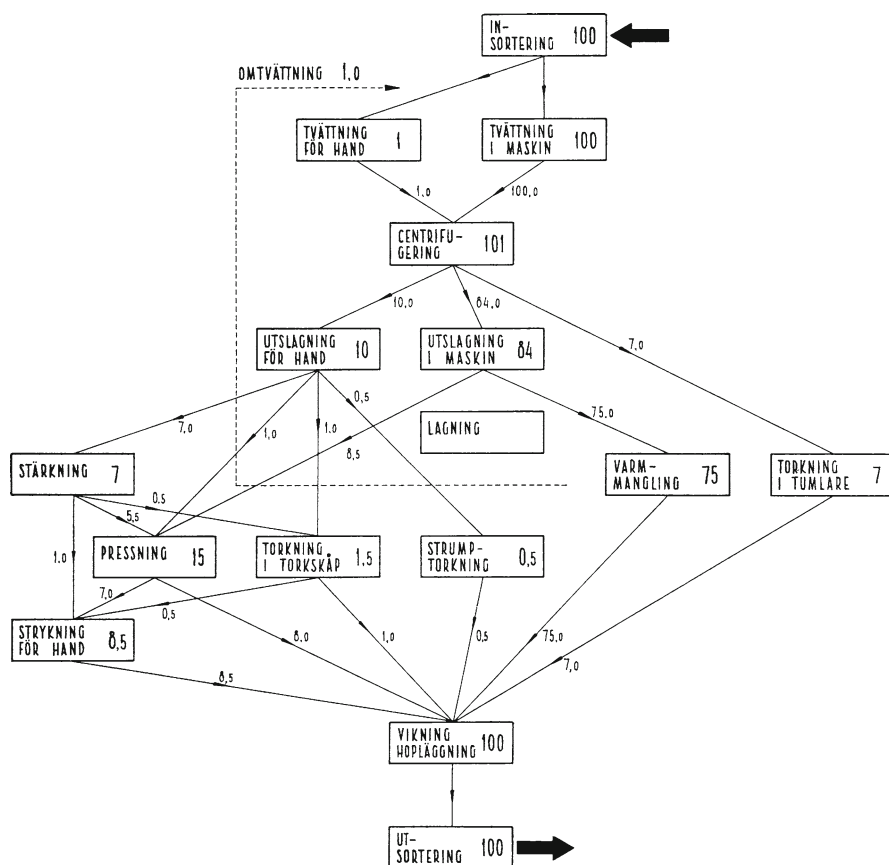
put forth a series of work studies of certain home labor such as cooking, child care, ironing etc. Within this expert group the methods for time and motion studies were initially directed by an engineer from the industry who was specialised in the study of work. The investigations continued with comparative studies of methods for various tasks [and] and functions regarding kitchen (SOU 1947b: 239).

The methods for analyses were borrowed from public industrial rationalisation. Methods used were primarily comparative studies of specific tasks by observing units that were possible to break down into measurable variables so they could provide empirical evidence. In that way, methods for domestic work would be clarified, domestic equipment would be improved and domestic affairs would be possible to rationalise (Åkerman 1994: 128).

Gradually the work, based on the needs of the delegation, was more formalised, and in 1944, a specific institute *Hemmens forskningsinstitut* (*The Household Research Centre*) was established. The main goal of the Household Research Centre was to rationalise home labour, where rationalisation was understood both as a labour- and time-saving project. Time, however, was privileged and was designated to be the major analytical concept when summarising the efforts. This can be exemplified by some mappings and a flow chart concerning the washing process in a cooperative laundry (Figs. 12.8 and 12.9).

Just as Hanna Rydh had lobbied for collective or cooperative laundries within her own information project, she and the delegation as a whole concluded that the most rational and efficient solution of the domestic washing problem from a social economic and labour-saving perspective would be collective laundries for self-managing or for handing-in washing (SOU 1947a: 203–209; Rosén 2008: 2). This conclusion was based on the Taylor-inspired studies like those shown on Figs. 12.8 and 12.9. The delegation recommended that the government would give an economic support to such enterprises.

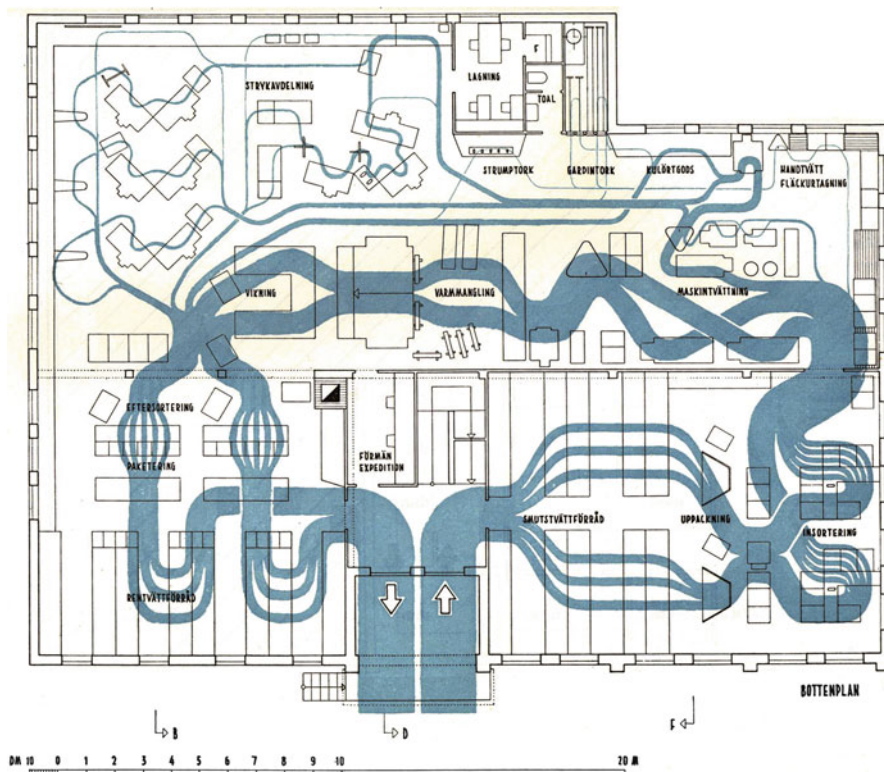
Another of the delegation's keenest recommendations was that the Household Research Centre would be permanent. If made permanent, its mission should be broadened to cover all areas of products for consumption. In addition, it should apply a consumers' perspective on every investigation (SOU 1947b: 239). The delegation provided a detailed plan for the structure and organisation, personnel, tasks,



**Fig. 12.8** Flow chart showing the whole process of the laundry, from arrival of the dirty items, preparing for rinsing, washing, ironing or pressing, starching, mending, folding and delivering of the clean products. All in all, 16 points were distinguished, where the old manufacturing was taken over by machines in a rational order. The chart was presented in the official report of the delegation within the population committee. Graph design by architect SAR Nils Halla. (SOU 1947a: 1: 69, Figure 26) (Published by courtesy of Maria Halla and Johan Halla)

facilities and funding. Even a group of architects had been consulted to plan the rooms in the most efficient way (SOU 1947b: 248–254, 315–316).

The Swedish idea of domestic rationalisation is explicitly shown by the Household Research Centre. Over time, there had been a modest but continuous influence primarily from the Home Efficiency Movement in the USA, which flourished in the decades around the First World War (Pursell 1985). With this movement, the scientific management ideas by Frederick W. Taylor were adapted to the domestic realm. Already in the early twentieth century, Scandinavian women took an interest in the rationalisation of domestic affairs (Hagberg 1986: 192–199). So, for example, there were more than 70 Swedish women participating in the fourth international congress for domestic education in Rome in 1927 where one major issue was the



**Fig. 12.9** Map of a collective laundry house showing the rational flow of the laundry through the whole washing procedure. The graph demonstrates variations of intensity—time and amount of items—for the various check points. The design provides visual connotations to the flow of water, so vital for the washing process. Graph design by architect SAR Nils Halla. (SOU 1947a: 1: plate 8b.) (Published by courtesy of Maria Halla and Johan Halla)

rationalisation of domestic tasks. One of the pioneers within the field, the American expert Mrs. Christine Frederick, presented a much appreciated lecture and demonstrated her labour-saving methods by showing a model of her own kitchen at the Applecroft Experiment Station (Rutherford 2003: 61, 134). This performance was described with enthusiasm by a Swedish lady's magazine. Another leading figure, Dr. Lillian Gilbreth (Pursell 1985: 8–10), was presented in the Swedish ladies' press at about the same time (Hagberg 1986: 192–193). During the following decade, the public scientific management movement and Frederick W. Taylor were occasionally brought into the discussion by representatives of various women's groups. Many creative suggestions were presented on how to make efficient rationalisations of domestic work, and Mrs. Frederick was explicitly referenced (Husmodersförbundets medlemsblad 1939; Kastman 1939). It was not, however, until the Household Research Centre was established that Taylorism was systematically brought into the domestic sphere (Hagberg 1986: 193–199).

It is evident that “The Delegation for Home and Family Issues” searched for inspiration from other countries. In a supplementary appendix, “*Domestic reform research abroad*” architect Ingegerd Waern Bugge (1947: 311) states that the leading country concerning domestic reform is the USA. Especially the American way to handle the laundry issue seems to have fascinated the delegates, in a combination of admiration and scepticism. So, for example, the delegation writes, “The U.S.A is usually presented as the country where practically no washing problem exists. Either the laundry is handed in to a company or it is washed at home in the kitchen or the basement a few hours every week” (SOU 1947a: 224). This can be compared with Christine Frederick’s ideal laundry, with washing machine and mangle, that was in her basement (Spencer-Wood 1999a: 183–4). The delegation even mentions with interest a practical solution to the recurrent washing problem of baby’s napkins.

The American laundries are much more service minded than the Swedish ones. And from an economic perspective, the service seems to be more rationally organised. An interesting detail from this point of view is the possibility to rent babies’ diapers which is arranged in New York and its neighbourhood by “The General Diaper Service”. Twice a week, the customers are visited “when 20 clean washed diapers are changed for 20 dirty ones”. Buckets to keep the used napkins are borrowed from the company. According to our information, 50 cars are used, and altogether 140 people are employed (SOU 1947a: 244–245).

However, the delegation also shows a somewhat ambiguous attitude towards the American examples. This is, for instance, visible when the delegation quotes Alva Myrdal who in 1939 shared her experiences from a visit to the USA with the readers of a lady’s magazine. There she says about the American housewife:

In Monday morning she washes the week’s harvest of sheets, towels, the husband’s seven shirts – one for each day – the children’s clothes, her own domestic costumes. She uses, however, a washing machine. For approximately 200–300 crowns, which roughly equates to the monthly pay for a first class domestic maid, she can buy a washing machine that is so neat, that it can be placed in the kitchen. Then she can perform other tasks at the same time, and above all, have the children with her, which our collective laundries counteract. /.../ In our days it can hardly be proper to encourage an accumulation of untidiness on a large scale [which Myrdal considers that the cooperative laundries advocated by the committee did]. Laundry as a homelike pastime work should be the ideal (SOU 1947a: 39).

And Alva Myrdal further informs the reader that in the American homes “mangling is often performed in the living-room, where, in the small families, the mangle is placed, just like the sewing machine is placed in our homes” (SOU 1947a: 39). The committee predicts that in the future, the households’ washing habits will be changed in accordance with the American pattern, but they claim that the description presented in the magazine is not representative for the majority of American people. The committee takes the slightly sceptical view by saying that:

the press often, in a quite ignorant and untrustworthy way refers to American conditions. Pictures show how American “housewives”, dressed in afternoon dresses arrange the whole family’s laundry “in minutes”. The uncritical general reader will hereby easily get a wrong opinion. It is forgotten that there are many and time-consuming phases involved in the aftercare of the laundry (SOU 1947b: 39–40).

Today's research shows that this scepticism was justified as the living conditions for housewives during the first half of last century, especially in the American countryside, sometimes could be very hard (Kleinegger 2001). The committee's prediction that the Swedish washing pattern in due time would follow the American way, with a small household machine belonging to almost every household, would come true a few decades later. According to Rosén, however, this idea was not possible to implement until the washing industry—and the consumers—had accepted the technical innovation of the more effective front-loading machine instead of the top-loading machine (Rosén 1992: 37, 62). This process went on during the 1950s and 1960s, and in 1975, 90 % of the Swedish households had access to a washing machine, either in their houses or flats or in the special laundry rooms of the apartment houses (Rosén 1992: 43). By then, Calor had long since been sold by the Rydh family, merged with other companies, and the cooperative laundries had gradually played out their role (Rosén 1992 43–45, 67–84, 2008).

Even if the delegation's proposals for the cooperative or communal laundries would not be marketable for more than a decade, the delegation achieved another of its major goals as the Household Research Centre was made permanent and given an established position. It was commissioned to study homes and households as centres of consumption and thereby consider economical, technical, hygienic and social problems. The institute was financed as a joint project by the government and the industry (Åkerman 1994: 132–134). Within the Household Research Center, a clear Taylorian attitude towards domestic work is expressed—and it is also clear that domestic work merged into domestic consumption.

The Household Research Centre existed in this form for about 10 years. Thereafter it was reorganised to the State Institute for Consumer's Issues and later to the Swedish Consumers Agency, and thus, the consumer's perspective was made even more explicit.

It is true that Hanna Rydh and the other women who participated in the commission had many opportunities to influence and create opinion. However, the position should not be overemphasised. The secretary of the committee, Mrs. Brita Åkerman, states that the committee in some ways could be seen as a sop by the politicians in response to women's demands to be included in the political life. When things came to the point, the major male politicians didn't always pay attention to the recommendations (Åkerman 1994: 112, 119–122, 125–127). The main political issues were not focused on the relation between women and domestic reforms, which was the committee's main interest, but rather on the efforts to make women join the labour market, which caused different targets. So, for example, the delegation wanted to facilitate the care of children at home by rationalising domestic work connected to child care (SOU 1947b: 56–62), while the government wanted to support day care centres or other collective arrangements while the mothers were at work. Opinions differed also within the commission, and compromises had to be made. All delegates did not share Hanna Rydh's explicit gynocentric perspective, and when she, for example, pleaded for compulsory education in domestic science for girls, she had to promote her dismissed proposal in a "long and eloquent reservation", in one of the delegation's statements (Åkerman 1994: 117). The delegation



represented a complex level of society, where masculine governmental politics intersected with women's interests. These were in turn formed by women representing a varied spectrum of social groups. Then it was not always possible to maintain the ambitions of one individual person.

## Discussion

Returning to Alaimo's and Hekman's (2008a, b) discussion about redefining material phenomena, while understanding the *Cow Fund*, the laundry and the delegation's scientific investigations as examples of feminist practices, the material consequences of these practices as a material ethic can be discussed in several ways.

The example of the *Cow Fund* shows how the closeness to the cows linked women to well-known and secure life experiences. In that way, it could affirm cultural values and strengthen the individual's confidence and self-respect. A tight physical and emotional relation between human being and animal could be captured with all sensibilities within this mutual communication based on corporeal response and anticipation as described by Birke (2009: 28). This co-constitution of subjects can be understood as an example of an intra-action in Barad's terminology and a two-way matter in Haraway's terms (Schneider 2005: 82). For some families, the ultimate result of access to a cow could be freedom from hunger and malnutrition. There could also be strong symbolic and emotional connotations related to a mother's possibility to provide her children with milk. In this small-scale example with a short distance between problem and solution, the material phenomena related to the *Cow Fund* were acting in a direction towards a feminism which promoted specific female values and responsibilities. From the perspective of Hanna Rydh's feminism, the ethical consequences must have been beneficial.

The example of the *laundry* can also be interpreted in several ways. One theme is the bodily consequences. Women were liberated from hard and toilsome work, which might have a negative effect especially on a growing or an ageing body. It could cause illness and pain. The new, time-saving technology created free time which could be spent on various activities or at rest. To this can be added some social effects, such as the need to organise time in timetables to get access to a machine, to form a queue or to expose the family's textiles to scrutinising eyes. This can also be linked to the ideology of bodily hygiene and the appearance of a person, dressed in fresh and clean clothes.

It was also involved in a technical development of the washing practices, which was expanded by the emerging washing industry with the building of laundry houses, development of washing machines, spin dryers, mangles and other equipment. The new washing technique went hand in hand with the development of new textiles. The traditional linen, wool and cotton were in part replaced by synthetic fibres which required reduced temperature of the water and less ironing but often more frequent washing. The quality of the fabric also triggered the production of

new types of detergents and fabric softeners. In the long run, the result was an increasing consumption of products.

With Hanna Rydh's experience from a geographical province, she realised that the so-called periphery, through the mobility of material objects, could benefit from the discourse of modernity without giving up its local character. The washing machine from Calor, situated in the local medical centre in Gäddede and combined with the necessary electric power and water pipes, mediated this with efficiency.

The various laundry projects represented a social complexity on a middle-scale level, based on the users' need and with a cooperative managing, but also associated with local politics. The material phenomena in many ways promoted women's emancipation from heavy domestic work. But it also distanced women from a practical everyday knowledge and led the washing practices into a scientific, technical and commercial arena. This process was nourished by modernity's discourse of hygiene. However, the cooperative laundries still kept a link to the shared washing practices of earlier days. In a way, they "dressed" the practice of washing in a modern costume but kept the structure of joint work safe. It was not until a part of the collective life disappeared as the washing practices moved into the homes and became individualised that washing became fully modern.

From Hanna Rydh's point of view, the aid to overworked women was the prime goal, and the material phenomena attached to the laundry issue must have had positive ethical connotations. As her feminist concerns intersected with her influential position within the washing industry, the practical solution appeared in the name of Calor. That she herself made an economic profit on this material development was not a problem for her in relation to the Swedish women. If there could be some moral doubts, it was only a problem for Calor's business competitors.

The example of the *delegation's investigation* shows us how various home- and household-related practices were broken down to measurable and countable units to get data for recreating new and rational physical entities. The intentions were benevolent, and in many cases, the result fundamentally improved women's working conditions. The new findings were absorbed and incorporated in a grand scale in the modernisation of city cores and the suburban expansion which characterise the population's geographical reorganisation in the last half of the twentieth century. However, recommendations of the optimal size of a kitchen, the distance between stove and refrigerator, the height of the sink or specific electric lighting strategies created notions of the typical and the normal, within such a personal sphere as the home. These notions took concrete physical form, and a standard model was created. Ideas of the normal size of a family or the normal height of an adult woman were given material consequences which were written into social planning and daily life. The material equipment inscribed women and not men into domestic work. This had far-reaching consequences as it promoted the heteronormative family order and the traditional male and female gender division of labour, both formulas being hallmarks of modernity. Thereby also differences from the so-called normality would be accentuated. Those who fitted into the standard norm gained an easily handled and effective household. However, a group of so-called deviants would be created and materially expelled.

The delegation's investigations were linked to a political project of national social planning based on an aspect of modernity which merged rationality with consumption. The examples discussed here show the entrance of rational modernism into the intimate home and family spheres. From Hanna Rydh's perspective, the ethical consequences of the material phenomena related to domestic reform might have had an ambiguous character. The practical solutions were probably seen as something good. However, as she was not included in the superior political project—and so she didn't want to be—it is not likely that she would have approved of rationalisation's notions of neutrality and normality, which in her eyes showed the masculine character of the public social planning.

## Conclusions

From the point of view of ethical theory, in this case feminism, the three examples show us local, community and national solutions of different domestic matters. The practices of the three examples had various ethical and material consequences in relation to women's emancipation. It stresses the opinion that feminism can be different, depending on how it is socially and geographically situated, that it can be contested and that it is not uniform. It also shows us that modernity itself is ambiguous and open for discussion and various interpretations.

For Hanna Rydh, as a trained archaeologist, it was important to include a historical long-term perspective and scientific methodology in her feminist work. Her archaeological and historical experience convinced her that women over time were attributed to the family, home and household spheres. Their various practices were often toilsome, but in a specific context, both in prehistory and in her time, they could also promote women's independence. This gave Hanna arguments to search for liberating practices in her feminist work. Through her archaeological training, it must have been quite evident to apply an evolutionistic perspective on her understandings of the world. After all, her archaeological mentor had been Oscar Montelius, one of the main proponents of evolutionism within Swedish archaeology. But archaeology's evolutionism followed a typological path. The contemporary evolutionism, or rather social development, was promoted by the progress of science and technology. Being an archaeological scholar, she had the scientific training to use artefacts as arguments in social discussions. This could be one reason why she also treated material objects of her own time seriously. Doing so, she situated various materialities into practices where the material phenomena in many ways were given an active position in a social dynamic.

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**Part IV**  
**Internal Colonialism: Public Reform**  
**of Domestic Material Practices**

# Chapter 13

## Making Men and Women Blush: Masculinity, Femininity, and Reform in Nineteenth-Century Central New York

Hadley Kruczek-Aaron

### Introduction

On a clear June day in 1844, thousands of social reformers gathered in an upstate New York cemetery to commemorate the death of Myron Holley, one of the founders of the abolitionist Liberty Party. Prayers were said, hymns were sung, and a monument was erected before the New York reformer, businessman, and philanthropist Gerrit Smith (1797–1874; Fig. 13.1) addressed the crowd gathered under the trees and around Holley’s new grave marker. In his speech, he touted Holley’s achievements and lamented the costs that accrued once one took on the abolitionist label. For, devotion to the enslaved prompted accusations of fanaticism, stirred the deep hatred of abolition’s many opponents, and required abolitionists to submit “to all the sacrifices of ease and respectability...” (Smith 1844: 10).

Though Gerrit tinkered with the appropriate strategy for effecting social change over the course of his reform career, he remained consistently frustrated that doing what he considered to be God’s work (in the form of abolition, temperance, and other social reforms) rendered the reformer disresponsible in the eyes of many Americans. He regretted that those he deemed unworthy of respect received it, while radical white reformers were marginalized as extremists, and African Americans were held up to unreasonably high standards by those seeking evidence for their racist arguments. To remedy this, Gerrit joined other reformers in arguing that individuals be judged by what they did and how they did it, instead of by their race, class, and sex. Just what they should do and how they should do it became the focus of many of Gerrit’s letters and speeches, which detailed his recipe for respectability.

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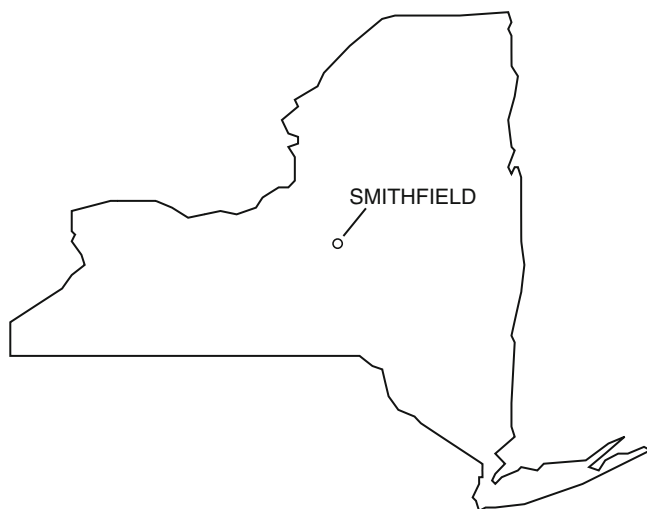
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**Fig. 13.1** Engraving of the reformer Gerrit Smith from the frontispiece of a published collection of his congressional speeches (Smith 1855a).

This chapter focuses on his recipe, which in large part involved a complex refashioning of what it meant to be a man and woman, and it reveals just how those around Gerrit Smith responded to his call for change at the household and community levels via an analysis of the archaeological and documentary record. Though the reform press as well as more recent commentators have depicted the Smith household and his central New York hometown of Smithfield, New York (Fig. 13.2), as reform utopias (Griffiths 1850; Whitney 1872; Kraut 1975, 1979; Stauffer 1997, 2002), the evidence shows that even at these levels, opposition and compromise followed the reformer's call for social change. The ways that these responses related to gender and class are considered, and the obstacles that reformers like Gerrit Smith faced as they pushed others to alter their notions of masculinity, femininity, and ultimately personhood are examined. While historians and archaeologists have tended to focus on the impact of social reform on either woman's or the man's sphere (Welter 1974; Cott 1977; Douglas 1977; Grebinger and Guntzel 1983; Ryan 1983; Hewitt 1984, 2001; Yacovone 1990; Spencer-Wood 1991a, b, 1994, 1996, 1999a, b; Rotundo



**Fig. 13.2** Map of Smithfield, New York.

1993; De Cunzo 1995, 2001; Kimmel 1996; Pendery and Griswold 2000; Auerbach 2010), a focus on Gerrit Smith and Smithfield requires a (re)consideration of both.

## Gender and Reform: The Historical and Archaeological Literature

Historians and archaeologists of the past few decades have been quick to recognize that the study of nineteenth-century social reform movements requires a consideration of gender. The earliest scholarship came in the form of groundbreaking feminist studies that viewed female reformers as active agents who blurred the boundaries between the public and the private—or at least stretched the boundaries of what could be considered private—through their participation in causes that (according to separate spheres ideology) took advantage of their “natural” predilection for morality and domesticity (Welter 1974; Cott 1977; Douglas 1977; Spencer-Wood 1991a, b). Inspired in part by this research, a handful of historical archaeologists began to consider when and how nineteenth-century domestic and social reform ideas impacted women’s bodies (see Chap. 10), their daily lives inside the home (Grebinger and Guntzel 1983; Pendery and Griswold 2000; see Chaps. 2 and 4), and in the institutions, utopias, and communities that they helped to shape (Spencer-Wood 1991a, b, 1994, 1996, 1999a, b, 2004; 2006; De Cunzo 1995, 2001).

Other studies of antebellum social reform emphasized that considerations of class, race, ethnicity, and the type of reform (e.g., benevolence groups vs. radical suffrage and abolition) were also needed to untangle the complex origins of these social movements, their popularity, and the profoundly significant impacts

they had on various communities that come under study (McElroy 1977; Ryan 1983; Hewitt 1984; Yee 1992; Hansen 1993; Jeffrey 1998; Wellman 2000; Fischer 2001; Moses 2001). And more recently, scholars have been prompted to connect the study of antebellum reform movements and empire building in research that questions how both projects were a part of a broad, multifaceted effort at domination. Such an effort aimed to create “civilized” subjects/citizens/laborers who were compelled through physical, economic, or ideological domination to alter their behaviors and in the process mitigate the collective threat they posed to those in power (Dorsey 2002; Gordon 2006; Stoler 2006a, b, c; see Chap. 1). Historical archaeologists (including contributors to this volume) have responded with analyses that examine how these efforts involved the entwining of the public and private spheres via a policing of desire, that show how individuals of different classes and ethnic backgrounds reacted to calls for change, and that push researchers to consider other economic and social variables that might be impacting people’s material worlds inside their homes (Beaudry 1989, 1993; Bond 1989; Beaudry et al. 1991; Wurst 1991, 1993, 2002, 2006; Spencer-Wood 1994, 1996; Reckner and Brighton 1999; Crane 2000; Kruczek-Aaron 2002, 2007; Rotman 2006, 2009).

Of these scholars, those who have considered the variable of gender have tended to examine reform’s impact on the idea of the “woman’s sphere” and the lives of women, who (according to ministers and other commentators of the period) had a natural and biological disposition to matters of morality and emotion, religion and reform, and the private, domestic sphere (Welter 1974; Cott 1977; Douglas 1977). But a growing number of historians have begun to reconsider antebellum notions of masculinity and the lives of men and male reformers in light of this new analytical focus. Most often, these studies have involved an exploration of the ways that reform movements offered a more moral and inclusive model of masculinity than the dominant male archetypes that were popular during this period (Griffen 1990; Yacovone 1990; Rotundo 1993; Kimmel 1996; Moses 2001; Dorsey 2002). Among others, these archetypes included the market-oriented, upwardly mobile, and individualistic “self-made man” who emerged with the capitalist transformation of the period and who (according to separate spheres ideology) was naturally disposed to dominate the public sphere. This ideal man thrived in the competitive commercial world as a result of his own hard work, and he looked to his wife and the home to function as a respite from the greed and licentiousness that came to define the marketplace (Cott 1977: 148; Kimmel 1996: 17).

In contrast to this archetype, historians of nineteenth-century ideas of manhood have described the male reformer as embodying a “feminized male ideal” (Yacovone 1990: 95) that some characterized as an “alternative” (Kimmel 1996: 70) and others positioned at the extreme end of a masculinity spectrum (Griffen 1990: 186). Generally speaking, this resulted from male reformers’ advocacy for the rights of women as well as from their broad-based commitment to the moral cleansing of America and beyond through a variety of causes, including temperance, the anti-tobacco movement, moral reform, domestic reform, education reform, and abolition. Other ideas and behaviors, including the embracing of feelings and compassion

(Dorsey 2002: 189–190), their participation in egalitarian marriages (Dixon 1997), and their expressions of fraternal love (which were modeled in the Christian tradition of agape and are thought to have emerged from the decidedly homosocial [not homoerotic] Victorian world; Yacovone 1990), became associated with the male reformer type as well. While male reformers considered this alternative gender role as redemptive and reflective of their piety, discipline, and moral strength, many of those they targeted for reform likely viewed their lifestyle as effeminate in a derisive sense (Griffen 1990: 185; Auerbach 2010: 79).

One's perspective on this issue was structured by class, race, and ethnicity, since most antebellum American reformers in question were white middle-class or elite men who pushed poor whites, immigrants, and African Americans to cleanse themselves of behavior that affirmed aspects of their identity but which the reformers deemed disresponsible and undesirable (Mohl 1971; Faler 1974; Dawley 1976; McElroy 1977; Johnson 1978; Wallace 1978; Ross 1985; Cook 1989; Kasson 1990; Beaudry, et al. 1991; Dorsey 2002; Smith 2008). Here, reform involved creating more orderly communities and more disciplined employees, thereby helping to maintain existing social relations. Intra-class relations were affected as well since reformers also targeted other middle-class and elite men whose drinking habits and tavern culture embodied the masculinity of the “self-made man” by offering him a means to escape from the pressures of work and home (Dorsey 2002: 134). Instead of churches and reform institutions, those aspiring to this dominant ideal preferred sexually segregated social spaces (including taverns, clubs, and fraternal organizations) where men whose inhibitions had been lessened by alcohol could engage in conversations that were the “vital heart of the world of shared play” and the intellectual sparring that characterized this brand of masculinity (Rotundo 1993: 201).

In presenting an assault on behaviors that affirmed the social relations of a range of men, reformers themselves would have been subject to attacks on their manliness for their overarching preoccupation with religion, their aversion to drinking and smoking, and/or their perceived disdain for hard work by their own hands (Rotundo 1993: 270–271). Thus, it remains quite clear that in examining the experience of reformers and community response to reform, gender, class, race, and ethnicity remain inextricably linked (McElroy 1977; Ryan 1983; Hewitt 1984; Yee 1992; Hansen 1993; Jeffrey 1998; Wellman 2000; Fischer 2001; Auerbach 2010). The case study presented here examines this point as it relates to the community of Smithfield, New York, where the social reformer Gerrit Smith encouraged those around him to think more as Christian men and women and less in terms of stereotypes based on one's color, wealth, ethnicity, or sex. It explores how Gerrit navigated the sea of ideas about both masculinity and femininity in the course of living his reform ideals and attempting to get others to do the same. The study, which highlights the temperance cause and reform ideas relating to frugality and simple living, demonstrates that resistance to reformers' gendered reconfigurations existed among his neighbors and even within his own household. In particular, it shows how the class relations in which his neighbors and his family members were engaged structured this resistance.



