

ABSTRACT

The Compassionate College Woman and the Confident College Man:
Examining Gender and Race at American Colleges from 1890 to 1910

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Students attending higher education institutions during Progressive Era America consistently admired confidence in men and compassion in women. With the immense social changes during this time period, a mix of gender ideals existed on college campuses, shifting from previously held values in the mid-nineteenth century to more recently adopted ones. The traits these college students praised throughout this era demonstrate the attitudes of young adults surrounding gender and race. While Black students often experienced and understood gender differently from white students, both jointly embraced certain ideals of successful manhood and womanhood. This thesis offers an examination of the college campus cultural moment from 1890 to 1910 by exploring student discourse around the intersectionality of race and gender.

The Compassionate College Woman and the Confident College Man:
Examining Gender and Race at American Colleges from 1890 to 1910

by

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To Jack,
my best friend and the love of my life.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The man is more noble in reason, so the woman is more quick in sympathy. That as he is indefatigable in pursuit of abstract truth, so is she in caring for the interests by the way—striving tenderly and lovingly that not one of the least of these little ones should perish.... That both are needed to be worked into the training of children, in order that our boys may supplement their virility by tenderness and sensibility, and our girls may round out their gentleness by strength and self-reliance.

—Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice from the South*

The Progressive Era American higher education system and its students celebrated the compassionate woman and the confident man. These assertions by Anna Julia Cooper about the necessity of women’s kindness and men’s independence resonated with college students across the nation. Cooper, a Black American scholar and activist, who fought for Black education and against segregation, emphasized in her 1892 book, *A Voice from the South*, the racial and gender issues surrounding American life and schooling.¹ Black and white Americans attending higher education institutions at the end of the nineteenth century mixed various points of view around college, vocations, masculinity, and femininity. Across the United States, cities developed, businesses industrialized, and numerous immigrants arrived, leading to changes in the everyday lives of Americans. This period transformed countless aspects of American lives, including new possibilities that opened to women along with shifting expectations for men. Throughout this era, women fought for numerous modifications, such as prohibition and

¹ Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice from the South: By a Black Woman of the South* (Xenia, OH: The Aldine Printing House, 1892).

suffrage. This reality altered American culture and the ways in which women and men once regarded themselves. While these changes occurred, young adults attending college developed their own ideas of successful womanhood and manhood.

Grasping how college students comprehended their gender roles contributes to the understanding of American femininity and masculinity in the Progressive Era. An analysis of college student ideals offers a glimpse into the overall gender and race dynamics among young adults, especially those within the same social class, as these students often went on to take influential positions in government, organizations, and businesses or in the responsibilities of motherhood. Throughout this period, College started to represent more and more a place where Americans went to establish knowledge, culture, and a path for a future career.² Educational institutions prepped these students for cultural influence and leadership, no matter their occupational prospects. Thus, the attitudes of the students around the purpose of higher education, characteristic values, and their own futures disclosed the gendered and racial lines of society.

As societal perceptions shifted considerably in the Progressive Era, typically students followed the overall trends occurring in America. However, different college cultures represented their own specific regional gender and racial understandings. The culture at these colleges establishes that largely, gender ideals remained the same from 1890 to 1910 yet they differed from earlier nineteenth century values. These students tended to associate femininity with broader knowledge, compassion, altruism, and domesticity while they associated masculinity with confidence, honesty, independence, and competitiveness. The tendencies present at these schools speaks to the cultural

² Roger L. Geiger, *The History of American Higher Education: Learning and Culture from the Founding to World War II* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), ix.

moment of late nineteenth century higher education. This thesis offers a more in-depth look into these college cultures and how they reflected or influenced wider America.

In order to understand the constructs of gender and race that occurred during the Progressive Era, historians must examine the common ideals praised amongst Americans. Scholars have agreed that this age brought about a conversion from Victorian ideals to more modern ones, especially among white Americans. Generally, three different principles—Victorianism, “Civilizationism”, and Progressivism—collided at the end of the nineteenth century and gave way to new perceptions of gender and race.³

Victorianism centered upon crafting a chaste America where individuals valued “cleanliness, refinement, highbrow culture, self-respect, social uplift, and sexual restraint.”⁴ Gender conceptions formed around these ideals. For example, men valued restraint, while women prized purity, and they valued these traits for each other as well.⁵ Victorians also thought white men could always improve their lives through hard work. Men stood for intelligence and chivalry, devoting their time to their public work, while women created safe, tranquil homes.⁶

Similarly, nineteenth century “Civilizationism” acclaimed sophisticated nonaggressive men and spiritual, delicate, and domestic women. This attitude saw white society as the most civilized and therefore the most successful society. Based on social

³ Derrick P. Alridge, “Of Victorianism, Civilizationism, and Progressivism: The Educational Ideas of Anna Julia Cooper and W.E.B. Du Bois, 1892–1940,” *History of Education Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (2007): 416–446.

⁴ Alridge, “Of Victorianism, Civilizationism, and Progressivism,” 419.

⁵ Mabel C. Donnelly, *The American Victorian Woman: The Myth and the Reality* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), 118.

⁶ Alridge, “Of Victorianism, Civilizationism, and Progressivism,” 419–420.

Darwinism, “Civilizationism” called for white society to “conquer, civilize, and assimilate,” other races it deemed lesser.⁷ Lastly, Progressivism rose at the end of the nineteenth century and desired social reform to counteract the harmful effects of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration, such as overcrowding, unsafe work conditions, and political corruption. Progressives desired social change through institutional transformations, social rhetoric, science, and community.⁸ These three ideals merged at the turn of the twentieth century, creating fluctuating ideals for men and women along with maintaining strong racial divides. Within these years, the students praised a mixture of older nineteenth century ideals and the newer emerging ones. Thus, women chased compassion and erudition, while men desired confidence and honesty.

When considering gender in nineteenth-century America, historians have coined the concepts of separate spheres and the Cult of True Womanhood.⁹ The notion of separate spheres evolved due to the fact men often participated in public life through politics or their occupations while women mostly participated in private life through child-rearing and domestic work. This developed due to the transformation of the economy and society during the first half of the nineteenth century. Americans of this time often believed and referred to the ideas of separate spheres themselves, but women frequently negotiated a space between these two, as they hosted guests within their homes, joined women’s organizations, and taught in schools. In the Progressive Era,

⁷ Alridge, “Of Victorianism, Civilizationism, and Progressivism,” 420–422.

⁸ Alridge, “Of Victorianism, Civilizationism, and Progressivism,” 424.

⁹ Barbara Welter and Gerda Lerner were the ones who posited this specific concept in America, but it is widespread across gender history. See Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820–1860,” *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (1966): 151–174; Gerda Lerner, “The Lady and the Mill Girl: Changes in the Status of Women in the Age of Jackson,” *Midcontinent American Studies Journal* 10, no. 1 (1969): 5–15.

more women began physically inserting themselves into the public sphere instead of negotiating spaces in between. The opportunities that arose—such as social work or leading reforms in organizations—led to this shift. Women often started seeking work or political involvement outside the home, assisting in poverty-stricken areas through settlement houses and community service centers.¹⁰

The Cult of True Womanhood, the second term historians devised to describe gender in nineteenth century America, also known as the Cult of Domesticity, defined the most common values among women, especially during the Antebellum through Reconstruction eras. These principles included “piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.”¹¹ Historians observed white American women during the nineteenth century hoping to embody these four characteristics, as women wanted to personify a devout, chaste, obedient, and home-centered nature. However, the firm divisions of separate spheres and the Cult of Domesticity have been challenged and stretched by historians in the past several decades.¹² With further exploration of class and race, historians also discovered that the idea of separate spheres applied less easily to those of the working class and different races. Historians see the notions of separate spheres generally prevailing until around the late nineteenth century. More and more women

¹⁰ For information on women in the Progressive Era, see Dorothy Schneider, *American Women in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920* (New York, NY: Facts on File, 1993); Nancy S. Dye and Noralee Frankel, eds., *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform in the Progressive Era*, Reissue edition (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1994).

¹¹ Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood,” 152.

¹² See Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres the Intellectual Roots of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); Amy Kaplan, “Manifest Domesticity,” *American Literature* 70, no. 3 (1998): 581–606; Mary Kelley, “Beyond the Boundaries,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 21, no. 1 (2001): 73–78.

sought occupations outside the home at this time—although numerous women still worked in a domestic realm, helping families or children through settlement houses or social work.¹³ While the nineteenth century gender ideals shifted during the late 1900s, the Cult of Womanhood’s principles, piety, submissiveness, domesticity, and purity were transforming into different priorities for women.

Several scholars have explored gender dynamics in higher education through the late nineteenth and twentieth century. However, scholars have glossed over gender and racial experiences and distinctions conceptualized by college students themselves. The work completed by these scholars enhances my research by laying a groundwork of institutional changes and the ways student experiences in college changed throughout the years. Despite the various secondary works on women or men in higher education, few scholars have analyzed student discourse for gender identities. We need more examination of documents written by college students themselves to conceptualize their own identities. The amount of scholarly research on Progressive Era higher education regularly concentrates on institutional and instructional changes, relying on more administrative documents for information. A focus on faculty leaves out the experiences of students on the ground and how they understood their places in society.

Lynn D. Gordon’s *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* and Andrea Turpin’s *A New Moral Vision: Gender, Religion, and the Changing Purposes of American Higher Education* are the two works most closely connected to my research. Gordon explicates how men reacted to women entering higher education institutions and

¹³ Barbara Miller Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America*, Reprint edition (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 119–121.

how each sex separated themselves from one another in school. Her focus lies on illuminating the ways college education resulted in the creation of both progressive suffragist women and women accepting of the status quo.¹⁴ To support this argument, Gordon utilizes student writings and institutional documents. While Gordon's thesis emphasizes the ways that men responded to women on campus and how these women envisioned their opportunities, I explore masculine and feminine values and how much they differed or were alike. She avoids studying the culture among college men beyond just responding to the women on campus. Thus, I expand on the work she completed by delving deeper into the masculine and feminine culture present at these schools.

Turpin's *A New Moral Vision* establishes an overview of the development of religious teachings for collegiate men and women. She centers her discussion on how higher education institutions transformed from directly teaching morality from the Bible in classrooms to relying on extracurricular sources, such as the YMCA or YWCA, to influence students' morality.¹⁵ To explore these changes, Turpin primarily focuses on institutional or faculty sources rather than student voices. However, she also pulls in material from student organizations and their writings. Employing Turpin's information on how students and faculty saw the purpose of college for men and women, especially in reference to moral and religious instruction, I expand on the values students perceived as important for their futures.

¹⁴ Lynn D. Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990).

¹⁵ Andrea L. Turpin, *A New Moral Vision: Gender, Religion, and the Changing Purposes of American Higher Education, 1837–1917* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016).

Other secondary sources also offer information about women in higher education throughout the majority of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Barbara Solomon's *In the Company of Educated Women* surveys the entirety of women's involvement with higher education, beginning with early academies until the 1970s. This work provides a history of many generations of educated women, looking at their fight for education and their experiences. Due to the large breadth of Solomon's work, she gives fewer specific analyses of students and specific years. Additionally, Roger L. Geiger's *The History of American Higher Education: Learning and Culture from the Founding to World War II* provides a detailed assessment of the institutional changes transpiring among American colleges since their inception until the Second World War.

Numerous scholars, such as Geiger, have written on the history of higher education from a more male perspective, but a cultural analysis of the male and female students is needed. Comparing male and female student discourse discloses how they defined gender identities. Two important works discussing American masculinity are Anthony Rotundo's *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* and Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen's *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America*. These two books provide details about the development of white American masculinity and the important ways white men conceived of their gender. Throughout the nineteenth century, the values associated with American manhood changed, especially due to the rapid expansion westward, and self-made manhood bloomed. During this time, men viewed the most

important values as ambition, aggression, and individualism.¹⁶ Men exercised these virtues to build work, a home, and a life.

