"Some of the babies who scored high in a better baby contest sponsored by the University Settlement in New York City." [From *Save the Babies*]

causes of infant mortality displayed the inherent limits of defining the problem in terms of personal hygiene or maternal ignorance. Once milk supplies became hygienic, once mothers became better educated, once the death rates from gastrointestinal illness began to decline, infant deaths caused by poverty, overwork, and the lack of pre- and postnatal care became more apparent. And the impetus for social intervention became clear. Meckel describes how many European nations turned to maternity and sickness insurance as the solution. In the United States, however, these were, to quote Meckel, "the steps not taken." The choice reflected what he terms "the ideological and political marginalization of government-provided health care services" and the triumph of privatized medicine.

Despite the political implications of his work, Meckel's book is neither polemical nor pessimistic. He recognizes the gains that were made even as he acknowledges the choices and decisions that have become, for better or for worse, our public health legacy. By tackling the central problem of public health and the period of its vital transformation—demographically, intellectually, and programmatically—he has produced a significant work in public health history. Together with Preston and Haines, Meckel has clarified the enormous achievements of the American public health enterprise, even as he has documented many of the causes of its past and present failures.

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Transformations on Campus

Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era. LYNN D. GORDON. Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1990. xiv, 258 pp. + plates. $29.95.

Lynn D. Gordon's *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* is a welcome addition to the growing body of literature on women's education, and higher education in particular. In a lengthy and informative introduction and in her conclusion, Gordon demonstrates that students of the Progressive Era lived on the cusp of modernity. They inherited a Victorian past that deemed women to have a separate sphere for life's activities, a special nature, and a separate destiny from men. But these students helped to bring into being the modern age predicated on integration of the sexes in public life and their political equality.

Gordon presents carefully researched studies of campus life of women students at five institutions: the University of California, the University of Chicago, Vassar College, Sophie Newcomb College, and Agnes Scott College. Gordon's case studies illustrate variations in college life at institutions north and south, public and private, coeducational and single-sex. To participate in campus life, women students followed a variety of strategies. At the University of California, where they were prohibited from sitting on certain benches and using certain paths reserved for men, women embraced a strategy of separatism. But at Chicago women students and administrators resisted segregation when male administrators, hoping to improve the quality of education by attracting more men students, tried to institute sex-segregated classes. Nevertheless, despite the various strategies that women pursued, one great similarity appears. At each institution, women had to deal with hostile reactions from men who opposed their becoming educated and developing their own college life. At all colleges, men would have preferred that women students not act independently. California men, for instance, opposed women's writing and offering cheers for the football team, even when the women sat in a section of the stadium reserved for women without male escorts.

Men's reaction to women's pursuit of higher education is one of the themes that gives this monograph on educational history significance for the larger domain of cultural and social history. For the book brings to light how the Progressive generation of college students helped to bring in the modern age. Student writings, from which Gordon quotes extensively, reveal how young men and women were working out new patterns of behavior and relationships during the years when women descended from their pedestals. In the late 19th century, future Progressive-Era college students had met the opposite sex most often in settings

governed by strict conventions. Male-initiated dating had not yet taken hold, and among the middle class relationships still developed under the watchful eyes of relatives in parlor settings. Then at college the informal and regular contact of men and women in classes and campus activities called forth new codes of behavior and visions of the opposite sex. Chicago women warned one another that college relationships were evanescent, ending with the term, and California men welcomed more casual and permissive styles of dating when a kiss on the lips would not signal engagement to be married.

Previous historians have viewed Progressive-Era women students' relationships with men in and after college as signs of declension from the pinnacle of seriousness scaled by the first generation of women students. Gordon exonerates college women of the years 1890 to 1920 from these charges of frivolity by showing how they moved from a strategy of separatism to a campaign for full and equal inclusion in campus life. And after college Progressive-Era college women pursued a similar strategy by combining marriage and employment. Though most graduates found their employment in teaching, some entered new fields, especially domestic economy and sanitary science, in which colleges and universities had recently begun to offer courses. And higher education could suggest even more daring alternatives. At Vassar, a student writing in the 1917 yearbook envisioned her classmates becoming model mothers or working for the suffrage cause, agitating for labor, or going to Europe for war work.