## Gerrit Smith and Social Reform

Spurred on by his religious convictions, Gerrit Smith began his reform career in Smithfield (the town his father Peter founded) as a patron for the Sunday School movement and the American Home Missionary Society in the 1820s, before becoming increasingly active with temperance and abolition in the 1830s and 1840s. A wealthy landowner and businessman who inherited thousands of acres of land in New York State from his father, Gerrit was often targeted by his reform colleagues to use his considerable wealth to support numerous reform groups and institutions, which he funded locally and beyond beginning in the 1820s. He parlayed his financial capital into political power as a leader of statewide reform groups and as a candidate for a range of political offices on behalf of various abolitionist parties in the 1840s and 1850s; in one successful contest, he became a congressman in 1853. Frustrated with party politics and distracted by his business affairs, Gerrit resigned this post in 1854 and went on to become a source of national controversy when it was revealed that he was the major financial backer of John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry. After retreating from the spotlight in the wake of those accusations, Gerrit went on to become a national reform statesman in the 1860s until his death in 1874 (Frothingham 1909; Harlow 1939; Strong 1999; Sernett 2002; Stauffer 2002; Kruczek-Aaron 2007; Dann 2009).

Inspired by the perfectionist ideals of evangelical preachers who toured the central and western New York region in the 1820s and 1830s, Gerrit eventually came to believe that true Christians should always strive to walk in God's light and that doing so involved a range of behaviors that assured believers of their salvation. In addition to working hard, being hospitable to others, and actively supporting (not simply verbally supporting) reform causes and institutions, being moral also involved a particular set of consumption practices. For example, Gerrit eventually gave up various products of slave labor (including sugar, rice, and cotton) in the 1830s when he began patronizing merchants who could provide free labor produce (Smith 1827–1837). He also rejected tobacco, believing it to be unclean, unhealthy, and a gateway to other sins like alcohol and crime (Smith 1852c), and he derided caffeine as impure (Smith in Frothingham 1909: 39).

Because of his almost lifelong support for the temperance cause, Gerrit wrote most frequently of his denunciation of alcohol, which he rejected outright in part out of a concern for the well-being of other drinkers. Believing that it was essential for the sober to help set an example, he argued that it was their responsibility to create an environment conducive to the redemption of the intemperate (Smith 1833). While many in the temperance movement only rejected distilled spirits, Gerrit and others came to believe that total abstinence (and not simply moderation) was the most righteous choice, for only “in an atmosphere of total abstinence [can] the drunkard...come to life again” (Smith 1833). Regarding his own personal drinking habits, Gerrit wrote that he had given up such intoxicating substances by 1833 (Smith 1852c, 1857a, 1858).

Not only concerned with the purity of what entered the body, Gerrit's reform effort also involved a preoccupation with the wardrobes and household decorations of those around him. He argued that people erringly made choices based on fashion instead of on what was moral, and he expressed his contempt for the wealthy who showcased their status via the excessive adornment of their bodies and their homes (Smith 1855b, 1857b). Like other antebellum preachers, reformers, and utopians (e.g., Ralph Waldo Emerson, Catherine Beecher, Bronson Alcott), Gerrit advocated that all true Christians value frugality and industry and live a life of "plainness," "simplicity," and "sobermindedness" (Smith 1841a, 1843b, 1844: 14, 1847a: 35; Shi 1985, 1986; Dorsey 2002). In this way, his writings show that though he was a capitalist who benefited from the expanding market, he sought to shift the emphasis away from greed or the accumulation of wealth for wealth's sake.

As historian Linda Gordon (2006: 429) has described, a reformer's focus on consumption practices in the domestic sphere is not surprising given that the private—even the intimate—was a central battlefield in the fight for reform (here conceptualized metaphorically as internal colonialism) because it was in this context that Christian (or civilized) hearts and bodies were made and nurtured, and the "internalization" (Moraga 1983: 33) of reform ideals could take place under the influence of social relations at the household level. Because this civilizing effort can be connected to large-scale national and imperial efforts of social, political, and economic control, the social relations at work in the household have been characterized as a "primary domain of the microphysics of power" (Oswin and Olund 2010: 62). For historians, archaeologists, and other researchers, an interpretive emphasis on the home offers a window on how the reform movement was embraced, resisted, and/or altered as it was encountered in the context of everyday life (Wurst and McGuire 1999: 195; McGuire and Wurst 2002: 89–90; Spiers, 2002: 219; Ollman 2003: 60).

For the present case study, the fight for reform in the Smith household involved Gerrit's attempt to alter the behavior of his wife Ann and children Elizabeth and Greene as well as his household employees, which included English and Irish domestic servants, African American laundresses, and European American gardeners, laborers, and farmhands. Their behaviors were meant to be visible, as the willingness of Smith family members and employees to live these reform ideals was tied to the success of the movement as a whole since their actions were meant to serve as inspiration for others in the larger community of Smithfield (Smith 1837, 1847a, 1848b, 1860). In this way, reformers like Gerrit Smith actually merged the private and the public spheres in order to ensure that reform's success would spread from town to town, state to state, and nation to nation, via the personal influence and inspiration of one's neighbors, friends, business associates, employers, and family members.

But, as discussed above, ideological barriers to this blueprint for success existed, and Gerrit's published and non-published writings reveal his repeated attempts to challenge commonly held nineteenth-century gender ideals out of concern for their detrimental impact on the reform movement. For example, Gerrit actively tried to reclaim the label "manly" for those men who took on the

reformer's mantle. In various sources, he offered the behaviors and qualities described above—that which would make a respectable and true Christian male—as the traits and actions required of a “whole man” and as epitomizing manliness. In one broadside entitled “Some of the Duties of an Abolitionist,” he writes that “every whole man is an abolitionist” (Smith 1841b). In another essay, he describes supporters of big government as “shriveled in...manly spirit” because they wanted the government to do what they should do themselves (Smith 1851). And in a letter that he wrote upon learning that African American leaders, including James McCune Smith and Frederick Douglass, supported the coalitionist Free Soil Party and not the radical Liberty Party, he wrote:

How sad, that such men, as Doctor Smith and Mr. Douglass, should ever have so undervalued and degraded themselves - should ever have so pocketed the detestable and infernal insults upon their race! I am aware, that it may be said, in excuse for these gentlemen, that, in what they did, they aimed at the deliverance and elevation of their race. But to this we reply, that even the highest good is not to be sought for, at the expense of self-respect - that even Heaven itself is not to be crawled into; - and that, in all our purposes, relations, pursuits, activities, the Divine admonition to us is: “Quit you, like MEN [emphasis in original]” (Smith 1848a).

Not afraid to publicly criticize the actions of his friends in the movement, he argued that despite their good intentions, the votes revealed their lack of manliness or self-respect. And as described above, his definition of respectability (here conceptualized as manhood) involved being hard working, frugal, hospitable, pious, reform-minded, and free from sin—including the sins of alcohol and luxuries.

Though emphasizing manliness when referring to respectability in these examples, ultimately Gerrit had parallel concerns for the moral health of women. Gerrit was quite explicit in expressing his belief in the equality of all peoples and specifically his belief in the common humanity of both men and women. In one 1857 essay on dress reform, for example, Gerrit stated: “I need not say that in my sight man and woman have a common nature, a common dignity, and common rights” (Smith 1857b). And in a brief letter published in *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, he writes to a female reformer who had given him a copy of an 1852 report “on the joint education of the sexes” authored by James Fairchild, a former president of Oberlin College. In it, Gerrit writes that Fairchild:

...admits the doctrine, that the sexes differ in their “mental constitution.” That is, as I understand him, that they differ *naturally*... Now, I regard this doctrine as very false and very pernicious: and, I believe, that the wrongs of woman will never be righted until this doctrine, that there is sex in mind is exploded...On page 37 Prof. F. would guard well “the feminine instincts.” But why not the masculine also? ...On page 39, the Prof. is concerned to preserve the modesty and delicacy of woman. And why should we not be as much concerned to have man modest and delicate as woman?

Heaven speed the day, when man shall be expected to blush as quick and as deep, as woman, at every degree of impurity: and when the churches and schools and public sentiment of the whole world shall demand the same mental and moral character – the same mental and moral strength, beauty, and delicacy – for woman as for man – for man as for woman (Smith 1852b).

Here, Gerrit made his case for erasing this fundamental distinction between the sexes with regard to moral character and intellect.

Though Gerrit sought more equality in terms of standards of morality, following his reform agenda challenged dominant gender ideologies of the period differently depending on whether one was male or female. As described above, the overarching concern for morality instead of for commerce, business, and the workplace would have marked a male reformer as a different kind of man. And the taking of a temperance pledge would have amounted to a rejection of the tavern culture that fed many men's appetite for those "mighty agents of Satan" (Smith 1852c) while offering them a respite from their work and family life. For middle-class and elite women, Gerrit's reform lifestyle required a changing of priorities in the domestic environment, which most were using to bolster their status and affirm social bonds with other middle-class and elite women via displays of excessive wealth (their "jewels and gewgaws" [Smith 1857b]) and one's skills as a mother, hostess, and household manager. Consequently, to aspire to the reform ideal required nineteenth-century men and women to embrace different behaviors, social spaces, and objects that affirmed new sets of Christian social relations.

The historical archaeology carried out at a series of Smithfield sites provided an opportunity to examine the material dimensions of the lived experience of reform and to consider how successful Gerrit was in overcoming these very real ideological barriers to reform within his own household and community. While the scope of his reform ideas is broad, this chapter focuses on the alcohol-related material culture and ceramic table and teawares recovered archaeologically in order to reveal how his household members and/or neighbors responded to the temperance crusade and to Gerrit's ideas about simple living.

Archaeologists recovered the material culture considered in the following analysis in the course of excavations conducted at the Smith estate from 1997 to 2001. The main part of the estate, which at its peak included 30 buildings on a 30-acre parcel in Smithfield, currently contains 4 extant structures on 10 acres divided into 3 lots. Archaeologists recovered artifacts and identified features through the excavation of 71 shovel test pits (STPs) systematically placed at 10 m intervals across the estate grounds. In addition, 7 judgmental STPs in areas surrounding the Smith mansion site (the mansion burned down in 1936) and 41 1×1 m units were placed where features or rich midden deposits were detected. Archaeologists recovered deposits specifically associated with the Smith household and dating to the period of Gerrit's residence there in a midden located to the rear of the Smith mansion site and in a subterranean icehouse located to the northwest of the mansion. Material recovered from neighboring sites, including two residences (the Williams-Stafford site and the Brown-Buck site), and a combined store and residence (the Eastman site) offers information about community response, as well as comparative data for the Smith assemblage as they also date to the period of Gerrit's reform activity (Kruczek-Aaron 2007).

## The Archaeology of Total Abstinence

Regarding alcohol consumption at the Smith site, the two deposits associated with the Smith household contained wine and liquor bottle fragments in spite of Gerrit's strong stance on total abstinence. In the one midden located to the rear of the Smith mansion, 20% (2/10) of the glass vessels were alcohol-related, including one that was an olive mold-blown wine bottle with a dome-shaped basal profile and another that was an olive mold-blown liquor bottle. In the icehouse feature, 25% (2/8) of the glass vessels were alcohol-related; one was an olive figural flask and the other was an olive bottle with a hand-tooled brandy finish. Neither deposit contained the identifiable remains of alcohol-related ceramic vessels, such as stoneware ale jug fragments.

Though this is a small sample of material, the findings remain significant in part because of the overall low density of artifacts found in deposits associated with the Smith household. Like other elites of the period, the Smiths (through the labor of their household staff) maintained a high standard of cleanliness that was not revealed in deposits associated with their neighbors. Recycling and reuse might also have been responsible for the small sample sizes (at all of the sites examined in this study), as the practices made glass vessels too valuable or too useful to simply discard (Busch 1987: 69–70). In light of these considerations, the glass bottle sample may underrepresent the amount of alcohol being consumed on the property.

Regardless, because Gerrit maintained a total abstinence philosophy, the presence of the vessels that were found in the assemblages does indicate that some of those living, working, or visiting the estate rejected his ideas in his own home. In terms of who contested Gerrit's rules, the contextual evidence suggests that his children and/or employees most likely consumed and discarded the material. Archaeologists recovered the artifacts from deposits located to the rear of the mansion, in areas that guests or visitors would have avoided. It is more likely that the alcohol-related material was consumed by household employees, who worked in the kitchen and/or discarded household trash in the family's icehouse; or by the Smiths' children, including daughter Elizabeth and son Greene, who had access to all areas of the property.

The idea that some of the Smiths' household employees may have chosen to disregard Gerrit's rules about alcohol consumption is supported by documentary evidence suggesting that many were unhappy with their work environment. Censuses from 1850 to 1870, for example, showed that of 15 domestics employed by the Smiths during this 20-year period, not one remained for 5 years or longer (United States Census Bureau 1850, 1860, 1870; New York State Secretary's Office 1855, 1865). Their short terms of service reveal that many employees did not benefit from the Smith family's ideas enough to encourage them to remain loyal. Besides leaving the family's employ, household laborers also may have expressed their contempt for the Smiths' rules by drinking alcohol on their property. In this case, the archaeological evidence would indicate that the employees were willing to risk their livelihood by expressing a particular gender and class identity that their employer deemed

immoral. Because Gerrit did not often travel for business and he worked in his estate's land office, his ability to police employees was interrupted only rarely, and as a result, his employees would have had few opportunities to break the reformer's rules without significant risk.

Gerrit denied that rule violations would have threatened his employees' livelihood or that he forced them and others into supporting his causes (Smith 1843a), but a handful of sources show otherwise. An early Smith biographer quoted one letter in which the reformer expressed concern about one of his employees, who was not a regular churchgoer; he wrote, "I asked John at dinner, if he had been to church. He said, he had not. I fear that we shall have to dismiss him. I do not like it, that a member of our family should so use his Sabbaths" (in Harlow 1939: 43). In contrast, many of the family's long-term staff members, including a housekeeper, nanny, and Gerrit's office clerks, were enthusiastic Christians and staunch supporters of reform whose service to the family was generously rewarded with property and long-term financial assistance (Smith 1849a, b). Whether or not these benefits can be linked to their reform sympathies remains unclear, but correspondence between Gerrit and other employees and neighbors who chose to publicly challenge their benefactor and were subsequently fired demonstrates that many believed this to be the case (Smith 1843a). The perception among community members and employees that Gerrit used his class position coercively was very real. In the eyes of his neighbors, the progressive reformer who lobbied for equal rights regardless of race, class, or sex continued to reinforce unequal social relations in Smithfield and, using Gordon's (2006) and Stoler's (2006b) metaphor, had become a colonizer who used his economic power to force others to live by his standards.

Regarding the Smith family, the documentary record supports the contention that both Greene and Elizabeth Smith also could have been responsible for the alcohol-related material because neither favored Gerrit's total abstinence philosophy. As revealed in the family's correspondence, Greene struggled with his family because (from his father's perspective) he chose to live not as a moral man but as a "debauched aristocrat" (Stauffer 2002: 274) who overindulged in drinking, chewing tobacco, and gambling while a teenager and adult (Miller 1861; Smith 1861). His refusal to restrain his indulgences while at school and abroad in England made him one of Gerrit's most difficult reform projects (Stauffer 2002: 271–275; Dann 2009: 130–141). The remains of alcohol bottles, therefore, may be the physical evidence of this struggle between father and son over their contrasting ideas about masculinity.

This type of social drinking most often took place outside of the home, however, and consequently, it is more likely that the alcohol-related material found on the estate represents Elizabeth's struggle with temperance and not Greene's. Like Gerrit, Elizabeth did not believe in using alcohol as a beverage, but unlike her father, she was conflicted on the use of wine and spirits in cooking. When writing her cookbook *In the Kitchen* (Miller 1875), she struggled over whether to include such ingredients in her recipes. She explained to her father: "I cannot help feeling troubled on this point—for I want perfection of taste in every receipt—& yet I shrink from keeping up the sale of alcohol save for absolute necessity" (Miller 1874).

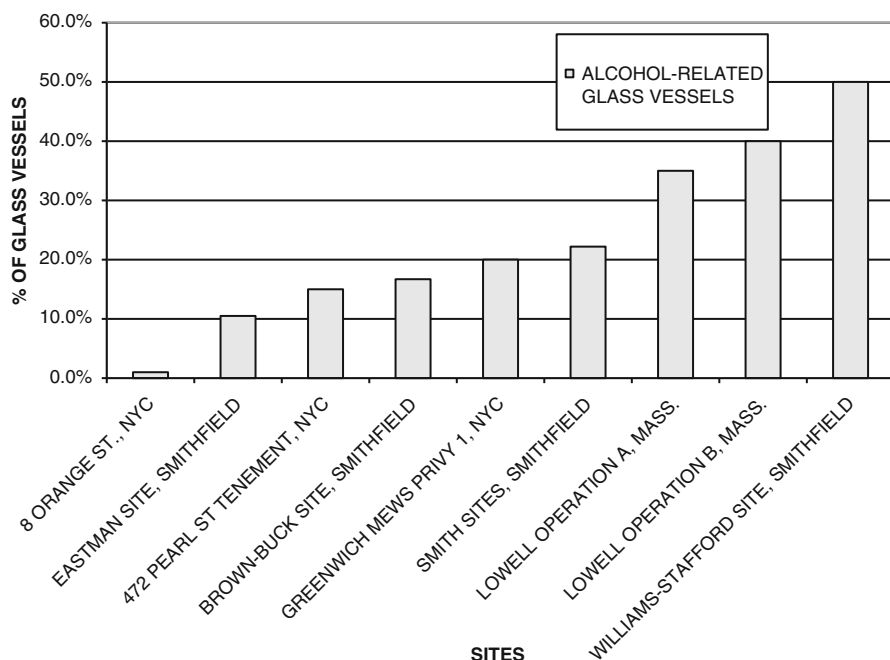


Ideas about gender and class also shaped Elizabeth's resistance to total abstinence, though, in this case, it was an overarching concern for maintaining her identity as an elite woman that fueled her anxiety about the quality of her cooking. Studies of period probate inventories suggest that entertaining was the primary focus of those who designed, organized, and maintained the genteel home during this period, and, as numerous domestic manuals make clear, middle-class and elite women enhanced their status through their role as a hostess and provider (to family and guests) within their homes (Bushman 1992; Wall 1994, 2000). Elizabeth's domestic manual acknowledged the stress caused by such responsibilities, and inevitably a concern for the social relations affirmed by this gender ideal prevented Elizabeth from taking her father's radical position on alcohol use. When published a year after she corresponded with her father on this subject, her volume lacked any statement on the use of wine and brandy in cooking, and numerous recipes included these ingredients when the book was published a year later (Miller 1875: 161, 164, 336, 344, 348, 349, 352).

Regarding community response to temperance, the analysis of the assemblages recovered from neighboring sites also suggests resistance to Gerrit's total abstinence position. At the Brown-Buck and Eastman sites, for example, 16.7% (2/12) and 10.5% (2/19) of the glass vessels found at the respective sites are alcohol-related. These percentages are lower than that found in the Smith deposits and are relatively low in comparison to others of the period where alcohol bottles have been analyzed, including working-class households in New York City and Lowell, Massachusetts (Bond 1989; Reckner and Brighton 1999; Fig. 13.3). In contrast, alcohol-related vessels represented half of the glass vessel assemblage (6/12) associated with the nearby Williams-Stafford site. Such a percentage put the Williams-Stafford site on the high end of the spectrum, as it is 25% to 40% higher than the other Smithfield sites and 10% higher than that recovered in two areas associated with worker housing at Boott Mills in Lowell, Massachusetts.

Those living at the working-class Brown-Buck and Eastman residences who were responsible for the relatively moderate amounts of alcohol found there offered evidence for their unwillingness to completely cohere with Gerrit's vision, though it is unlikely that the occupants of these sites would have made more public pronouncements by patronizing local dramsellers. Whether or not these neighbors genuinely believed in Gerrit's radical approach to reform, more conspicuous displays of opposition to his ideas about gender were less likely in light of the perception held by many in the community that Gerrit only financially supported those who supported his reform causes. And written sources show that members of the Brown-Buck and Eastman households did business with the Smith family in the form of day labor and goods and services provided and/or benefited from the Smiths' generosity during their period of residence (Miller 1853–1857; Smith 1847b, 1849–1850).

In contrast, offending Gerrit Smith was not likely a concern for the members of the Williams-Stafford household, who were responsible for the highest percentage of alcohol-related vessels found at any of the Smithfield sites. The latter and farmer Harvey Williams, who purchased his parcel from the Smiths in 1834, likely



**Fig. 13.3** Percentage of alcohol-related glass vessels found on the Smithfield sites and other nineteenth-century sites (Bond 1989; Reckner and Brighton 1999) where alcohol use has been examined.

felt more free to express his opposition to Gerrit's reconceptualization of manhood and womanhood on account of his relative economic independence from the Smith family. In contrast with the other two households described above, deeds show that Williams owned the home in which he and his family lived, as well as the hatter's shop in which he worked; they were not leased from the Smith family. And, Williams was one of Smithfield's most visible Whigs during the 1840s, making him a known opponent of Gerrit's radical brand of reform (*Madison County Whig* 15 October 1845). As such, living up to a less sober conceptualization of manhood or womanhood would have proven less financially, politically, and socially risky for members of that household.

The archaeological and documentary records, therefore, reveal how reform in Smithfield was not about complete domination and social control (Gordon 2006: 443). Gerrit's neighbors and household members showed variable levels of resistance toward the notion of shedding their gender identities related to alcohol consumption, and the analysis suggests that this resistance was structured by the class relations at work in the community. As demonstrated here, the influence of the economic position of the reformers must not be underestimated when seeking to understand the nature of community and household response to reform in Smithfield and elsewhere.

## The Archaeology of Simplicity

As described above, Gerrit scolded the elite and others for marking their wealth by showcasing fashionable consumer goods, and here Gerrit viewed women as being especially flawed. According to the family's personal correspondence, Gerrit did not have to look far to find evidence of this sin, as Gerrit believed the women in his own family were also guilty of this offense. Gerrit's wife Ann and daughter Elizabeth had an appreciation for fineries that manifested itself in correspondence between the women and in the domestic manual Elizabeth authored. In one letter from Ann to Elizabeth, for example, Ann accompanied a shopping list with the following instructions: "I want all these things of excellent quality. Do not be troubled if the articles cost more than you expect. It is a great bother to be restricted to a certain price when you are shopping, and if a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing well" (Smith 1866). Elizabeth also encouraged other women to spend more on material goods relating to dining, as the ritual was so significant to a child's moral education. She wrote that the accoutrements of dining, including the silver, china, glass, and table linens, "all be of beautiful design... and of as choice a quality as can be afforded" (Miller 1875: 17). The quality of these things was so significant that Elizabeth advised mothers to sacrifice other items in order to spend more on what adorned the table.

As introduced elsewhere (Kruczek-Aaron 2002, 2007), at times these ideas frayed Gerrit's nerves. In one letter, Gerrit described Ann's cultivated taste as "part of her disease" (in Miller 1869), and in another, he complained of Elizabeth's desire for a "fashionable" wedding, which he believed would "violate, if not...void, our long standing example in behalf of simplicity and sober mindedness" (Smith 1843b). These sources show that in addition to alcohol, the family members also held divergent perspectives on household consumption that proved a source of stress, especially since Gerrit placed so much value on his image during his long reform career, which extended from the 1820s until his death in 1874.

Conflict over living simply manifested itself in the archaeological record and specifically in the ceramic assemblages associated with the Smith household, which reveal the ways that the Smith women attempted to compromise their reform ideals with their desire to affirm their relationships with other elite women. Ceramic table and teawares found at the site are extremely important in evaluating material display at the Smith estate not only because Elizabeth described them as being so significant but also because Gerrit used dining as a tool to convert others and as an avenue to showcase him and his family "doing the word" in front of those he sought to reform. To this end, Gerrit developed a reputation for being a host who would never close the door on a visitor and as someone who would use meals as an opportunity to gather people from different backgrounds together at one table (Frothingham 1909: 141–142). At these meals, his biographer noted that "the host knew no distinction of persons... [and] the board was abundantly but simply spread" (Frothingham 1909: 142).

Given Gerrit's opinion regarding ostentation as well as the significance of the dining ritual for the Smith family, it is clear that the table and teawares would have been carefully selected. And regarding the ceramics, it is clear that if the wealthy Smiths had wanted to decorate their tables with expensive china they could have. What the analysis of their table and teawares reveals, however, is that during the first half of the nineteenth century, the Smiths set a relatively unostentatious table. A comparison of the table and teawares from sites associated with the Smiths and the three neighboring households described above, for example, shows that despite the differences in wealth between the sites' occupants, the differences between the four ceramic assemblages are not very significant. This includes comparisons of each site's table and teaware assemblages in terms of ware type; decoration type; and mean decoration index, a measure used by Wall (1989) in which the extent of decoration on a vessel is determined by calculating the following proportion: number of surfaces decorated/number of surfaces available for decoration.

Regarding ware type, in all four assemblages refined earthenwares predominate by a large margin (Table 13.1). This includes the assemblage associated with members of the Smith family, who could have afforded multiple porcelain sets. But at all sites, porcelain comprises less than six percent of the combined table and teaware assemblage. Regarding decoration type, most vessels in all assemblages are transfer-printed/flow transfer-decorated, with the remainder largely edged, painted, or undecorated (Fig. 13.4). This distribution suggests an overarching preference for the "less simple" transfer-printed wares in all households (Table 13.2). And when the four assemblages were analyzed to calculate the extent of decoration on each vessel, the mean decoration index figures show that the Smiths' assemblage does not set itself apart as the simplest or the fanciest (when looked at as a whole or separated by form), despite the fact that they could have easily afforded the most elaborately decorated vessels (Table 13.3).

When form (plates versus cups/saucers) and cost are considered, however, differences between the assemblages are revealed. A comparison of the mean cc index values (Miller 1980, 1991) suggests that the Smiths invested the least into their plates and the most into their teas during the first half of the nineteenth century (Table 13.4). These figures show that the difference between the mean expenditure on plates and that on cups and saucers is greatest in the Smith sample. In fact, the data show that while those residing at all three neighboring sites invested slightly more into their plates than into their teas, the Smiths did the opposite by a wide margin. Their tea index value rose by .92, a 54% increase over their plate index value.

In order to better clarify just how the family allocated funds on their plates and teas and to evaluate whether the midrange mean cc index values were masking the presence of very high value and very low value wares in these assemblages, ceramic profiles were developed to show to what extent each decoration type contributed to the mean cc index value (Spencer-Wood 1987). This was done by multiplying the number of vessels of a certain type by their corresponding index value, calculating the sum of these products for all decoration types, and then dividing the weighted index values for each type by the sum total figure. The results show that the mean

**Table 13.1** Table and teaware distribution by site and ware type

Ware type	Smith		Eastman		Williams-Stafford		Brown-Buck	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Refined earthenware	32	94.1	55	96.5	36	94.7	34	94.4
Porcelain	2	5.9	2	3.5	2	5.3	2	5.6
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	34	100.0	57	100.0	38	100.0	36	100.0

Note: To assess whether the assemblages were statistically similar in terms of decoration type, I used a chi-square test of association. The results were as follows: chi-square=0.3163, 0.95 > *p* > 0.98; where *df* = 3, chi-square should be ≥ 7.82. These show that the differences between the assemblages were not very significant.



**Fig. 13.4** A sample of table and teaware sherds from the Smith assemblage.

cc index value for the Smith plate assemblage does not reflect a high number of vessels on the extreme ends of the relative cost spectrum (porcelain and undecorated cc ware), but that the value comes from a fairly similar investment in both edged and transfer-printed wares (Table 13.5; Fig. 13.5). Though these wares also comprise a significant proportion of the total cc index value of the other assemblages, the low mean cc index value for the Smith plate assemblage has resulted because of a greater allocation of funds granted to the edged wares and the absence of porcelain and higher value flow transfer vessels.

These results can be interpreted in a handful of ways. They may suggest the use of the cheaper edged vessels by the Smiths' household staff (following the model for elite household assemblages suggested by Spencer-Wood 1987). Or, in light of Gerrit's reform ideals, the investment in both edged and transfer-printed plates may suggest that the Smiths used the more elaborately decorated set as their everyday dishes and reserved the simpler wares for meals when nonfamily members were guests and when Gerrit had outsiders to impress with his family's Spartan consumption habits. In this way, the pattern is similar to what Wall (1991, 1994) found when analyzing assemblages associated with middle-class New York City households in that two sets of dishes (one considered fancy and the other considered simpler or more "moral") are being observed in both cases. But while Wall argued that her families used the simpler wares for the more private family meals, the reform-minded and image-conscious Smiths likely would have preferred the opposite.

Given that the ceramic profile reveals that all households allocated a considerable amount of funds to their transfer-printed plates, however, it is unlikely that the Smiths' poorer guests would have perceived the Smiths' consumption practices as



**Table 13.2** Table and teaware distribution by site and decoration type

Decoration type	Smith		Eastman		Williams-Stafford		Brown-Buck	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Transfer-printed/flow transfer	19	55.8	24	42.1	20	52.6	20	55.6
Painted	4	11.8	9	15.8	3	7.9	2	5.6
Sponged	0	0	3	5.3	0	0	0	0
Edged	7	20.6	12	21.1	5	13.2	9	25.0
Molded	0	0	3	5.3	3	7.9	0	0
Undecorated	3	8.8	1	1.8	4	10.5	5	13.9
Other	1	2.9	5	8.8	3	7.9	0	0
Total	34	99.9	57	100.2	38	100.0	36	100.1

Note: To assess whether the assemblages were statistically similar in terms of decoration type, a chi-square test of association was used. Because some cells contained values less than 5, the distribution of transfer-printed/flow transfer vessels versus all other decoration types combined was compared. The results were as follows: chi-square=2.435, .50>*p*>0.30; where *df* = 3, chi-square should be ≥7.82. These show that the differences between the assemblages were not very significant.

**Table 13.3** Mean decoration index values for plates and teas

Assemblage	Plates and teas	Plates	Teas
Smith	0.634 ( <i>n</i> = 32)	0.526 ( <i>n</i> = 12)	0.7 ( <i>n</i> = 20)
Eastman	0.685 ( <i>n</i> = 48)	0.639 ( <i>n</i> = 26)	0.739 ( <i>n</i> = 22)
Williams-Stafford	0.62 ( <i>n</i> = 34)	0.742 ( <i>n</i> = 13)	0.545 ( <i>n</i> = 21)
Brown-Buck	0.711 ( <i>n</i> = 21)	0.415 ( <i>n</i> = 12)	0.822 ( <i>n</i> = 9)

Note: The decoration index value is determined by calculating the proportion of the number of surfaces decorated to the number of surfaces of the vessel that could have been decorated. The highest possible score for each vessel (when all possible surfaces are decorated) is 1 (Wall 1987).

showy even if the Smiths chose to adorn their tables with their transfer-printed vessels during their more public meals. Despite the tremendous discrepancy of wealth between the Smiths and their neighbors, the Smiths’ tableware would not have stood out. The evidence suggests that their table would not have looked very different from what was found in the smaller dwelling houses rented by the working-class Eastmans or the Browns or in the small nearby home owned by the Williams family. In fact, the Smiths’ table may have seemed simple because it lacked porcelain plates, which were recovered from two of the three neighboring sites.