As the century passed, American land became settled and men continued to esteem ambition, aggression, and individualism, but competitiveness, strength, and physical skill of the male body mattered to them as well. As noted by Gail Bederman in *Manliness and Civilization*, many middle-class men developed animosity towards women for entering their areas of life and affecting economic changes present during this time. The goal of self-made manhood seemed out of reach in the economy of the Progressive Era. Small businesses were failing, and men started to enter the workforce as employees rather than business owners. Men responded to these perceived challenges to their manhood by proving their physical strength through sports and male organizations, entering the domestic and feminine sphere, or pushing back against women vying for more political and social power.¹⁷ To establish white masculine power, men believed that health and athletics connected to a strong Christian faith and morals. This belief became known as muscular Christianity.¹⁸ The YMCA expanded in the Progressive Era to avoid the perceived feminization of the economy and religion. Thus, the YMCA spread muscular Christianity ideals and worked to incorporate so-called manly ideas around character building and helping society, similar to women, but more focused on leadership

¹⁶ Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1993), 3–5; Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen, *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

¹⁷ Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917*, Women in Culture and Society edition (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 16–17.

¹⁸ Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 224–225.

and public involvement in business or politics.¹⁹ Many felt that women gained too much power through service. The ways in which male students embodied or stretched the beliefs of muscular Christianity needs to be studied.

Due to the organization of the economy, prejudice, and monetary requirements to attend, the majority of college students came from a white, middle or upper-class background.²⁰ The experiences of African Americans varied from those of white students due to immense widespread prejudice and schools across the nation refusing to accept them.²¹ On account of the smaller percentage of African American students and fewer sources available, education scholars have tended to discuss the culture of Black American college students in the years after the Progressive Era and have often avoided comparing them with white students' experiences. To fully understand collegiate culture, historians need to study students' voices across many different institutions, not just white or mixed-race schools, but also those for African Americans.

While the entirety of the United States experienced changes in the Progressive Era, higher education institutions underwent particular transformations in the late nineteenth century. Universities started to switch to more scientific methods, relying more on research and professionalization than before. Thus, numerous colleges converted into research universities and allowed their students more control with the emergence of

¹⁹ David P. Setran, *The College "Y": Student Religion in the Era of Secularization* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

²⁰ Roger L. Geiger, *The History of American Higher Education*, 468–470.

²¹ Marybeth Gasman and Roger L. Geiger, eds., *Higher Education for African Americans before the Civil Rights Era, 1900-1964* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2012), 2–3.

the elective-based system.²² Colleges moved from promoting a broad liberal arts education for all students to offering specific schedules for certain interests. Therefore, men received knowledge for their specified interest or job, while more women began to enter the workforce as social workers in addition to their primary paid occupation as teachers. The services facilitated by these women in settlement houses or otherwise, included education, childcare, legal help, and healthcare.²³ This transformation transpired slowly, over the course of many decades. Although most young Americans did not enroll in higher education during the Progressive Era, this number rapidly increased across these twenty years. College transitioned into a more attainable desire. Despite the statistics of students in college still remaining low, enrollment experienced a more than fifty percent increase from 1890 to 1910, increasing from 1.8% of the American population to 2.8%.²⁴ This increase in enrollment sparked changing cultures on campus.

With a wide range of sources and cultural history methods in this thesis, I examine the main personal attributes esteemed by these men and women during this era of change. To approach this with an emphasis on cultural history, I focus on the gendered and racial discourse of the students and faculty, highlighting their individual gender performances. As gender is a process consistently changing over time, examining what

²² For more about the changes and development of higher education during these years, see Julie A. A. Reuben, *The Making of the Modern University: Intellectual Transformation and the Marginalization of Morality* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

²³ Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era*, 148–149; Turpin, *A New Moral Vision*, 164–165.

²⁴ The National Center for Education Statistics, *120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait*, ed. Thomas Snyder (The U.S. Department of Education, 1993), 76. It is important to note that the accuracy of these statistics varies as the government did not require colleges to send statistics unless they were land grant institutions and thus, many did not respond or responded with only some of the information requested, see *120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait*, 95–96, 103–106.

these students presented as important, shows their performances of gender at this cultural moment. Ultimately, I address the major ways these men and women defined their masculinity and femininity. Female students in higher education valued several traits more than others. In addition to these changes occurring for women, ideals of manhood also shifted in the late nineteenth century. Although college students coveted the same ideals through 1890 to 1910, these ideals differed from previous nineteenth-century values. College women cultivated identities around developing more erudite and altruistic natures, while men esteemed competitive and self-assured identities.

My research examines nuance within these strict ideals and how these values altered in this period of higher education. Specifically, I study how women and men viewed the purpose of college and womanhood or manhood in general from 1890 to 1910. These young adults attended college through a time of immense change in gender and racial norms at universities. I identify the specific shifts within the Cult of Domesticity in the Progressive Era and the ways common masculine traits compared to the new principles revered by women. To recognize the qualities esteemed by white and Black students of each sex I assess sources written by students from 1890 to 1910. This thesis thus reflects the essence of the Progressive Era but excludes the ways in which the Great War, which began in 1914, influenced masculinity and femininity. Although the United States only joined the war in 1917, World War I still affected American conceptions of gender.

Various and detailed sources from student perspectives document the culture of these college men and women. Thus, I utilize student voices present in collegiate newspapers, literary magazines, yearbooks, as well as personal letters. College

newspapers, literary magazines, and yearbooks all contained opinion pieces written by students who wrote, managed, and edited the majority of these sources. At schools where student voices failed to appear as often, I examine faculty or administrative writings expressing their views of how they believed the students should have behaved. To find these faculty voices, I analyze commencement addresses and student handbooks. These primary sources reveal the discourse crafted by students around gender and society, as well as the college leaders' discourses within which students moved. College students' espoused values appeared in these newspapers as they esteemed these attributes in each other and in the general populace. Although newspapers principally demonstrated the espoused values among students, to some extent, the students must have practiced these attributes as well due to them publicly admiring these in their classmates.

To understand a plethora of perspectives, I examine several different institutions. Therefore, I look at two women's private colleges, Mount Holyoke College and Wellesley College, two male private colleges, Princeton University and Yale University, one public coeducational college, University of Michigan, and one private coeducational college, Baylor University. I also study three historically Black colleges, including a women's college, Spelman College, and two coeducational institutions, Howard University and Fisk University. When relevant, I bring in information from other American colleges as well for extra comparison; specifically, I examine sources from the women's college, Vassar College, and the coeducational University of California, Berkeley. Although most college students came from white lineages and many colleges refused entry to Black Americans, several Black colleges existed and some schools accepted all races, such as University of Michigan, Spelman, Howard, and Fisk.

When studying the history of American higher education, many historians have focused on renowned colleges. Distinguished institutions characteristically represented affluent white male students; often these prestigious colleges underrepresented the population and are the exception to the average. However, elite colleges largely instigated the hegemonic collegiate culture throughout the country. By the late nineteenth century, many coeducational and women's colleges existed all across the nation. Over the course of the century, elite northeastern schools influenced the formation of various other colleges due to their hegemony and reputation.²⁵ Therefore, these prominent institutions could reveal the general attitudes of affluent white male and female students. The leading women's colleges were the Seven Sister Colleges in the Northeast, which represented Ivy League level academics for women in the late nineteenth century.²⁶ The schools I studied exemplified several different types of students, not just northeastern Ivy League men and women. Studying individual institutions thoroughly is essential to understanding what these men and women thought of their gender, race, country, and futures.

To fully examine masculinity and femininity, I must lay out definitions for several terms. First, gender and sex differ from one another. Sex describes one's biology and reproduction functions, whereas gender signifies the personal, experienced, performed, public, and evolving associated cultural ideals around sex that transform over time. The intersectionality of race, gender, nationality, religion, and sexuality all impact one's identity. Ideas around these change through time and thus, it is important to study how

²⁵ Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women*, 45–47.

²⁶ The Seven Sister Colleges are Mount Holyoke, Vassar, Wellesley, Smith, Radcliffe, Barnard, and Bryn Mawr.

and why these changes occur. For my project, I utilize masculine to refer to anything associated with men, while masculinity means the “constructions of the male gender.”²⁷ Moreover, these historical actors rarely referred to masculinity, as they typically would comment on others’ manhood or manliness. I employ Sara Imhoff’s usage of these terms because they align more easily with our modern versions and with how students and faculty discussed men in the past as well.²⁸ Anthony Rotundo defines manhood as constructions of manliness that changed over time, which is how I use masculinity throughout.²⁹ However, manliness and manly typically intended positive traits associated with men. Manliness became more and more connected to financial success throughout this period.³⁰ Thus, the meaning of manhood switched from “self-sacrifice” to “self-fulfillment, self-expression, and self-gratification by the 1920s.”³¹

Similar to the ways manhood was referred to, women during the Progressive Era used femininity to refer to qualities they saw as being inherent to women. These women recognized womanhood differently than previously but found connections in domesticity and motherhood.³² The relationships between spheres changed as private and public interactions overlapped in a consumer economy.³³ Society excluded women from the

²⁷ Sarah Imhoff, *Masculinity and the Making of American Judaism* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2017), 7–8.

²⁸ Sarah Imhoff, *Masculinity and the Making of American Judaism*, 7–8.

²⁹ Anthony E. Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 7–8.

³⁰ Martin Summers, *Manliness and Its Discontents: The Black Middle Class and the Transformation of Masculinity, 1900–1930*, New edition (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 1.

³¹ Summers, *Manliness and Its Discontents*, 157.

³² Dye and Frankel, *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform*, 5.

³³ Dye and Frankel, *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform*, 4.

masculine ideals around success, due to their lack of economic and political independence.

Black Americans, both the men and women, also fought for this success. Racial divides impacted the gender constructions of Progressive Era America. Intense conflicts across racial and ethnic lines occurred and complicated issues arose within social, cultural, political, and economic systems throughout this period. In this thesis, although I focus on Black and white students, students of other races and ethnicities attended higher education institutions in small numbers as well. Thus, scholars need to examine more diverse experiences of students from all backgrounds. While white students dominated enrollments, Black students had to create their own spaces and colleges in order to obtain an education.

Even though they shared certain similarities, Black Americans experienced different realities from white people in America, at an institutional, cultural, and personal level. As middle-class and more elite white women understood domesticity to be located in their family homes, Black women and working-class women's experiences of domesticity were not isolated strictly to the home.³⁴ These women "relied upon collective networks and strategies" to embody domesticity.³⁵ Therefore, Black women and some working and middle-class white women believed that the Progressive agendas needed to be applied communally. White women's view of reform often excluded issues around segregation and disenfranchisement of Black Americans. Even white progressives that desired changes in race relations still would often place other issues above racial matters.

³⁴ Dye and Frankel, *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform*, 5–6.

³⁵ Dye and Frankel, *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform*, 5–6.

Black women's progressivism focused on racial consciousness.³⁶ Black women desired racial uplift and social, economic, and political equality.³⁷ The differences in progressivism among races led to distinctive reasonings for pursuing higher education. Community-based concerns contributed to the motivations behind Black men and women's education as communal and racial responsibility drove many Black students to pursue education. However, general Black middle-class masculinity shifted similarly to the white middle-class, "[from] production to consumption, from character and respectability to the body and personality."³⁸

As with any area of history, studying the perspectives of individuals contributes much to the understanding of past society and culture. Thus, Progressive Era student views can add to the way historians see higher education. Comprehending the culture of young adults in this time requires fully surveying the discourse of the young people themselves. To express the gender ideals prevailing in this period, I will first introduce the experiences of white college women and their beliefs surrounding their lives and education. In the next chapter, I will examine white male college students and their understandings of higher education and masculinity. Following this, I will look at Black college students and the associations between their college education, civil rights, and gender. Finally, my conclusion will discuss the overall perceptions and connections between gender, race, and higher education throughout this era.