Gender and Higher Education should also encourage historians of higher education to abandon their understanding of the academic past as man-made. As Mary O. Furner has previously argued in *Advocacy and Objectivity: A Crisis in the Professionalization of Social Science*, some late-19th-century male academics wanted the social sciences to have direct impact on American social and political life, whereas others denigrated reform efforts and argued that academics owed their allegiance to a purer vision of scholarship. Gordon's account of women students in the Progressive Era fills in this story. The gendered dichotomy between reform and scholarship had its grass roots in the reality of women students' academic and career interests. It was not scholars exclusively whose value system deemed women's concerns second-rate; also men students and administrators who devalued women's campus life.

Finally, Gordon's view of campus life offers an alternative to that popularized by Helen Horowitz, whose book *Campus Life* pictured college life as warfare—students versus faculty and administrators. Colleges were and are complex social organizations; their various constituencies often had and have overlapping interests. So women students of the Progressive Era often found allies and supporters among women faculty, administrators, donors, members of the enviroring community, and alumnae. At Chicago, where the purpose of administrators coincided with that of women students in inhibiting the growth of a campus life dominated by sports and rituals such as fraternity rushes and hazing, the men's student newspaper suggested that the word "coed" was "discourteous and vulgar." At Vassar, faculty members formed friendships with students, encouraged their interest in social issues, and promoted their desire to pursue careers and socially responsible volunteer work. And at the southern colleges, alumnae took as their responsibility providing students with role models and mentors.

One cannot have everything in a book. I would like to know more about the students. In what particular part of the middle class did they have their origins? Were some of them second-generation college women, and were they building upon the experiences of their mothers? Also, there is more to know about the curriculum. Gordon's definition of campus life excludes consideration of students' course choices, and this omission seems less than wise if she wants full proof for her contention that faculty lessons inspired student interests and career plans. Finally, Gordon may underestimate the case for college as a transforming experience. She is disappointed to find so few suffrage organizations on campus. But my own survey of women achievers in Massachusetts shows that pro-suffrage women were far more likely to have gone to college (61%) than were women achievers who supported the antisuffrage cause (37%). Suffrage organizations may have been rare on campus, but college graduates usually supported the suffrage cause.

It is my hope that *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* will win a readership among those interested in women's education and higher education in general. If faculty members, academic administrators, and concerned citizens wish to change campus life, the past as described in this book contains useful models for our future. Thanks to Gordon's research, historians now face the task of reconceptualizing the history of education so that descriptive models encompass the experiences of both men and women.

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Current Patterns

Educated in Romance. Women, Achievement, and College Culture. DOROTHY C. HOLLAND and MARGARET A. EISENHART. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1990. xiv, 273 pp. $19.95.

What deters women from careers in science? Holland and Eisenhart set out to answer that question with a grant from the National Institute of Education in 1979 that supported a largely quantitative study of women college students in two institutions in the South, one a historically black college and one a predominantly white university. Although this provided the authors with baseline data, they found themselves increasingly drawn to the students' self-revelations in the qualitative interviews they were also conducting. This book is the outcome of those 23 in-depth interviews as well as long-term follow-up (to 1987) of the interviewed students to see "how their plans came out."

The entry into science as such is no longer the central focus of the study. For the students, the distinction between scientific and other career options was simply not the most salient dimension of difference. Although these women students, both black and white, talked about the importance of a career to them, they also gradually redefined what a career was. For most of them, it became a secondary pursuit, a way of supporting oneself that would not interfere with the more significant pursuit of a suitable marriage partner. As the authors followed the twists and turns of the students' thinking, they became intrigued with the myriad ways by which women students both absorb and resist the messages that college education provides.

One of the most discouraging discoveries of the study was how small a role the classroom and instructional program played in the experience of higher education. Peer culture, at least in these southern institutions, strongly supports the importance of romance as what gives meaning and purpose in life. Young women learned from their peers that their attractiveness was their chief asset and that attractiveness could only be demonstrated—to oneself as well as others—by attracting a man. Courses, grades, and interactions with faculty exist in a shadowy realm outside the concerns of peer culture, defined as private matters but also as interpersonally insignificant. Rather than finding peers reacting positively or negatively to sex-atypical choices of majors, as has often been supposed, Holland and Eisenhart depict them as frequently ignorant of what major or grades even their close friends have, but deeply concerned about who their boyfriends are and how they treat them.