Though the Smiths appear to have eschewed porcelain plates, the profile for teas from the mansion midden shows different priorities (Table 13.6; Fig. 13.6). It reveals that the Smiths invested more in high-end teas, including porcelain, transfer-printed, and flow transfer vessels, which accounts for a higher mean cc index in comparison to the one calculated for their plates. The presence of pricier handled cups (2 of 10 transfer-printed teas were handled) in the Smith assemblage and none in the other assemblages had the same effect (Miller 1991: 15–16). Though all sites invested the most in their transfer prints, the Smiths’ neighbors tended to purchase more inexpensive teas, including undecorated cc, sponged, and painted wares, which (along with the presence of fewer porcelain and unhandled vessels) lowered their overall mean cc index value.

Given these results, it is clear that the Smiths purchased more expensive wares for use in the tea ceremony and reserved less distinctive, cheaper vessels for other meals, while their neighbors did not make this distinction. Here, the context of the wares’ use was impacting the Smith family’s expression of simplicity. The most significant difference about these contexts involves who was present at each kind of meal. As described above, Gerrit often gathered individuals of varied economic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds around his dinner table. In front of a wide audience, he showed his family living their reform ideals through displays of hospitality and, as clarified by the ceramic analysis, their commitment to pious consumption. The plates were so inexpensive and minimally decorated that even the family’s poorer neighbors likely would have found them familiar. In contrast, at tea, the Smith women often entertained a small group of friends or family that were often female and usually members of the middle and upper classes (Miller 1841–1842, Miller 1852a).

The teas are linked to Ann and Elizabeth not only because the tea ceremony has traditionally been linked to nineteenth-century elite and middle-class women

**Table 13.4** Mean cc index value for plates and teas

Assemblage	Plates	Teas	Difference
Smith	1.71 ( <i>n</i> = 12)	2.63 ( <i>n</i> = 20)	+0.92
Eastman	2.37 ( <i>n</i> = 26)	2.33 ( <i>n</i> = 22)	−0.04
Williams-Stafford	2.35 ( <i>n</i> = 13)	2.18 ( <i>n</i> = 21)	−0.17
Brown-Buck	2.31 ( <i>n</i> = 12)	2.3 ( <i>n</i> = 9)	−0.01

Note: A Kruskal-Wallis test on the distribution of cc index values for each vessel was used to evaluate whether the assemblages were statistically similar in terms of cost. For plates, the results were as follows: chi-square = 3.85,  $0.30 > p > 0.20$ ; at  $df = 3$ , chi-square should equal 7.815 for significance at the 0.05 level. For teas, the results were as follows: chi-square = 4.94,  $0.20 > p > 0.10$ ; at  $df = 3$ , chi-square should equal 7.815 at the 0.05 level. The results show that the difference between the sites in terms of cc index values for plates and teas was not significant.

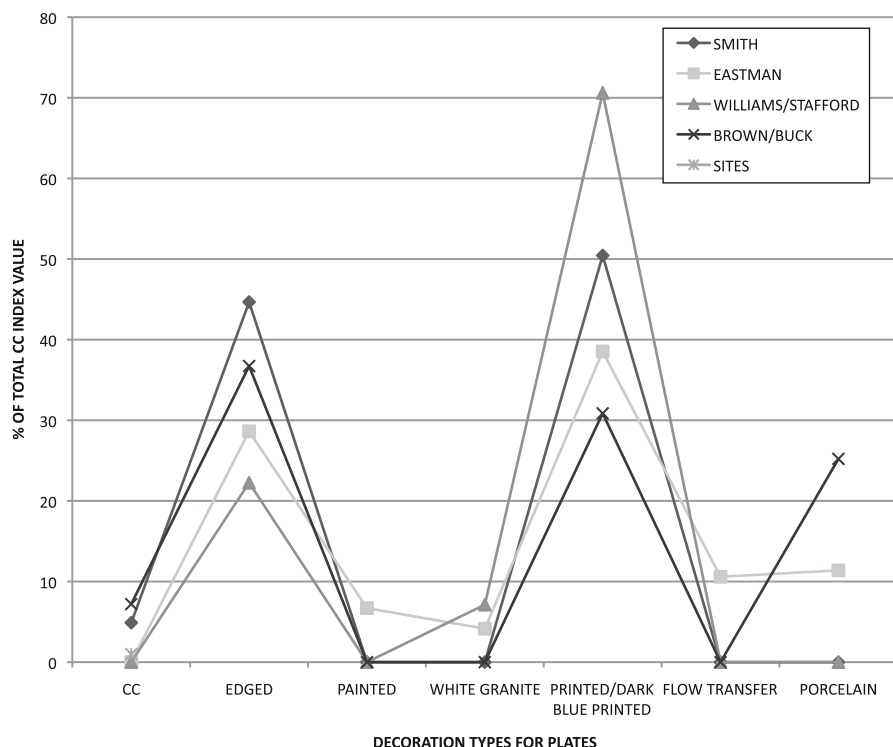
(Wall 1994, 2000) but also because of Gerrit's disdain for caffeinated beverages, which he reportedly gave up in 1832 (Frothingham 1909: 39). Unless Gerrit consumed other beverages in the vessels as part of the meal, the sheer presence of teaware, then, reflects a level of opposition to Gerrit's reform ideas about caffeine consumption, while the overall quality of the ceramics suggests that the family's ideas about simplicity differed. For in the context of the tea ceremony, Ann and Elizabeth were able to make less pronounced displays of austerity by using their porcelain sets and handled cups. As Wall noted, wealthy women often "exercise[d] their role as the arbiters of their families' gentility" (Wall 2000: 122) at teatime, when members of the same class were present, and it appears that Ann and Elizabeth were no different. Other women of means would have recognized their choices as expensive and refined, which would have expressed the Smith women's identity as genteel ladies in the context of rituals that in turn affirmed their social relationships with other wealthy women. But because the profile also shows a sizeable investment in less expensive teas (e.g., painted and transfer-printed tea sets) in the Smith assemblage, the women would have been able to employ different, more "simple" material culture when the audience differed and when affirming one's status as a reformer was more important than expressing one's wealth. In this way, their consumption strategy would still have met Gerrit's needs.

Thus, while Gerrit hoped to refashion the ways middle-class and elite women expressed their gender identity through his ideas about simplicity, the Smith women creatively subverted his authority by crafting a consumption strategy that was flexible and that served their own social needs. This strategy, which at times involved a more refined simplicity and (as discussed above for Elizabeth) a less radical temperance position that approved of the use of alcohol in cooking, likely did not endanger Gerrit's vision for social change, as the context of its expression was decidedly limited. The ceramics and alcohol-related material, then, must be viewed as a compromise that the Smith women brokered as they sought to simultaneously balance the demands of being elite female reformers, whom critics often labeled as "unwomanly" or as "violating the properties of their sex" (Smith 1874). Ann and Elizabeth's consumption strategy amounted to a negotiation that allowed them to remain "feminine" while navigating their diverse sets of social relationships.

Table 13.5 Decoration type value distribution for plates

Decoration type	Smith		Eastman		Williams/Stafford		Brown/Buck	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
CC	1	4.89	0	0	0	0	2	7.2
Painted	0	0	2	6.7	0	0	0	0
Edged	7	44.67	12	28.64	4	22.25	6	36.73
White granite	0	0	1	4.15	1	7.13	0	0
Transfer-printed/ dark blue printed	4	50.44	8	38.54	8	70.61	3	30.86
Flow transfer	0	0	2	10.59	0	0	0	0
Porcelain	0	0	1	11.38	0	0	1	25.21
Total	12	100	26	100	13	99.99	12	100

Note: In order to calculate the decoration type value percentage, the number of a particular type of vessel is first multiplied by its corresponding index value. The products for all vessels of each decoration type are then totaled, and the weighted values for each decoration type are then divided by the product total for the assemblage as a whole. Using the data from Miller (1991), the appropriate index value was selected depending on what was known about each vessel. If the rim diameter was known, the index value for a specific decoration type and plate size was used. When the rim diameter was not known (due to the small sherd size of some of the vessels), an average index value was taken of all plate sizes for a particular decoration type. Because the four assemblages date to roughly the same period (c. 1845), the index values were taken from the 1846 price index where possible. When figures from 1846 were not available for a particular decoration type, index values from the closest possible year were selected.



**Fig. 13.5** Profile showing what decoration types contributed to the mean cc index values calculated for each plate assemblage. The decoration types shown on the x-axis are arranged from left to right in order of their value. The transfer-printed plates and dark transfer plates, which have comparable index values, have been combined in this profile.

## Conclusions

As historians have demonstrated over the past few decades, it is impossible to consider the experience of social reformers without also considering gender. And while historical archaeologists have begun to contribute to this research area by excavating the lived experience of reformers, they have made more progress as it pertains to examining reform's impact on women's lives. The historical archaeological examination of a series of Smithfield, New York, sites offers an opportunity to examine both sides of the gender relation, thereby offering a reminder that reform changed the lives (or at least sought to change the lives) of both men and women.

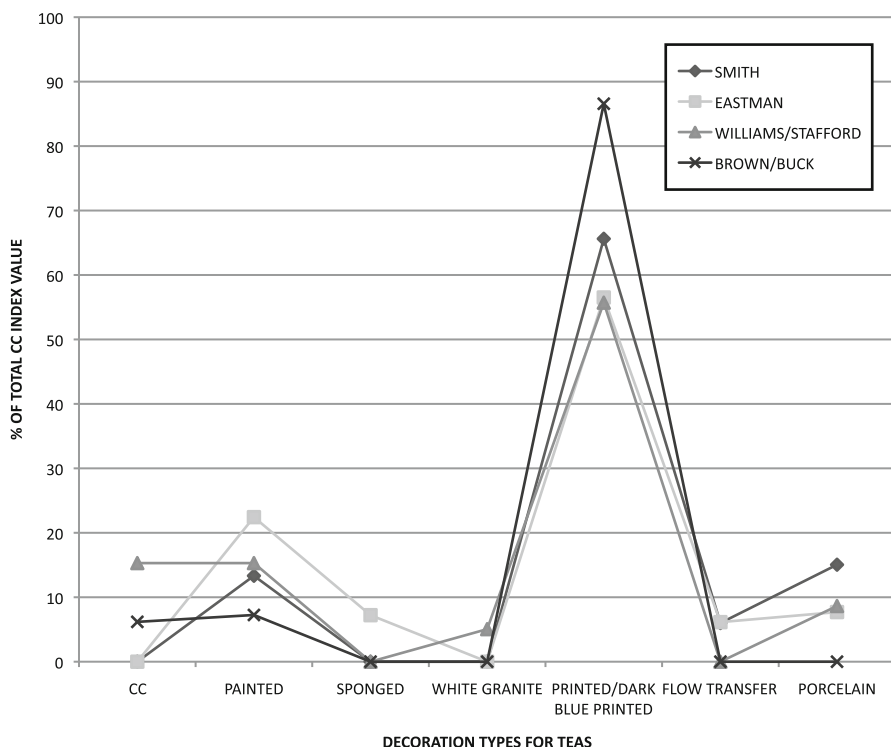
It did this in part because Gerrit's attacks on the consumption of alcohol and luxuries amounted to an assault on behaviors that affirmed specific sets of gender and class relations. And as demonstrated by the archaeological evidence found at four Smithfield sites, those Gerrit targeted for reform found it difficult to alter their behaviors and conform to an unadulterated version of Gerrit's radical vision. Instead, the data showed consumption patterns that must be viewed as a compromise. By consuming moderate

Table 13.6 Decoration type value distribution for teas

Decoration type	Smith		Eastman		Williams/Stafford		Brown/Buck	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
CC	0	0	0	0	5	15.3	1	6.18
Painted	4	13.33	7	22.43	4	15.3	1	7.25
Sponged	0	0	2	7.22	0	0	0	0
White granite	0	0	0	0	1	5.05	0	0
Transfer-printed/ dark blue printed	13	65.62	11	56.51	10	55.71	7	86.57
Flow transfer	1	6	1	6.14	0	0	0	0
Porcelain	2	15.05	1	7.7	1	8.64	0	0
Total	20	100	22	100	21	100	9	100

Note: In order to calculate the decoration type value percentage for teas, the number of a particular type of cup or saucer is first multiplied by its corresponding index value. The products for all vessels of each decoration type are then totaled, and the weighted values for each decoration type are then divided by the product total for the cup and saucer assemblage as a whole. Using the data from Miller (1991), the appropriate index value was selected depending on what was known about each cup or saucer. If it was known whether the cup was handled, for example, the index value for a vessel that featured a handle and a specific decoration type was used. When it was not known whether or not the cup was handled or unhandled (due to the small sherd size of some of the vessels), an average index value was taken of both for a particular decoration type. Because the four assemblages date to roughly the same period (c. 1845), the index values were taken from the 1846 price index where possible. When figures from 1846 were not available for a particular decoration type, index values from the closest possible year were selected. Lastly, index values were taken from the London-sized teas, unless the cup size was noticeably larger.





**Fig. 13.6** Profile showing what decoration types contributed to the mean cc index values calculated for each cup and saucer assemblage. The decoration types shown on the x-axis are arranged from left to right in order of their value. The transfer-printed teas and dark transfer teas, which have comparable index values, have been combined in this profile.

amounts of alcohol, imbibing more temperate forms of alcohol, opposing the use of alcohol as a beverage but not in cooking, and limiting displays of wealth to less public contexts, Gerrit's neighbors and his family members variably negotiated their ideals and their social relationships as they encountered the demands of daily life.

Though the twenty-first century observer often prefers to deify individual social reformers instead of remembering the challenges they faced (Mayer 1998: xiv; Wurst 1998; Sernett 2004), a true understanding of the ambitious nature of their work can only emerge from an appreciation of the negotiations that took place between reformers and their neighbors not just inside churches, reform institutions, taverns, and factories but also in dining rooms, parlors, and kitchens. As Gordon (2006: 443) has argued, this focus on the domestic offers not only an opportunity for scholars to reveal a different, usually private context in the fight for reform, but also a chance to highlight new ways that these efforts were resisted and negotiated by both reformers and those they targeted (and often compelled) for change. Historical archaeology, with its necessary focus on both belief and practice, offers a window for viewing these battles and compromises, which shed light on the complexity of consumption and identity construction, and the obstacles that nineteenth-century activists faced in seeking to realize their reform goals.

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# Chapter 14

## Sisters Across the Bay: Archaeology and the Influence of Two Late Nineteenth-Century Free Kindergartens in Northern California

Mary Praetzellis

### Introduction

In 1878, Kate Douglas Smith (later, Wiggin) opened the Silver Street Kindergarten in a San Francisco building that had housed a prestigious Institute for Young Ladies in a more prosperous decade. A well-connected New Englander, Kate embraced reform principles and studied Froebelian teaching methods. The kindergarten reached out to the poor families in the “Tar Flat” neighborhood and provided a safe, comfortable place for their children’s introduction to learning and middle-class values. The model provided by the first free kindergarten west of the Rockies inspired others to follow, and soon the Silver Street Kindergarten provided training for teachers as well, until the building was dynamited to stay the fire’s progress following the 1906 earthquake that nevertheless destroyed the surrounding neighborhood (Wheelan 1928: 7).

Elizabeth Betts, a student of Kate Wiggin, founded the West Oakland Free Kindergarten in 1886. By 1900, it had evolved into a community center, dubbed “Sunshine Corner,” housing a sewing school, cooking school, kitchen garden, boys’ club, secondhand goods center, and mothers’ club, along with a school of domestic science. It provided essential services to the neighborhood until it was torn down in the 1960s (Praetzellis et al. 1996).

In advance of freeway reconstruction following the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, historical archaeologists excavated hundreds of artifact-filled archaeological features associated with families within the spheres of influence of these organizations, in addition to excavating the Silver Street Kindergarten privy. What can the archaeological collections tell us about the importance of early childhood education to these mainly immigrant families struggling to make their futures in California so long ago? What can they tell us about the importance of such programs today?

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Additional considerations concern whether kindergartens were established for social control or internal colonialism and/or to provide poor children with the advantage of early education? The social control school contends that reformers strove to impose their middle-class values and practices on working-class people (Spencer-Wood 1994: 197–198). In contrast, proponents of internal colonialism consider the possibility that working-class people willingly adopted at least some dominant-group practices, particularly in the domestic sphere (Gordon 2006).

As I hope is demonstrated herein, good historical archaeology can and should complete the loop and tie into present day places, events, and processes.

## San Francisco

### *San Francisco: Setting*

San Francisco hardly needs an introduction—an instant city born of the Gold Rush, populous, rich, bawdy, and fully formed within a few years. Pioneers moved the sand hills that impeded traffic and growth, filled in the bay, and for a brief time, prosperity reigned for the workingman and elite alike. Labor was in short supply, goods flowed into the city, and gold or the aura of gold paid the bills. With its view of the bay and easy access to downtown, Rincon Hill was San Francisco's first exclusive address. Gold Rush entrepreneurs built their mansions here in eclectic styles on large lots with elaborate entrances, lush gardens, and high walls (Olmsted 2000a: 66–76; Shumate 1988).

The California Collegiate Institute for Young Ladies operated on the edge of Rincon Hill at 64 Silver Street from at least 1861, when it advertised itself as an “admirably arranged and conducted female school.” Mrs. M.B. Swedenstierna served as principal assisted by four other ladies in teaching music, dance, languages, gymnastics, and callisthenic exercise to an average of 63 pupils, half of whom boarded at the school. Advertisements described the building as large, pleasant, and well adapted to its purpose (Langley 1861: 31). The institute also taught needlework and embroidery (Langley 1863: 1xi). While most of the young ladies were Californians, a number came from northern Mexico and Canada. The school held receptions every Friday afternoon to demonstrate the progress of their pupils to guardians and visitors alike. The performances of the pupils of this “select school” with a “reputation for its thorough course of study and careful training” were “well calculated to enhance its reputation with all who witnessed them” (San Francisco Bulletin 1866: 3).

The Institute for Young Ladies suffered from decline as the Gold Rush petered out, and public works compromised the neighborhood's physical and aesthetic integrity. By December 1869, the Silver Street Primary School rented the building (City and County of San Francisco 1879: 325). Where 60–75 privileged young ladies had formerly studied gymnastics, music, and the fine arts, 600–700 public grade school students now labored, receiving accolades for their adherence to discipline and punctuality (San Francisco Bulletin 1872).



**Fig. 14.1** Silver Street Kindergarten in the mid-1880s (courtesy California Historical Society, FN-08725)

Things only got worse: A stock market crash fueled by widely traded, worthless mining stocks in the middle 1860s preceded a run on local banks on Black Friday in August 1875. The much-anticipated Transcontinental Railroad brought riches only to the rich providing cheaper eastern goods and a cheaper, more plentiful workforce. In 1878, in the midst of an economic downturn, the Silver Street Kindergarten (Fig. 14.1) replaced the overcrowded public grammar school that had moved to more spacious quarters nearby (Olmsted 2000b: 78–95).

### *San Francisco: Reformers*

Kate Douglas Smith was the driving force behind the free kindergarten on Silver Street. Her autobiography describes an idyllic childhood in a New England hamlet surrounded by her intellectual family (two generations of Harvard graduates preceded her) and Unitarian friends. The family moved to southern California for her stepfather's health, and here Kate became part of a new kindergarten and training school based on Froebelian methods (Wiggin 1923). Frederick Froebel developed the concept of a kindergarten in Germany in 1837. He believed that young children had a divine inner spirit that if nurtured would prepare them to be healthy, productive adults.

Structured play, actually practical tasks and activities—games set to music, and structured art projects—in a loving but firm environment, would lead children through progressively higher levels of physical, mental, and spiritual growth to adulthood (de Cos 2001: 7–9; Wiggin 1892, 1923: 90–99).

Kate Smith became both an ardent student and teacher, studying under Emma Marwedel, a Froebel graduate striving to transplant the teaching to charitable venues in America (Wiggin 1883: 5). Kate briefly opened her own school before being offered a position at the newly established free kindergarten in San Francisco. While education for young children had been available in the city since 1863, proprietors charged a per pupil fee. Silver Street was the first free kindergarten west of the Rockies. This solidly placed the institution within the social reform movement; its motto: “Education is a better safeguard of liberty than a standing army.” Marwedel also returned to the San Francisco Bay Area and was influential in the kindergarten movement until she died impoverished in Oakland in 1893 (Gutman 2000: 282, fn.27).

A charismatic teacher, speaker, and author, Kate Smith (Fig. 14.2) gained wide fame, attracted wealthy patrons, and made a huge success of this first free kindergarten. Simply put: she believed that providing age-appropriate lessons in beautiful and loving surroundings created happy, well-behaved children, who would grow into healthy, productive citizens in the Victorian model. And the children would bring these lessons—of thrift, cleanliness, and caring—to their families, who would be reformed as well (Smith 1881; Wiggin 1883, 1889, 1892, 1923). These lessons in middle-class values could be viewed as internal colonization or, alternatively, as the Beatles once sang: “All you need is love.”

The German term kindergarten means “children-garden” and nicely conjures up the image of careful tending of these youngsters as they blossom and grow into something of beauty and utility. San Franciscans came up with a vernacular translation—“kids’ guards”—that resonated with the teachers and acknowledged the full range of their duties to both nurture and protect (Wiggin 1892). The student teachers, themselves called kindergarteners at the time, spent 5 hours a day in class with the children and afternoons visiting their families. Every family received 3 to 4 visits a year with those in need receiving triple (Silver Street Kindergarten Society 1886: 9).

Kate Smith worked tirelessly for the cause using her “magnetism,” personality, and many talents; the press widely reported the miracles being accomplished, although some visitors doubted the children truly originated from the neediest families, and others criticized the lack of explicit religious teachings (San Francisco Bulletin 1878). A gifted writer, who penned *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, Kate wrote and apparently illustrated her own children’s stories, teaching manuals, and sheet music. The *Story of Patsy*, the short, tragic life of a young boy thrown down the stairs by his drunken father, takes place at the Silver Street Kindergarten to which all the proceeds initially were donated (Fig. 14.3). Kate also performed in music recitals and dramatic productions to raise money. Over 1,700 visitors thronged to the school in its second year (Smith 1881: 17). Kate Smith married in 1881. She trained her sister, Nora Smith, to run the kindergarten and took over the training school and fund-raising (Wiggin 1923: 164).



**Fig. 14.2** Kate Douglas Smith in her kindergartening days (Wiggin 1923: 116)

Each kindergarten class was divided into four “families,” located at tables in the four corners of the classroom. The middle of the room was left vacant and marked for games, marching, and gymnastics. Woodwork was painted in two shades of brown with brilliant scarlet moldings on the doors, baseboards, and windows and cream-colored walls covered with woodcuts, engravings, colored pictures, and student artwork. A piano, specimens, aquarium, caged birds, live plants, and vases of flowers completed the furnishings (Smith 1881: 23).





THE STORY OF VICTOR" Page 45.

**Fig. 14.3** Illustration from *The Story of Patsy*, Kate Wiggin's fictional account of the short life of a young boy set at the Silver Street Kindergarten. Note the monogram in the corner that indicates she also provided the illustrations (Wiggin 1889: 45)

The children arrived at school by 8:30 a.m. and assembled in the yard until the bell at 8:55 called them to line up for a quick inspection by the teachers, prior to marching, "singing, dancing, hopping" into class accompanied by the piano (Wiggin 1883: 17). The day began with "conversation," the teacher and students sharing interesting stories. At 9:30, the larger group split into "families" to work on various tasks—sewing, weaving, drawing, or lessons—until outdoor play at 10 a.m. Next, the children played games in their respective circles in the center of the classroom. At 11 a.m., the children split into groups by age and worked on their "occupations"—Froebel designed activities in the performance of handiwork of various kinds that rotated by groups and by day of the week. After-lunch activities varied between story time, ball exercises,

gymnastics, games, group work, and sewing (Wiggin 1883: 17–22). Thus, the children spent a very structured day, divided between tasks requiring concentration, exertion, and conversation, to develop mind, body, and spirit. All in all, the curriculum differed only slightly from that of the Institute for Young Ladies. Both programs wanted to prepare their pupils in mind and body for happy, productive lives.

Among the “occupations” were the “well-illustrated trade games of Miller, Shoemaker, Blacksmith, and Carpenter.” While industrialization was rapidly displacing most of these skilled crafts, the lessons learned of punctuality, thrift, order, and attention to detail remained desirable traits for prospective employers. Pupils at the Christmas Festival in 1880 provided business sponsors a view of these practical skills by demonstrating the games of Little Housemaids and Wheelwright (Smith 1881: 21–22).

The San Francisco Public Kindergarten Society founded the first 40-pupil class at the Silver Street Kindergarten in 1878 by securing subscribers who contributed \$1 a month or \$100 for life. Miss Hattie Crocker, of the railroading family, provided funds to enlarge and improve the original class, accommodating 80 pupils in January 1882. Later that year, Adolph Sutro, a local businessman, entrepreneur, and later San Francisco mayor, started another 80-pupil class. In 1883, a fund-raising campaign provided a third class for an additional 40 students (Wiggin 1883: 6–12). Miss Crocker purchased the building in June 1885, so that the kindergarten no longer needed to pay rent. In that year, the school accommodated 220 children aged 3–6 and graduated 25 women from the training school. Many training school graduates went on to teach in newly opened schools nearby (California Kindergarten Training School 1885; Gutman 2000: 272–278; Silver Street Kindergarten Society 1886: 9).

Prominent San Franciscans actively supported the free kindergarten movement. Trade associations pledged funds for new schools. Businesses donated goods and services. Wells Fargo provided free delivery, the water company provided free water, street cars allowed free rides to outings, hotels provided food for picnics, Adolph Sutro donated a tree for each child to plant on Arbor Day, and Phoebe Hearst donated money for shoes and holiday dinners (Ross 1976: 39). San Francisco had 43 free kindergartens in 1892 (Wheelock and Greenwood 1940).

### ***San Francisco: Patrons***

Kate Smith met Charles Dickens as a girl (Wiggin 1923: 34–43). She admired him immensely and obviously enjoyed emulating his style in writing descriptions of the “slum of Tar Flat.” This characterization of the neighborhood is not supported by census, geographic, and other archival data but may have been important in generating charitable gifts to the school. San Francisco had no clearly defined slum in the Eastern or European use of the word, but neighborhoods that changed character in the distances of less than a block (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1993).

Kate Smith had a vision of planting “a child-garden in some dreary, poverty-stricken place in a large city, a place swarming with unmothered, undefended,

under-nourished child-life” while acknowledging no experience with crowded neighborhoods nor with “any but carefully brought up, well-trained, silk-stockinged children” (Wiggin 1923: 107). Entering as an outsider, young, with only her recently acquired kindergarten certificate, Kate forged a new path. She felt that the school must not be “an exotic, a parasite, an alien growth,” a “transplanted” flower; that no teacher could sufficiently influence the children unless she could find eventually an ally in the parents. Kate Smith set out to find 40 families in “this strange, puzzling, foreign community, this big mass of poverty-stricken, intemperate, overworked, ill-assorted humanity, leavened here and there by a God-fearing, thrifty respectable family” (Wiggin 1923: 111). She did this in a practical, casual, and unobtrusive way: she shopped in the many, local small shops for the things she needed to furnish her new school, everything from paper to pencils, thumbtacks, and glue, including her own milk and bread. In the process of going in and out of as many different shops as possible, she discovered her future pupils and their families (Wiggin 1923: 112). Families in the neighborhood came from “every nation upon the earth”:

The Shubeners, Levis, Ezekiels, and Appels were generally in tailoring or second-hand furniture and clothing, while the Raffertys, O’Flanagans, and McDougalls dispensed liquor. All the most desirable sites were occupied by saloons, for it was practically impossible to quench the thirst of the neighborhood.

There were also in evidence barbers, joiners, plumbers, grocers, fruit-sellers, bakers, and vendors of small wares, and there was the largest and most splendidly recruited army of do-nothings that the sun ever shone upon. These forever-out-of-workers, leaning against every lamp-post, fence-picket, corner house, and barber-pole in the vicinity, were all male, but they were mostly mated to women fully worthy of them, their “wives” doing nothing with equal assiduity in the back streets, hard by—Stay, they did do one thing, they added copiously to the world’s population (Wiggin 1923: 109).

For her first class, which she taught without an assistant, Kate picked 40 students “best calculated to show the amazed public the regenerating effects of the kindergarten method” (Wiggin 1923: 116). In Kate’s fictional account, Patsy relates her criteria: “... he said, when the ‘nifty’ little girls come to git in, with their white aprons, yer said there warn’t no room; but when the dirty chaps with tored close come, yer’d said yer’d make room” (Wiggin 1889: 19). Whether she did, in fact, take an extra share of the more troublesome boys, sole charge of a class of 40 preschoolers presented a Herculean task.

The children came from the neighborhood:

We have children of hard-working and honest parents, who do for their family the best they know, and those of intemperate, brutal and ignorant ones, who only care to get their little ones out of sight; children from grogeries, and all sorts of dens, and saloons, second-hand clothing stores, small fruit and vegetable stands, etc, sailors, and the like honest, and well-behaved, wishing their children a better lot than their own, yet not knowing how to accomplish their desires (Smith 1881: 10).

And so did at least some of the Trustees, who lived around the corner on Harrison Street or nearby on Laurel Place up on Rincon Hill (Smith 1881: 3).

The school’s annual report for 1885 listed students by ethnicity: 70 Irish, 53 American, 49 German, 19 English, 8 Scottish, 8 Scandinavian, 6 Danish, 3 French, 3 Portuguese,

and 3 Finns. Interestingly, the average number of children per family was only 3 (Silver Street Kindergarten Society 1886: 10). This is a good reflection of the neighborhood in the late nineteenth century, although the Germans were generally not within the poverty-stricken class (Olmsted 2000b). It is probable, according to Kate Smith Wiggin's description, that the school accepted a range of pupils from families, some out of work and dysfunctional, and others what we would now call upwardly mobile.

Supplementing the message of beauty and utility, the Silver Street Kindergarten had two supporting platforms: cleanliness and temperance. Kate Smith first tackled the "ancient and respectable dirt devil" before the children even entered the building; they washed, if necessary, in the yard. Dirty hands could not create beautiful things, and children in clean clothing behaved more respectfully. Initially, the kindergarten supplied clothing for about half of the children, but gradually the work of the "little home missionaries, the children themselves" changed this as the mothers took a greater interest in their children's appearance (Smith 1881: 15; Wiggin 1883: 29).