³⁶ Dye and Frankel, *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform*, 7.

³⁷ Linda M. Perkins, "The Impact of the 'Cult of True Womanhood' on the Education of Black Women," *Journal of Social Issues* 39, no. 3 (1983): 17–18.

³⁸ Summers, *Manliness and Its Discontents*, 8.

The intersectionality of race, gender, and class in higher education, especially in the nineteenth century, has not yet been fully addressed. Many scholars have studied African Americans' culture and experiences in American history, but scholars usually stick to writing about solely white students or Black students; few have compared the lives of both students in one work. With my research, I bridge the gap and look into gender identities among both white and Black students in higher education. Fundamentally, I demonstrate the prominent values revered by college students and how the intersectionality of race, gender, and class affected these students.

CHAPTER TWO

White Collegiate Womanhood and the Transformation of the Cult of Domesticity

College women, it is said, do not look at life in its practical aspect, as seriously as do college men. They have a fatal tendency to come to the end of the four years of preparation without being prepared for anything, and to drift into conventional lines of work.... The new position of women in the social scheme means more than increased health and happiness for women themselves. And perhaps we shall find a stimulus in this thought which we fail to find in other directions. We talk a great deal about our broader outlook and wider opportunity.... But it is a more bracing view and quite as true a one, that work needs women. Opportunities and "openings" for women are also opportunities and openings for the more perfect development of civilization itself.

— "Editor's Table," *The Vassar Miscellany*, May 1, 1893

The student editors of the *Vassar Miscellany* addressed the significance they saw in taking advantage of the new opportunities for white women in the Progressive Era to aid society as a whole. This viewpoint represented many young white women in the second half of the nineteenth century when society engendered massive change for women. Women started to achieve higher education equal to men, the suffrage movement gained extra traction, and more women's organizations with political aims developed. This transformation impacted the culture of the country and how women conceived of themselves. Along with more women attending college, Black Americans lives also changed dramatically at this time. The intersectional collision of race and gender at these higher education institutions created complicated collegiate identities and cultures. As white female students experienced social changes, they clung to familiar feminine ideals, such as domesticity, but also shifted their focus to others, like compassion, altruism, and erudition. All the while they asserted their racial distinction from Black Americans.

These four characteristics shined through the writings of female students as changes occurred around them within in society and higher education. Students and faculty both addressed this adjustment of four values from Welter's Cult of True Womanhood to more modern ideals. The kindness promoted by these college students mostly related to refraining from gossip and cliques as well as accepting newcomers into the universities. These women still regarded domestic skills, such as cooking and cleaning, as essential for young women to learn. However, women promoted these skills as tools for settlement houses, not just their own homes. Additionally, the knowledge gained from higher education was no longer seen as helpful only to teach or to share the gospel. Women viewed this knowledge as important to their understanding of the world and as preparation for different vocations within social work. Furthermore, some women went on to attend graduate or professional schools and female institutions evolved as they established similar education to men's schools. More normal schools, which trained students to learn teaching tactics, and seminary schools, schools focused on religion and theology instruction, worked to incorporate higher level academics. Before the widespread acceptance of women into collegiate institutions, typically women were resigned to attend seminaries or normal schools to receive higher education. Women still valued purity, but among these college students, purity was not discussed as often as compassion, philanthropy, domesticity, and the use of knowledge. This could be due to the fact that college was not designed to teach purity as much as other values. Purity discussions often resided in religious organizations.¹

¹ Andrea L. Turpin, *A New Moral Vision: Gender, Religion, and the Changing Purposes of American Higher Education, 1837–1917* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), 29–30.

Looking at the role of gender in higher education institutions demonstrates aspects of American femininity for young adults. Even though elite white women dominated female enrollment for this period over women of other races or lower classes, the thoughts of college women on femininity permeated throughout white middle- and upper-class circles, especially as more and more joined higher education. The number of women students represented about a third of total college enrollment nationwide, but significantly less received an official bachelor's degree. In the 1889–1890 school year, women comprised 35.92% of higher education students, but only 17.26% of the bachelor's degrees conferred. By the 1909–1910 school year, women made up 39.57% of students and 22.68% of the bachelor's degrees conferred. The women attending higher education institutions increased from 56,303 in 1890 to 140,651 in 1910.² With the population of the US remaining below one hundred million, the population percentage attending college remained around 1 to 2%. However, as previously mentioned, those with higher education tended to hold a larger number of political and societal leadership positions among men and women.

Women in the Progressive Era took it upon themselves to change the rough conditions present in an industrialized society. This newfound calling resulted in women turning to new occupations in social work.³ The rise of leadership and job opportunities available changed the dynamic for collegiate women who now saw college as the beginning of their philanthropic efforts. The notion that women could help fix societal

² The National Center for Education Statistics, *120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait*, ed. Thomas Snyder (The U.S. Department of Education, 1993), 75.

³ For information on women in the Progressive Era, view Dorothy Schneider, *American Women in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920* (New York, NY: Facts on File, 1993).

problems through motherhood, social work, or teaching contributed to beliefs around women's education. Although women attended higher education institutions for different reasons, generally they desired similar attributes as each other and wanted to become cultured and educated ladies with the ability to help the nation.⁴

While gender ideals of the late nineteenth century were shifting, the Cult of True Womanhood principles of piety, submissiveness, domesticity, and purity gave way to new priorities for women. Female students in higher education valued several traits more than others at the end of the century including altruism, compassion, domesticity, and erudition. These attributes represented the ideal characteristics women wanted to embody in order to live life as a successful and well-respected woman. Piety transformed into altruism due to the college emphasis on women joining charitable vocations. As Turpin explored, one purpose of education that shifted for women was that instead of teaching women to learn and spread the gospel, educational and religious organizations trained women to turn to social work and other humanitarian activities.⁵ Women saw philanthropy as an extension of piety but talked more of altruism than church itself.

As piety shifted to altruism, submissiveness moved to compassion. Although women still experienced a strong patriarchal society, women started gaining further autonomy by working outside the home and acquiring more access to education. This focus on philanthropy also included a push for compassion and sweetness towards everyone which, to an extent, could be construed as submission, as women were expected

⁴ Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women's Colleges from Their Nineteenth Century Beginnings to the 1930s*, 2nd edition (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 147–148.

⁵ Turpin, *A New Moral Vision*, 31–33.

to comply with others. The merging of Victorianism and Civilizationism created a contradictory campus culture for women.⁶ The continued expectations of piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity conflicted with new ideals of erudition and philanthropy. Even though the lives of white women in the American South and North were vastly different, both supported building higher education for women. Educated southern women usually married and stayed out of employment in comparison to northern women, but that began to change during this period as well.⁷ Similar to the North, these college-educated southern women emerged as “teachers, leaders, and mothers...women who worked tirelessly in their clubs, churches, and communities for social, economic, and political reform.”⁸ Southern women tended to join more religious avenues for their vocations. Yet, both northern and southern women found the leadership and altruistic opportunities offered through missionary work appealing and numerous women pursued missions as their career especially those women attending more strictly religious schools such as Baylor.⁹ Progressivism and the notion that women could help society took root in northern and southern institutions as reasoning for an education.

Within these studied colleges, female students established types of women they admired, such as those who worked hard both academically and socially, otherwise

⁶ Amy T. McCandless, *The Past in the Present: Women's Higher Education in the Twentieth-Century American South* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University Alabama Press, 1999), 18.

⁷ McCandless, *The Past in the Present*, 6–7.

⁸ McCandless, *The Past in the Present*, 15.

⁹ T. Laine Scales and Craig R. Clarkson, “Preparing College Graduates for Mission: The Role of the Student Volunteer Movement in the Colling and Formation of a ‘Baylor Girl,’ 1903–1907,” *Baptist History and Heritage* 46, no. 3 (2011): 43–59; Scales and Clarkson explore one specific Baylor student’s experiences on campus and her understandings of religion and womanhood.

known as “all-around girls.”¹⁰ Male students also extolled all-around type students, wanting to study and involve themselves in campus life. They looked down upon “grinds,” those who came from humble backgrounds and focused intensely on their studies.¹¹ The all-around archetype illustrated that collegiate students desired a comprehensive education involving social and school experiences. Furthermore, the worshipping of certain students created situations where same-sex relationships and interactions grew. Relationships between upper and lower classmen, referred to as smashes or crushes, occurred frequently at Progressive Era women’s colleges.¹²

The female student voice came across most strongly in documents and newspapers from Wellesley, Vassar, and Mount Holyoke, as they only admitted women. However, I also analyzed writings from the University of Michigan and Baylor University. These universities showed the northeastern, midwestern, and southern perspectives in addition to coeducational and single-sex institutional viewpoints. The editors at the University of Michigan tended to be white male students, although women began writing more articles in the early twentieth century. The coeducational college newspapers typically published articles written by male students, but sometimes the author and content would clearly be catered towards women. Thus, the female discourse is easiest to see in the single-sex college newspapers, whereas male perspectives are often

¹⁰ Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 156–157.

¹¹ Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 156–157.

¹² Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 162–167. For more information about same-sex relationships at colleges see Sherrie Inness, “Mashes, Smashes, Crushes, and Raves: Woman-to-Woman Relationships in Popular Women’s College Fiction, 1895–1915,” *NWSA Journal* 6, no. 1 (1994): 48–68; Martha Vicinus, *Intimate Friends: Women Who Loved Women, 1778–1928* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Catherine Cocks, “Rethinking Sexuality in the Progressive Era,” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 5, no. 2 (2006): 93–118.

shown in both single-sex and coeducational publications. It is important to note that all but one of these colleges accepted only white students. The University of Michigan represented a multiracial and coeducational undergraduate population, although the nonwhite students made up a small portion of the student population.¹³ Thus, the voices most present in the newspapers and documents studied were those of white people.

The societal changes arising and the effects these transformations caused among college aged students appeared in statistics involving marriage and occupations. In comparison to national statistics, the percentages of married to unmarried educated women post-graduation were unusual. Roberta Frankfort evaluated the particular marriage and occupation rates at Wellesley College and the University of Michigan.¹⁴ The marriage rates of Wellesley graduates for the years 1889 to 1908 averaged out to 57% married and 43% unmarried.¹⁵ The University of Michigan returned similar numbers the same years with the average being 53% married and 47% unmarried.¹⁶ These numbers show that collegiate women generally did not see marriage as the only option, especially at a younger age, unlike American society as a whole.

However, marriage rates of students increased in the beginning of the twentieth century, especially after 1910. Gordon attributed this to the growing acceptance of

¹³ William Edward Burghardt Du Bois and Augustus Granville Dill, eds., *The College-Bred Negro American* (Atlanta, GA: The Atlanta University Press, 1910), 50.

¹⁴ Roberta Frankfort, *Collegiate Women: Domesticity and Career in Turn of the Century America* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1977). These statistics were taken from the alumnae registers of each college. For more marriage statistics from various colleges see Barbara Miller Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America*, Reprint edition (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 120.

¹⁵ Frankfort, *Collegiate Women*, 59.

¹⁶ Frankfort, *Collegiate Women*, 112.

women into colleges, mixing professional and personal lives as more workplaces allowed women to be married and more women only leaving the workforce when having children.¹⁷ Occupation rates at this time demonstrated that women held a similar view of their future since more and more female graduates went on to find employment after school. From 1889 to 1893, Wellesley classes reported only 24% employment, while the classes from 1899 to 1903 reported 45% had employment.¹⁸ This number fluctuated over the years but remained about thirty percent during the Progressive Era. As the years went on, women's jobs diversified from teachers and social workers to include supplementary doctors, lawyers, insurance agents, salesladies, assistants and more. This was an indication of the type of futures women wanted to achieve for themselves, with or without marriage.