Kate Wiggin (1883: 25) lamented that among all the different classes of families, "drink is the worst and most unconquerable foe of parents and children"—in "play lessons" imagining a party, beer, and spirits ranked as indispensable luxuries. For these children at least, tea was not the pretend beverage served in their toy tea sets. While the Silver Street Kindergarten exposed the evils of drink in their annual reports and the teachers made regular visits to the families in their program, they appear to have been concerned with intemperance rather than temperance as a practice. Kate Wiggin (e.g., 1923: 197, 211, 214) enjoyed the occasional alcoholic beverage on her travels abroad.

## *San Francisco: Archaeology*

Archaeologists from the Anthropological Studies Center (ASC) at Sonoma State University excavated two artifact-filled privies behind the Silver Street Kindergarten as part of Caltrans' West Approach Project designed to rebuild the freeway system following the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1993; Ziesing 2000). One privy was associated with the California Institute for Young Ladies and the other with the Silver Street Kindergarten (Praetzellis 2007a: 524–587). Project archaeologists also excavated nearly 50 discrete, artifact-filled features associated with neighborhood families dating from about 1868 to the 1930s (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2009). What can these deposits tell us about the success of the Kindergarten's neighborhood mission? Can the messages of education, cleanliness, sobriety, and beauty be seen in domestic assemblages from families with small children? And what about the discards from the Kindergarten itself?

What might be the archaeological footprint of a kindergarten? Froebelian teaching aids were primarily of wood and paper, items that generally do not survive in archaeological contexts. Durable parts of Froebelian materials include metal rings, straight wire used with peas like Tinkertoys, wax in metal boxes, clay, metal



**Fig. 14.4** Artifact layout photograph from the Silver Street Kindergarten privy. Note pile of 977 slate pencils, tablets, and ink bottles in the lower right hand corner (courtesy Anthropological Studies Center)

paper-weaving and paper-pricking needles, glasses for paint, metal parts of small paint brushes, shells and seeds used to create patterns, and metal fasteners for wooden objects hung from wood frames (Spencer-Wood 1991: 267). Ordinary durable goods—toys, sewing and writing implements, flowerpots and vases, and picture frames—might also be expected. Of course, these are all the things that would also be expected in domestic refuse deposits (Fig. 14.4).

Comparing the proportion of minimum number of items (MNIs) relative to total MNI for the Silver Street Kindergarten and 13 features from neighborhood households with young children dating from the period after the Kindergarten's founding, some rather mundane findings can be put forward (Table 14.1). Slate pencils vastly outnumber all other artifact types recovered at the Kindergarten; no domestic deposit even approached this 62% figure. While toy tea sets, dolls, and traditional games (dominos) did make their way into the Kindergarten privy, neighborhood families ranging in occupational levels discarded proportionally more. Likewise, the durable Froebelian materials, pictures, and interior decorations so widely touted for kindergartens did not often end up broken and discarded in the privy; deposits from neighborhood families contained a greater proportion of these items. And quite logically, the sewing and weaving undertaken by small children did not occur with standard needles and pins, which were found in greater proportion in the surrounding neighborhood where many tailors and dressmakers labored. Every archaeological deposit excavated in San Francisco included alcoholic beverage containers. All of the 13 features contemporaneous with the Silver Street Kindergarten contained a greater proportion of alcohol bottles than the Kindergarten (Praetzellis 2007a, b, c).

**Table 14.1** San Francisco archaeological features contemporaneous with Silver Street Kindergarten (school); artifact categories as proportion of MNI

	Privy 1	Well 8	Well 6	Well 801	Privy 857	Privy 505	Privy 1300	Privy 1318	Privy 515	Privy 806	Privy 808	Privy 1600	Privy 1322	Privy 1305
Date ca.	1880	1888	1896	1888	1880	1880	1885	1880	1880	1880	1882	1880	1888	1882
Ethnicity/origin		US	Irish US	Irish	Irish Nordic	US Canadian	Polish, US	Irish	Irish	Scots English	German Danish, Irish	Scots, Irish	Irish Australian	French, Irish
Occupation	School	Skilled	Skilled	S-skilled	Prof	Skilled	Skilled	Unskilled	S-skilled	Prof S-skilled	S-skilled Unskilled Pro	Skilled Unskilled	Unskilled S-skilled	S-skilled
<i>Toys</i>														
Tea set	0.0108	0.0141	0.0014	0.0254	0.0094	0.0082	0.0056	0.0209		0.0051	0.0213	0.0110	0.0083	0.0056
Doll	0.0025	0.0035	0.0037	0.0109	0.0084	0.0041	0.0064	0.0161		0.0039	0.0064	0.0047	0.0041	0.0168
Games	0.0006		0.0009		0.0009		0.0016				0.0021			
<i>Educational</i>														
Pencil	0.6215	0.0188	0.0051	0.0308	0.0094	0.0164	0.0142	0.0209	0.0070	0.0353	0.0128	0.0131	0.0124	0.0308
Tablet	0.0038	0.0024	0.0014	0.0072	0.0028	0.0041	0.0017	0.0032		0.0013	0.0011	0.0022	0.0041	0.0056
Sewing	0.0013	0.0047	0.0083	0.0036	0.0196	0.0061	0.0034	0.0016	0.0070	0.0032	0.0458	0.0075	0.0083	0.0028
<i>Beauty/nature</i>														
Picture			0.0009					0.0048	0.0070	0.0006	0.0043	0.0009		
Vase		0.0012		0.0054				0.0064		0.0032	0.0128	0.0009		
Flowerpot	0.0025	0.0035	0.0023	0.0072	0.0075	0.0061	0.0073	0.0064	0.0070	0.0071	0.0011	0.0022	0.0041	
Fish/birds	0.0006		0.0009	0.0036			0.0004			0.0045	0.0011	0.0006		
Alcohol bottle	0.0108	0.0176	0.0409	0.0308	0.0140	0.0736	0.0219	0.0145	0.0420	0.0141	0.0661	0.0185	0.0996	0.0252
Total MNI	1580	851	2175	552	1069	489	2326	622	143	1557	938	3195	241	357
SF Index	NA	68.19	61.89	59.41	57.71	54.85	54.06	53.87	51.86	51.36	49.08	48.33	42.26	34.85
Rank		7	9	10	11	14	16	17	20	22	25	26	29	34
Combined Index	NA	70.98	59.52	57.27	53.1	60.07	58.74	51.12	50.27	55.81	42.97	49.24	39.23	42.18
Rank		7	23	28	38	20	25	48	53	30	73	55	81	75



If we remove the disproportionate number of pencils from the analysis, the Kindergarten ranks in the middle (seventh) in the relative number of alcohol containers per MNI (minus pencils).

The discarded remains of the Silver Street Kindergarten, and the absence of some kinds of remains, quite simply demonstrate an emphasis on teaching fine manual skills involving pencils, and the values of temperance, thrift, and care. The children did have some free play with toys, but the vast majority of time was spent in structured activities as is reflected in discards. While the durable Froebelian items were fairly unbreakable, the children, no matter how active, rarely broke the cherished pictures, vases, and flowerpots. The teachers, student teachers, staff, or visitors occasionally imbibed spirituous beverages as part of their leisure or fund-raising activities. Remains from Privy 1 reflect the normative vision of a late nineteenth-century free kindergarten.

## Oakland

### *Oakland: Setting*

Just across the bay, Oakland provided the counterpoint to San Francisco. Oakland was the safe suburb, the moral, modest, middle-class haven in commute distance by boat to the dangerous, sophisticated metropolis of San Francisco. Oakland had more room, better weather, safer streets, and less of the adventurous element. San Francisco had a maritime focus connected to the world by sea; as the western terminus of the Transcontinental Railroad, Oakland was well grounded in the United States. The railroad also provided secure employment to skilled laborers long after the demise of the mining economy took its toll on San Francisco. But, of course, the railroad only needed so many employees, and, like other towns in California, Oakland filled quickly with new arrivals unable to find the security they sought (Olmsted and Olmsted 1994: 51–71; Praetzellis 2009a).

Following the usual political maneuvering, West Oakland was chosen as the perfect spot for the western terminus of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869. Real estate developers subdivided the flat, plentiful, and vacant land that soon sprouted inexpensive homes. In a classic display of the American dream realized, working- and lower-middle-class families, who had swarmed to jobs on the railroad, seized the opportunity and became the first proud owners of these cottages. With well-paid jobs and inexpensive housing, a stable multiethnic, working- and lower-middle-class flourished. The Pullman Company's policy of hiring African Americans as porters on the railcars led also to a multiracial, integrated neighborhood. Industries requiring access to transportation flocked to West Oakland creating a demand for unskilled labor, including immigrants—male and female (Olmsted and Olmsted 1994: 51–62; Spires 1994: 205–208).

Favorable employment conditions wavered with the times and declined steadily during the 1880s. The aftermath of the 1893 “panic” took its toll on all sectors,

culminating in the American Railway Union (ARU) strike of June 1894. Here, workers supported the Pullman Company car builders who struck in protest of wage reductions. The dispute revolved around the right to organize industry-wide and not general wages or hours. Both sides knew the result of this power struggle would define the power relations between labor and capital for decades (Olmsted and Olmsted 1994: 72). West Oakland workers supported the strike almost unanimously. On its second day, nearly 1,000 railway employees left their jobs—"even the Portuguese shovelers," "not five men of the regular force were at work for the company" (*Oakland Enquirer* 29 June 1894 cited in Olmsted and Olmsted 1994: 72–73).

Only the arrival of Federal troops restored control of the rail system to the railroad company. The ARU called off the national strike in late July having failed in its attempt at an industrial, rather than craft-based, unionism. It took another 15 years of deteriorating conditions before organized labor regained the strength to again question the railroad's power (Olmsted and Olmsted 1994: 76–77). The strike and the failure of the union reverberated through the neighborhood hurting railroad and small business families alike. There were simply fewer opportunities and less money to go around.

Over the years, families initially drawn to West Oakland for employment moved to other parts of town upon achieving success. West Oakland's simple cottages, now aging and grimy with railroad soot, attracted the notice of social reformers. Local women actively worked to improve conditions in the home and community for women and children and took a lead in the labor movement (Gutman 2000; Woods 1994: 185–186).

### ***Oakland: Reformers***

Miss Elizabeth Betts graduated in May 1886 in the sixth class to complete the program at Kate Wiggin's California Kindergarten Training School. She had studied rigorously for 9 months, attended 110 lessons, assisted for up to 200 days in a kindergarten, written abstracts of lectures, stories, and model lessons, passed 14 written and oral exams, and executed "the schools of work with inventions in all Froebel's occupations" (California Kindergarten Training School 1886). Kindergarten occupations included "sewing, drawing, weaving, paper-folding and cutting, pricking, slat and paper interlacing, pease-work [building with sticks and peas; similar to Tinkertoys], and clay modeling" (California Kindergarten Training School 1889: 9). Miss Betts also made home visits and provided statements of "family affairs" to the school (Silver Street Kindergarten Society 1886: 9).

With her degree in hand and having already taught as part of her training, Miss Betts went back to West Oakland where she opened the West Oakland Free Kindergarten in September 1886, just a block from the Oakland railyards. The daughter of a local carriage-spring maker, Elizabeth used her own volunteer labor and private subscriptions to establish the unaffiliated and nonsectarian school. She chose a geographically prominent, "sunny" large room in a wood-frame building

that had reportedly formerly housed a saloon. Thirty children came to the first class where Miss Betts offered “simple lessons in the better way of living, by gently enforcing order and cleanliness, and training the hand to respond to the brain” (Barber 1900: 27; Woods 1994: 193–194). While unconnected with the local temperance movement, Miss Betts’ bravery in transforming this former bastion of male misbehavior into a school for young children resonated with local reformers. Within two years, a group of Protestant women formed the West Oakland Free Kindergarten Association with a Board of Lady Managers to run the school and pay Miss Betts for her efforts (Gutman 2000: 272).

Miss Betts taught the children in the morning and visited their families in the afternoon. Her program grew rapidly with 75 pupils enrolled in 1892. She was credited with improving the “manners and morals” of her students and with reducing the number of broken windows in the neighborhood. As required at the time, Miss Betts resigned prior to her marriage in 1894 (Whitehouse 1901; Gutman 2000: 273, 276).

Mrs. Watt, the newly elected president of the board, hired Minnie McFarland, another graduate of the California Kindergarten Training School, as Miss Betts’ replacement. A very wealthy and determined woman, Elizabeth Watt provided the funds and backbone to not only keep the kindergarten running during hard times that saw a decline in charitable subscriptions but also resolved to create new programs for older children and adults. Her first new program developed from a suggestion by Miss Betts: a sewing school as a remedy to the cycles of domestic violence she had witnessed in her home visits. The sewing school would provide a refuge and useful training for school-aged girls. The kindergarten children recruited their sisters. The sewing program was huge success: 45 girls attended the first class, 80 the second (Gutman 2000: 276–278).

Mrs. Watt continued to expand the charity, establishing a settlement house in 1895 (Gutman 2000: 278). First known as the West Oakland Settlement and later as the New Century Club, this women’s club offered an array of programs to the neighborhood. Their stated mission is:

To abolish Ignorance by Knowledge  
 To eradicate Vice by Virtue  
 To displace Disease by Health  
 To dispel Darkness by Light  
 [Oakland New Century Club 1902:cover]

In contrast to residential practices at famous East Coast settlements, the Oakland women lived at home and not at the settlement. They did, however, rent, purchase, develop, and decorate more and more spaces within which to offer their expanding array of charitable programs. By 1900, the New Century Club women sponsored a sewing school with 100 pupils, boy’s club, salvage bureau, working girls’ club, little housekeepers’ class, laundry class, cooking class, and garment class. They took pride in their 14-year history and in watching girls’ progress from the kindergarten through the garment class (Whitehouse 1901). The club women remained nonsectarian in their teachings and, as can be seen from photographs of the time, provided racially integrated activities to the surrounding mixed neighborhood (Carlin 1900b; Gutman 1997: Plate 47, Plate 57).

## ***Oakland: Patrons***

Reformers did not consider West Oakland a slum for it lacked packed tenements and wretched poverty. Most working-class families possessed skills that achieved a modest, respectable livelihood from the railroad and local industries. In 1900, Eva Carlin (1900b: 247), a reformer and *Overland Monthly* reporter, wrote frankly: “It is an ugly locality, lined with small unattractive, crowded dwellings,” “a law-abiding, workingman’s district settled chiefly by hard-working foreigners, with a sprinkling of Americans, attracted thither by the exigencies of their occupation or the cheapness of the rents” (Carlin 1900a: 425). West Oakland reportedly housed 21 nationalities and at least 35 saloons or corner groceries selling liquor in addition to bocce-ball courts where fees included red wine; the district lacked churches, playgrounds, libraries, and other civic educational or recreational facilities (Carlin 1900a: 429, b: 247).

At the turn of the twentieth century, Carlin (1900a: 425–426) wrote that the neighborhood included Italian fruit and fish vendors; Irish railroad workers in various skilled trades; German clerks, bakers, and grocers; “pleasure-loving Negroes, clannish by reason of past oppressions”; Jews as independent dealers in goods; and Portuguese (1900b: 247). Other nationalities included Russian, Swedish, Scotch, Polish, English, Welsh, Norwegian, Danish, French, and Spanish (Watt 1902). The lack of amenities, the level of poverty relative to their homes in other Oakland neighborhoods, the aftermath of the railway strike, and the racial and ethnic mix attracted reformers to West Oakland. Moving on from child saving, they sought as their next subjects immigrant and working-class housewives, who were said to be “ignorant of science and its immutable laws; all lack the knowledge which in any form ‘transmutes existence into life’” (Carlin 1900a: 426). The cramped living quarters, often only three rooms within which families’ everyday activities—cooking, eating, sleeping, childbirth, illness, and death—took place, did not correspond to Victorian domestic ideals. The practice of using front steps and sidewalks as social space was viewed as symptomatic of the “over-worked, weak, ill-tempered” women who had, not surprisingly, “turned their backs on the dreariness within” (Carlin 1900a: 426).

The cooking and hygiene habits of immigrant women alarmed West Oakland’s domestic reformers. Much of the food “is selected without regard to its nourishing value. It is badly cooked, untidily served and often eaten irregularly.” Children’s home-prepared school lunches often included tea, coffee, and “even beer,” “baker’s cake, doughnuts, and soda-water,” and very seldomly “wholesome home-made bread, or milk or eggs” (Carlin 1900a: 428). Thus, the cooking and laundry classes for women and young girls targeted these shortcomings, as well as the teachings within the kindergarten and vacation school stressing the virtues of cleanliness, nutrition, thrift, order, and temperance. The “Broom Brigade” complete with verse—“With the shortest strokes we’ll sweep, in the corners we must peep;...” (Oakland New Century Club 1901; Fig. 14.5a)—and the required courses in “Scrubology” and “Soapology” for boys wishing to enter the “club” (Carlin 1900b: 251) are but two examples.



**Fig. 14.5** (a) The Broom Brigade (Oakland New Century Club 1901). (b) Boy's Club (Carlin 1900b: 250)

The New Century Club provided no programs for workingmen, but they did reach out to the boys, opening the Boys' Club in 1899. Seven boys attended the first meeting at which they proceeded to tear the curtains from the windows and the cloths from the tables, throwing them into the street—"pandemonium reigned. With the aid of a little muscular Christianity order was restored and the Club adjourned." After a few months, the "drunken boys entirely reformed," and 72 of them spent their Thursday evenings listening to music and staging musicals, playing games, painting, stamp collecting, leatherworking, and participating in the self-governing club (Carlin 1900b: 251; Wheaton 1901; Fig. 14.5b).

The Oakland New Century Club women created a space within which they could demonstrate, model, and teach their values of Victorian domesticity and order, and pass on their views of culture, beauty, and mankind. Their belief in a moralistic environmental determinism conditioned their thinking and actions (Gutman 2000: 264). Through their work, they hoped to “create new lives and new tastes—it is really re-generating the next generation” (Carlin 1900b: 257).

### ***Oakland: Archaeology***

Archaeologists from the ASC excavated 120 artifact-filled archaeological features dating between the 1850s and 1910 on 15 city blocks in West Oakland in advance of the replacement of the Cypress Freeway (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2004). The West Oakland Free Kindergarten (a.k.a., Sunshine Corner, New Century Club) was adjacent to the project corridor, about midway along the route under study.

The West Oakland sample includes nine features associated with families and young children contemporaneous with the West Oakland Free Kindergarten. The Oakland data parallel those presented for San Francisco: household deposits contain a greater proportion (with or without pencils) of alcohol containers than the Silver Street Kindergarten (Table 14.2).

Kindergartens were but one of many domestic and environmental reform movements that had energized upper- and middle-class women since the late 1860s in the aftermath of the Civil War and as an outgrowth of Abolitionism. Benefiting from the Industrial Revolution and the expansion of scientific knowledge and new gadgets, the movement sought to revolutionize women’s work through applying the advances of scientific housekeeping, to elevate the role of women in the home, and to create free time for other uplifting activities beyond the home. Having mastered domestic material culture through careful study of such works as Catharine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe’s 1869 *The American Woman’s Home*, these women organized to bring the message to immigrant and poor women in America’s cities. Kindergartens, domestic reform, urban reform, and social reform interconnected both the women and their organizations. For example, some of those involved in the West Oakland Free Kindergarten had connections to the temperance movement and to organizations in support of the striking railroad workers (Gutman 2000). Most domestic reformers supported temperance, unions, minimum-wage laws, child-labor laws, and the 10-hour day (Spencer-Wood 2002: 132).

The awakening consumer culture, with its abundance of mass-manufactured goods, advertising, planned-obsolescence, and attention to changing styles, crosscut and reinforced domestic reform movements. Even if we could directly connect an archaeological deposit to a family known to have been served by one of our kindergarten programs, it would be impossible to tease out the affect of the kindergarten movement from the pervasive influences of reform and consumerism. Nevertheless, both institutions helped to make each neighborhood uniquely its own place.



**Table 14.2** Oakland archaeological features contemporaneous with West Oakland Free Kindergarten

	Privy 8445	Well 2007	Privy 4234	Well 300	Well 7511	Pit 2855	Pit 2870	Pit 2404	Pit 1354
Date ca.	1895	1900	1887	1895	1895	1900	1900	1900	1900
Ethnicity/origin	US	US English	Irish	Irish African-American	Semi-skilled	US	US	US	German
Occupation	Skilled	Skilled	Skilled	Professional	Skilled	Skilled	Skilled	Unskilled	Skilled
<i>Toys</i>									
Tea set		0.0118	0.0024		0.0042				
Doll	0.0116	0.0067	0.0024	0.0086	0.0084		0.0028		
Games									
<i>Educational</i>									
Pencils		0.0118	0.0144	0.0086	0.0021		0.0083		0.0083
Tablet		0.0034	0.0024		0.0021	0.0263	0.0028	0.0100	0.0078
Sewing		0.0067		0.0029	0.0125				0.0078
<i>Beauty/nature</i>									
Picture					0.0021				0.0021
Vase		0.0017			0.0104		0.0304		0.0078
Flowerpot		0.0168			0.0104		0.0000		0.0078
Fish/birds	0.0058		0.0096	0.0029		0.0088			
Alcohol containers	0.0523	0.0523	0.0288	0.0315	0.0251	0.0251	0.0028		
Total MNI	172	595	417	349	479	114	362	0.0400	0.0234
Oakland Index	64.62	52.96	52.84	49.08	48.35			100	128
Rank	8	26	27	33	34				
Combined Index	51.51	59.55	51.21	43.6	55.46				
Rank	46	22	47	71	32				

Building over many years of archaeological work, Bruce Owen looked at material well-being as measured by discarded consumer goods to see if this correlated with occupation. This analysis resulted in a Material Status Index using statistical data derived from 59 domestic deposits in Oakland and 39 in San Francisco dating from the late 1860s to 1900 (Owen 2009a). To be included in the sample, each feature needed an MNI of 35 and 100 identifiable faunal items. Each feature had been excavated and cataloged with the same methods to ensure truly comparable collections.

The simplification presented here does not do justice to Owen's work, and the reader is encouraged to read his groundbreaking study. His approach involved devising and testing a large number of potential indices based on the archaeological material and then evaluating how well each index correlated to historically documented occupation categories associated with each feature and to the neighborhoods in which they were located (Owen 2009b: 394). Owen chose a best-fit index for San Francisco, one for Oakland, and one for the two cities combined. The San Francisco Index ranged from 71.56 (highest) to 26.66, Oakland from 89.76 to 22.98, and combined from 77.4 to 21.56 with a total sample size of 98 assemblages. Tables 14.1 and 14.2 rank the features from left to right, based on the city index and rank, and also list the combined index and rank. Eighteen of the 98 households contained young children during the respective neighborhood kindergarten's period of operation (Praetzellis 2009b: Table 11.8).

Starting with the small scale: Artifacts from the well associated with the Rowe household ranked the highest among our sample on both the San Francisco and combined indices at 7 overall. Albert Rowe and his wife Harriet moved to San Francisco from New Jersey in the 1850s. Albert worked successfully as a shipwright. From 1873 to 1888, the family lived in a relatively large 1,900-square-foot house on Perry Street, just across the back fence from the Silver Street Kindergarten. During this time, at least two daughters, one son, and often other female relatives lived with them. The girls had the nicest dolls and tea set available. The collection also contained a large number of shoes from infant through children's sizes, with little wear. After Harriet died, the family moved, and Albert remarried and had a second son, also named Albert. Two of his sons became physicians, Albert Jr. achieving particular renown as one of the first allergists and an instructor at the University of California Medical Center in San Francisco (Praetzellis 2007a: 356–383). The family's discards showed an investment in their children that was also reflected in their educational accomplishments.

Moving to the large scale, it is not surprising that the rankings from our sample do not stratify by occupation or nationality, as Owen found that the best indices correlated only roughly with occupational rank. Material status, he suggested, could be defined as "the relative cost or prestige of the goods a person actually consumes" (Owen 2009b: 410). Given the forces behind nineteenth-century reform and consumerism, the material status indices may also be measuring adherence to Victorian norms. These were powerful forces. Despite the fact that by 1880 the Bay Area had only been inhabited by nonnative/non-Spanish-speaking peoples for 30 years,



**Fig. 14.6** Cypress Project Well 7511 contained bones representing nearly 2,200 pounds of meat (courtesy Anthropological Studies Center)

almost no statistically significant differences in artifacts or faunal remains could be assigned to ethnic or national differences (Owen 2009a).

Consumerism and reform did not, however, always coalesce as homogenizing influences on the newly arrived Californians. Diet remained contentious—households may have eaten off standard Victorian white plates, but the meals they served conformed to other visions of proper diet (Fig. 14.6). Kate Wiggin noted the presence of luxury foods in children’s lunches and Eva Carlin the woeful lack of nutritious meals, while wags such as Bret Harte (1860) described the state paradoxically as: “give us the luxuries of life and we will dispense with its necessities.” Butchers complained that they could not find customers for their coarser cuts of meat: “He must have his sirloin and café noir to-day; to-morrow may be leanness and abstinence” (Brooks 1868: 466). Nineteenth-century nutritionists bemoaned findings that working-class and poor families spent too much money on expensive meats and sauces while shunning more nutritious options: this they ascribed to “some kind of mysterious virtue in the kinds of foods that... have the highest price” (Atwater 1888: 437).

Statistical studies of our archaeological faunal collections have demonstrated that there was “no neat correspondence between a family’s wealth and the purchase of high quality meats in 19th-century Oakland”; “the meaning of meat extended beyond nourishment” (Praetzellis 2004: 83). In both cities, consumers avoided low-cost cuts of meat. Owen found that expressing high material status accorded more with rejecting the low-cost cuts than in choosing the high-cost ones. San Francisco consumers purchased high-cost cuts, such as sirloin and prime rib, more frequently than did

Oaklanders, who opted for mid-price ones such as round and chuck rib (Owen 2009b: 412). In neither city could the message of domestic reformers regarding health and nutrition overcome conflicting cultural and class-based messages regarding the expression of social status and deep cultural understandings of self-worth and diet.

## California Today

From its inception, the ultimate goal of its supporters was for kindergarten to become an integral part of the California public school system. At the same time, the moral force behind the movement was one of social reform; this meant rescuing the youngest children in poverty-stricken immigrant families and giving them the chance to better themselves through education.

California enacted its first law regarding kindergarten in 1891, when children at age four were admitted to public schools that had adopted kindergartens. It was not until 1946 that California voters approved a constitutional amendment that provided state aid for kindergartens as part of the elementary school system (de Cos 2001: 21, 32). Thus, kindergartens gradually and unevenly became part of the public school system. Other programs developed concurrently for preschool age children, ranging from government subsidized and charity schools to private nursery schools, daycare centers, and preschools. Continuing debates revolved around the appropriate age to begin kindergarten and curriculum. When were children ready and what should they learn? Was the goal to create happy people, good citizens, or capable workers? Problem solvers or trusting followers? What was the appropriate balance between academics, citizenship, arts, and simple nurturing?

Longitudinal observational studies of families classified by occupation (professional, working, welfare) have found that although from very different lifestyles, all nurtured and socialized their children, providing much the same toys and basic skills by age three (Hart and Risley 2003). During this time, the children grew more like their parents most significantly in the size of their vocabulary, with the professional families using nearly three times as many different words than those on welfare. Professional families also were found to have provided significantly more verbal encouragements than discouragements to their children than the welfare families, where discouragements were found to outnumber encouragements two to one. Thus by age three, the disadvantaged children already lagged significantly behind in vocabulary and in incentives provided by positive reinforcements. A second study including many of the same children at age nine found that the vocabulary growth at age three strongly associated with vocabulary scores at age nine (Hart and Risley 2003).

Two economists recently studied return on investment in cognitive and noncognitive (social, emotional) skills during various life stages with the goals of maximizing return on investment, lessening inequality, and providing an understanding of how to foster “successful people” (Cunha and Heckman 2010). They constructed a “simple economic model of skill formation,” which is actually a series of complicated equations and graphs opaque to the uninitiated. Their findings, however, would resonate with the nineteenth-century



**Fig. 14.7** The  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch-tall house was scratched into the surface of a slate writing tablet found in Well 9 on the West Approach Project (digitally enhanced scan courtesy Adrian Praetzelis)

kindergarten pioneers. Very basically, they found that investments in the cognitive and noncognitive skills of young children multiplied and reinforced themselves over the years. Noncognitive skills foster cognitive skills and are an important part of successful families and successful social programs: “Emotionally nurturing environments produce more capable learners” (Cunha and Heckman 2010: 6). Late investments in the cognitive skills of disadvantaged children were not found to have the same level of benefit (Cunha and Heckman 2010: 20–21, 25).

These contemporary studies on how children learn have equal relevance to the past. Our kindergarten reformers intuitively understood the need to reach young children and their families and to enrich them in mind, body, and spirit as an antidote to poverty. While more than a century has passed since the reformers set up their schools, many things have not really changed (Fig. 14.7). Kindergarten children are precious, appealing, and easily objectified as marketing tools. Family participation is essential to sound learning experiences. Children are the entry point into the family for new ideas and provide agents for change, particularly in immigrant households. Diet is perhaps more contentious than ever with the increasing problems of diabetes and obesity and the mass appeal of fast food and Happy Meals. In a world of single parents and two-income families, the latter provide cheap, convenient, fast, filling, and fun (often accompanied by a toy or playground) meals for parents who lack the time, energy, facilities, resources, or knowledge to provide the expert-approved meals in the desired ratios from the basic food groups. Market forces and prevailing cultural values continue to undermine government sponsored messages of dietary reform.

As part of his War on Poverty, President Lyndon Johnson initiated Head Start in 1965 to enhance the social and cognitive development of preschoolers. While focusing on early reading and math skills, the community-based, comprehensive programs also covered health, nutrition, and parental involvement services for low-income families. In 1995, the program expanded to include Early Head Start covering prenatal to age three (Office of Head Start 2010). This partnering of public and private organizations at the local level is a clear outgrowth of the free kindergarten movement a century earlier. Through its emphasis on mind, body, and spirit in partnership with families and communities, Head Start has broken the poverty cycle for many. Much as individual artifact categories did not reflect the kindergartens' influences on local families, basic achievement tests do not adequately reflect Head Start's impact. Complex multivariate or longitudinal studies, such as Owen's (2009a) Material Status Index and Hart and Risley's (2003) vocabulary analyses, are needed to untangle the influences of cognitive and noncognitive factors on human learning and behavior. Additionally, some behaviors such as diet are simply harder to change than others. In all cases, children continue to supply the subject and object, message, and media. They are the battleground of the future.

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# Chapter 15

## Reform to Repatriation: Gendering an Americanization Movement in Early Twentieth-Century California

Stacey Lynn Camp

### Introduction

Between 1906 and the early 1940s, American state and federal officials, who were predominantly men, decided that the country's patriotism was in peril. This time period would see not only two world wars but also the Great Depression. Sent off to war, separated from loved ones, or bankrupt from the stock market crash, Americans began to question the greatness of the supposed "American" dream. In response, the US government, corporations, and other social organizations set out to "Americanize" its populations. Many (but not all) Americanization programs reminded citizens and noncitizens alike how different Americans were from other nationalities and sought to create a homogenous national culture that subscribed to a shared belief system (Van Nuys 2002).