When examining the culture of these white female students, the influence of race must be addressed. The ways these white women discoursed about race publicly demonstrated how they perceived themselves compared to Black Americans. White women often defined themselves in juxtaposition to their views of Black Americans.¹⁹ Thus, the attributes these white women admired typically represented different qualities than they associated with Black men or women. Ultimately, race always factors into the ways people perceive of themselves and others. Black women experienced difficulty in attending higher education institutions. The Seven Sister colleges refused entry to Black

¹⁷ Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education*, 197.

¹⁸ Frankfort, *Collegiate Women*, 60.

¹⁹ Linda M. Perkins, "'Bound to Them by a Common Sorrow': African American Women, Higher Education, and Collective Advancement," *The Journal of African American History* 100, no. 4 (October 1, 2015): 721–722.

Americans, except Wellesley.²⁰ However, Wellesley generally avoided accepting Black women and when they were admitted, they experienced high levels of prejudice and bullying from other students.²¹ Overall, the other Seven Sisters tried not to accept Black students, but sometimes those with lighter complexions enrolled unbeknownst to the school. This clear prejudice among the perceived top women's colleges created an environment which distinguished educated white women from other races, leading them to believe themselves better or at the very least different from others. This distinction comes through as these white women evaded discussing race publicly much at all in twenty years-worth of student newspapers while Black students repeatedly mentioned race and racial issues in America.

With the three women's colleges, knowing the perceptions of the white female students was disclosed through their student newspapers, but identifying the women voices in the newspapers of the coeducational Baylor and Michigan is more difficult. Generally, these mentions of race usually appeared in articles discussing male debate tournaments or statements on race made by male faculty, so I included more Michigan and Baylor articles on race in the next white male student chapter. As segregation and racial prejudice influenced the white female student culture along with African American student lives and culture, white women at all of these schools thought of themselves as different from Black students. The newspapers and writings of students demonstrated this belief and their perceptions of Black culture and lives.

²⁰ Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 155.

²¹ Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 156.

The words written by male and female students turned to more opportunities for women and conflicting opportunities for men. Women sought more in life than ever before, looking to help others and reclaim the humanity in cities, while men tried to exercise their passion and competitiveness with muscular Christianity, but still wanted to keep themselves restrained. The feminine values promoted by these female students throughout the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century shows the gendered lines within which they lived. The characteristics of altruism, kindness, domesticity, and erudition epitomized what these college women believed would help them in living successful lives.

Erudition and Experience

The Progressive Era had altered the way women saw their education, resulting in women attending higher education institutions for the benefit of their own minds, bodies, and their future vocations. E. G. Townsend, a Baylor professor, explained this reasoning for female education when she proclaimed,

college training is a life insurance for a girl, a pledge that she possesses a disciplined ability to earn a living for herself and others. Knowledge is sweet and powerful. It emancipates the mind and makes one feel that she is a part of the great world, makes one long to know the meaning of the stars over her head, the flowers under her feet and yearn to learn why the world is so sad, so hard, so selfish.²²

As demonstrated by Townsend's views, these women believed college offered important knowledge for women and served to impart information to aid her in helping the world. They thought college instructed academic knowledge and life experience These women

²² E.G. Townsend, "For Higher Education: Some Gleanings," *The Lariat* (Waco, Texas), July 14, 1906, Baylor Digital Collections.

desired the training of their brains and bodies while attaining broadened knowledge in order to contribute to the bettering of society. Shifting from an earlier focus on mostly religious and less academically rigorous instruction, late nineteenth-century women received broader educations and institutions began to offer education more equal to men.²³

Expanding college curriculums and extracurriculars included college athletics, which men and women both participated in, although in separate sports. Male and female students as well as faculty expressed the importance of enrolling in school athletics. However, for men, students and faculty saw this participation in sports as promoting college spirit and manliness. For women, partaking in athletics promoted good health, but also entertainment for other students. They saw women's participation as a way to help develop a stronger body and mind capable of holding more knowledge, becoming more erudite. These differences show through the articles in their newspapers and the way faculty conversed about male or female athletics.

For female students, college intramural athletic teams and activities started officially developing among a few colleges in the late nineteenth century. More and more colleges implemented athletics for women starting in these decades.²⁴ For example, Baylor instigated women's athletics not long after accepting women into the school in 1887. By the 1900s, women joined tennis or basketball teams and showed interest in these sports.²⁵ Women participated in many different activities when collegiate sports

²³ Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women*, 116–118.

²⁴ Ellen W. Gerber et al., *The American Woman in Sport*, Addison-Wesley Series in the Social Significance of Sport. (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1974), 3.

²⁵ "Stunts from the Gym: Snap-Shots from the Girl's Gymnasium," *The Lariat* (Waco, Texas), March 05, 1910, Baylor Digital Collections.

started for women. At first, women partook in non-intense sports like croquet and golf, but in the 1890s more colleges started athletic associations and other sports opportunities for the women.²⁶ Several institutions also executed field days, where female students competed in various sports against each other. These field days transpired at many schools in the Northeast, including Mount Holyoke, Vassar, and Wellesley.²⁷ At Mount Holyoke, the *Freshman Student Handbook*, dedicated a whole page to offer different ways to exercise and push membership of their new Athletics Association and ice-skating rink for those seeking health and pleasure.²⁸ In an article in the *Lariat*, one student expressed what changes occurred for college women in the previous decades, elaborating,

since it would seem that the average college girl of that period put in her time writing essays, eating pickles and cheese in tiny portions, reading novels, and cultivating a languid semi-invalidism which was supposed to be very ladylike, and irresistible to the stronger sex. Present day ideals are different. Wise parents and thoughtful teachers have come to see that even from the standpoint of scholarship alone a proper regard for bodily health, including a proper amount of daily exercise, is absolutely necessary. Considering life in college as a period of proper preparation for later life, it is indeed a foolish thing to neglect or allow to be neglected the health of the body which ought to be a strong, comfortable, and beautiful dwelling for a wise and beautiful soul²⁹

As described by this student, earlier colleges taught women an imitation of independence, ultimately promoting ladylike values specifically to attract men. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, women and faculty hoped to impart knowledge and experience

²⁶ Sparhawk, et al., *American Women in Sport, 1887–1987: A 100-year Chronology* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1989), xv-xvi; Gerber, *The American Woman in Sport*, 4–6.

²⁷ “Field Day,” *The Wellesley News* (Wellesley, MA), November 23, 1904, Wellesley College Digital Scholarship and Archive.

²⁸ Mount Holyoke, *Freshman Student Handbook* (South Hadley, MA: YWCA, 1899-1900), 33, Five College Compass Archive.

²⁹ “Athletics for College Girls,” *The Lariat* (Waco, Texas), August 12, 1905, Baylor Digital Collections.

meant to help them the rest of their lives. Athletics developed among college women due to the scholarship at the time because administrators read reports about the benefits of exercise. Administrators also felt fear due to Edward Clarke's assertions in *Sex in Education*, which claimed that women physically and mentally could not handle higher education.³⁰ Additionally, as more coeducational colleges and job opportunities opened for women, these female students realized the importance of a strong body and mind.

Students and faculty both agreed that college helped train the body and mind for their vocational lives afterward. For instance, the president of Mount Holyoke, Mary Woolley, gave an address in 1909 about "The Vocational Power of the Woman's College." In this speech, she stressed the "physical vitality" helping "the development of mental strength."³¹ Woolley highlighted the impact of college on a woman's life as it led to the expansion of knowledge and experience through physical, mental, and social activities. These developments aided women in their vocational futures. For example, in one editorial in the Free Press section of the *Wellesley News*, one woman specified, "college life above all thing should be broadening...I think, that there were a number of girls asked off hand, what they considered to be the greatest general benefit gained from college, they would say it was just this broadening, this widening of interest and sympathy, this gaining of freer outlook."³² Therefore, this pupil believed the expansion

³⁰ Edward Hammond Clarke, *Sex in Education: Or A Fair Chance for the Girls* (Boston, MA: J. R. Osgood & Co., 1875).

³¹ Mary Woolley, "The Vocational Power of the Woman's College," *The Mount Holyoke* (South Hadley, MA), November 1909, Five College Compass Archive.

³² "Athletics for College Girls", *The Lariat* (Waco, Texas), August 12, 1905, Baylor Digital Collections.

that college provided gave women more interest and sympathy in the world, leading them to understand and aid others better.

These white students claimed the importance and strength of a woman's mind. This praising of women's minds appeared in their yearbooks when discussing positive attributes of classmates. Within a tribute to an alumnus who had passed, another alumnus wrote of her friend's "unselfish," "kindly," and "motherly" nature, while also helping all her pupils "physically, intellectually, or spiritually."³³ Therefore, people praised this woman's attributes of altruism, compassion, and intelligence. In a different issue of the Mount Holyoke yearbook, students wrote of the class of 1893 that "the fertile brains of this remarkable class are innumerable."³⁴ This summary of the '93 class also continued esteemed their "brilliant minds" and dedication to studying.³⁵ The emphasis on the minds of this class show that these students admired increased intelligence in their peers. Furthermore, in the sections of the yearbook when they wrote of their classmates and their personalities, when not cracking jokes about one another, they typically acclaimed those of them who portrayed a studious and social nature, typical of an all-around girl.³⁶ These yearbooks from Mount Holyoke demonstrate the ways these students frequently respected intellectual growth amongst themselves.

³³ S. Louise Bell, "Entered Into Rest," *Llamarada* (South Hadley, MA: 1897), 113–114, Five College Compass Digital Archive.

³⁴ "History of Ninety-Three," *Llamarada* (South Hadley, MA: 1896), 64–65, Five College Compass Digital Archive.

³⁵ "History of Ninety-Three," 64–65.

³⁶ "Who's Who in the Junior Class" *Llamarada* (South Hadley, MA: 1907), 197–219, Five College Compass Digital Archive.

White women argued that college helped train women's minds and bodies for their futures in American society and the occupational world. When discussing how college men dominate the journalism industry, the editors of the *Vassar Miscellany* stressed that, "college girls are still an anomaly in the newspaper world, but the critical ability of the feminine mind is more clearly recognized every day, and we need not count it among the impossibilities that we too are preparing ourselves in some degree for a future 'journalistic career.'"³⁷ This writer hoped for a future with more newspapers and occupations using the minds of women. With women in new workplaces, these students believed that society would be helped.

The specific benefits to college varied among different institutions and areas of the United States, but generally, these women imagined transforming into educated and experienced women. Thus, these women supposed that the opening of their minds and experiences at these institutions would help them live fuller lives and understand the world. With additional knowledge about the human experience, female students hoped to share compassion and altruism among more workplaces, social settings, and families.

Compassion

White Progressive Era women considered an educated and cultured woman, one who treated others with compassion and respect. Mary E. Woolley gave an address in front of the Mount Holyoke Students' League asserting the one main attribute faculty and students desired in women: kindness. She pushed that,

In the mind of the casual observer, at least, the college is largely responsible for her manners and morals, as well as for her intellectual development, and of course, to a certain extent, that is true; the college has no right to disclaim

³⁷ Editorial, *Vassar Miscellany* (Poughkeepsie, NY), February 1, 1892, Vassar College Digital Library.

responsibility for development outside of that is purely intellectual realm. But you and I know that the responsibility rests mainly upon the individual girl. It is necessary only to look about you to see what girls are really gaining in mental grasp, in womanliness, and in character.... The woman with fine perceptions knows when not to laugh, she is simple and courteous, considerate of others, attentive at a recital or a lecture.³⁸

Woolley hoped to dispense this through Mount Holyoke, but this language and idea appeared across all colleges, but especially women's colleges. Reminders to emanate responsibility and kindness appeared in many articles by female students. The aspiration for compassion reflected the ways these women thought about their schooling and futures as mothers, educators, or social workers.

Often these students professed in their newspapers the importance of showing kindness towards each other and to avoid gossip or judgement. In an editorial of the *Mount Holyoke*, a senior student counseled that students needed to appreciate others rather than judge them and manage their time as well as money more sensibly.³⁹ Female students criticized unfriendly acts by students on campus. These women often commented on how they wanted to grow and mature while in college. They specifically called for all women to be kind and respectful to each other.⁴⁰ Another female student in an editorial discussed that college women "are superior to all gossip," and that women mostly only engaged in intellectual discourse on campus.⁴¹ Although this student possibly

³⁸ Mary E. Woolley, "The Function of the College," *The Mount Holyoke* (South Hadley, MA), March 1908, Five College Compass Digital Archive.

³⁹ Editorial, *The Mount Holyoke* (South Hadley, MA), January 1910, Five College Compass Digital Archive.

⁴⁰ Editorial, *The Mount Holyoke* (South Hadley, MA), May 1896; Editorial, *The Mount Holyoke* (South Hadley, MA), November 1897, Five College Compass Digital Archive.

⁴¹ Editorial, *The Mount Holyoke* (South Hadley, MA), January 1897, Five College Compass Digital Archive.

exaggerated, she expressed her desire for all students to maintain kindness and focus on academic discourse. In the Wellesley newspaper, a student proclaimed that some kinds of gossip “are justifiable,” such as when students tried to help others realize their prejudice or unseen problems, done out of the goodness of one’s heart.⁴² Thus, these female students believed they must live a thoughtful, erudite, and civilized life.

These attributes were also praised within their student class books. In the “Class Roll” section of these books, specifically at Mount Holyoke, the seniors wrote little tidbits of information about each student, remarking on their personality or other traits. Many of these comments told silly stories or information about each student, but others admired certain qualities in the woman. For instance, in one comment, it said, “Lillian’s mind is healthy and strong. It works and it labors the whole day long.”⁴³ This poem praised this student, Lillian for her intelligent and hardworking mind, which suggests that erudition was an admirable quality in these students’ eyes. In another class roll section, a student named Bessie is praised with the words, “fealty to her we all give, To our sunny little Bess, Who wins the hearts of all, By her love and gentleness.”⁴⁴ They esteemed Bessie due to her soft and loving nature. The students that had complimentary remarks usually were commended for either their intelligence, diligence, kindness, humor, selflessness, or all of the above. Consequently, these yearbook comments commonly focused on the four ideals of erudition, compassion, altruism, and domesticity.

⁴² Free Press (editorials), *The Wellesley News* (Wellesley, MA), March 11, 1903, Wellesley College Digital Scholarship and Archive.

⁴³ Mount Holyoke, “Class Roll,” *Llamarada* (South Hadley, MA: 1909), 185, Five College Compass Archive.

⁴⁴ Mount Holyoke, “Class Roll,” *Llamarada* (South Hadley, MA: 1904), 181, Five College Compass Archive.

Altruism

Female students and faculty rewarded other women who displayed selflessness and sincerity in their lives. Within different articles or editorials, the students praised women for those certain characteristics again and again. Typically, these acclaims around altruism accompanied organizational or vocational discussions as these women believed society needed more selfless women involving themselves in aiding society. Thus, philanthropic women received high admiration from students and faculty.

Students who displayed the strongest altruistic natures rarely went unnoticed and frequently ended up in leadership positions at school. In the *Wellesley News*, a student promoted the YWCA and its need for a president with particular qualities. Specifically, an editorial specified,

She must have breadth of view—the typical twentieth century characteristic—and other qualities are just as necessary. No girl would make a successful president without the spirit of good fellowship that makes her ready to be a friend to a great number of girls; the sympathy that leads others to turn to her in trouble; and the faithfulness and infinite patience that carry one through a mass of trying detail work.⁴⁵

The YWCA clearly wanted a woman with kindness to befriend others, patience, as well as widespread knowledge and an understanding of different perspectives. This “breadth of view” trait mentioned as a classic in the twentieth century came up often in female student writings under different designations, such as “breadth of interest.”⁴⁶

Understanding others and the larger world through their college experiences and

⁴⁵ Free Press (editorial), *The Wellesley News* (Wellesley, MA), February 28, 1906, Wellesley College Digital Scholarship and Archive.

⁴⁶ Free Press (editorial), *The Wellesley News* (Wellesley, MA), February 28, 1906, Wellesley College Digital Scholarship and Archive.

knowledge allowed these women to show more compassion and altruism. Another article in the *Wellesley News* stressed maintaining friendships despite the trivial problems of living in different dorms or attending different classes.⁴⁷ Proclaiming that friendship and relationships should be maintained despite inconveniences spoke to these women's belief in the importance of kindness and selflessness. Many newspaper articles at all these schools regularly declared that students should work to maintain good relationships with their friends and spread kindness on campus.

When discussing attributes, the faculty or student's preferences for certain qualities is made clear by what they mention. In a lecture about England, a professor explained the differences she observed between American and English female students.⁴⁸ She included attributes such as that the English were not as busy as American college women, that the English were more dependent on their mothers, that they did not receive official degrees from their colleges, the English were more domestically inclined, and less likely to enter the workforce, as a teacher or anything else that required higher education. Regardless of whether these differences are accurate, this professor noted characteristics that she viewed as important for women. Thus, her focus on American college women's independence, stronger vocational freedom, and degree achievement demonstrated that this professor wanted her students to strive for these qualities. Her finding that the English held better domestic skills than American women indicated that she believed domestic skills important to women. Another article in the *Mount Holyoke*

⁴⁷ Free Press (editorial), *The Wellesley News* (Wellesley, MA), March 23, 1910, Wellesley College Digital Scholarship and Archive.

⁴⁸ Mrs. Crooker, "Girl's Life in England," *Michigan Daily* (Ann Arbor, MI), November 16, 1903. Michigan Daily Digital Archives.

addresses these same distinctions between American college women and their English counterparts.⁴⁹

One area where men and women thought differently and admired different aspects was with collegiate music programs or clubs. Women promoted the beauty of music, while men promoted school spirit and competition in music. A Mount Holyoke student commented, “there is no power on earth that appeals to the very best and finest part of our nature as does the subtle influence of music. All beauty is but harmony, in nature, in literature, in art; all discord is ugliness.”⁵⁰ Following this endorsement of music, the student advocated for the implementation of a college song. This student’s declaration about the beauty and peace of music exemplifies the way female students often wrote about their studies or lives. Encouraging these attributes of music display the women’s interest in maintaining a civilized and beautiful college, full of equally harmonious women. Another student wrote an editorial wherein she mentions that changes in traditions should be welcomed if they want to ever make progress, “especially in college should every new idea be welcomed by which we may attain more nearly the ideal student life.”⁵¹ This student shows that these female students sought changes to the status quo to improve their colleges. Women also wanted to improve and support the college, often showing school spirit, but less competitiveness than the men.

⁴⁹ “The American Graduate Student at Oxford,” *The Mount Holyoke* (South Hadley, MA), February 1902, Five College Compass Digital Archive.

⁵⁰ Editorial, *The Mount Holyoke* (South Hadley, MA), November 1893, Five College Compass Digital Archive.

⁵¹ Editorial, *The Mount Holyoke* (South Hadley, MA), November 1893, Five College Compass Digital Archive.

These sentiments expressed by women about what characteristics women embodied were also noticed by some men as well. In a *Michigan Daily* article, an attorney and graduate from the University of Michigan, Noah Cheever, reflected on when the university accepted women.⁵² He explained the objections men said when it was debated. These objections were, “First, that they were not strong enough physically to do the work; second, that they did not possess the mental qualities necessary to master the higher branches of knowledge; third, that it would cause untold disaster to the moral atmosphere of the University; fourth, that it would lower the standard of requirements in the University and turn it into a mere female seminary.”⁵³ Cheever explained that all of these accusations proved false once women joined the school. Specifically, he stated that women brought more maturity, more sincerity, equal intelligence, and more morality. He continued to clarify that women used to be stuck in domestic work or teaching district school before they received college degrees, but now society appreciated them in other occupations.⁵⁴ As the women moved to more social work and society continued to urbanize, they adjusted their priorities and future aspirations. The transformations of society during the Progressive Era affected both men and women. With a more urban working population and institutional changes, men also experienced changes in their values.

⁵² Noah Cheever, “Admission of Women to the University,” *Michigan Daily* (Ann Arbor, MI), December 16, 1899, Michigan Daily Digital Archives.

⁵³ Noah Cheever, “Admission of Women to the University.”

⁵⁴ Noah Cheever, “Admission of Women to the University.”

Domesticity

The ideas around women staying in the private sphere and strictly adhering to domestic duties shifted in the Progressive Era. Female students noticed this change and began caring more about the development of their mind. Although more vocations opened up, women were still wary of working outside the home. In an obituary in the *Mount Holyoke*, a student wrote of an alumna, “although much of her work lay in public life, the essential womanliness of her nature never became the least impaired or obscured.”⁵⁵ Despite this student’s admiration for the alumna, she hesitates to applaud her public work without addressing the persistence of her womanliness. As colleges transitioned into the twentieth century, the more women pursued public life vocations. In 1893, when the newspaper published this obituary, the number of women working in the public sphere was starting to increase. This student went on to comment on the woman’s “remarkable combination of strength, sweetness, serenity, and sunshine... her tenderness was as inexhaustible as her faith; her sweetness as infinite as her strength.... She had a mind of the most remarkable clearness and of logical power.”⁵⁶ This writer praised the alumna for kindness, faith, intelligence, and strength of the mind. Piety still received admiration among women for years to come, but philanthropic activities through churches and colleges appeared more often in student writings than attending church or other displays of faith.

⁵⁵ “In Memoriam,” *The Mount Holyoke* (South Hadley, MA), November 1893, Five College Compass Digital Archive.

⁵⁶ “In Memoriam,” *The Mount Holyoke*.

Another example of female students hesitating when considering vocations outside of the private sphere shows through in a section of the *Wellesley News* where women responded to letters. One response said, “You should certainly know how to make fudge. Every well-bred girl should be able to.”⁵⁷ This declaration that all women need to know how to make fudge promotes the domesticity ideal prized by women. In a different letter response, the editors answered a student’s dilemma about having to wear white when she complained it did not suit her complexion. The editors replied to her with their sympathy and the wise words of “one should be careful about such matters, as it is a woman’s duty to look her best.”⁵⁸ A different student advised another’s letter with the advice that “we are all so busy with our own affairs that we lose many opportunities to do various little kindnesses for those around us.”⁵⁹ These responses depict the strong sentiment among female students that women should maintain their looks, domestic skills, but also practice selflessness and kindness.

Notwithstanding these women still praising domesticity as important, one student wrote in an editorial asserting that a domestic problem existed in the form that women saw that housekeeping as employment for those without an education. Thus, a shortage of housekeepers cropped up. This student claimed that a woman with a “well-trained mind has too often scorned the ‘narrow’ life of the home.”⁶⁰ Essentially this article represented

⁵⁷ “Particular Girls’ Papers,” *The Wellesley News* (Wellesley, MA), November 23, 1904, Wellesley College Digital Scholarship and Archive.

⁵⁸ “Particular Girls’ Papers,” *The Wellesley News*.

⁵⁹ “Particular Girls’ Papers,” *The Wellesley News*.

⁶⁰ Editorial, *The Mount Holyoke* (South Hadley, MA), May 1900, Five College Compass Digital Archive.

that female students believed in the importance of domestic skills and in broadening one's mind. She also stated that, "it is the cultivated woman who can see the possibilities for raising the plane of service for both employer and employee; and it is she who must develop them."⁶¹ These white female students often saw a significance in creating "cultivated" women, those who went through education and learned much of the world. These cultured women could then go on to aid the world in expanding and improving different areas of their spheres, such as through their teaching, domestic jobs, or social work. This desire to craft cultivated women transferred to the beliefs these students held around trying to construct cultured Black Americans.