At the same time, the nation's ethnic composition was diversifying. With immigrants entering the country from nearly all sides of the North American continent, the imagined cultural homogeneity of Anglo-America was being threatened. Immigrant assimilation programs and Americanization instruction were proposed as solutions to problems supposedly arising from the arrival of immigrants and the importation of their multifaceted political and cultural beliefs (Barrett 1992).

Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans were one of the most heavily targeted ethnic groups during the Americanization movement. Unlike other immigrants

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"His children [Mexican American and Mexican immigrants] and his children's children will live here as American citizens. They will help to elect our presidents; they will help to establish our moral, political, and religious ideals and practices. Our future is bound up with theirs. We must think about them; we must come to know them; we must work with them in constructive and worth-while things of life" (McCombs 1925: xi)

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occupying early twentieth-century California, Mexican immigrants were conferred the racial and legal status of “white” and promised the full benefits of American citizenship in California up until the late 1920s. This legal whiteness was a condition of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo signed after the cessation of the Mexican-American War of 1848. The treaty promised individuals of Mexican heritage occupying annexed portions of former Mexican territory full citizenship in the United States as well as an ascriptive and judicial whiteness reflected in census schedules, court cases, and other legal documentation (Ngai 2004: 50–53). Reformers reasoned that if Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants were to share the same racial and citizenship status as Anglo-Americans, they must become accustomed to Anglo-American culture. Reformer Vernon Monroe McCombs echoed this sentiment by reminding readers of his book, *From Over the Border: A Study of the Mexicans in the United States*, “It is to be remembered that all Mexicans are legally ‘white.’ They are so classified by marriage license bureaus and in all government statistics” (1925: 30). This case shows how the legal designation of whiteness can be undone, and people can be reclassified as nonwhite, in contrast to the studies of many immigrant groups that came to be considered white (Roediger 2005).

Yet Anglo-American enthusiasm for the Americanization of individuals of Mexican heritage soured by the 1930s when reformers who initially campaigned for the adoption of Americanization and acculturation instruction in work camps, schools, and churches actively supported and even advocated the repatriation of both naturalized and nonnaturalized Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants back to Mexico. What caused such a radical and rapid shift in federal and public attitudes toward Mexican immigrants? Why did Anglo-Americans go from reforming to repatriating both naturalized and nonnaturalized Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants? Why did they shift from Americanization programs that were forms of internal colonialism to expulsion?

Presently, research on communities subjected to Americanization in the Western United States is limited. Indeed, as John McClymer remarked in 1991, “despite its size and the furor it occasioned in the decade following the outbreak of war in Europe, Americanization remains one of the least studied movements in the United States” (3). McClymer’s statement still holds true today; William Deverell has recently lamented that “We know too little about Americanization, especially how this supposedly national ideal was refracted through local political and cultural settings” (1997: 247).

In historical archaeology, Spencer-Wood (1996: 435–437) has conducted pioneering research revealing how some Boston reform women defined Americanization differently from men. These reformers materially implemented their alternative ideology through reform programs. Spencer-Wood found that the term “Americanization” held different meanings due to diversity among reformers, and the Americanization movement was not a uniform program for creating proper Americans. Many Americanization programs sought to eliminate immigrant cultures and replace them with Anglo-American culture. This is an example of internal colonialism because immigrant adoption of the dominant American culture was facilitated by the commonly strong desire of the children of immigrants to become

Americans and reject what they often perceived as antiquated customs and lifeways of their foreign parents.

Reform women in Boston's social settlements, where participation in programs was voluntary, redefined the meanings of the terms "Americanization" and "social order." As reformers at Denison House put it in 1916:

While we interpret the glory of America to these newcomers, let us not fail to interpret their aspirations and endowments to the native born, that the word *Americanization* [sic] may cease to mean to the majority of *men* [my emphasis] the impossible task of shaping alien minds and hearts to the old colonial pattern. Let us not rob America of some of the best gifts of these foreign-born citizens have to offer her, in our blind efforts to make them over into something too much like ourselves! ...only by the united wisdom of all sorts and conditions of men can we attain to the better social order. (quoted in Spencer-Wood 1996: 436)

Spencer-Wood's research found that this was not empty rhetoric but a discourse on goals that were implemented in programs promoting the preservation of immigrant cultures, which included ethnic clubs, dances, plays, pageants, lectures, theater productions in foreign languages that were sometimes about immigrant cultures, and ethnic fairs where women sold their home-sewn cultural costume items (Spencer-Wood 1994: 197, 1996: 435–436, 2002: 117–19, 130–131).

This chapter adds new information about the regional diversity in Americanization movements by exploring how Americanization instruction was carried out on the Southern California landscape: what agents of reform thought of it and how their opinions and actions ultimately helped contribute to the deportation of nearly 500,000 Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants in what historians consider to be "one of the largest mass-removal operations ever sanctioned by the United States government" (Guerin-Gonzales 1994: 1). Using archaeological and archival research (Camp 2009) conducted on an Americanization program aimed at Mexican immigrants as a case study, this chapter demonstrates how a constellation of racialized and gendered discourses regarding the citizenship of the American nation shaped the types and intensity of training the "reformees" received.

The Pacific Electric Railway Corporation, one of the chief Southern California employers and recruiters of male Mexican immigrants for railway maintenance labor, produced and circulated a sizeable amount of literature on the Americanization of their workforce. The charity and acculturation activities put on by the company or, rather, the reform work they claimed to perform served as a model for other Americanization campaigns in the region and made a lasting impact on race relations in California. Drawing upon a combination of oral histories from Southern California reformers, recently cataloged the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation documents held at *The Huntington Library*, newspaper articles, and reports composed by the California Commission of Immigration and Housing health and work camp inspectors who witnessed firsthand the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation's supposed reform work, this article demonstrates that Americanization efforts in Southern California predominantly benefitted the corporations or institutions imparting such instruction.

The following locally situated analysis demonstrates that in this case, research on reform programs reveals more about the "assumptions made about Mexican



culture...and the version [that Anglo-American] migrants to California brought with them from points east” than about the individuals on the receiving end of Americanization (Sánchez 1993: 88). Indeed, some Anglo-American female reformers used their work as a platform for the women’s suffrage and rights movement of the time. Performing charity, they argued, should be acknowledged as “work” worthy of pay. Women such as the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation’s Americanization nurse, Viva Carr, “joined the Americanization movement because the fundamental question of that campaign, defining American citizenship, merged with the basic issue they sought to resolve: how to transform women’s citizenship” (Gullet 1995: 72). Companies like the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation also championed the rhetoric of Americanization to silence naysayers who were adamantly against the construction of railway labor camps in their communities. Writing about and promoting “charity work” gave the Pacific Electric a discursive space to convince such communities otherwise. Public relations materials spoke of the clean, hygienic work camps that were maintained by their Mexican immigrant occupants thanks to the Americanization instruction they were receiving. However, as county and state health inspection records will show, Pacific Electric camps were cited numerous times for unsanitary and crowded conditions that were rarely remedied, although minimal improvements were made to a few camps.

In what follows, this chapter highlights the discrepancies between what Americanizers in Southern California promised in public forums and the reform activities they actually undertook by comparing and contrasting archival and archaeological data associated with the Pacific Electric Railway’s railway camps. To understand why these disjunctures exist, the Americanization movement must first be understood in its broader national and international context by exploring some of the factors that stimulated and provoked the production of Americanization discourses. Next, the case study of the Pacific Electric’s railway camps is considered to critically assess what Americanization was actually composed of and if any of the company’s promises were actually kept. This chapter concludes with a review and consideration of the factors that led to the disappearance of Americanization rhetoric in public venues and the simultaneous repatriation of Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans back to Mexico.

## Historical Context of the Americanization Movement

Historians have traditionally assumed that nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Anglo-American reformers, politicians, and social workers wished to impart a uniform suite of Victorian ideologies to immigrants, children, and other marginalized groups. In practice, however, domestic reform campaigns comprised of a pastiche of ideas, plans, and intentions regarding how to create “proper” American citizens. In historical archaeology, Spencer-Wood (1991, 1994) coined the term “domestic reform” to capture the great diversity of reform movements she researched. She found that some Boston reform women redefined Americanization

and created programs to integrate immigrant cultures into a pluralistic American culture, which stood in contrast to the frequent attempt by Americanization programs to eliminate immigrant cultures.

The Americanization movement arose at a time when immigration and citizenship laws and statutes were being reexamined and reformulated by the US government. This era is considered a “nodal point in the history of American immigration policy”; the years between 1882 and 1943 “marked the moment when the golden doorway of admission to the United States began to narrow” and “when statutes and administrative actions set narrowing numerical limits for those immigrants who had not otherwise been excluded” (Daniels 2004: 3). Americanization programs that sought to replace immigrant cultures with Anglo-American culture were seen as a solution to deal with the multicultural peoples entering the country as well as to the indoctrination of the younger members of the American republic. Organizers of these kinds of Americanization programs believed that homogenizing culture and decreasing the diversity of the new nation would reduce conflict, encourage democracy, and evoke patriotism.

Consequently, these programs targeted a variety of people: Anglo-American children; children of immigrants who were already citizens at birth; blue-collar, working-class Anglo-Americans; and newly arrived immigrants from Mexico, Asia, and Europe. The diverse agendas of these programs were dependent on the racial categories of the time and the class, gender, and age of the individual. Male lawmakers, politicians, and female social workers, a profession founded by reform women, had specific ideas of what types of citizens particular ethnic and gendered subjects could become: what jobs they could fill and their prospects for upward mobility. As a result, Americanization programs came in many forms and were held in a variety of places: programs were established in work camps, factories, churches, community centers, colleges and universities, schools, and federal buildings.

While everyone living in the United States could be suspected of bad citizenship, the most aggressive Americanization programs were aimed at Mexican Americans and other immigrant groups (despite the fact that many of the individuals targeted were already naturalized citizens). The president at the time, Theodore Roosevelt, reasoned that “The foreign-born population of this country...must be an Americanized population...It must talk the language of its native-born fellow citizens, it must possess American citizenship and American ideals” (Van Nuys 2002: 2). Large-scale federal and state Americanization programs run by men’s corporations and the female-dominated vocations of social work, charity groups, and churches went after these populations. Exactly what these programs were trying to get marginalized groups to assimilate to “shifted and bent, undergoing continual redefinition and renegotiation according to changes in economic conditions, population, politics, and social and cultural pressures,” demonstrating that even Americanizers struggled to define the qualities unique to an “American citizen” (Van Nuys 2002: 2). According to Van Nuys (2002: 2), the ultimate goals of these programs remained remarkably consistent: to create a “smoothly functioning social, economic, and political order” by teaching immigrants their “rightful place” in the American capitalist order. However, some Boston reform women sought a “better

social order” by redefining Americanization as the process of integrating the diversity of immigrant cultures to form a more pluralistic American culture (Spencer-Wood 1996: 436).

Some Anglo-American female social workers shared surprisingly similar conceptions of Mexican American and Mexican immigrants’ place in America. Many proponents of the Americanization movement desired to change Mexican Americans’ domestic practices and family structures while continuing to position immigrants on the lower-class rung of the ladder of “American” society. Reform programs could not change the widespread racism that prevented Mexican American men from being hired for middle-class professions. Reform programs were similarly gendered for Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants. Women were taught sewing, typing, and housekeeping (jobs typically associated with working-class Anglo America women at the time) and how to be “proper” housewives and mothers (cf. Ellis 1929). As Americanizer and social theorist Merton Hill wrote in 1931, Mexican American “girls should be trained to become neat and efficient house servants” (250). To teach this form of labor, Americanizers set up ideal “American” homes for Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans to study and emulate (Pavlenko 2005). In such model American homes, Mexican immigrant women were taught to perform housework, such as serving and housekeeping, meet to middle-class Anglo-American ideals. Such Americanization programs are examples of internal colonialism because they sought to change family structure and domestic practices while training Mexican women as servants for Anglo-American wives.

Such instruction mirrored Anglo-American cultural values that both “placed the women squarely in the home” as domestic servants and trained Mexican American men for “unskilled” agricultural or manual labor or skilled trades (Pavlenko 2005: 287). Transforming the daily life of a Mexican American woman, the individual who reproduces (literally and figuratively) familial and cultural relations ranked high among Americanizers’ priorities. Women, as mothers and primary caretakers of the family, could enforce, merge, or denounce the ideals espoused by Americanizers. The Pacific Electric Railway Corporation’s reformers recognized this and, in George Sánchez’s (1994) words, went “after the women.” The “centrality of racial ethnic women in shaping the loyalties and competencies of their children” was hence a “source of power and danger” to the Americanization movement (Anderson 1999: 150). A few upper-class Mexican American wives used their social agency to support the internal colonialism of Americanization programs because they desired material benefits such as American stoves and cotton mattresses (Camp 2011). Some Mexican migrant women also sought the greater freedom of working outside the home (Gordon 2006: 436, 438–439). Mexican American women were pivotal in the two-way internal colonialism process.

As retainers and reproducers of ethnic culture, Mexican American children also received special attention. American elementary, junior high, and high schools became training grounds for Americanization programs where reformers “sought to inculcate, at times forcefully, ideal forms of American culture and language upon Mexican children and to eliminate or displace the Mexican cultural heritage and

identity” (San Miguel 1987: 472). Schooling became the primary way in which Mexican American children could be accessed without parental supervision or permission. As one reformer emphasized, the role of schools as gateways into the indoctrination of future American citizens should not be underestimated: “the importance of the school as an Americanization force lies chiefly in its effect upon the second generation” (Huebner 1906: 194).

Nonetheless, the educational opportunities available to children of Mexican descent were limited in terms of scope and quality. Shaped by “popular notions about the limited intellectual capabilities of Mexican children” (San Miguel 1987: 473), 85 % of California public school districts segregated Mexican children “in one form or another, some until the eighth grade, others until the fourth” (González 1985: 57). The so-called principles of equality that Americanizers promised to secure for Mexican immigrants fell to the side in the case of schooling. These reformers failed to see the “obvious contradictions of establishing segregated schools for the purpose of assimilating Mexican children” (Romo 1983: 139). In Artesia, California, school authorities “deliberately prolonged a Mexican student’s grammar school years,” which made it embarrassing for these students to “go on to an advanced grade” (Haas 1995: 195). Separating Mexican children from Anglo-Americans allowed educators to “Americanize the child in a controlled language and cultural environment as well as to train for occupations considered open to Mexicans” (Haas 1995: 57). The English words taught to Mexican children in school demonstrate the place Anglo-Americans envisioned Mexicans occupying in the American social hierarchy. These phrases and words included “to pick, to prune, box, branch, clippers, or pruning knife” (Monroy 1983: 451) and the nouns “scissors, box, and gloves” (González 1994: 126).

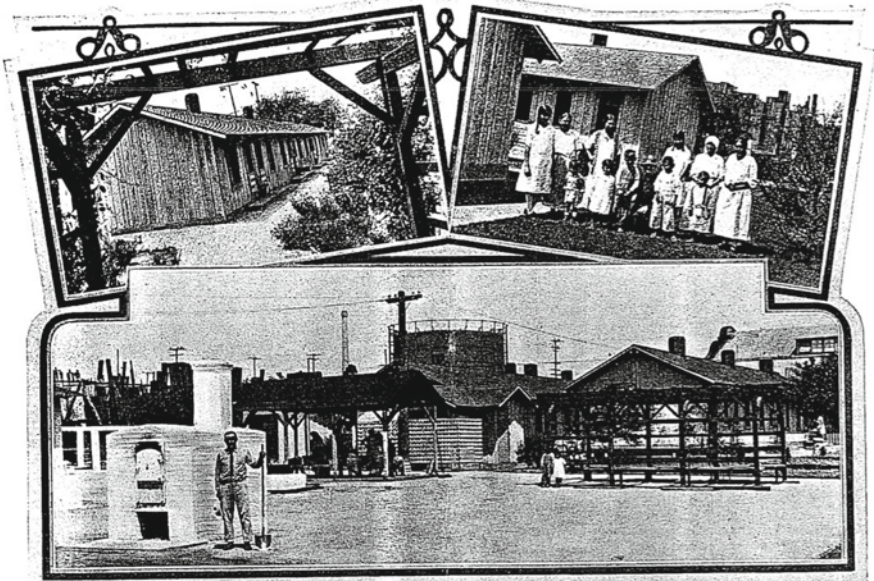
Children of immigrants posed a threat to an imagined racially homogenous Anglo-American nation because any child born in the United States was automatically conferred citizenship. This explains why Pacific Electric’s Americanizers devoted nearly all their writing and attention to the reform of their Mexican employees’ children. As Pacific Electric reformer Viva Carr argued, “Our greatest asset is the younger generation, for they are growing, are very much alive and are more receptive to new ideas and new customs. They often teach their parents when we fail” (Carr 1921). Nearly every known photograph of the Pacific Electric Railway’s section camps features Mexican children (cf. Fig. 15.1). The parents of these children are noticeably absent from photographs, and the only adults who appear any images relating to Pacific Electric’s section camps are their camp managers and nurses (Fig. 15.2).

Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans also had the option of sending their children to boarding and mission schools set up to support the Americanization effort in Los Angeles. Yet, like the public schools, the instruction Mexican children received was structured around instilling “proper” class, race, and gender roles (Berrol 1992). Vocational curriculum and “manual-skill training classes” reinforced the public perception that instructing Mexicans was “a burden as well as a waste of time” (Menchaca and Valencia 1990: 231). The Women’s Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, for example, founded the Forsythe Memorial Girls Boarding School in 1884. There, female students were taught Bible studies, domestic

July 10, 1928

3

## HOW COMPANY HAS AIDED MEXICAN WORKER



Types of quarters and surroundings, together with group of women and children residents, and a visiting nurse, at one of our Mexican Camps, of which there are twenty-two. Note the pleasant atmosphere and tidiness which prevails.

**Fig. 15.1** Pacific Electric Railway article depicting Mexican American children and section camps (Courtesy of Paul Ayers)

science, cooking, and sewing through the mid-1900s. At the Frances M. DePauw Industrial Girls Boarding School, opened by the Women's Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1900, Mexican girls learned similar skills, such as "cooking, sewing, house work, and laundry work" (Stowell 1920: 26). Mexican boys enrolled in comparable types of institutions received tutelage in manual labor, "agriculture, printing, and wood working" (Stowell 1920: 27). These programs were gender segregated, training women for the stigmatized occupation of domestic service, while boys were trained in the skilled trades of printing and carpentry, which afforded the possibility of upward mobility out of the underpaid occupation of agricultural laborer. Training Mexican American women for domestic service served the needs of middle- and upper-class women who sought domestic servants.

Anglo-Americans tended to believe that Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants were migratory by nature, sometimes likening them to swallows making their annual flights to and from California's missions (Monroy 1983). Reformers who believed that "migratoriness creates unrest, makes home life difficult, hinders the proper education of children," and, most importantly, "arrests the growth of constructive citizenship" encouraged their subjects to buy and maintain homes and





**Fig. 15.2** Pacific Electric Railway article depicting camp nurses and inspectors (Carr 1921)

acquire stable jobs (as if their transience and poverty were personal or cultural choices) (Bogardus 1934: 45). Some policy makers even questioned the construction of school buildings for Mexican children, believing that their migratory behavior was biological in nature (Haas 1995: 192).

Many reformers believed that Mexicans were naturally weak and that this weakness is what kept them from advancing in society, an idea popularized by the social Darwinist movement of the time. They consequently overlooked Anglo-American racism that prevented Mexican Americans from obtaining social mobility and employment in nontrade sectors. Unfavorable food, for instance, was often blamed for high infant mortality rate among Mexican American and Mexican immigrant families (Molina 2006: 97). The Pacific Electric Railway Corporation's Engineering Department Nurse, Viva Carr, voiced her discontent with her section camp charges in 1921, writing, "Under-nourished children are our greatest difficulty, for it is very hard to get the parents to see where the diet is at fault. If we succeed in this, they will



tell us that they cannot buy the proper food, thus adding to our difficulties” (Carr 1921). Carr did not connect the discriminatory underpayment of farm workers with the malnutrition of their children. Inadequacy of income was beyond their experience and the comprehension of Carr. In contrast, middle-class reformer Ellen S. Richards was inspired by philanthropic kitchens in Europe to organize American reform women to found urban public kitchens that offered inexpensive nutritious food to the working poor in Boston, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Olneyville, Rhode Island (Spencer-Wood 1991: 269–270).

Despite Carr’s comments, archaeological data found during excavations at one Pacific Electric section camp imply that residents were concerned for their children’s futures and financially invested in material symbols that schooled Mexican American children in Anglo-American culture. Toys, such as a doll, parts of a miniature tea set, and marbles, were found during excavations (Camp 2009: 304). A similar assemblage was recovered at the nineteenth-century working-class community of Paterson, New York, where Yamin (2002: 118) argues parents attempted to use toys as educational tools (e.g., slates, writing implements) to impart skills that would allow their children to escape the 12- to 14-h workdays in the mills and factories. The dominant gender ideology assigned women the role of child rearing, including overseeing children’s play and learning.

A few reformers conducted their work with genuinely good intentions and confronted colleagues who failed to treat Mexican immigrants as their equals. Reverend Vernon Monroe McCombs, superintendent of the Latin American Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Los Angeles, condemned American corporations’ treatment of Mexican immigrants. “Are the folks who deliberately exploit the labor of these people, without providing for their welfare,” McCombs questioned, “any less culpable than those who steal because they and their families are starving?” (1925: 34). In another account, McCombs was stunned by the squalid conditions of one local work camp: “After visiting the houses of even that one crew of laborers we are appalled. It is all outside of our experience: some families living in shacks made of ragged burlap and under pieces of tin cut from cans; huts dug into hillsides; five “families” living in one windowless cellar; some even living in old stables...” (1925: 17).

Arletta Kelly, who worked as a teacher and reformer in a number of Los Angeles and Orange County Mexican labor camps in the 1920s and 1930s, also denounced the popular idea that Mexican immigrants were of a lower intellect than Anglo-Americans. She wrote,

...you cannot convince me that they are any stupider than any of the others...and I used to maintain that so violently...that our I.Q. tests are never, were never fair to Mexican students. Because they just didn’t have the vocabulary and the cultural background was entirely different from that. And all of our I.Q. tests were based on an Anglo background, an Anglo culture, and not a Latin culture (Kelly, n.d.).

She also questioned the racist assumptions of her fellow reformers. In one incident at a “Friends of the Mexicans” meeting in Pomona, California, Kelly took offense at an elementary school instructor’s comment that “Mexicans were so poor in arithmetic.” As she details,

...I took him up on that. I said I didn't think they were...And he said, but they're so slow. And I said, well you stop and think probably the last thing you learn when you learn a foreign language is to think numbers. I said they've got to stop and translate: six and six then becomes seis y seis. I mean it just takes two more steps to do it. And really, I think Mexicans as a whole are very good in math. And I said well, I think there's a problem of translation (Kelly, n.d.).

Despite the diverse and sometimes contradictory opinions expressed by the aforementioned reformers, Americanization efforts in Southern California seem to have been similar to many others. The following two sections illustrate that reform catered to companies' needs more than the individuals; involved in reform. In the few instances where charity was exercised, it was strongly gendered. Female Mexican immigrants were relegated to being taught tasks that would continue to place them in the marginalized occupation of domestic service, while male Mexican immigrants were trained as agricultural or manual laborers or for skilled trades.

## **Pacific Electric Railway's Americanization Campaign**

Corporate reform, such as the Pacific Electric Railway's Americanization campaign, has been described as being guided by a "welfare capitalist" ethic: a logic that rationalized companies providing free subsistence (such as housing, food, and clothing) as a means of securing the loyalty and allegiance of their employees (McClymer 1991). Besides fostering employer-employee relationships, reform rhetoric was also employed to convince outsiders, such as health inspectors and neighborhoods where railway companies were constructing labor camps, that the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation was complying with health and sanitation laws and that their Mexican employees would not impose upon the outlying communities. Publicity materials written and produced by the company state that their Americanization campaign sought to create a stable, clean, nonstriking workforce by giving immigrant families homes and by teaching them English, "proper" hygiene, trade-oriented work, gardening, and housekeeping skills. These publications discuss Americanization work taking place in section camps, which were built as part of the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation's "Americanization" program to house railway workers repairing "sections" of the company's railway lines.

The Pacific Electric Railway Corporation erected section camps all across Southern California, including in Pasadena, Altadena, Huntington Beach, Van Nuys, Culver City, Arcadia, and Sunset Beach. Missionary work at the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation's section camps is first discussed in an August 1903 *Los Angeles Times* article. Revealing the racialized climate of early twentieth-century Pasadena, the article's author wrote, "The Congregational Church has conceived the idea of driving the devil out of the Pacific Electric Company's camps of cholos, Japs, Greeks, and wild men of Borneo, who are employed at broad-gauging the tracks in this city" (Los Angeles Times 1903a: 13). This rhetoric makes an analogy

between external colonization of exotic places like Borneo and the internal colonization of immigrants in America. Reformers working in these camps convinced “about 125 Mexican” men to listen in on the “words of the gospel from the lips of Reverend Mejaris from the Congregational Mission at Los Angeles.” Though the workers “listened very intently,” they “took no part” in prayer services offered to them (Los Angeles Times 1903a: 13).

The second public mention of the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation’s employment of Mexican immigrants is made in a September 17, 1906, *Los Angeles Times* article noting the Pacific Electric’s preference for hiring Mexican laborers over Japanese immigrants. As the article details, “As fast as the Los Angeles-Pacific electric line can find Mexican laborers to take their places, the Japanese men employed in the section gangs along the road are being ‘let out’” (Los Angeles Times 1906: 116). The two principle reasons given for hiring Mexican immigrants along the railway were the Japanese’s inability to change their “nationality” and their hesitancy to integrate themselves into the American economy: “It is stated that one of the objects in changing the nationality of the laborers is found in the fact that the Japs invariably spend or send all of their money out of the country, to the prejudice of home industry and institutions. Their food for the most part comes from the Orient” (Los Angeles Times 1906: 116). A mark of a good American citizen was one’s willingness to participate in the flourishing American consumer culture.<sup>1</sup> In a time when purchasing American-made commodities and goods was seen as the ultimate expression of democracy and citizenship (Cohen 1990; Leach 1993; Lears 1994; Mullins 1999; Cross 2000), Some Mexican workers accepted their roles as “consumer citizens” (Panunzio and the Heller Committee for Research in Social Economics of the University of California 1933).

Official Pacific Electric Railway Corporation statements regarding their Americanization efforts began appearing in a 1918 publication by Clifford A. Elliott’s (Cost Engineer Maintenance of Way Department, Pacific Electric Railway) (Elliott 1918: 150–152). According to the article, the company supplied “section houses” for its Mexican immigrant workers at no cost. These homes were designed for Mexican families rather than single Mexican men. Recycling regional rhetoric that claimed Mexican immigrants exhibited little corporate loyalty, Elliott argued that because Mexicans were “of a migratory nature” the company should give preference to “men with families” over single men (Elliott 1918: 150). Elliott also describes providing free chickens, seeds to plant flower gardens, and rabbits to Mexican families.

Other charity work directed at Mexican immigrants living in the region started at a much later date. Extensive and wide-reaching charity work does not appear to have gotten its footing until the late 1910s and early 1920s in communities neighboring the Pacific Electric’s section camps. For example, Pasadena’s Methodist

<sup>1</sup> As Cohen reminds us, during one of the most important events in American history, the Boston Tea Party, colonists expressed their desire for America to be an independent nation through the use of goods: “On the eve of the American Revolution of the late eighteenth century, colonists shirked imported British tea and fabrics” (2003: 21).

community erected a Mexican-only congregation under the direction of Reverend Mr. Gonzales, where aid was provided in the form of clothing, food, and furniture. Missionaries involved with the church and its Ladies' Aid Society imparted "American ways of cooking and baking" to Mexican immigrant women so they would "be able to enter domestic service" (Pasadena Star News 1916). The Edna Later Memorial Association, also known as the "Mexican Day Nursery," opened in December 1915 to provide the Mexican immigrant community assistance with healthcare, childcare, clothing, housing, and food (Pasadena Star News 1915). While the settlement provided care for Pasadena's and Altadena's Mexican immigrant community, its operators stated that they offered such assistance in order to gain "a better knowledge of the Mexican situation, and more constructive working plan" in reference to Mexican immigration and citizenship laws (Pasadena Star News 1919: 17–18). This ambiguous statement can be interpreted in two ways. It is possible that the reformers wanted to better understand Mexican immigrants to form to help them become citizens. Alternatively, this statement could mean that they wanted to limit immigration and citizenship. The statement's meaning is ambiguous, but given its historical context, the later scenario was likely at work.

Local philanthropy projects aimed to provide decent housing for Mexicans at rents they could afford, either hoping to eliminate the substandard housing for Mexican immigrants in the camps and/or intending to make profit off their need for proper housing. The Mexican Homes Association, financed by "more than eight public-spirited people in Pasadena," erected homes for sixteen families in 1919. The housing developers promised two things: "1. To provide for Mexican families here in Pasadena decent, well arranged, sanitary, and comfortable houses in which to live, at rentals within their means, and 2. To earn sufficient fair interest on their investment to the men and women who have shown their faith and interest in the enterprise by putting money into it" (Pasadena Star News 1924). Though proclaiming to be one of the first housing developments to provide sanitary and spacious living environments for Mexican immigrants, the *Pasadena Star News* assured readers that it was "in no sense a charitable movement" as the "tenants are asked and are most willing to pay a rental that will bring a fair return to the investors" (Pasadena Star News 1924). It is unclear if this housing project aimed to provide reasonable housing for Mexican immigrants or, rather, sought to capitalize on the fact that they required housing while performing railway-related construction in the neighborhood.

At the neighboring Casa de Castelar, a settlement house established in 1894 by the Los Angeles Settlement Association (LASA), middle- and upper-class Anglo-American women designed a reform program meant to "work with people, not for people and share with, rather than give to them" (Lewthwaite 2007: 334). This language needs to be understood in the context of the desire of most people to avoid the shame and social stigma of receiving charity or being considered charity cases (Spencer-Wood 2009: 119). Many reformers and settlements voiced goals of working with immigrants to create a community and sharing middle-class privileges, such as day care and healthcare, at little or no charge (Spencer-Wood 1996: 411–12, 2002: 117–20). This language avoided the stigma of giving charity to them and the condescension of charities that did things "for" people.

The men running the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation noted surrounding communities' unwillingness to have section camps in their neighborhoods and worked hard to change public opinion. As the company complained in a 1929 article, "Thriving communities did not look favorably upon the housing of these people within their city confines, and citizens of many communities exercised much effort to prevent their becoming established" (Pacific Electric Magazine 1928: 3). Alhambra residents, for instance, objected to the construction of the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation's "Ramona Camp" (Pacific Electric Magazine 1929c: 5). According to the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation, they changed their mind when the company landscaped the camp. Responding to public outcry and concern with the construction of work camps, the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation's Pasadena section camp was placed on display in April 1927 to demonstrate the charitable work the company was performing. The Pacific Electric held the event to show how, in their own words, "the company has given freely to build up these Mexican Camps to their present high standard and is justly proud of the results obtained" (Pacific Electric Magazine 1927). During the weeklong "open house," visitors and tourists were accompanied by guides who elaborated upon "the methods employed in caring for the needs peculiar to such an establishment" (Pacific Electric Magazine 1927). This article also claimed that this particular "camp was pointed out as a model of cleanliness and well-kept surroundings that could well be patterned after" by a Pasadena City Health Inspector by the name of "Fox" (Pacific Electric Magazine 1927).