Race

White female students usually only referred to race and Black Americans when mentioning events on campus, such as speakers and theatrical shows, but race also appeared in articles when women reviewed recent books. Students rarely specifically brought up racial tensions or problems unless reviewing or summarizing speakers or books. At large, remarks about Black Americans or race seldom appeared at all in these white female Northeastern collegiate newspapers. When these students did discuss race, they made sure to distance themselves from Black Americans, singling them out as different.

These female college students repeatedly referred to common stereotypes of Black Americans off-handedly when talking about music or literature performed and read in school. In one instance, a Mount Holyoke student described a short story by Virginia

⁶¹ Editorial, *The Mount Holyoke* (South Hadley, MA), May 1900.

Frazer Boyle as “hinging upon the negro’s love of the marvelous and the mysterious.”⁶² This stereotype of Black Americans as closely associating with enigmatic, emotional, and supernatural elements of the world permeated through different women’s colleges and their newspapers. Specifically, white collegiate women consistently referred to the passion they saw embodied in African Americans. This emotionality came up often in articles about Black American songs and musical artists. Furthermore, these female students most often mentioned African Americans when analyzing or appreciating Black American musical or literature compositions.

To this end, articles in each college newspaper discussed Black influences on songs and commended Black artists for their talented music. For instance, in the *Vassar Miscellany*, one student compared Black American songs to Scottish music. This student, Alice Hussey, a graduate of 1894, described both Scottish and African American songs as simplistic, but emotional and earnest.⁶³ She stressed that, “As is perhaps natural with the strong emotional nature of the Negro, the conditions of his life and his lack of personal comfort, the religious songs constitute by far the greatest number.”⁶⁴ With her explanation, she believed that Black Americans music revolved around religion more than anything else due to their strong emotions and difficulty of their lives. This article demonstrated the distance these white women put between themselves and Black Americans. Although this student praised the Black American music, she clearly separated them as distinct from the Scottish, but also from white Americans. These white

⁶² “Current Literature Section,” *The Mount Holyoke* (South Hadley, MA), January 1900, Five College Compass Digital Archive.

⁶³ Alice Hussey, “Scotch and Negro Songs,” *Vassar Miscellany* (Poughkeepsie, NY), June 1894, Vassar College Digital Library.

⁶⁴ Alice Hussey, “Scotch and Negro Songs.”

female students acclaimed Black American music and singers, but always distinguished them as different from their own songs and artists.

Black colleges such as Fisk University or Tuskegee Institute often visited these white colleges to advertise their school and explain their goals. In another Vassar article, a student discussed singers from Tuskegee stating, “selections were all typical negro songs, some comic, some pathetic [evincing pathos], and were sung with a fervor that called forth the heartiest applause.”⁶⁵ When referring to Black music, these students usually highlighted the emotional fervor, comical and tragic themes. An additional article in the *Vassar Miscellany* emphasized a visit from the Hampton Institute, another higher education establishment for Black Americans. This writer talked about two students, one Black and one Native American, who entertained them in “an interesting way” and explained their work “among their own people.”⁶⁶ These white women saw the Black students at the other schools living in a world separate from their own. Another article discussing artistic endeavors, claimed that “the simple, primitive lives” offer the best subjects for study as “the creole, the Negro, and the Yankee are more tempting than the typical Englishman or American.”⁶⁷ White students again and again asserted that Black Americans represented more simplistic and emotional beings.

An additional advertisement for the Tuskegee Institute written by Vassar students, emphasized the importance they believed labor jobs and education held for Black

⁶⁵ “Social Events,” *Vassar Miscellany* (Poughkeepsie, NY), April 1, 1895, Vassar College Digital Library.

⁶⁶ “College News,” *Vassar Miscellany* (Poughkeepsie, NY), March 1, 1899, Vassar College Digital Library.

⁶⁷ “The Mission of Dialect in Literature,” *The Mount Holyoke* (South Hadley, MA), February 1892, Five College Compass Digital Archive.

Americans. These white students stressed, “Tuskegee has endeavored to show them that the difference between being worked and working is the exact difference between degradation and civilization.”⁶⁸ This view that education created civilized and cultured men and women justified these white students’ beliefs that Black Americans were primitive. Furthermore, these students highlighted the main characteristics they still noticed in Black Americans when they claimed, “The negroes are handicapped by their ignorance, lack of experience, and their inability to utilize properly the results of their labor.”⁶⁹ Even decades after the Civil War, these students held onto the idea that Black Americans embodied ignorance and inexperience. These students continued to state, “the two great problems of the educated negro are to lift himself and his people, and to keep peace between the two races. The first is being solved by the negro himself. The basis of the solution of the second lies in the individual relations of the negroes and the whites. This, too, is being worked out, for the negro is the most adaptable of all races.”⁷⁰ Through this assertion, these students revealed that they believed Black Americans needed to work towards lifting up their race and help create peace.

Putting these burdens on Black Americans, without even mentioning white Americans like themselves demonstrated their understanding of the separation between races. These students saw Black Americans as embodying adaptability and perseverance without acknowledging the white Americans role in African American oppression. Even though many of these white students supported the artistic talents and education of Black

⁶⁸ A.B.B., C.G., D.G., H.L., M.C.R., R.S., “College News,” *Vassar Miscellany* (Poughkeepsie, NY), February 1, 1910, Vassar College Digital Library.

⁶⁹ A.B.B. et al., “College News.”

⁷⁰ A.B.B. et al., “College News.”

Americans, they desired independent institutions, jobs, and futures for them. When these white women encountered Black Americans near their campus, they frequently remarked upon the rarity of interacting with them. In the *Wellesley News*, one student wrote of a Black young girl who attended an on-campus show, “this was an unusual sight at the Barn as negroes are very scarce in this part of the country.”⁷¹

Only occasionally within this twenty-year period did these women discuss problems associated with Black men and women in America. In one particularly revealing article, a student made her opinion on other races apparent when she announced that if more Japanese individuals were allowed into the country, they would “but become another race within the boundaries of our country, a race which cannot be assimilated and whose presence will cause as great a problem in the West as the Negro causes in the South.”⁷² This student saw other nonwhite races as impediments to the American economy and society. One article in the *Vassar Miscellany* described the American response to the “Negro question” so far had been handled “ignorantly” without examinations of the failures and corruption of the government.⁷³ The student writers of this highlighted the “smug and self-satisfied” nature of Americans which led itself to the refusal to solve problems over and over.⁷⁴ Even when criticizing the white American

⁷¹ “The Punch and Judy Show,” *The Wellesley News* (Wellesley, MA), January 16, 1907, Wellesley College Digital Scholarship and Archive.

⁷² “The Exclusion of Japanese Labor from the United States,” *Vassar Miscellany* (Poughkeepsie, NY), April 1, 1908, Vassar College Digital Library.

⁷³ Alice Cheyney, Elisabeth Goodrich, Eliza Draper, and Lydia Sayer, “Loose Leaves,” *Vassar Miscellany* (Poughkeepsie, NY), March 1, 1907, Vassar College Digital Library.

⁷⁴ Alice Cheyney et al., “Loose Leaves.”

mass at large, these students still referred to Black Americans separately from the general American population.

The women at these colleges also participated in and attended minstrel shows on campus, further increasing the divide they saw between Black and white. Usually these appeared as announcements in their student newspapers, listed off as either upcoming or past performances. Students described these shows with names similar to “Negro Dialect Sketches.”⁷⁵ In the *Wellesley News*, one student, Mae White, a graduate of 1908, asserted her denunciation of the minstrel shows on campus. White declared that, “If the negro means to us only degradation, why should we care to imitate him so often, as in minstrel shows? Why be so inconsistent as to take part in them, if we are among those who make fun of or scorn the colored race?”⁷⁶ Her reasoning as to why minstrel shows needed to end on campus came down to the hypocrisy found in the act of impersonating a race to tease and poke fun. She also professed to her classmates that, “we are imitating the negro, if not at his worst, at anything but his best; we are forgetting that the ultimate aim of a college education is to help us to go higher in the scale of civilization, not lower.”⁷⁷ Mae White thought that due to these white women’s education level they had a chance to know better than the uneducated Black Americans and that once African American education increased, they would rise to a higher culture similar to white Americans. Although she fought against the minstrel shows, she still seemingly placed herself and her peers above Black Americans as more educated and cultured women.

⁷⁵ Announcements Section, *Mount Holyoke* (South Hadley, MA), June 1902, Five College Compass Archive.

⁷⁶ Mae K. White, Free Press (editorial), *The Wellesley News* (Wellesley, MA), December 18, 1907, Wellesley College Digital Scholarship and Archive.

⁷⁷ Mae K. White, Free Press (editorial), *The Wellesley News*.

The white students separated themselves from the Black population, designating them as the other, with different attributes than their own and in need of changing. When these white women wrote of race and Black Americans, which was rarely, they typically evaded placing any blame on themselves or their families in perpetuating any violence or prejudice against other races. Evidently, these white women kept themselves at a distance from Black Americans and believed them to be living different lives. Even when these white women acknowledged the rampant prejudice and racial issues, they rarely offered any help or advice to fix it, resorting to only vague articles about Black education and Black leaders. Despite these collegiate women claiming their compassionate and altruistic natures, they often avoided discussion of the race problem. Furthermore, while other white women collaborated with Black Americans to help solve social issues, especially in religious or teaching contexts, these white students rarely, if ever, considered themselves cooperating with Black students to create change.

Collegiate women emphasized these ideals of erudition, compassion, altruism, and domesticity, which departed from the stricter Victorian ideals of the nineteenth century. These acclaimed characteristics represented what qualities these students believed they needed to live a fuller life and achieve their goals, whether that included motherhood, employment, or both. Women saw college social experiences as ways to attain a more civilized nature, while men regarded social interactions as ways to get ahead in life by networking and making connections for the public world. Contrary to collegiate women, the men saw college as preparing them for the harsh business and public world. These men believed they needed to acquire strength, confidence, independence, while maintaining some semblance of restraint and honesty.

CHAPTER THREE

White Collegiate Male Understanding of Reputable Manhood

Whereas, these guilds made men good machines, education should make them good men; whereas the guilds concerned about teaching men how to make a living, education is concerned about teaching them how to make a life; whereas the guilds limited the number of their craftsmen and narrowed their activities, education spreads abroad its wide evangel and multiplies the humanities; whereas the guilds were seclusive and protective, education mingles with the multitude and promotes social sanity and social service...If there is something wrong with education or there is something wrong with life. The education that makes good, that makes the man, makes the workman.

— J. L. Kesler, “For Higher Education: Some Gleanings,”
The Baylor Lariat, July 14, 1906

J. L. Kesler’s words echoed the sentiment of Progressive Era college men as they viewed their higher education as the basis for creating model citizens who contributed to the success of the United States. Consequently, the education of these men intertwined with their ideas of nationhood and citizenship of that time.¹ However, variation in men’s occupations, geographical location, class, and race created differences in masculine values. For instance, men working all day in factories felt differently than those raising livestock. Nevertheless, examining collegiate men and their ideals of what constituted a good male citizen exposes who they strived to be and what they expected from American leaders. These men enrolling in university tended to go into powerful occupations hoping to control aspects of politics, business, or science. Men attending university in the

¹ For more about the changes of higher education during these years, see Mark Richard Nemecek, *Ivory Towers and Nationalist Minds: Universities, Leadership, and the Development of the American State* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2006); Roger L. Geiger, *The History of American Higher Education: Learning and Culture from the Founding to World War II* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

Progressive Era usually originated from white wealthy or middle-class backgrounds. Elite white men viewed higher education as directly responsible for the creation of good men: those embodying confidence, strength, maturity, independence, honesty, and restraint.