Gathering from the above accounts, the discussion of reform activities appears to have been one way of silencing public outcry when Mexican immigrant and Mexican American communities and labor camps started to settle in Southern California. But was any of the reform work discussed by social workers and the Pacific Electric performed? If so, what did the instruction entail and did such instruction reposition Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans as middle-class citizens of the United States? Given the racism of the time, middle-class standing may have been an unrealistic goal, but some programs noted above raised Mexicans from unskilled into skilled occupations, such as the printing and carpentry classes for boys in vocational schools. To address these questions, I will compare and contrast documents authored by the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation and the California Commission of Immigration and Housing, newspaper articles, and oral histories from reformers.

## Reform for Rhetoric? The Performance of Care, 1900–1920

Though Pacific Electric Railway Corporation boasted teaching Mexican immigrant women "English, reading, writing, domestic science, thrift, economy and marketing" in a July 27, 1918, article in *Pacific Electric Magazine* (Elliott 1918), Pacific Electric reformer Viva Carr hinted at her dissatisfaction with the lack of teachers at the Pacific Electric's section camps and the fact that her colleagues received no compensation from the company for their efforts. In a June 10, 1919, article, she

wrote: “It would be a dream realized to have a teacher for every camp, but as there is no remuneration for service rendered, it is difficult to obtain them” (Carr 1919). Two years later, Carr outlined the company’s failure to allow time for English instruction of its Mexican employees: “We would like to teach our people the English language, but time is limited and it is not possible to do so” (Carr 1921). Archaeological evidence (Camp 2009) from one Pacific Electric Railway section camp near Pasadena, California, suggests that Mexican immigrants sought out instruction, had prior knowledge of, and/or received instruction in English. Twenty-one artifacts associated with language acquisition, writing, and reading, including an eyeglass lens, pencil lead, wood pencil fragments, metal pencil fragments, ink pen fragments, an ink bottle cap, and a fragment of a calendar written in English, were found at a camp that may have been visited by Carr herself.

Carr’s dismay at the Pacific Electric’s failure to follow through on its promises and disinterest in compensating its mostly female reformer staff reflected a growing movement among Anglo-American women to assert their independence from men by working outside of the home. They drew upon “traditional stereotypes about domesticity and maternal instincts to argue that women were peculiarly well suited for a whole range of public tasks” (McClymer 1991: 4) and professions (Spencer-Wood 1991: 234–235). Ironically, the majority of the work many reformers performed centered around the home and showing immigrant women how to act as the “moral guardian” of it (McBane 2006: 82). These reform women were communicating the ideology of women’s superior morality that they had used to raise their own status, perhaps thinking Mexican American women could raise their status using the same argument and strategy.

Instruction, when provided, was sometimes hindered by the reformers’ communication barriers and racist notions of Mexican culture. Americanizers such as Carr subscribed to the idea that Mexicans were of a lower evolutionary order. Carr demonstrated her subscription to this vein of “scientific” thought when she described the different “types” of Mexican employees she encountered in her reform work at the Pacific Electric camps:

“It is interesting to note the varying types of Mexican, as one travels from door to door, from camp to camp. The stupid, sullen Mexican of the lower type, is our problem and a very discouraging problem it is. From this type on up we have many different grades, all more or less pliable, some naturally clean and some naturally dirty” (Carr 1921). Amanda Matthews, one of the first Americanizers to work with Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles, stated in agreement, “These people are *not* [author’s emphasis] a hopeless proposition, but they need education of a peculiar sort – education that shall be a disciplinary tonic – that shall give them standards – that amount to *evolution* [author’s emphasis]” (Garcia 2001: 66).

This sentiment was expressed in Carr’s articles on her work in the Pacific Electric Railway’s section camps. She saw herself as “helping [Mexican immigrants] to more correct viewpoints of things in general” by providing physical inspections of “all houses” and demoralizing demonstrations on proper bathing and bed making (Carr 1919). Treated like children, prizes were awarded to “those women who had learned the most English and finished the greatest number of blocks for their quilts” in Pacific Electric’s section camps (Carr 1919). The supposed “benefits” of living in



the Pacific Electric's settlements could be stripped away if a woman or child failed to comply with company regulations. If "women and children in each camp" met a "certain standard of cleanliness each week," they were "rewarded with free passes to Los Angeles for shopping and pleasure trips" along the Pacific Electric Railway (Elliott 1918: 152). If, however, they were "careless about observing the rules," wrote Pacific Electric Engineer Clifford Elliott, they were "disqualified from receiving any such free transportation" (1918: 152). Matching tablewares and hollowwares and individual serving vessels for different types of drinks (e.g., teacups, pitchers, mugs, tumblers, stemware) and foods (e.g., condiment dishes, creamers, serving bowls) found at a Pacific Electric section camp provide evidence that some section camp occupants complied with reformers' notions of proper domestic practices as defined by the cult of domesticity, if only to gain permission to visit friends and family or shop in Los Angeles. Toward this end, Mexican immigrants also seemed to have shared or adopted the ethic of frugality stressed by Americanizers by using canning jars and hunting and acquiring local foods (Camp 2009: 295–309).

Despite Pacific Electric's claims that they treated their Mexican employees with the same respect given to Anglo-American workers, the extracurricular activities made available to Mexican employees were never offered without some sort of restriction or clause. For example, the company provided an annual picnic outing for its employees during the summertime. Mexican workers started to be incorporated in the event in 1928, but they were not allowed to attend the same picnic as their Anglo-American colleagues. Their picnic was held at the less enticing Rose Hill Park, while Pacific Electric's Anglo workers' festivities took place at Redondo Beach, the beautiful seaside spot and tourist destination (Pacific Electric Railway 1929a). This spatial segregation, claimed a Pacific Electric employee, did not dissuade Mexican employees from making the "day a complete success" (Pacific Electric Railway 1929b). In fact, the author asserted, Mexican employees appreciated having the event to themselves as it "made all feel more free to enter into the spirit of the day" (Pacific Electric Railway 1929b).

Though some section camps received training in "English, reading, domestic science, thrift, economy, and marketing," the people imparting this instruction acknowledged that education alone would not necessarily lead to the advancement of Mexican Americans. As one typing instructor pointed out to a young Mexican American woman, "Who's going to hire you? You're so dark" (Ruiz 1992: 65). Another social worker, interviewed by sociologist Emory Bogardus in 1934, remarked, "Americans want household help for two or three days a week, and they can, if they will, take Mexican women and teach them. It requires patience to be sure, but there are large numbers of Mexicans who can fill the household gap if the proper connections are made" (Bogardus 1934: 43). Highly cognizant of these social barriers, educators and reformers working with Mexican Americans inculcated "only the kind of ambition that would leave the newcomers in the working class, moving from unskilled to semiskilled or, at best, skilled work" (Gullet 1995: 88). Such racist thinking determined much of the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation's reform campaign. For instance, unsanitary camp conditions were blamed on "purported deficiencies" in Mexican Americans' "biological capacities and cultural

practices” (Molina 2006: 2) rather than on corporate cost cutting and camp crowding, conditions that contributed to the outbreak of the plague in 1924 (Deverell 1999) and typhus in 1916 in Los Angeles’ immigrant communities.<sup>2</sup>

In practice, the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation’s Americanization movement was little more than artifice concocted to gain state health inspectors and local communities’ acceptance of work camps. For example, the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation hosted an annual Christmas charity drive to collect clothing, toys, and food for their Mexican railway workers’ children. Every year, the corporation wrote about their charity efforts in the company’s magazine, *Pacific Electric Magazine*, in articles titled, “Annual Visit of Santa Claus: Supplies Many Kiddies in Our Company with Christmas Cheer,” “Will Ol’ Santa Remember Mexican Camp Kiddies?,” and “There is, too, a Santa Claus!” A close reading of the magazine reveals that the proceeds and gifts donated to the company were not always get dispersed. In a 1925 edition of the company’s magazine, a reformer noted that over 624 gifts collected in 1924 “were not distributed” to the children because “there were so many to be taken care of and the supply limited” (Pacific Electric Railway 1925).

## *Camp Inspections*

California Commission of Immigration and Housing labor camp inspection records relating to the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation’s section camps expose a similar pattern of empty promises. One of the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation’s section camps, located in the city of Arcadia (titled “Arcadia Mexican Section Camp,” linking railroad work with individuals of Mexican descent) and where all of the camp’s fifty men, ten women, and eleven children were Mexican immigrants, was written up by the California Commission of Immigration and Housing for failing to meet the standards laid out in the Camp Sanitation Act. In a letter dating October 24, 1922, Inspector Mr. M. E. Edwards condemned the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation for allowing camp occupants to “cook and sleep in the same room” and sleep in “wooden bunks,” which were “in bad condition” (California Department of Industrial Relations 1912–1929). Of the worst offenses noted by the state health inspector was the camp’s lack of bathing facilities. As the report explains, “Bathing facilities should be provided. In this connection we recommend that a community shower bath house be erected. Separate quarters to be provided for men and women. Drainage from the showers to be connected up to your present sewer system. Some provision should be made to heat the water for the showers” (California Department of Industrial Relations 1912–1929).

According to state housing inspection reports composed by the California Commission of Immigration and Housing spanning between 1922 and 1932, trash

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<sup>2</sup> Matt Garcia (1985: 97) also paints a vivid and compelling picture of the unsanitary conditions plaguing the citrus worker “colonias” in Southern California; these conditions likewise tended to be blamed on “Mexican people rather than poverty-level wages, segregation, and civic neglect.”

and waste were incinerated on-site. State sanitation standards mandated that kitchen sink and bathroom sewage be piped into a cesspool. The Pacific Electric Railway Corporation managers were well aware of these guidelines and even published a statement acknowledging their adherence to them in a 1918 article discussing the construction of their section camps: “More modern toilet facilities, less crowded quarters, fresh air privileges and shower baths were provided. Washrooms with concrete floors, drains, storm sewer and cesspool connections were installed...the arrangements were strictly in accordance with the legal requirements of the California State Commission of Immigration and Housing” (Elliott 1918). Yet a work order written on October 12, 1920, documents the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation’s failure to meet these health precautions at a neighboring section camp in Altadena. As the memo states, “The toilet facilities are very unsanitary at this point and the County Health Officers have asked us in order to make such facilities more sanitary, to install septic tanks and sanitary plumbing; therefore, it is recommended that this additional improvement be provided at this point” (Pacific Electric Railway Collection).

The fact that health inspectors only made recommendations suggests that company compliance was voluntary and could not be legally enforced. This would explain why camp conditions improved little as time progressed. Carey McWilliams’ landmark treatise on the status of Southern California Mexican American communities includes several eyewitness accounts of Pacific Electric Railway section camps. Writing in a critical tone, McWilliams described a 35-year-old Pacific Electric camp at the intersection of San Vicente and Santa Monica “where forty Mexican families live as they might live in a village in Jalisco” (1949: 225). Venturing inside the camp, McWilliams discovered more startling findings: “the company has generously provided four ‘outside’ showers for 120 residents. It has even provided them with ‘hot water’—on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays! The only facilities for washing clothes or dishes consist of outside sinks, detached from the shacks in the court, and used by all the families” (1968: 225). The company had made improvements in response to the health inspections but only minimum inadequate improvements.

## **From Reform to Repatriation: The End of Americanization, 1920–1940**

In 1919, the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation held a “Hard Times Dance” where company employees in attendance were required to be “in costume, typifying an extreme state of poverty” (Pacific Electric Railway 1919). Their nonchalant attitude toward the economic hardships many of their lower-class employees faced would quickly change with the economic challenges of the coming years.

Making light of poverty may have been acceptable in 1919, but by the late 1920s, the company was experiencing financial difficulties that abruptly ended

social events like the “Hard Times Dance.” Women reformers who organized the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation’s annual “Mexican Kiddies” Christmas charity drive now turned their attention to their own needs and away from “helping” Mexican immigrants starting in December 1931. From then on, the company’s women’s club provided food, clothing, and other forms of assistance to middle management and club members. As a December 1936 article detailed, “Twelve substantial boxes of food (a roast included in each one) delivered at Thanksgiving time. Ten employees of the Operating, Signal, and Mechanical and Engineering Departments furnished complete outfits and clothing; three women employees supplied with warm clothing, and several families in the women’s club given very material assistance” (Pacific Electric Railway 1936: 4). In July 1938, the annual company picnic was canceled due to the “poor financial showing the company has made to date” (Pacific Electric Railway 1938). Any public mention of the company’s Americanization campaign and Mexican immigrant welfare operations ceased to appear after December 1930.

The Pacific Electric Railway Corporation’s abandonment of its Americanization efforts paralleled the tightening of immigration guidelines. Growing concern over “spies” infiltrating America and the displacement of people from their homelands during World War I was expressed with the passing of the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act. This provision “required passports and visas”: concrete, material evidence of citizenship (Ngai 2004: 8). From then on, citizenship was to be a highly controlled and orderly process. As this act was unveiled, Americanizers began to abandon the notion that citizens could and should be made. Now, “noncitizens” or potential citizens became “illegal aliens”—discursively and literally. What followed was a decisive and clear transition from a belief in reforming immigrants to an acceptance of repatriating immigrants as well as individuals of Mexican heritage who had already naturalized (Guerin-Gonzales 1994: 1).

Signaling the end of the Americanization movement, the California Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Immigration and Housing, an agency formed to ensure sanitary housing and work environments for immigrant workers in 1913, had a sudden change of heart in 1926. In a letter sent on February 24, 1926, the commission petitioned a number of senators and congressmen to restrict immigration into California and the United States by imposing quotas on Mexico. The commission responsible for looking “after the welfare of the foreign born” in the state communicated racially charged words to rationalize the dispersal of California’s Americanization movement and the impending repatriation of hundreds of thousands of nonnaturalized and naturalized individuals of Mexican heritage back to Mexico. For an agency supposedly committed to caring for immigrant populations, they expressed little sympathy or compassion for their charges. Of the numerous reasons listed for the restriction of immigrants into the state they included: They “effect” the health of our communities; they are of low mentality; they diminish the percentage of our white population; they remain foreign (California Department of Industrial Relations 1926–1927). These words were written a mere 10 years after the commission was considered to be “on the cutting edge of Americanization, suggesting programs, forming committees, and coordinating private and public efforts”

(González 1994: 117). Employers of Mexican immigrants, hoping to continue hiring cheap labor from across the border, maintained an oppositional stance (Guerin-Gonzales 1994: 117).

Following in the footsteps of the California Commission of Immigration and Housing, some agencies and reformers who originally encouraged and promoted the Americanization movement abandoned it in support of mass repatriation efforts in the 1930s (Camarillo 1979: 227). Now, reformers like Vernon Monroe McCombs chastised those who continued to see Americanization as a worthy cause, writing: “These strangers within our gates are an unexplored field awaiting the Columbus who will ‘Sail on, and on’ away from the comfortable ports of theories of Americanization...to the New World of helping these less fortunate neighbors to help themselves” (McCombs 1925: xi). Mexican Americans, he continued, “must not be expected to become Anglo-Saxon Christians any more than we should expect 10-year-old Tommy to become the sort of saint that his dear Aunt Eliza is” (McCombs 1925: 175). McCombs clearly felt that although Americanization provided more comfort and help to Mexican immigrants, it had failed in its goal of turning them into Americans. Houston’s Rusk Settlement Association, where Mexican immigrants were schooled in cooking and housekeeping and whose mission was to teach their students to “be American” (García 2000: 131), and Placentia, California’s Bastanchury citrus workers’ camp (Guerin-Gonzales 1994: 133) both transitioned into repatriation centers between 1930 and 1932. Reformers working at Rusk did not show any visible signs of remorse in regard to repatriation. As García elaborates, “Settlement workers did not consider repatriation to be inconsistent with their social service and Americanizing goals because they believed that this was a viable solution to increasingly distressed conditions” (García 2000: 135). In Pasadena, similar attitudes were forming. In January 1928, Mrs. Marie W. Simpson, a volunteer with the Pasadena Settlement House and Assistant Principal of a local elementary school, filed a complaint with the California Commission of Immigration and Housing against the cooperative living arrangement for Mexican workers that was partially subsidized by Anglo-Americans living in the city. Simpson cited the Mexican camp’s crowded housing, unsanitary conditions, and overall “menace” to the health of neighboring homes as warranting an inspection by state and city health officials (California Department of Industrial Relations 1920–1928). She may have sought inspection to obtain improvement in conditions or to obtain eviction notice to deport the Mexican American residents of camps.

One of the largest known conferences originally organized to bring academics, social workers, employers, and Mexican immigrants in dialogue with one another also turned its back on Mexican communities in the late 1920s. The conference, entitled “Friends of the Mexicans” and held annually at Southern California’s Pomona College, featured such scholars as Emory Bogardus, Ernesto Galarza, and Paul Taylor, as well as “California Commission on Immigration and Housing officials Leo Mott and R. W. Kearney and local Mexican consuls” (Garcia 2001: 111). In 1927, the conference presenters proposed solutions to Mexican immigration that “foreshadowed a shift away from Americanization and assimilation issues toward the support of Mexican expulsion and immigration quotas” (Garcia 2001:

113). And by November 1931, conference supporters encouraged the US government's repatriation efforts by offering financial aid to Mexican immigrants willing to return back to Mexico (Garcia 2001: 113).

Facing both economic woes and social pressure, the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation joined in the repatriation movement by providing their services to the county of Los Angeles. They shipped individuals of Mexican descent back to Mexico "at a wholesale per capita rate of \$14.50" (McWilliams 1949: 316–317). Carey McWilliams saw the process unfold before his own eyes: "I watched the first consignment leave Los Angeles in February, 1931. The loading process began at six o'clock in the morning, when the *repatriados* began to arrive by the truckload: men, women, and children; dogs, cats, and goats; loaded down with suitcases wired together, rolls of bedding, and lunch baskets" (1949: 317). McWilliams described the affair as "tragicomic": a tragedy due to the "hardships occasioned" but comical because "most of the Mexicans eventually returned to Los Angeles, having had a trip to Mexico at the expense of the county" (1949: 317). Others found irony in the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation's attempt to charge the county anything and unwillingness to accept any responsibility for the situation at hand, especially given the fact that the company has transported thousands of Mexican nationals across the border (McWilliams 1968: 315–316; Los Angeles Times 1903b: A7) to work on their railway system for decades (Sánchez 1993: 39).

## Summary

As Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans were working hard to prove their loyalty to the United States and to comply with reform standards set out by Americanizers (cf. Camp 2009, 2013), nativists were devising new ways to exclude immigrants and naturalized citizens from the benefits of full citizenship. Even if immigrants were to subscribe and fully submerge themselves in American culture as defined by reformers, nativists would continue to consider their subjects foreign. In this vein of thought, sociologist Pauline V. Young wrote in 1936, "At best, most immigrants and their children are accommodated to American life rather than fully assimilated into it, and even when amalgamated through marriage they rarely completely lose their identity after a considerable period" (1936: 422).

This research has revealed the diversity in reformers' beliefs and actions. Some believed Mexican Americans were equally intelligent and argued for equal education with Anglo-American, exemplified by Rev. Vernon McCombs and Arletta Kelly. Others, such as Amanda Matthews and Viva Carr, subscribed to racial beliefs that lower races could evolve into somewhat higher forms through education that taught them discipline and middle-class standards of housekeeping boys. Training immigrant men in "unskilled" agricultural labor served the interests of companies in minimizing labor costs to maximize profits. Training immigrant women in domestic service served the interests of Anglo-American middle-class women who wanted affordable domestic servants. County health inspectors exposed company failures to



provide decent sanitary camps but only made recommendations that the company minimally followed with inadequate facilities, if provided at all. By failing to provide adequate sanitary living conditions and by performing charity for public relations purposes, companies added further fuel to the time period's racist ideologies that claimed individuals of Mexican descent were a *biological race* to predisposed living in dirty, unsanitary environments and thus could not be assimilated. Such "data" was all that racist state and government officials needed in order to support later 1930s efforts at repatriating Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans back to Mexico.

This case study not only unveils the contradictions inherent in Americanization efforts but also parallels the conditions Mexican migrants face in contemporary America. With the advent of World War II, workers were needed to fill the jobs American soldiers left when they went off to war. The "Bracero" Program was seen as a solution to the labor problem, which allowed Mexican nationals to enter into the United States on temporary work visas. This program, however, blocked workers from accessing the benefits of and protection guaranteed by American citizenship (De Genova 2004: 165; Galarza 1964). The H-2 program is a more recent form of the Bracero Program. A report describing the H-2 program suggests that the racism Mexican migrants faced in the early twentieth century remains the same; as the report details, "these workers...are systematically exploited and abused. Unlike U.S. citizens, guestworkers do not enjoy the most fundamental protection of a competitive labor market – the ability to change jobs. Instead, they are bound to the employers who 'import' them. If guestworkers complain about abuses, they face deportation, blacklisting, or other retaliation" (Southern Poverty Law Center n.d.:1). Moving away from what the Southern Poverty Law Center likens to "indentured servitude" (n.d.: 2) requires not only an examination of the current economic and social circumstances that produce programs like H-2 but also careful consideration of how American society has naturalized the unequal relationship between Mexican immigrants and American citizens, as if it can be attributed to biological or genetic differences between the two very diverse populations. This chapter has been an attempt to trace the historicity of discrimination against Mexican immigrants in the hope that scholarship will counter the injustices that Mexican migrants continue to face in what was once considered to be their homeland.

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## **Part V**

### **Commentary**



## Chapter 16

# Commentary: How Feminist Theories Increase Our Understanding of Processes of Gender Transformation

Suzanne M. Spencer-Wood

The purpose of this commentary is to make explicit the feminist theories that are implicit in most chapters in this volume and to encourage more explicit future use of feminist theories. New insights can be gained into gender research by understanding the different feminist theories underlying such research. Feminist theories provide frameworks that increase our understanding of the complex meanings and significance of material culture. Feminist theories provide information about cultural ideologies, structures, institutions, habitus, and processes that support, enforce, or diminish patriarchy. Thus, feminist theories can provide the insight that a specific historical event or process is not unusual or unique but is in fact part of a long-term patriarchal structure or process. Feminist theories can also provide insights into the methods used by reformers to diminish male domination. Feminist theories are substantiated and enlarged by historic case studies in book chapters that provide details revealing how theories were operationalized in actual practice. In addition, knowledge of feminist theories bring to light contributions to those theories made by some chapters. Perhaps most importantly, knowledge of feminist theories enlarges the questions about gender and sexuality that we can consider researching from material and historical perspectives. Feminist research asking these new questions provides important historical context for archaeological gender and sexuality research. Feminist theories are explicitly applied in chapters in this volume by Joyce Clements, Elizabeth Arwill-Nordbladh, and Suzanne Spencer-Wood.

First, it needs to be realized that feminist research is not necessarily the same thing as gender research. While all feminist research is concerned with gender, not all gender research is feminist. Feminist research is concerned with gender power dynamics, while some gender research only analyzes gender roles without

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considering the power dynamics deeply embedded and performed in those roles. For instance, the introduction to this volume notes that the “separate-spheres” gender ideology (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 144; Matthaei 1982: 29–32, 110–111) was fundamental to the Western cultures researched in this volume but does not address the gender power dynamics in this ideology, which are addressed in Clements’ and Spencer-Wood’s chapters. Other analyses that have not considered gender power dynamics often unquestioningly project modern patriarchy into the past (analyzed in Spencer-Wood 2007: 29–30). All feminist theories analyze some aspects of the gender ideology of “separate spheres” to understand the patriarchal structures enforcing social domination by men’s public sphere, and subordination of women and their domestic sphere. Different feminist theories have analyzed legal, economic, social, or psychological aspects of patriarchal gender ideology and social structures in order to theorize how patriarchy can be replaced with an egalitarian gender system.

Feminist theory is usually analyzed as a series of “waves.” The first wave developed in the nineteenth-century women’s rights movement, the second wave developed from c. 1950 into the women’s liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and the third wave has been developing since the mid-1980s. However, the metaphor of waves is misleading because later waves of theory did not replace earlier waves, which have continued to develop (Nelson 2006). Each wave contains a number of theories. Later waves have further developed ideas in earlier waves while also creating new theories. The result is a great diversity of feminist theories. Each theory analyzes a different aspect or area of women’s oppression under patriarchy, and most also theorize how to dismantle patriarchy or replace it with an egalitarian or matriarchal gender system. Since no theory addresses all aspects or causes of women’s oppression, more insight can often be gained by combining several theories. Keeping in mind the limitations of the wave metaphor for feminist theories, I will use the waves as an easy way to indicate the time period and associations of different theories. The waves can be viewed as a set of temporally finer telephoto lenses that have increasingly revealed the complexity in the ways patriarchal gender systems differentially oppress women in diverse social positions.

Chapters in this volume usually implicitly draw on a number of feminist theories, often in combinations that lead to more insight than taking a single theoretical approach. Therefore, insights are gained into the research in each chapter by viewing it through the lens of different feminist theories. In the following sections, theories of the cultural construction of women’s oppression are first discussed, followed by theories of women’s social agency and by third-wave theories of the diversity of women’s experiences, including oppressions and opportunities for social agency. Applications of different theories in book chapters are briefly discussed.

## Structuralist-Feminist Theories

The first and second waves of feminist theory analyzed how gender inequalities have been culturally constructed by patriarchal structures and institutions, although these theories used other terminologies. Chapters by Clements and Spencer-Wood

define patriarchy as a male-centered and controlled society fundamentally structured by men's domination of women (Gordon 2006: 441). To explain more fully, patriarchy is organized in a male ranked class hierarchy that subordinates women to men within each class (Gordon 2006: 441). Thus, women are also organized in a class hierarchy in which upper-class women dominate men as well as women in the lower classes (Spencer-Wood 1997). Structuralist-feminist theory analyzes how women's subordination to men in government, as well as to men at their social level or above, has been enforced by patriarchal structures and discourses in all subsystems of culture, from traditional customs, etiquette, ideology, religion, ritual, and education to economic, social, political, and legal systems (Rich 1976: 57).

The separate-spheres gender ideology legitimates the social dominance of men's public sphere and the subordination of women and their domestic sphere (Donovan 2001: 19–23; Lorber 2001: 55–56, 63–64). The deep cultural context for this volume is this dominant separate-spheres gender system, including ideology, identities, roles, practices, and power dynamics, and women's social agency in changing this gender system to diminish or eliminate patriarchal structures and institutions oppressing women. Most chapters in this volume discuss some aspects of the separate-spheres gender system, with most detail by Clements, Jackson, and Spencer-Wood.

In 1949, Simon de Beauvoir's (1953) book *The Second Sex* initiated the second-wave feminist analysis of the binary cultural gender stereotypes in the dominant separate-spheres gender ideology, which legitimated discrimination against women. Second-wave feminism broke new ground by theorizing that gender roles and power dynamics were cultural rather than biological (Lorber 2001: 3, 14). The feminist cultural context for many chapters in this volume is the first-wave nineteenth-century women's equal rights movement founded in 1848 by Elizabeth Cady Stanton with other women and men to protest and change American men's laws and practices that enforced the separate-spheres gender ideology in practice by making it illegal for wives to undertake public legal actions and denying them nearly all civil rights (Donovan 2001: 22–24). American laws came from earlier European laws enforcing gender inequalities, which form part of the cultural contexts of chapters researching European processes of colonization and colonialism.

Spencer-Wood's chapter discusses laws and practices enforcing gender inequalities that were legitimated by the dualistic Western "separate-spheres" gender ideology, which, at least since Greek civilization, constructed a supposedly biological, fixed hierarchical dichotomy opposing public, rational, cultural, active, strong, moral, superior, dominant men versus domestic, irrational, natural, passive, physically and morally weak, inferior, subordinate women (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 143; Cott 1977: 161; Matthaei 1982: 29–32, 110–111; Robertson 1982: 26–28; Spencer-Wood 1992: 99; Verbrugge 1988: 117). Until the second half of the nineteenth century, women's inferior domestic status was enforced at marriage, when wives underwent a civil death, becoming legal nonpersons and incompetent minors, dependents, and chattel of their husbands, legally equivalent to children, the insane, and slaves. Husbands had the documented authority to make all decisions for their families since Roman times. Under "feme covert" common law that spread from France throughout Europe starting in the twelfth century, domestic wives had few civil

rights and could not perform public legal acts such as to go to court, sue or be sued, sign legal papers, make a contract or a will, operate a business, be on a jury (except in France), speak in public, or vote in national elections (except propertied women voted in Austria in 1861–1888, and women gained suffrage in New Zealand in 1893). Husbands had to give permission for wives to open bank accounts or to sign legal documents. In England, France, Austria, and their colonies, a wife could, with a husband's permission, legally become a “feme sole” or single woman, who could conduct business in her own name (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 147–150; Coleman 1987: 28, 90–91, 102; Dubois 1998; Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 23–24; Lloyd 1971: 122; Robertson 1982: 277). In America, state laws passed between the 1830s and the 1880s gave wives property rights and allowed them to freely buy and sell and negotiate contracts without acquiring the legal status of feme sole (Kwolek-Folland 2002: 50).

Wives were subsumed by husbands who represented them in public and controlled any earnings by his family and any property his wife brought to the marriage (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 28, 148–150; Coontz 1991: 148–51; Donovan 2001: 12–20, 30, 56; Stansell 1986: 21–22, 36). Wives and their children, their bodies, their belongings, and their earnings all legally belonged to husbands as property. Men could rent out their wives and children and take their wages, just as they could with slaves. The husband decided where his wife and children lived, if and where his wife worked, and if she could inherit or acquire property or donate to charities. Wives had no rights in their children, which the husband could send to live elsewhere without his wife's permission (Demos 1970: 58, 88; Kwolek-Folland 2002: 21–25, 49; Millett 1970: 67–69; Robertson 1982: 18, 156, 275, 433–434). The subjugation of women and their domestic sphere to men and their public sphere was legitimated by the biblical story of Eve being created as Adam's helpmeet from one of his ribs and the story of Eve's moral weakness that resulted in their fall from God's grace and being cast out of the Garden of Eden (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: xiii–xiv, 96–99; Donovan 2001: 19; Helsinger et al. 1983: 76–77, 89–91, 105–106, 167–171; Robertson 1982: 241–246, 277, 279, 433). Some parts of Europe, such as Spain and the Netherlands, and their colonies, followed the Roman law, in which widows inherited 50% of the community property of the marriage, in contrast to the English tradition of “widow's thirds” that only gave widows use of a third of their husband's property, which was inherited by sons (Kwolek-Folland 2002: 21–22; Jackson *forthcoming*).

Separate structuralist-feminist theories developed to analyze different primary sources of women's structural oppression under patriarchy, implying and sometimes explicitly theorizing means for diminishing or eliminating patriarchy. While structuralist-feminist theories focus on gender identities, roles, and practices that are isomorphic with patriarchal gender ideology, first- and second-wave theories also address social agency to some extent. Second-wave theories relevant to chapters in this volume include radical feminism, Marxist feminism, socialist feminism, and postcolonial feminist theory.

## ***Radical Feminist Theory***

Radical feminist theory analyzes how men's dominance over women is enforced through culturally condoned systematic male violence and sexual exploitation of women. In the late twentieth century, this theory led to laws identifying and making crimes of sexual harassment, domestic violence, and rape in marriage (Lorber 2001: 77–78). Spencer-Wood's chapter briefly notes that European laws gave the husband the right to his wife's sexual services on demand. Further, until 1884 English wives could be imprisoned in jails for denying conjugal rights to their husbands and could be legally imprisoned in their homes by husbands in England and other countries. Marital rape did not become a crime in Great Britain or in most of the United States until the late twentieth century, as a result of feminist activism, and rape in marriage in most states remains a lesser crime than stranger rape (Donovan 2001: 200; Lees 2000: 59; Hong 2006). Except in France, Switzerland, and most American colonies, a husband had the legal right to lock up his wife and beat her "moderately," with only light fines for causing major injury, such as loss of an eye. However, in general, wives were forced to submit to domestic violence because it was legal, or they could not go to court for redress when it was illegal. Laws also made divorce by wives difficult in Protestant countries (except Germany in 1794–1900) and impossible in Catholic countries (except France in 1792–1816) (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 151–153, 336–337; Collins 2003: 53–54; Degler 1980: 15; Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 11–12, 23–24; Robertson 1982: 163, 177, 179, 192–193, 276, 349, 455).

Women who had sex outside of marriage were subjected to systemic culturally condoned violence, but men who had sex outside of marriage were valorized for their masculine conquest. A husband could divorce his wife for adultery, which was a crime against the husband's property, since he owned his wife as chattel, as noted in chapters by Clements and Spencer-Wood. Wives convicted of adultery were punished with legal fines, public pillorying, whipping, branding, prison, or hanging. In contrast, adultery by a husband with a married woman was only a crime against public order, usually just resulting in a fine. And adultery with an unmarried woman was only considered fornication. In contrast, women who had sex outside of marriage, whether married or not, could be arrested and incarcerated in jails or reformatories. This sexual double standard was justified by blaming women, as immoral temptress daughters of Eve, for causing the fall of Adam and all other men. Adultery by wives was a major crime because it forced an illegitimate child on the husband, who could no longer be sure that he was passing down his wealth to his own son. Adultery by husbands was not usually enough reason for women to divorce, who had to have additional reasons, such as desertion, cruelty, incest, or sodomy (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: xiii–xiv, 96–99, 150–151; Coontz 1991: 96; Demos 1970: 93, 96–97; Helsing et al. 1983: 23–28; Hobson 1987: 33; Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 11–12; Robertson 1982: 241–246, 277–279, 433; Stansell 1986: 23–25).

Radical feminist theory provides gendered insight into the Spanish conquest and colonization of North America that is summarized in Angela Middleton's chapter in this volume. The Spanish called their conquest process "the conquest of women" because their policy was to rape Native American women and kill their men who

resisted (Kwolek-Folland 2002: 18; Voss 2000: 41). The Spanish process for missionizing Native Americans involved “reduccion” by herding them into villages around a mission and coercing them to convert to Catholicism so they would owe tribute labor to the mission. Labor was enforced through whipping, stocks, leg chains, and solitary confinement, as noted by Middleton. Native American men were put to work farming mission lands or building presidios, forts, or other buildings in the Spanish settlements. The women became domestic servants and concubines of the friars, who frequently sexually exploited women and girls (Lightfoot 2005: 60–61; Rothschild 2003: 140–143; Voss 2008: 79–82, 96). Part of the process of imposing patriarchy involved stopping the casual sex among the unmarried by locking up single Native American women in a *monjerio* or nunnery with barred windows and locked doors, only letting the prisoners out to go to mass. Many women died in these unhealthy conditions, and some friars had sex with the imprisoned young women. At the Santa Cruz mission, Native American men freed Native American girls after killing a friar who was sexually abusing them (Voss 2000: 44–47). In the Southwest USA, the excessive tribute payments of food demanded by the Spanish led to a Native American revolt that ousted the Spanish from the region for several decades (Rothschild 2003).

Radical feminist theory provides the insight that the incident of domestic violence detailed in Joyce Clements’ chapter in this volume is not unusual, but is rather one instance of the systematic male violence used to enforce English, and indeed Western patriarchy, as shown by the European laws permitting husbands to “moderately” beat their wives. Clements discusses one case history of cultural condoning of domestic violence to enforce English patriarchy that was imposed on the more egalitarian matrilineal American Ponkapoag “Praying Indians,” who were converted and colonized in the seventeenth century. The indigenous wife was expected to just suffer in silence from the domestic abuse of her indigenous husband, who was also the Indian praying town’s minister. Native American girls were exploited as domestic servants, for one girl apparently including sexual exploitation that resulted in death in childbirth at age 15.

This evidence about the condoning of domestic violence in Puritan patriarchy indicates the long history of domestic violence that the Women’s Christian Temperance Union worked against using women’s “powers with” each other in the late nineteenth century (Spencer-Wood [forthcoming](#)). Ieva Reklaityte’s chapter discusses the seclusion of women and children in houses without external windows in medieval Muslim Spain, which could hide domestic violence. Jackson’s chapter discusses the division of English Georgian houses into many private rooms, which could also make domestic violence invisible, even within a house. Radical feminist theory also explains men’s harassment and intimidation of reform women wearing bloomers in public as part of a larger pattern of men in patriarchal Western culture condoning male violence to subordinate women and keep them in their place, wearing heavy skirts and corsets that made them physically weak and dependent on men, fulfilling the feminine stereotype (Spencer-Wood [forthcoming](#)). Radical feminist theory leads to such analyses of ways that material culture facilitates and expresses the cultural condoning of systematic male violence to enforce patriarchal subordination of women.



## ***Marxist-Feminist and Socialist-Feminist Theories***

Marxist-feminist theory argues that the root cause of women's oppression is patriarchal capitalism's hierarchical division of labor into male family breadwinners and women as their unpaid servants, whether wives or daughters. This theory provides the insight that domestic reformers were Marxist feminists, because they argued that women's low status was due to being economic dependents of men, as pointed out in Spencer-Wood's chapter. The first overt application of Marxist theory to gender was by Friedrich Engels (1972: 71–72), who in 1884 made an analogy between housewives and proletarian workers, while husbands were the bourgeois capitalists who financially controlled the means of production, since men legally owned all the equipment in the household. However, this analogy is not accurate because housework is not waged labor. The middle-class perspective on Marxist-feminist theory also overlooks income generated by women working either outside or inside the home. However, women's income legally belonged to the male head of household until the late nineteenth century (Spencer-Wood [forthcoming](#)).

Socialist-feminist theory argues that patriarchal social inequalities cannot be reduced to economic inequalities because patriarchy predates and shaped capitalism. As early as 1838, Sarah Grimké had argued that men as a class used their patriarchal powers to subordinate women as a class (Donovan 2001: 30). Since the late 1960s, Marxist feminists have further theorized how capitalism is dependent on the oppression of women as unpaid domestic laborers, since women's domestic skills and physical labor are essential in biologically and physically reproducing much of the capitalist labor force on a daily and generational basis (Lorber 2001: 41, 56–57).

Marxist-feminist theory needs to be further expanded by research showing how women's domestic production has contributed directly and substantially to public capitalist markets (Spencer-Wood 1991a: 236–237). The existence of a household quota for textile production in the American colonies testifies to the importance of this aspect of women's domestic production for public markets (Wertheimer 1977: 16). Until the mid-nineteenth century, farm women produced all the butter, cheese, and eggs in the American market and also exported some abroad (Jensen 1986). From the seventeenth century, what was called cottage industry in England and the putting-out system in nineteenth-century America also produced publicly marketed goods in households, initially on rural farms or later in urban tenements. In these home-production systems, manufacturers supplied materials and paid women or whole families at low wages to make publicly sold commercial products such as shoes, straw hats, brooms, cigars, or clothing items such as pants or shirtwaists (Matthaei 1982: 18, 53, 64, 122, 126, 211). Women's domestic production formed substantial contributions to publicly marketed goods.

Chapters in this volume by Deborah Rotman and by Shannon Jackson are implicitly following the Marxist-feminist critique of the capitalist devaluation of women's household labor by discussing women's domestic products that were sold by women in capitalist markets. Rotman's chapter reveals cooperative household production by housewives and some men in late-nineteenth-century Deerfield, Massachusetts, and public marketing of household products from private houses. Jackson similarly

found documentation that eighteenth-century Dutch colonial wives sold their household products from their private living rooms in Cape Town, South Africa. Such research challenges the Marxist-feminist acceptance of the sexual division of labor into men's public work and women's domestic work by showing that women's domestic work often produced publicly marketed products, overlapping the domestic and public spheres.

In his 1884 book, Friedrich Engels (1972: 137–139) followed Enlightenment feminist philosopher Mary Wollstonecraft's widely read 1792 feminist book in arguing that women needed to become economically independent in order to avoid enslavement in marriage as a form of lifelong prostitution. Engels proposed eliminating the family as the fundamental capitalist economic unit based on "the open or disguised enslavement of the woman" and advocated that women work at public waged labor to liberate themselves from economic dependence on men. In 1838, liberal feminist Sarah Grimké first made the primary Marxist-feminist argument that working women deserve equal pay with men (Donovan 2001: 30). It is interesting to note that Engels' book was published when domestic reformers were creating new middle-class professions for women, and new laws in many American states were permitting women to keep their earnings. Wives did not previously gain economic independence from employment because their husbands legally owned and spent their earnings. Knowledge of this historical context discussed in Spencer-Wood's chapter is essential to understanding Marxist-feminist theory.

Engels (1972: 65–67) advocated state ownership of the means of production and cooperative farming and housekeeping, which had previously been implemented by Christian socialists in communes and by communitarian feminists in urban areas (Spencer-Wood 1987: 12–13; 2006). In fact, Melusina Fay Peirce's first American public housekeeping cooperative, including a laundry, a bakery, and store, was inspired by a Marxist worker's cooperative store in England. She argued that urban women could retain the greater gender equality of farmwives by continuing to make their domestic production public, by transforming housework into public businesses (Spencer-Wood 2004; forthcoming). The Arts and Crafts Movement that inspired the domestic craft production in Rotman's chapter, as well as the craft classes in cooperative social settlements discussed in Spencer-Wood's chapter, developed in opposition to industrial capitalism's mass production of goods in factories and was Marxist in seeking a return to earlier craft production by individuals who owned the means of their production and made all the profits from their production rather than the low wages of industrial workers (Adams 1987: 9–10).

Marxist feminism is the only second-wave structuralist-feminist theory with an explicit framework for women's social agency, created by gendering the Marxist domination and resistance framework (Donovan 2001: 101–2). In this volume, chapters by Clements and Middleton included different sorts of evidence of indigenous women's and men's resistance to English patriarchal colonization. Other chapters analyze women's and men's resistances to social reforms, such as (1) dress reform (Nickolai, Spencer-Wood), (2) public kitchens and training for domestic service (Spencer-Wood), and (3) temperance and simplicity in tableware and teaware (Kruczek-Aaron). Most chapters in the sections on colonization and internal colonialism, as well as Spencer-Wood's chapter, address resistance by

indigenous people, minorities, or immigrants to attempted impositions of Western patriarchy or middle-class agendas, such as training working-class women as domestic servants.

## Postcolonial Feminist Colonialism Theory

Theories of colonization and colonialism can be applied to increase our understanding of the importance of material culture in creating the hybrid cultures in colonies. As defined in Joyce Clements' chapter, ungended colonization theory is concerned with the creation of foreign colonies through conquest in order to extract labor, raw materials, and surplus production by managing interactions through state control. Colonialism is defined as attempts by colonizers/settlers to control foreign territories and dominate indigenous people through dispossession, economic marginalization, labor control, racism, oppression, and other actions producing inequalities (Silliman 2005: 59). I prefer to call this "external colonialism," because from the viewpoint of the colonized, they experience invasion and conquest by foreigners from an external nation-state. Colonialism also analyzes the responses of indigenous peoples, from resistance to willing adoption of the culture of colonizers (Silliman 2005: 58). Thus, the framework of colonialism considers both European colonizers and indigenous people to have social agency in their dialectical interactions, resulting in hybrid cultures in colonies.

The centrality of the imposition of patriarchal cultural structures to colonization and colonialism processes was analyzed first by Marxist feminists in the 1970s, followed by postcolonial feminist theory in the 1980s, which I prefer to call feminist colonialism theory because this term is more descriptive of the theory's concern. Since 1970, feminist anthropologists have theorized and researched the colonial exploitation of indigenous women's labor and the negative impacts of colonialism on women's production, economic independence, and related social status (Boserup 1970). Postcolonial feminist colonialism theory argues that the economic exploitation of women is fundamental to the class and racial inequalities created by colonization processes previously theorized in ungended postcolonial theory. Research revealed that in order for women to have high status, they needed to earn a significant proportion of their family's income *and* control the distribution of that income. This was not the case in colonial patriarchal capitalism, which consistently paid women less than men. In addition, men controlled the expenditure of their wives' and daughters' incomes until the late nineteenth century, as discussed in Spencer-Wood's chapter. The Marxist framework of domination and resistance led to analyses of indigenous women's social agency in resisting exploitation or loss of status resulting from colonial replacement of their traditional agricultural labor with men's labor (Lorber 2001: 55–70). Marxist-feminist anthropologists were in the forefront of research on such topics in many developing countries (e.g., Leacock and Safa 1986).

The concept of internal colonialism was developed by Lenin and his followers as an ungended analysis of inequalities within a nation-state due to dominant-group discrimination against, and economic exploitation of, stigmatized class, racial, ethnic,

or religious minorities. The concept of internal colonialism traditionally neglected gender and has been used to refer to national racist ideologies that create a supply of underpaid labor for capitalists (Gordon 2006: 428, 430–1, 433, 442).

Feminist postcolonial theorists have used the term “internal colonialism” to refer to attempts by the dominant group within a nation-state to impose interrelated imperial ideologies of patriarchy, sexism, heterosexism, racism, and classism to create social divisions legitimating capitalist exploitation of immigrants and minorities (including indigenous minorities) within the state (Gordon 2006: 444). Internal colonialism includes the responses of immigrants and minorities, ranging from resistance to acquiescence. External colonialism transformed into internal colonialism as European colonies became Westernized nations such as Australia, New Zealand, and nations in the Americas and Africa.

I suggest the terms “patriarchal colonialism,” “domestic colonialism,” and “gender/sexual colonialism” to specifically refer to those different kinds of internal colonialisms, rather than using the latter term for multiple meanings. Patriarchal colonialism is concerned with attempts to impose Western patriarchy on indigenous people, immigrants, or other minorities. Domestic colonialism is concerned with attempts to impose middle-class housekeeping practices, and gender/sexual colonialism is concerned with attempts to impose gender/sexual roles when this does not involve imposing the gender power dynamics in patriarchal colonialism. Gender/sexual colonialism could occur if indigenous groups successfully rejected Western patriarchy, an infrequent situation. Middleton’s chapter discusses indigenous groups that initially rejected nineteenth-century British missions attempting to impose patriarchy and middle-class domesticity in Tahiti and the Marquesas Islands.

Postcolonial feminist theory defines internal colonialism as the postconquest dialectical process involving attempts by the dominant group in a polity to impose patriarchal racist capitalism on minorities or indigenous people and their responses, ranging from resistance to willing adoption of middle-class housekeeping. Analyses of resistance to the imposition of patriarchy and capitalism predominantly draw on the Marxist domination and resistance model. Gordon (2006: 443) contends concerning colonialism that “there has been no perfect domination or control (except possibly for very short stretches) and that those who wish to rule protractedly must adjust to some degree to the ruled. Likewise most forms of resistance involve some degree of conformity to the rulers.” She argues that internal colonialism is “a model that is always two-sided – about conflict and negotiation rather than simply domination and social control.” It was impossible for reformers to enforce complete social control or Americanization of working-class people’s lives because working-class people could always resist and fail to conform in some ways.

Our understanding of internal colonialism can be increased by modeling the dialectical relationships between reformers and recipients of reform as a spectrum or continuum of degree of force used by reformers to socially control recipients, and the related amount of compliance or resistance by recipients of reform. At one extreme were paternalistic companies such as the Lowell, Massachusetts, textile mills, which in the 1820s sought to improve employees with lectures on topics such as cleanliness, punctuality, and frugality, and fired employees who complained or did not conform to company requirements such as temperance and churchgoing.

Yet still the “millgirls” held the first walkouts and strikes in the 1830s in response to speedups and wage cuts (Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 126, 131–132). In the middle of the continuum were coercive methods of reform that were less forceful and therefore generated less resistance, such as rewards for immigrants who adopted middle-class housekeeping, as were used by the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation discussed in Stacey Camp’s chapter in this volume. The other extreme involved voluntary participation in reform programs by immigrants who wanted to become American citizens and adopt American lifeways and material culture, such as the kindergartens discussed in Mary Praetzellis’ chapter, programs such as playgrounds, and classes in English, citizenship, and American history discussed in Spencer-Wood’s chapter.

Feminist colonialism theory provides a framework that can be applied to increase our understanding of the importance of material culture in attempts to impose patriarchy and middle-class housekeeping on colonized or minority populations. The sections of this volume on colonization and internal colonialism are particularly concerned with patriarchal and domestic colonialism. Chapters in this volume on external colonization provide insights about the imposition of Western patriarchal domestic power dynamics expressed in the arrangement of household spaces. All these chapters address to some extent the resistance by indigenous people to the imposition of Christian patriarchy.

## *Colonization*

Ieva Reklaityte’s chapter discusses an early imposition of European patriarchal domestic power dynamics that was accomplished through physical force by medieval Christians who conquered Muslim Spain. Muslim Spain had tolerated the different religious practices of Christians and Jews. Reklaityte details how Christians remodeled or replaced small Muslim courtyard houses that secluded women and children behind windowless external walls, with large Christian houses that had external windows opening the supposedly private domestic sphere to greater public viewing and listening. Public viewing of domestic interiors could be prevented with window curtains, and window glass could limit the ability of persons in the public landscape to hear conversations in domestic spaces, although windows were frequently open in warm weather. Interestingly, windows in Christian houses were part of the public display of social status with domestic structures. Thus, private homes had more public functions for Christians than for Muslims. Further, Muslim ritual bathing facilities were transferred to other uses, and the Christians decried Muslim public baths as sinful. However, Muslims and Jews attempted to retain their religious rituals, including bathing in the baths the Christians did not destroy.

Interestingly, the Muslims were more patriarchal than their Christian conquerors – Reklaityte quotes an Egyptian source that states wives had to get permission from their husbands to go to the public baths once or twice a year! Today in many Muslim countries, wives still must get permission from their husbands to do anything or go anywhere, and men legally can, and sometimes do, lock up their wives and daughters

in a room in their houses and beat them, because females are legal minors without civil rights in these countries, as they were in Europe and its colonies (Pollitt 2010; Spencer-Wood [forthcoming](#)). In medieval Spain, both Muslim and Christian women were legal minors and chattel owned by their husbands, who had the right to control their wives' and daughters' behaviors, even with violence. However, the lack of external windows in Muslim houses made domestic violence more invisible than did the windows connecting Christian houses with the public street.

Joyce Clements' chapter analyzes the imposition of patriarchy involved in English colonization of Native Americans, particularly in the seventeenth-century Ponkapoag Praying Indian Village. Native American women were expected to develop English domestic habits and subordination to male domination, including domestic violence and sexual abuse. Many Native American girls were adopted into English households and brought up as unpaid domestic servants to perform housework to English standards. At a young age, one of them had a child by her master, suggesting sexual abuse, although this is not stated in the records. In a better documented situation, women of the matrilineal tribe supported one adult indigenous woman in resisting domestic violence by her indigenous husband. The wife left and took an indigenous lover, but then returned to her husband, probably because of her children. The local indigenous court sentenced her to be publicly whipped as punishment, and in an ultimate act of resistance to male domination, she jumped off a cliff and committed suicide by dashing her head on a rock. Clements also mentions Devens' (1991) research that found documented evidence of Canadian Cree women's resistance to domination by Cree men who adopted European patriarchy.

Angela Middleton's chapter discusses how missions in several nineteenth-century colonies sought to convert indigenous women to Western patriarchal domestic roles. She compares and contrasts institutional missions in New Spain and Australia that controlled all aspects of the lives of aborigines versus household missions in Massachusetts, Hawaii and New Zealand, where aboriginal women willingly participated in classes to learn middle-class domesticity from the missionary's wife, who was central to the mission. Middleton contrasts how the Spanish forced Native Americans to live and perform European gender roles in missions operated by friars, and the incarceration of aborigine children in Australian protestant missions where girls were taught European middle-class housekeeping, with the voluntary participation of indigenous people in New Zealand missions. The missionaries' private homes were public showcases of respectable patriarchal domesticity operated by the missionary's wife, who was central to the mission. They served as schools where indigenous women were taught to sew and clean to Western standards in order to become servants of the British missionaries. However, not all indigenous people were interested in learning Western ways. Middleton points out that the missionaries had to conform enough to aboriginal social norms to develop positive relationships with native groups. This case study supports Gordon's (2006:443) statement that colonialism involves accommodations both by the colonizers and the colonized, forming hybridized colonial cultures.

Shannon Jackson's chapter discusses how changes in domestic architecture expressed changes in degree of household privacy and separation from the public landscape when the British Empire conquered Dutch South Africa in the nineteenth



century. The earlier Dutch houses were medieval in having quite an open plan, facilitating Dutch surveillance of their slaves, who were Africans or more often Malaysians brought from other Dutch colonies. Jackson mentions an incident of resistance when two male slaves threatened to rape their mistress, although the Dutch records are questionably similar to discredited records by whites in the US south accusing black men of raping white women. The Western stereotype of black hypersexuality was spread by British colonization of both areas, but interestingly was used to excuse some rapes by black men in South Africa. Jackson points out the open plan of Dutch houses also resulted in more connections and mixing of races and public and domestic spaces than occurred in English houses, which provided more separation between public and domestic spaces and between rooms within houses, segregating servants from their owners. Interestingly, the increased segregation of spaces in English houses resulted in less surveillance of slaves or servants, who were thus afforded more freedom of action. However, the increase in private spaces could also make domestic violence invisible to people entering houses from public spaces. Still, British houses did provide more segregation of the domestic from the public spaces where prostitutes threatened middle-class domesticity. Jackson discusses how prostitution was controlled in Cape Town by English women's importation of the Purity Movement from England and the Morality Act of 1885 that coordinated the medical profession, white women, and religious reformers.

### *Internal Colonialism*

The section of this volume on internal colonialism includes three chapters that form a spectrum or continuum in attempts to impose Anglo-American middle-class domesticity or gentility. Two chapters analyze differing kinds and degrees of coercion, while the other chapter analyzes an institution that offered programs in which participation was voluntary. Voluntary domestic reform movements and institutions that offered programs teaching new forms of domestic habitus to the middle class as well as the working class and immigrants are also discussed in chapters by Arwill-Nordbladh, Christensen, Nickolai, and Spencer-Wood. These chapters could expand the definition of internal colonialism to include reformers' attempts to change *middle-class* housekeeping, mothering and intimate domestic practices, and responses to those attempts. The section on internal colonialism is also concerned with making domestic matters public, but is distinguished by clearer attempts to impose middle-class Anglo-American domestic practices. The chapters also address the varied responses of immigrants or working-class Anglo-Americans to some extent.

At one extreme, Hadley Kruczek-Aaron's chapter discusses how US Representative Gerrit Smith sought to internally colonize his own elite family as well as his working-class tenants to perform his moral-domestic reforms of temperance and simplicity in undecorated white tableware. While Smith was able to use his patriarchal power over his wife, and his economic power over his tenants, to coerce them to acquire and discard undecorated or shell-edged tableware, they all also discarded

decorated (transfer printed and/or hand painted) tableware, suggesting Smith's tenants may have only used the undecorated tableware when he visited them, while his wife may only have used undecorated tableware when Smith was home and/or when he held dinners to display his moral reforms to neighbors. The tenants discarded fewer liquor bottles than neighbors who owned their houses, suggesting that the tenants adopted temperance to a greater extent than nontenants. Smith's own wife and children were more resistant to his reforms, discarding liquor bottles and transfer-printed tableware and porcelain teaware as well as undecorated tableware. Kruczek-Aaron's research reveals that domestic reform attempted to internally colonize not only immigrants but also the Anglo-American working class and middle class.

Stacey Camp's chapter discusses how the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation internally colonized the wives of their Mexican workers to adopt middle-class housekeeping by demeaning methods such as inspecting their company houses, instructing them in "proper" bathing and bed-making methods, and giving prizes for those who learned the most English, finished the most blocks for their quilts, or met the company standards of cleanliness. Families who did not comply with company regulations could be stripped of the supposed "benefits" of living in company settlements that were cited by county health inspectors for inadequate sanitation, resulting in outbreaks of typhus and plague. The unsanitary camp conditions were due to corporate cost cutting and camp crowding, but were blamed on the immigrants' supposed biological and cultural deficiencies. Spencer-Wood's chapter discusses how reformers connected dirt with immorality and cleanliness with morality, so cleanliness campaigns had moral overtones.

Camp excavated remains of hunted and local foods, and especially canning jars, indicating that the Mexicans at one Pacific Electric Railway section camp followed reformers' advice about frugality. While their poverty would be reason enough to be frugal, the canning jars suggest instruction in canning foods, a complex process involving a big pot of boiling water, although canning jars can also be used for other purposes. Despite the workers' poverty, the ideologies of domesticity, gentility, and respectability touted by reformers were expressed in matching tablewares and hollowwares, and individual serving vessels for different types of drinks and foods. Taken together, the archaeological evidence suggests that Mexican workers discarded material culture expressing the dominant ideal practices or habitus of middle-class domesticity. Did they use this material culture for its intended purposes or other purposes, and did they discard it in resistance to the reformers or just due to breakage during use? A use-wear analysis might address this question.

Mary Praetzell's chapter in this volume discusses the famous Silver Street Kindergarten in San Francisco and the Oakland Free Kindergarten. Kindergartens exemplify the other extreme of internal colonialism: voluntary participation by immigrants in reform programs that they considered useful. Kindergartens were so popular that they usually had waiting lists for admission. Froebelian "gifts" of wood blocks and other equipment developed by the German founder of kindergartens, Friedrich Froebel, were used for discovery learning about relationships among shapes and objects, as well as methods of creating things, such as weaving, paper pricking, and model building. Many kindergartens also taught basic hygiene, and

some taught house cleaning (Spencer-Wood [forthcoming](#)). Praetzellis found documentary evidence of the “soap and water club” at the Silver Street Kindergarten. Boston reform women recorded positive responses of immigrants to their children learning to help keep house. These records are credible because the reformers quoted negative responses to some of their programs and discussed how they changed or eliminated programs as a result (Spencer-Wood 1994, 1996, 2002).

Many domestic reform programs were forms of the internal colonialism because they taught immigrants English, civics, and middle-class Anglo-American house-keeping practices, such as personal hygiene, cleaning, setting tables, and cooking. However, except when companies or landowners pressured employees or tenants, participation in such Americanization programs was voluntary, so reformers had no power to coerce immigrants or minorities to participate. While some reformers tried to impose American middle-class housekeeping, some working-class women and men voiced objections or just did not participate in programs they felt were not in their interests. Because reform women viewed their programs as experiments, they changed or canceled programs and developed new ones in response to requests. The reformers were exceptional in actually quoting working-class and immigrant voices that were negative as well as positive, a uniquely valuable record, and evidence of their respectful dialogue and negotiation of program content with participants. Reform women in Boston reframed Americanization by arguing that not only should American culture be interpreted to immigrants, but that immigrant cultures and talents needed to be retained to enrich American culture. Immigrants often wanted to become American and gain social “respectability” and upward mobility by adopting middle-class values and accompanying material culture advocated in the cult of domesticity (Spencer-Wood 1994, 1996, 2002, [forthcoming](#)).

## First-Wave Liberal Feminist Theory

Some chapters in this volume implicitly draw on the critiques of patriarchy by first-wave liberal feminist theory, which drew on Enlightenment natural-rights ideology that had previously only been applied to men, to argue that women were naturally, innately, rational social agents as much as men (Donovan 2001: 47). Liberal feminist theory argued against the stereotyping of women as passive, irrational, emotional, and mentally inferior to men. Liberal feminists first theorized and advocated women’s social agency as part of the argument for gender equality. In 1792, the Enlightenment philosopher Mary Wollstonecraft argued that just as men rightfully rebelled against their enslavement by tyrannical monarchies in England and France, women had the right to revolt against tyrannical men who enslaved women and denied their natural right to equality (Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 76–77). In 1845, transcendentalist Margaret Fuller (1971: 35, 39–40, 42, 101, 104) was unusual in theorizing and advocating that women have “free agency,” and “the agency of one human being on another,” urging that women develop “self-reliance,” “self-dependence,” and “persistence and courage” in taking “a course of her own,” to an “independent life,” “sustained by her own exertions.” Fuller (1971: 37) spoke for all liberal feminists

in urging “freedom for woman” as a right: “We would have every arbitrary barrier thrown down. We would have every path laid open to Woman as freely as to Man.” In 1851, Elizabeth Cady Stanton urged educating daughters in “courage,” “self-dependence,” “responsibility,” and “self-sovereignty” (Donovan 2001: 33–34). Most chapters in this volume implicitly draw on liberal feminist theory in analyzing evidence of women’s social agency. The following sections discuss the two strands of liberal feminist theory, which I have labeled public feminist theory and domestic feminist theory. The latter has also been labeled cultural feminist theory by Donovan (2001: 47–79).

### ***Public Feminist Theory***

Public feminist theory argued that women deserved to become men’s equals in the public sphere, combining the supposedly separate-gender spheres by making women public as well as domestic. Feminists in the nineteenth-century equal-rights movement argued they deserved equal public legal rights, such as suffrage, equal education, equal access to profitable public occupations, equal pay, economic independence, child custody, and rights to divorce, own property, sign contracts, and bring civil suit. Suffragists argued for the elimination of the law of coverture, the legal right of husbands to physically chastise (beat) their wives, and the sexual double standard that publicly punished only women for adultery (Donovan 2001: 22–24, 34). In this volume, chapters by Clements and Spencer-Wood discuss how patriarchal Englishmen made women’s private adulteries public crimes. Spencer-Wood’s chapter also discusses how first-wave feminists worked with men to pass legislation giving women rights to their property, earnings, children, divorce, and voting.