The ideals placed upon university instruction by elite white men regularly excluded Black men from the narrative. White male masculinity has been deeply interconnected with race throughout the history of America. White men defined people of color as the other, particularly Black Americans.² This way of thinking clearly appeared in white male college students in the Progressive era. They saw fundamental differences between themselves and Black people as well as women. Articles and editorials written by students during this period frequently touched on race and men. Even when supposedly supporting Black students, white men alluded to perceived disparities between white and Black men. When studying white masculinity, historians must address race since it impacts every aspect of U.S. culture.

This racial and gendered discourse perpetuated by white male students created the foundational basis for college culture that persisted into the twentieth century, and this view of race and desire for segregation did not diminish until much later.³ Knowing the ways these male students and administrators assumed men should act demonstrates the beliefs these colleges created in their students. These white single-sex and coeducational

² To read more on white masculinity and race in America, see Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917*, Women in Culture and Society edition (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Anthony E. Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1993).

³ Christi M. Smith discusses the development and ultimate failure of integrated education in the late nineteenth century in *Reparation and Reconciliation: The Rise and Fall of Integrated Higher Education* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

institutions maintained racial bias on both an individual and institutional basis.

Comprehending the culture of these students illustrates how higher education institutions developed and sustained their white male elite image. Tracing these cultures up to today can help reveal ways to craft more positive and inclusive campuses.

To grasp the culture of these colleges and the male students, I analyze voices of students themselves and their notions regarding gender, occupations, and race. It is clear that the writers discussed men in these documents either when they used specific terms such as men or male students, but also, in coeducational settings, when they focused solely on male-dominated areas of the school, like football or public debate clubs. Even when they did not discuss men specifically, male students revealed some of their assumptions about gender when they wrote about certain topics over and over again. In order to highlight several areas of the United States and single-sex as well as coeducational institutions, I specifically examine Princeton University, located in Princeton, New Jersey, Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, Baylor University in Waco, Texas, the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, and the University of California, Berkeley. These sources and schools constitute public and private institutions, as well as a geographically diverse set of students. Princeton and Yale enrolled only white men, usually from the middle or upper class. Baylor, Michigan, and Berkeley all enrolled both men and women. Michigan and Berkeley accepted multiple races, although white men dominated their enrollments until later into the twentieth century.⁴ Despite the existence of mixed-race institutions, many continued to segregate their students when they could

⁴ W. E. B. Du Bois and Augustus Granville Dill, eds., *The College-Bred Negro American* (Atlanta, GA: The Atlanta University Press, 1910), 50–51.

and offered more opportunities to the white students.⁵ The editors and writers of the student newspapers usually were white male or female students. This fact can be deduced through the photos of writing staff posted throughout the years.

Although historiography employing student voices and intertwining race and gender has been lacking, two main works address gender and higher education in the Progressive Era. Lynn D. Gordon in *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* and Andrea L. Turpin in *A New Moral Vision* analyze shifting masculinity ideals among students and administrators.⁶ Gordon studies how men reacted to women entering higher education. She asserts that men and women tried to separate themselves during this time, which ultimately led to more and more women fighting for suffrage.⁷ Looking more broadly, Turpin, following Bederman's research, sets the context of the period, explaining that middle-class men tried to assert their dominance over women and other races following the economic switch, especially for Northern men, that led men to stop owning business and instead work under others.⁸ Due to this change, colleges proclaimed that colleges would lead to white male influences on government, business, or education.⁹ White men saw a nationally important role to play by attending universities. Both Turpin and Gordon leave out detailed discussions on racial identities among collegiate men.

⁵ Michael Dennis, "Schooling along the Color Line: Progressives and the Education of Blacks in the New South," *The Journal of Negro Education* 67, no. 2 (1998): 143–144.

⁶ Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era*; Turpin, *A New Moral Vision: Gender, Religion, and the Changing Purposes of American Higher Education, 1837–1917*.

⁷ Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era*, 22, 25.

⁸ Turpin, *A New Moral Vision*, 26.

⁹ Turpin, *A New Moral Vision*, 27.

In addition to Turpin and Gordon, three other scholars have concentrated on masculinity among higher education institutions, including Daniel Clark in *Creating the College Man*, David Setran in *The College “Y,”* and Kim Townsend in *Manhood at Harvard*.¹⁰ Clark details the ways major national magazines shifted culture to promote collegiate education in Progressive Era America. In order to get white men to accept their new place lower in society due to industrialization, magazines, such as the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Collier's Weekly*, encouraged university education to train for leadership in businesses.¹¹ Setran looks into how the YMCA on college campuses started promoting the more masculine values of body discipline and strength as well as character construction in the late nineteenth century.¹² With the men fearing the feminization of religion, the YMCA worked to bring in masculine principles at universities. Lastly, Townsend explores the Gilded Age and Progressive Era manliness at Harvard. He analyzes how the nationwide emphasis on athletics, the body and character building for white men affected and propagated from the Harvard students and alumni, like Theodore Roosevelt.¹³ Although these authors offer essential insights into American manhood and college life, they generally leave out race from their analyses and do not fully examine all the ways these student discourses shaped their masculine beliefs.

¹⁰ Daniel A. Clark, *Creating the College Man: American Mass Magazines and Middle-Class Manhood, 1890–1915* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010); Setran, *The College “Y”: Student Religion in the Era of Secularization*; Kim Townsend, *Manhood at Harvard: William James and Others* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996).

¹¹ Clark, *Creating the College Man*, 7–8.

¹² Setran, *The College “Y,”* 104–105.

¹³ Townsend, *Manhood at Harvard*, 245.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the values associated with American manhood transformed as men esteemed aggression, strength, and confidence. Although these men at college participated in these ideals, placing emphasis on athletics and sports, they also saw college as a means to teach men restraint against debauchery, such as drinking, fighting, or intimate transgressions. Essentially, these boys transformed into college men by learning paradoxical ideals: men must be strong, passionate, ambitious, and aggressive, but also show restraint and honesty. Their newspaper articles demonstrated these desired attributes. Late-nineteenth century white American men, according to Bederman, reconciled with Victorian manliness and the newer views on masculinity. Victorian manhood revolved around restraint and confidence, while masculinity involved more aggression and embracing of sexuality. These ideals combined, but still operated under the “discourse of civilization,” meaning these white men saw themselves as still holding the power over those they viewed as more primitive, meaning African Americans, other races, and women.¹⁴ Bederman deftly discusses the way white middle-class men framed themselves as different and better than Black men.

College men praised additional attributes outside of those discussed by Bederman and Rotundo. Moreover, these white university men deliberated the race problem as an issue that needed solving, but only through education, not their own actions. The attributes celebrated by these white male students expresses what they saw and desired in their white peers as opposed to the Black men. The intricacies of how these white college men viewed race and gender represents how racist and patriarchal thinking continued into

¹⁴ Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 4–6.

the twentieth century while white women, Black men, and Black women received more educational opportunities but still experienced strong prejudice.

Confidence and Strength

Throughout their newspapers, men repeatedly praised one attribute, confidence. These male students sought confidence in all their endeavors, whether in sports, exams, social situations, or future vocations. A senior at Princeton articulated, “As we go out into those far lands, let us journey with hope strong within us; it is our due to Alma Mater that we be confident; we have heard her teachings and known her guidance—we should be ready to prove ourselves worthy of her.”¹⁵ With Princeton only enrolling men, this student’s appraisal of Princeton for its teachings of confidence referenced specifically only a male alumni population. In order to gain preferred occupations in the world, these men believed they needed confidence. Moreover, exuding confidence showed they were college men. As Rotundo argues, white male Americans felt the demand for confidence in order to feel dominant in an increasingly changing country, where middle-class men no longer owned their own business and women as well as other races entered more occupational spaces.¹⁶ The white man needed to declare and exude confidence and strength to continue to feel in power over men of all other races and women.¹⁷

As the nineteenth century ended and the twentieth century began, collegiate sports gained more and more popularity, especially among white men. These sports created a

¹⁵ George Tucker Bispham, Jr., “Gossip: On Gossip,” *Nassau Literary Magazine* (Princeton, NJ), April 1, 1904, Papers of Princeton.

¹⁶ Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 284–285.

¹⁷ Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 290–291.

sense of camaraderie among students but also aggression between males.¹⁸ These male students consistently admired the strength and confidence of sports players in their newspapers. In the *Lariat*, one student wrote, “Baylor does not want to say that any of her male students lack the will power and persistency to stick to anything that they undertake. Stick it out and win at the finish in spite of all odds.”¹⁹ Evidently, the emphasis on persistence and winning indicate that this article champions self-assurance and competition among the male football players. The student then said, “Students with muscle and nerve, come out and give a little of your energy for Baylor. Where is your college spirit? Do you want to be a grind? Take part in student activities.”²⁰ The stress on participating in college sports and praising those men with “muscle and nerve,” discloses the students believing school spirit, strength, and confidence mattered.

As these collegiate men consistently felt the need to prove and discuss their manhood, they displayed it through aggressive displays of their strength or confidence. One way these students accomplished this, especially elite white northeastern men, was through breaking strikes by working-class men.²¹ Stephen Norwood explores these actions by white college men and concludes that white men pursued strikebreaking to release aggression and undermine those supportive of pro-union or pro-labor actions.²²

¹⁸ Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 16; Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 241.

¹⁹ “Football at Baylor University,” *The Lariat* (Waco, TX), September 27, 1902, Baylor Digital Collections.

²⁰ “Football at Baylor University,” *The Lariat*.

²¹ Stephen H. Norwood, “The Student as Strikebreaker: College Youth and the Crisis of Masculinity in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Journal of Social History* 28, no. 2 (1994): 331–332.

²² Norwood, “The Student as Strikebreaker,” 333–334.

In a particularly daring, confident, and entertaining paper, students created a parody of the *Yale News*, and reported on fake events, but still revealed the confidence and admiration they held for their classmates as well as their school. The students wrote articles such as “Yale Needs More Booze” and “Baseball Abolished” to make satirical jokes. The topics discussed and mocked show what these college men considered ridiculous. For example, due to the “Baseball Abolished” article and another article stating that “all outdoor recreation” and sport activity is “strictly forbidden,” the importance of exercise and sports in these men’s lives becomes clear. The prominence of comradery comes across when demanding more booze on campus, the students joke about drinking that “nothing so fosters the growth of congenial good-fellowship and every-living friendship” and that “a man’s intellectual life is enhanced by a practical study of navigation” after a night of drinking.²³ This article poked fun at the drinking culture at the school, saying they need even more alcohol, but it also addressed the friendship bonds that form. These male students often refer back to school pride and camaraderie in their newspapers. Furthermore, the insistence on religion by administrators comes through when the students stated that the “Yale Corporation voted to discontinue the observance of Divine Worship on Sundays” in order to give them more time for “amusement.” All of these parody newspaper articles exhibit that the male students valued physical activity, confidence, and independence as they jest about the administration restricting them in many aspects.²⁴

²³ “Yale Needs More Booze,” *Yale Daily News* (New Haven, CT), May 30, 1904, Yale University Library Digital Collections.

²⁴ *Yale Daily News* (New Haven, CT), May 30, 1904.

When male college students wrote about athletics, they centered their discussions on college spirit and physical prowess. Thus, they esteemed confidence and strength in their athletes and school. The male students emphasized the competition between schools, along with the persistence and conviction needed in male athletes to win. However, faculty and administrators accentuate the significance of athletics to keep students healthy. A student in the *Baylor Lariat* pronounced, “No college life is complete without the proper development of the athletic spirit. . . . (students) admire physical rather than mental supremacy.”²⁵ This male student explicitly stated that men want to be stronger physically than mentally. He also goes on to say, “Even the school men revered the physical hero, then what shall we expect from the energetic American college boy? He delights to match his own prowess with that of a worthy foeman.”²⁶ Consequently, he further demonstrated the male student’s desire for competition and physical strength in college. In the *Michigan Daily*, a student declared that “interest in athletics need not detract from interest in study. An hour on the football field, if only used in vocal exercise encouraging the team, will fill you with new spirit and make you appreciate college life.”²⁷ Although this student criticized sports for taking too much attention away from academics, he admitted that some football evoked collegiate spirit and appreciation.