The public feminist theoretical critique of the limitation of women to the domestic sphere, and advocacy of equal public education, occupations, and civil rights, is the historical context for archaeological research on women’s expanding public roles in the past. In historical archaeology, Spencer-Wood (1987, 1991a: 237–238) has argued that women always had public roles in the past, in contrast to the dominant ideology of separate spheres that claimed women were limited to the domestic sphere. Reklaityte’s chapter in this volume notes that medieval Muslim women could be public artisans, marketers, medics, scientists, and philosophers. Historians and archaeologists have identified women’s many roles that transgressed men’s public sphere, invalidating the dominant gender ideology of separate spheres. In North American colonies, Dutch, French, and Native American women were traders in international public networks connecting Europe and America (Kwolek-Folland 2002: 17–18; Cantwell and Wall 2011). Supposedly domestic, working women and children, as well as men, were employed in public businesses ranging from farms, taverns, theaters, mines, foundries, tanneries, and slaughterhouses to factories in the textile and shoe industries. Women worked as public innkeepers, shopkeepers, peddlers, dressmakers, laundresses, undertakers, shoemakers, smiths, millers, etc. As more women were employed in factories, they decreased in trades

and self-employment (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 62–68, 250–251, 258–263, 267–269, 288; Fraser 1984, Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 122–124; Kwolek-Folland 2002: 13–85; Millett 1970: 69–70; Robertson 1982: 161; Smith 1990, Spencer-Wood 1991a: 237–238; Wertheimer 1977: 12–16).

From the eighteenth century until c. 1850, the number of middle-class women working outside the domestic sphere declined as respectable masculinity became tied to having a nonworking wife who managed household servants and consumption. Then reform women's domestic–public organizations created many new public women's professions, ranging from nutritionists, nurses, and social workers to kindergarten and home economics teachers, as discussed in Spencer-Wood's chapter in this volume. Urban wives in all classes had the role of shopping in men's public sphere for foodstuffs and other goods required to maintain the household. Annie Gray's chapter in this volume provides evidence that wives publicly shopped for teawares used for status display in Englishwomen's domestic tea ceremonies since 1662. Other research has found evidence that women often acted in the public sphere to select white tablewares used in status display in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Fraser 1984: 278; Martin 1994: 175–177, 183; 2006, 2008, Matthaei 1982: 115, 120–122, 139–140; Spencer-Wood 1995: 122; Wall 1994: 135–136; Yamin 2001: 166). All this evidence shows that women held a wide variety of public roles, contrary to the separate-gender spheres ideology limiting women to the domestic sphere.

### ***Domestic Feminist Theory***

Domestic reformers are called cultural feminists by Donovan (2001: 47–78) and material feminists by Hayden (1981). However, since many of the reformers opposed suffrage, Spencer-Wood (1987, 1991b) uses the term “domestic reform.” The reformers argued that men's sinful capitalist public sphere needed to be reformed ideologically and materially by women's superior morality, resulting from the closeness of women and their domestic sphere to God's holy nature. While retaining the dominant separate-spheres gender ideology, cultural-domestic feminist theory inverted its meaning by transforming women from innately sinful daughters of the biblical temptress Eve to passionless, ascetic, morally superior angels of the house or home ministers. Reform women claimed women were domestic, but materially made the domestic sphere public by (1) applying men's scientific-industrial technology to rationalize and mechanize housework, arguing that it was a profession equivalent to men's professions and (2) transforming some of women's domestic tasks into new women's public organizations, institutions, and professions. In the public cooperative housekeeping and municipal housekeeping movements, reformers extended women's domestic sphere to incorporate large areas of men's urban public sphere, with the slogan: The World Her Household (Spencer-Wood 1996, 1999a, forthcoming). This research reveals ways that women and men historically constantly renegotiated, changed, and invented new gender ideologies, discourses, identities, practices, and power dynamics, which were symbolized and implemented with material culture.

In this volume, Spencer-Wood's chapter provides an overview of many different domestic reform movements that developed new ideologies and discourses to make aspects of the domestic sphere public. For instance, some reformers, including a famous minister, sacralized housework and mothering as the equivalent of the prestigious public male profession of the ministry. Many doctors and reformers applied men's scientific technology to mothering, developing a public discourse transforming breast-feeding from a natural, innate, intimate female function into a scientific process controlled by male doctors and commercialized with ads making the spurious claim that babies always required formula. The public discourse developed by men's and women's different dress reform movements about the intimate physical effects of dress styles, especially corsets, is discussed in the chapters by Carol Nickolai and Suzanne Spencer-Wood. While reformers and doctors decried the horrible effects of tight-laced corsets on women's health, women continued to wear corsets into the twentieth century due to pressure from women concerned with respectability, and men enforcing the subordination of women, who were made into the weaker dependent sex by disabling tight-laced corsets. Kruczek-Aaron's chapter discusses the archaeological evidence for US Representative Gerrit Smith's attempted imposition of temperance and domestic reform of household whiteware consumer choices in his tenants' households, as well as his own. These chapters are especially interesting because they address some *male* domestic reformers.

Public cooperative housekeeping and municipal housekeeping were both domestic reform movements that transformed some of women's domestic tasks into public institutions and women's professions, bringing women's moral-domestic values into men's sinful capitalist public sphere. Municipal housekeeping was particularly directed at reforming men's urban landscapes of stone with green spaces, from parks to playgrounds, that brought God's morally reforming nature into contact with youth and adults alike, increasing their morality (Spencer-Wood 2003, [forthcoming](#)). Anne Yentsch's chapter discusses Mrs. Mina Miller Edison's lifelong evolution from a private housewife to one of the wealthy reform women who joined and led numerous domestic reform organizations. She was unusual in leading reform organizations in three states: New Jersey, New York, and Florida. Mrs. Edison was involved in a wide range of social movements, including playgrounds, kindergartens, municipal sanitation, temperance, the Red Cross, and aid to orphans. She was a leader in the City Beautiful movement, creating parks and bird sanctuaries, and the nature conservation movement. These movements and the Arts and Crafts Movement all argued that contact with God's nature was morally uplifting. In another example of women participating in a number of domestic reform organizations, Rotman's chapter discusses two Boston reformers who participated in temperance and domestic urban missions and establishing a municipal water system in Deerfield, Massachusetts. Women's exercise of power in the placement of municipal waterlines and spigots was visible in archaeological excavations. Kim Christensen's chapter concerns May L. Cheney, a suffragist who was also involved in the home economics and playground movements. From 1870 to 1930, women's public institutions proliferated and often dominated areas of men's public urban landscapes (Spencer-Wood 1994, [1996, forthcoming](#)).



In the public cooperative housekeeping movement, reform women socialized aspects of their domestic tasks into public professions and institutions, starting with the Harvard Cooperative Housekeeping Society laundry, bakery, and store discussed in Spencer-Wood's chapter, followed by kindergartens discussed in chapters by Praetzelis, Yentsch, and Spencer-Wood. Swedish cooperative laundries are discussed by Arwill-Nordbladh, who found they were inspired in part by American reformer Christine Frederick, who applied Taylor's principles of industrial efficiency to increase the efficiency of arrangements of material culture for performing housework. Domestic reform was composed of international networks of women's organizations using "powers with" each other to reform Western patriarchy from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century (Spencer-Wood [forthcoming](#)). Domestic reform spread and grew through many national and international reform organizations and networks, as discussed in Yentsch's and Spencer-Wood's chapters.

### Third-Wave Feminist Diversity Theory

The third wave of feminist theory, which I call feminist diversity theory, began in the 1980s when women of color critiqued totalizing second-wave structuralist-feminist theory for essentializing white middle-class women's domestic experiences as all women's experiences (hooks [1984](#)). Structuralist-feminist theory was criticized for reifying patriarchy by considering the dominant separate-spheres gender ideology to be universally isomorphic with actual practice. In order to denaturalize the binary construction of gender, it is first important to distinguish it as ideological discourse that is separate from actual gender practices, which may or may not conform to gender ideology, since people's actions differ situationally. This volume as a whole implicitly applies third-wave feminist diversity theory in distinguishing the dominant gender ideology from actual practices and alternative gender ideologies, discourses, and identities. Feminist diversity theory makes an important distinction between gender ideology or discourse and gender practices, and argues that different gender systems, including a variety of gender ideologies, identities, power dynamics, and actual practices, developed at the intersections of gender with different classes, races, ethnicities, sexualities, and ages (Friedan [1993](#); Lorber [2001](#): 147–161). Plural and situationally shifting individual and group identities can be modeled as moving intersection points among social dimensions modeled as separate continua, such as gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and age (Spencer-Wood [2007](#): 47).

The diversity of gender systems at intersections with other social dimensions of identity has been researched in historical archaeology since 1987 (Cantwell and Wall [2011](#); Frink [2005](#); Galle and Young [2004](#); Holliman [2005](#); Scott [1994](#); Spencer-Wood [1987, 1996, 1999b, 2010](#); Yentsch [2011](#)). In this volume, some chapters analyze the intersections of gender and class (Gray, Rotman, Christensen, Nickolai, Yentsch, Nordbladh, Kruczek-Aaron), while others analyze intersections of gender and race or ethnicity (Clements, Jackson, Middleton, Camp, Praetzelis), and a couple of chapters analyze intersections between gender, religion, and ethnicity and/or class (Reklaityte, Spencer-Wood).

Spencer-Wood's chapter briefly identifies her inclusive theoretical models based on feminist diversity theory. Her inclusive theoretical perspective critiques the binary oppositional *either/or* thinking that Deetz (1988: 22) argued is innate. Dualistic *either/or* thinking underpinning the gender dichotomy has naturalized the heterosexual division between women's domestic sphere and men's public sphere as biological, mutually exclusive, and universal. Instead, Spencer-Wood developed feminist inclusive *both/and* thinking to analyze how the supposedly separate-gender spheres overlapped, merged, and combined in many ways. Women and men and their supposedly separate spheres were *both* domestic *and* public.

The projection of the dominant separate-spheres gender ideology into the past as the only actual practice has been critiqued with evidence that many of women's and men's roles crossed or combined the domestic and public spaces. In this volume, Rotman's chapter draws on Spencer-Wood's critique of the separate-spheres gender ideology as actual practice and discusses a case study of men as well as women combining *both* the domestic *and* public spheres to manufacture and sell craft items out of rooms in their homes or from the liminal domestic/public spaces of porches. Some rooms in homes were traditionally used for public entrepreneurship or waged labor when women operated shops in their parlors or took in boarders, laundry, or sewing. In tenements, boarders often rented beds or parts of rooms, and industrial homework was conducted at the kitchen table in one- or two-room cold-water flats (Collins 2003: 263–236; De Cunzo 2004; Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 5, 195–202; Robertson 1982: 159; Rotman *forthcoming*; Spencer-Wood 1991a: 237–238). Manufacturers provided materials and controlled industrial home production for public markets in the already-mentioned English cottage industry and American putting-out system. Domestic and public places merged as women worked in all kinds of family businesses conducted on farms, in homes, and adjoining shops. Women often served as deputies for their husbands and took over the business when the husband died (Matthaei 1982: 51–68; Little 1994). Archaeologists have documented farmwives working in fields with husbands in the seventeenth and early twentieth centuries (Gibb and King 1991; Stine 1991). In domestic service, which was the most common employment for women, and for prostitutes working in brothels, their workplace was also the home where they lived, merging domestic and public places (Anderson and Zinsser 1988: 248–250, 270–174; Collins 2003: 112; Hymowitz and Weissman 1978: 200–201; Spencer-Wood 1995: 125–126). At the other end of the social spectrum, middle-class and elite women's public organizations sometimes were created or met in private homes, as discussed by Christensen for suffrage and Yentsch and Spencer-Wood for women's reform organizations. Some reform women crossed the boundary into men's occupations, such as architecture and invention (Brewer 2000: 65–75; Macdonald 1992: 4–6, 38–47, 182, 236; Spencer-Wood *forthcoming*). Some men crossed from their public sphere into women's domestic sphere in performing tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and/or sewing, including chefs, military men, lumberjacks, miners, sailors, and farmers (Babits 1994; Starbuck 1994: 125–126; Stine 1991).

Annie Gray's chapter in this volume researched British women's high-status leading role since the 1660s in controlling domestic tea ceremonies to which public

outsiders such as business acquaintances were invited, bringing men's public sphere into women's domestic sphere. Historians have documented the association of tea with women in the American colonies (Breen 1988: 83), and Goodwin (1999: 176–181, 187–192) has found eighteenth-century documentary evidence stating how important it was for a man's business acquaintances to impress his wife at teas. The wife served as a gatekeeper to alliances between her husband and other businessmen. Christensen's chapter analyzes how suffragists organized their political movement for women's public rights over tea in Joslyn Gage's home. Clearly, women's tea ceremonies had ritual and public economic significance beyond just the production of food to reproduce the capitalist labor force. Women performed important public roles in their homes, making the domestic sphere public in some ways.

Spencer-Wood's chapter also discusses a feminist inclusive heterarchical model of power, which considers *both* dominating “powers over” others, *and* subordinate “powers under” others, *and* cooperative “powers with” others (Spencer-Wood 1999c: 178). All of these different kinds of powers can also be “powers to” create change (Shanks and Tilly 1992: 129). The Marxist domination and resistance model considers many dominating “powers over” others, from physical force to mental coercion, and subordinate “powers under” from malingering to rebellion (Paynter and McGuire 1991). In addition to these powers, this model includes cooperative “powers with” others, from inspiration and empowerment to negotiation and collective action. The international network of social reform movements that transformed Western gender culture from the nineteenth to the twentieth century shows that “powers with” others can be more powerful in effecting major culture change than either domination or resistance.

One example of the cooperative powers in reform women's networks is the first Froebelian kindergarten in the USA, which was managed by Matilda Kriege in Boston in 1867, with the assistance of Mary Mann, as noted by Yentsch's chapter in this volume. Further, Mary Mann's sister, Elizabeth Peabody, who had created the first English-speaking kindergarten in the USA, in Boston in 1860, had met Matilda at the Froebelian Institute in Berlin, urged her to establish a Froebelian kindergarten teacher training school in Boston, and sent a letter to Mary asking her to assist Matilda, who became manager of Mary's kindergarten, which was a continuation of Elizabeth's kindergarten (Ronda 1999: 273, 299; Wiebé 1896: 61–62). Although Elizabeth recommended Matilda's Froebelian kindergarten to her friends, it failed because parents wanted more academic education for their children and objected to Kriege's rigid adherence to Froebel's German songs, games, and stories. Charitable kindergartens used “powers with” poor urban children to develop activities more relevant to their experiences (Beatty 2000: 45–7; Eggleston 1875: 626–7).

Reaching across the gender divide, reform women used cooperative “powers with” of “moral suasion” to gain the assistance of male government officials in reforms such as constructing playgrounds, children's gardens, planting trees, and hiring the Olmstead brothers to design the first American park playground, in 1889 in Boston. A major strategy used by reform women to create relatively rapid change involved materially implementing a reform program such as playgrounds, children's gardens, or kindergartens and then using their “powers with” male governmental

officials of women's superior moral suasion to convince men to adopt the reforms in public schools or other public institutions, such as hospitals that adopted reform women's scientific cooking and dietaries for the sick (Spencer-Wood 1994: 196; 2003, [forthcoming](#)). Arwill-Nordbladh's chapter analyzes how women's public cooperative laundries also gained the cooperation of male government officials.

Material feminist theory, which is concerned with the social agency of material culture in *both* enforcing *and* changing patriarchy, is foundational to feminist research in archaeology. The term "material feminism" was coined by Christine Delphy in 1975, inspired by Marxist and socialist feminism (Hennessy and Ingraham 1997: 7). Material feminist theory was proposed in historical archaeology by Spencer-Wood (1996: 407) and has been further developed by feminist sociologists (Alaimo and Hekman 2008). In this volume, chapters by Arwill-Nordbladh and Spencer-Wood both explicitly employ material feminist theory, while several others implicitly apply this theory. Spencer-Wood's feminist inclusive perspective has analyzed how material culture can be simultaneously *both* domestic *and* public when domestic material culture is used in publicly visible discourses, actions, institutions, or architecture used to enforce or change patriarchy.

The material enforcement of patriarchy included confinement of women in windowless Muslim houses in Reklaityte's chapter; the sentence of public whipping for an adulterous woman in Clements' chapter; incarceration in Australian missions, and whipping, stocks, leg chains, and solitary confinement in Spanish missions researched in Middleton's chapter; surveillance of wives permitted by the open construction of Dutch houses in Jackson's chapter; and the later European laws permitting husbands to confine and "moderately" beat their wives in their houses in Spencer-Wood's chapter. Domestic material culture was instrumental in attempts by European colonizers to impose Western patriarchal gender roles and middle-class housekeeping on indigenous peoples in many continents, as researched in chapters in this book's colonization section. Chapters in the Internal Colonialism section and Spencer-Wood's chapter discuss how domestic material culture was used by dominant Anglo-American reformers in attempts to impose middle-class standards of moral living and housekeeping on working-class and/or immigrant peoples. All these chapters also discuss the strategies of resistance or adoption of such material culture of domestic colonialism by indigenous, working-class, and/or immigrant families. The resulting material hybridization of American culture is apparent in aspects of material culture from architecture and foodways to borrowed words for borrowed material culture, such as margarita glasses, fajita pans, Jewish kosher knives, and menorahs.

Research in this volume reveals how historic women and men reformed patriarchy by constantly renegotiating, redefining, and combining the domestic and public spheres, artifacts, spaces, and landscapes in transgressive gender boundary crossings, transforming their meanings in complex ways. Domestic reformers used new types of material culture, and new uses of ordinary material culture, to symbolize and implement major changes in patriarchal gender ideology, identities, roles, and power dynamics (Spencer-Wood [forthcoming](#)). Carol Nickolai's chapter discusses the feminist dress reform movement in a theoretical context concerning the use of clothing as cultural capital, drawing on Bourdieu, to communicate social distinctions. Material feminism theorizes the importance of material culture *both* for

maintaining cultures *and* for creating cultural change. Feminist archaeologists are uniquely suited to further develop material feminist theory from our research, due to our focus on the ability of material culture *both* to express gender ideology *and* to unconsciously influence and change people's gender practices and beliefs.

## Lesbian Feminist Theory

Third-wave lesbian feminist theory critiqued the heterosexism in structuralist-feminist theory, which only analyzed the two heterosexuals in patriarchy, and ignored the existence of homosexuals. Lesbian theory analyzes the oppression of women and domination of women's spaces by heterosexual men and marriage. Lesbian feminist theory went beyond the radical feminist advocacy of mixed-gender communes and lesbian political communities to theorize complete gender segregation, with women-only workplaces, political organizations, lesbian culture, and homosexuality (Lorber 2001: 99–113). Interestingly, this solution, except for political organizations, is a return to the nineteenth-century culture of gender segregation and homosociality.

Lesbian feminist theory raises new questions about reform women. The majority of first-wave feminists, including suffragists and domestic or cultural feminists, participated in predominantly female networks or had primary relationships with women that were "romantic friendships" of an intensity that today would be considered lesbian even if they were not sexual, which is difficult to determine in most cases (Donovan 2001: 69). Homosociality was normative in gender-segregated Victorian society, especially among women. At the turn of the twentieth century, many reform women lived together in female-dominated and female-run communities in social settlements and other women's institutions that often provided programmatic opportunities for unmarried reformers to mother children (Spencer-Wood [forthcoming](#)). So many college-educated Boston reform women lived in long-term homosocial or homosexual relationships that a new term was coined for these relationships: "Boston marriages" (Deutsch 2000: 109). In most cases, we do not know if these relationships were homosexual or just homosocial. Knowing about Boston marriages sheds new light on Rotman's chapter about two reform women who moved from Boston to live together in Deerfield, making and selling crafts on their porch in a community with many single women and widows.

## Queer Theory

In the 1990s, lesbian theory's critique of women's oppression in heterosexual marriage led to queer theory, which critiques heterosexual privilege due to the patriarchal construction of monogamous heterosexuality as natural and normative versus other sexualities as deviant. Queer theory deconstructs the apparent normality and naturalness of heterosexuality and challenges conventional assumptions about gender and sexual boundaries, especially as depicted in mass media (Lorber 2001:

191). Queer theory destabilizes heterosexism by creating a diversity of gender and sexual bodies and categories that blur heterosexual boundaries and question what is normative. For instance, men wearing earrings who date women “queer” straight masculinity. Queer theory is antistructuralist in researching the diversity, fluidity and interrelatedness of culturally constructed biological sexes, gender-role performances, and sexual identities, orientations, relationships, and practices.

Queer theory is also concerned with the construction of gender and sexual identities through bodily and surface inscriptions of gender and sexuality in people’s appearances and behaviors. Queer theory views sexuality and gender as a performance and display of appearance that can be altered through clothing, jewelry, use of hormones, or surgery. Drag queens or transvestites are, through their appearance and gender performance, “queering” and parodying a heteronormative gender performance (Lorber 2001: 147–154). The dress reformers discussed in chapters in this volume by Nickolai and Spencer-Wood were harassed by men for wearing pants because this “queered” an exclusive material symbol of masculinity. Most relevant to this volume is Judith Butler’s (1990) theory of the performativity of gender and sexuality. Butler theorizes how the performance of gender and sexuality can be reinforced or changed through the daily iteration of their material performances.

Many chapters in this volume analyze processes of change in gender performances. Some chapters implicitly draw on Butler’s theory of the daily iteration of gender performances that can only change gender performances slowly if at all. Nickolai’s chapter analyzes the underlying gender ideology of dressing like a lady, which led most women to continue reiterating dress styles with tight corsets damaging to their health rather than adopting healthier dress reform garments. Yentsch’s chapter discusses how Mrs. Mina Miller Edison slowly shifted her gender performance from traditional domesticity to public leadership of several reform organizations that were considered appropriate extensions of women’s moral-domestic values into the men’s public sphere landscapes, as discussed in Spencer-Wood’s chapter. While this process of change was gradual overall, there were also sudden changes in Mrs. Edison’s performance of gender as she took up public activities. The public activities she undertook were acceptable *both* because they were considered part of women’s appropriate charitable role and because they were praised by her husband for creating good PR for him.

In contrast to Butler’s slow iterative process of change in gender performance, some chapters in this volume, such as the colonization section, analyze fairly rapid changes in performances of gender roles with the attempted material imposition of Christian patriarchy in different countries around the world, which was resisted or adopted by indigenous people. Chapters in the internal colonialism section analyze how reformers attempted to materially impose either the cult of domesticity or gentility on immigrants, as discussed by Camp, or reforms of domesticity, such as simplicity or temperance imposed on whites in the working and middle classes, as attempted by the elite Gerrit Smith, discussed by Kruczek-Aaron. Change in dress styles can also be relatively rapid, as they spread in an artifact horizon, often from



the French elite to other European elites, American and Australian elites, and then to the middle and lower classes, when a new elite style is introduced to maintain elite distinctiveness from other classes. The rapidity in adoption of new dress styles directly challenges Butler's model of slow daily iterative change in gender performance through personal appearance and representation.

Annie Gray's chapter discusses another rapid process of women's social agency in inventing a new gender performance in the tea ceremony that women adopted quickly after tea was initially imported to men's coffeehouses in the 1650s. Gray quotes Congreve in 1694 referring to ladies retiring to "*their tea and scandal, according to their ancient custom,*" to show that tea became a feminized drink soon after its introduction, in contrast to Yentsch's (1991: 234) contention that the tea ceremony was masculine until 1720. Factors involved in the rapid feminization of tea include a trickle-down process after Queen Catherine of Braganza introduced the tea ceremony to the royal English court in 1662, followed by aristocratic women in the court, and then moving down the social scale as the initially very high taxes were cut (Moxham 2003: 18). This process was similar to Josiah Wedgewood's celebrity sales of queensware to Queen Charlotte of England (including a tea set) and the aristocracy, followed by a trickle-down process (Smiles 1895: 77–87). Women's tea rituals became avenues for women's power, including social climbing, matchmaking, and distribution of the latest social news (Hohenegger 2006: 86–87). Women's "gossip" at tea ceremonies powerfully affected the reputations of neighborhood households and led to men's attempts to limit this new female power by denigrating it as gossip (Shields 1997: 107, 119).

Reform women and men sought to change the performance of gender in innovative ways that "queered" the supposedly separate spheres by overlapping and combining them. Rotman analyzes change in women's traditional performance of domestic production for sale in public markets as some men worked with women in community household production of new Arts and Crafts products such as baskets, quilts, and ceramics that were sold and consumed as anticapitalist symbols. New gender ideologies and discourses justified rapid changes, such as the rationalization and mechanization of housework using men's public scientific-industrial technology. Rapid increases in women's public gender performances in institutions and new professions were made acceptable by labeling them as natural extensions of women's domestic roles. Women's public housekeeping cooperatives were considered appropriate extensions of women's domestic roles and identities that applied Christian communitarian values to socialize mothering and housekeeping, as discussed in Spencer-Wood's chapter. Women's organizations created new women's gender performances and identities, from mixed-gender social settlements to alliances with men's organizations for women's rights and municipal housekeeping, as discussed in Spencer-Wood's chapter, or the way Mrs. Edison created a mixed-gender city beautification movement combining several men's and women's organizations in 1920s in Fort Myers, Florida, as discussed in Yentsch's chapter.

## Masculinity Theory

Starting in the 1980s, masculinity theory developed out of structuralist-feminist theory to analyze patriarchy as a male hierarchy. First masculinity theory analyzed the institutionalized privileges benefiting all men and the social values valorizing male violence. Then masculinity theory developed as a feminist diversity theory by addressing the diversity in forms of masculinity performed by straight and gay men of different classes, races, and ethnicities. Masculinity theory further unpacks the monolithic category of masculinity in structuralist-feminist theory and instead analyzes how one group of men – Western, elite, heterosexual white men – has institutionalized privileges resulting in greater wealth, political power, and educational resources. Masculinity theory analyzes the dominant ideology and practices of hegemonic hypermasculinity that valorize men's violence against, and sexual exploitation of, women. Masculinity theorists and homosexuals have developed alternative ideologies and practices of masculinity by eschewing dominance and instead working to share resources and power and to raise the status of subordinate groups of men as well as women (Lorber 2001: 163–176).

In this volume, hegemonic hypermasculinity concerning the tolerance of domestic violence by English patriarchy is discussed in Clements' chapter on the colonization of Native Americans in a Massachusetts praying town, in Jackson's chapter discussion of rape threats by male slaves against their mistress, and in Spencer-Wood's chapter discussion of the WCTU Home Protection movement. In Camp's chapter, men running the Pacific Electric Railway Corporation clearly dominated reform women they hired to Americanize Mexican immigrants, who were also dominated by the male-run company.

Alternative masculinities of reform men are discussed in some chapters. Spencer-Wood's chapter discusses the Protestant "self-reverence" movement of nineteenth-century reform men and women who rejected aggressive hypermasculinity and instead advocated an ideal moral masculinity involving kindness to others and purity or chastity, as well as subjugation to maternal morality. Christensen's research found that suffragists and reform women were supported by husbands who eschewed male dominance and oppression of their wives. Joslyn Gage's husband allowed the masculine space of his library to be used by Susan B. Anthony on her long visits. In Nickolai's chapter, the men who supported reform of women's clothing for health reasons eschewed the hypermasculine view of women dressing as sex objects. Kruczek-Aaron's chapter discusses how Gerrit Smith critiqued the domineering heavy-drinking "sporting" masculinity and instead advocated a gentler "truer" masculinity that eschewed hypermasculinity and status display for simplicity and temperance. As a whole, this volume provides evidence of reform movements advocating alternative nonaggressive masculinities *before* the twentieth-century development of masculinity theorizing about diverse constructions of masculinity.

## Conclusion

This commentary has discussed several feminist theories that underpin chapters in this volume, usually implicitly. Feminist theories are substantiated by, and provided insights about, how specific historical events in chapters formed some of the theorized cultural structures, institutions, and processes that enforced or diminished patriarchy. For instance, radical feminist theory revealed that the incident of domestic violence in Clements' chapter was one of the culturally condoned systematic forms of male violence used to enforce the imposition of English patriarchy on Native American women. Radical feminist theory also explains (1) Spanish men's use of violence to force Native Americans to perform patriarchal roles and (2) the culturally condoned male harassment and intimidation that led most reform women to stop wearing bloomers and no doubt discouraged many women from wearing them who had thought about it.

Marxist-feminist theory provided the insight that domestic reformers were Marxist feminists because they theorized the root of women's oppression to be their economic dependence on men, leading them to create new female public professions that were acceptable in the dominant ideology because they were considered natural extensions of women's domestic roles. First-wave Enlightenment egalitarian feminist theory provided theoretical context for Christensen's chapter, which is about two suffragists who were social actors involved in developing first-wave egalitarian feminist theory. Similarly, cultural feminist theory provided the coherent theoretical context for the book chapters on domestic reformers and their social movements to raise the status of women's domestic sphere by making it public in many ways.

Many suffragists were also domestic reformers, such as May L. Cheney, discussed in Christensen's chapter. Feminist diversity theory gave new meaning to the many chapters researching differences in gender systems due to intersections of gender with class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, age, religion, etc. Masculinity theory underpins, and is expanded by, research in chapters by Kruczek-Aaron and Spencer-Wood on social reform movements that constructed and advocated nonaggressive alternative masculinities based on the feminine ideal of higher morality. Queer theory underpins this volume because it has brought to light some processes reformers used to change gender performances from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century. Feminist theories raise fundamental questions about gender systems and are explicitly applied in chapters by Clements, Arwill-Nordbladh, and Spencer-Wood.

In addition, some chapters contribute new applications of, and/or insights into, feminist theories. Comparison with historical research showed that Marxist-feminist theory takes a middle-class viewpoint in only considering women as domestic and urging women's participation in wage labor when working-class women were already employed in industry, and middle-class reformers were developing new public professions for women. The historical context in Spencer-Wood's chapter shows that Engels' solution of wage labor for women's oppression would not work

as long as men owned and spent their wives' and children's wages. Reform women's new professions provided them with economic independence in the late nineteenth century because laws were changed allowing married women to keep their wages. Further, many reform women were not married, avoiding male domination by not participating in patriarchal marriage. In this commentary, I further differentiated the broad concept of internal colonialism into patriarchal colonialism, domestic colonialism, and gender colonialism. Further, book chapters about domestic reform movements suggest the extension of the concept of domestic colonialism to include reformers' attempts to change *middle-class* housekeeping, mothering, and intimate practices such as dress. Third-wave feminist diversity theory was expanded with my inclusive *both/and* framework, my continuum models, and my heterarchical model of multiple interacting powers. In developing material feminist theory, it was clear to me that historical archaeologists researching the materialization of gender transformations would be major contributors to material feminist theory. Many chapters in this volume also provide examples of relatively rapid change in gender performances of women, showing that change can occur more rapidly than through Butler's slow daily iterative type of change in gender performances. Chapters by Kruczek-Aaron and Spencer-Wood both show that diverse new masculinities were theorized and advocated by cultural feminists more than a century prior to the development of masculinity theory in the twentieth century.

Modern feminist theories have stimulated much of the recovery of women's history, called herstory, which had been excluded from men's histories under the assumption that women were domestic, unchanging, and therefore insignificant to history. In turn, feminist histories have provided case studies and historical context that substantiate, revise, and expand feminist theories.

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