The sports culture emerging among white male college students promoted competition and strength. Throughout a self-aware article, one student remarked,

²⁵ J.M.M., “Athletics in College,” *The Lariat* (Waco, TX), December 01, 1900, Baylor Digital Collections.

²⁶ J.M.M., “Athletics in College.”

²⁷ “We’ll Meet ‘Em Saturday,” *Michigan Daily* (Ann Arbor, MI), October 18, 1893, Michigan Daily Archives.

To a foreign observer the way in which the American public appears to work itself up to a fever heat upon questions of athletic supremacy or sportsmanlike behavior, especially in our colleges, must be somewhat of a phenomenon.... We call it "sport" —have we not turned it into labor of the worst description—labor which is of a style destined to wear upon nerve tissue rather than test our physical strength?²⁸

He attacked the collegiate sports institution as whole, but not because of its dedication to pure physical competition. Rather, he criticized sports as a labor testing each man's nerves. Thus, he sees sports as a labor that pits each team's time and courage against each other, but ultimately, he also criticizes the non-sportsmanlike and immature behavior of men when they blame the other team when they lose. This student's declaration that athletics is placed in high value among American men demonstrates the ways physical strength and competition reigned among American men during this period. As Bederman claims, these white males wanted to dominate sports with their physical prowess and outshine the physical strength of Black men at this time.²⁹ In addition, the desire for honesty and cleanness of sports also transferred to the overall lives of collegiate men.

Honesty and Restraint

Muscular Christianity correspondingly involved the idea of self-discipline and restraint on the part of men from the evils of drunkenness and impropriety. Male students reference these ideals and praise them throughout their newspapers and yearbooks. They saw keeping honest and refraining from these improper acts as their duty as collegiate

²⁸ "College Sports and the Harvard Game by the Way," *Nassau Literary Magazine* (Princeton, NJ), November 1, 1895, Papers of Princeton.

²⁹ Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 17–18.

men. Part of embodying honesty meant staying true to their schools as well. College men believed these qualities led to success in educational and occupational environments.

One way these men showed their support of abstaining from more inappropriate behavior was through discussions of prohibition and anti-gambling stances. For instance, as stated in the Baylor *Lariat*, “a thoroughly trained college man will have no need of prohibition laws, but he should align himself with those who stand opposed to the iniquitous influence of the open saloon.”³⁰ Throughout the years 1900 to 1910, the *Lariat* published numerous articles supporting prohibition, specifically to help men live better lives for God and the United States Prohibition organizations also spoke on campus during these years. A leader of the Prohibition League spoke on Baylor campus in 1906, reporting that Texas colleges had “impressed [him] more and more with the magnitude of the mission of college men for the solution of the liquor evil.”³¹ Although other schools focused less strongly on prohibition, students still championed restraint in matters related to alcohol.

The college men at Baylor regularly warned against the evils of gambling, drinking, and other forms of debauchery. One article particularly calls out men for betting on college sports and the dishonor involved with such a practice. The student stressed that “sports are so dear to the average college man” and to “not get rid of our greatest pleasure,”³² illustrating the love of sports and competition among men, but also the hope for honor and restraint from these men. In a different article, the male students advertise a

³⁰ Untitled Article, The *Lariat* (Waco, TX), September 28, 1901, Baylor Digital Collections.

³¹ “The Prohibition League Work,” The *Lariat* (Waco, Texas), September 29, 1906, Baylor Digital Collections.

³² “College Gambling,” The *Lariat* (Waco, TX), March 07, 1903, Baylor Digital Collections.

program for men that will aid in them understanding the importance placed on collegiate men, living lives dedicated to Jesus and to moral lives, away from gambling or cheating in sports and alcohol.³³ This program promoted school spirit and bonding with one's college and its male students. Furthermore, this program hoped to give these collegiate men a sense of purpose in serving their country and God through missionary or social work.³⁴ When discussing the ability of Baylor to keep peace and honor among male students during athletic events, one article stated that Director Mills could help men "build up their physical manhood" while tolerating "no vicious conduct among the Baylor players."³⁵ Commonly, the male students or faculty broadcasted the requirement of athletic men to stay safe and honest.

College men also lauded ideals of loyalty and honesty in reference to keeping ties to their colleges. In one editorial, a student claimed that a man must always "stay true" to his institution, and "fight its battles and uphold its standards," as that "is true of the college man."³⁶ Male student writings consistently pressure students to embody school loyalty and spirit. A tribute to a student that passed away praised his "life of sterling honesty and manly uprightness, a heart of pure gold, full of love for his friends and college, always loyal, always hopeful, always kind."³⁷ When admiring individual

³³ "Ten Reasons Why to Go to Ruston," *The Lariat* (Waco, TX), August 14, 1909, Baylor Digital Collections.

³⁴ "Ten Reasons Why to Go to Ruston," *The Lariat*.

³⁵ "Physical education," *The Lariat* (Waco, TX), August 20, 1910, Baylor Digital Collections.

³⁶ "A Student's Responsibility to his College Paper," *The Lariat* (Waco, TX), October 09, 1909, Baylor Digital Collections.

³⁷ *Daily Princetonian* (Princeton, NJ), May 14, 1909, Papers of Princeton.

attributes of men, these students usually mentioned the honesty and honor of a man. In a different article reflecting on a professor who had recently passed, the students wrote, “we caught from him, not only a thirst for knowledge, a love for truth, and longing for exalted manhood, but also a passion for holiness.”³⁸

Another quality that these student or college-affiliated men considered praiseworthy encompassed sincere personalities. In an excerpt from the alumni published *University of California Magazine*, which explained the first benefactors of the college and how the school began, they commended that the college “was fortunate in having at the head of its trustees a man of great strength of mind, clear perception, broad ideas and culture, and impressive elegance.”³⁹ Then Andrew Hallidie complimented the different regents for different attributes, such as “dignity,” “earnestness,” “faithfulness,” “caution,” and “efficiency.”⁴⁰ These qualities contrast with the ones this magazine praises a woman who aided in different educational related areas across the country at the time, Phoebe Apperson Hearst. William Carey Jones, who wrote the except on Hearst, proclaimed Hearst was “refined and high-minded by nature,” and that “The spirit of woman [is] the most beneficent influence wrought by God for the uplifting of mankind.”⁴¹ These writers praised similar aspects in the men and women of strong minds, refinement, and sincerity. However, Jones specifically focuses on how women uplifted mankind and brought about

³⁸ “Death of Professor Tanner,” *The Lariat* (Waco, TX), March 23, 1901, Baylor Digital Collections.

³⁹ Andrew S. Hallidie, Excerpt from “The First Benefactors,” *The University of California Magazine*, April 1899, 101–117.

⁴⁰ Hallidie, Excerpt from “The First Benefactors.”

⁴¹ William Carey Jones, Excerpt from “The First Benefactors.”

a charitable impact on society. The men were strictly admired for their intelligence and honesty which helped them in leading.

The significance of maturity, honesty, and confidence traits comes through in the way these college men wrote about cliques and clubs on campus. These students thought students isolating themselves from each other and staying only with friends created a negative campus where men could not trust or interact with each other. Talking with others and creating a welcoming campus would show a mature, authentic, and self-assured student population. In the Baylor newspaper, one student discussed the latest system instated at Princeton, where the administration tried to eliminate student clubs and establish residential squads, forcing students to eat, live, and work with the certain students.⁴² This Baylor student writer approved the decision to “combat the evil forces of fraternities” and “distinctions based on position and wealth.”⁴³

Princeton students also deliberated about clubs in their student publications. As student clubs increased in number and popularity on campuses across the nation through the Progressive Era, some students questioned their future effects on colleges. In the Princeton student literary magazine, one writer stated, “The moment club life begins to absorb college life and to cease from being simply a bright feature of it, club life is trespassing beyond its bounds and menaces what it should cherish.”⁴⁴ Following his discussion of maintaining the “good old Princeton life,” he continued to say, “That there

⁴² “Handling College Problems,” *The Lariat* (Waco, Texas), July 13, 1907, Baylor Digital Collections.

⁴³ “Handling College Problems,” *The Lariat* (Waco, Texas), July 13, 1907, Baylor Digital Collections.

⁴⁴ “Princeton’s Club Life,” *Nassau Literary Magazine* (Princeton, NJ), March 1, 1893, Papers of Princeton.

should be club spirit and, perhaps, club politics, is, to a great extent, inevitable...Friendships there are worth cultivating besides those of your clubmates’.”⁴⁵ A year later, another student warned of the danger of clubs by asserting that clubs were “destroying class unity.”⁴⁶ Several students wrote letters to the editor considering how clubs separated residents in Halls and took away each Hall’s purpose. In one such letter, a student stated in partial defense of clubs and Halls, “but club life should not discourage Hall work, as one may suspect is the case. One of the reasons, but not the only one, for suppressing the Greek Letter Fraternities was their presumed evil influence upon the Halls; but pernicious activity is not as disastrous as contemptuous neglect.”⁴⁷ This student reported the mischievous activity associated with Fraternities but blames the students for neglecting other responsibilities. Thus, this student and others identified that the college men hoped to live truthful lives, supporting their school, with limited destructive behavior.

School spirit and unity genuinely mattered to these college men as the male students worried about class alienating students in other ways as well. In the *Yale Daily News*, one student reporter remarked on an issue of wealthy students taking on-campus jobs for extra money from those who needed the money. This reporter proclaimed, “If Yale is one college where every effort is made to put the poor man on an equal basis with the rich, Yale should also be one college where the abuse of the privilege to earn money

⁴⁵ “Princeton’s Club Life,” *Nassau Literary Magazine* (Princeton, NJ), Papers of Princeton.

⁴⁶ Editorial, *Daily Princetonian* (Princeton, NJ), March 12, 1894, Papers of Princeton.

⁴⁷ A. A. Woodhull, Letter to the Editor, *Daily Princetonian* (Princeton, NJ), January 23, 1905; Letter to the editor, *Daily Princetonian* (Princeton, NJ), January 13, 1905, Papers of Princeton.

should be checked.”⁴⁸ This student pronounces that Yale stands tall as a college where class does not divide the students. At the University of Michigan, a male reporter announced to all incoming freshmen, emphasis on the men, “to all, rich and poor, wanderer, and appropriated, freshman and senior, the Daily gives a fond welcome. There’s some satisfaction in knowing that Michigan men can be themselves, fight their own battles, and stand or fall by their own resources.”⁴⁹ This student stressed that all men survived at Michigan based on their merits and resourcefulness, not their social status. Male students across the coeducational and single-sex institutions asserted the importance of school unity throughout 1890 to 1910.

These male students and athletes tried to dedicate themselves to staying honest, honorable, and loyal to God, their school, and each other. This honor came from leading professional and loving lives, avoiding drunkenness and lying. The Baylor students brought in more religious reasoning for their living as college students and more frequently mentioned clean living away from alcohol and debauchery. However, all schools remarked on these subjects as well, but they also joked about them. The mention of these honest and restraint ideals illustrated that the college men strived for these principles but did not necessarily achieve them.

⁴⁸ “The Abuse of Certain Privileges,” *Yale Daily News* (New Haven, CT), November 23, 1910, Yale Daily News Archive.

⁴⁹ “Students Pouring into Ann Arbor,” *Michigan Daily* (Ann Arbor, MI), September 26, 1905, Michigan Daily Digital Archives.

Gaining Responsibility and Independence to Become a Good Citizen

In addition to these ideals extolled by male students, the college men referenced the connection between education and male citizenship. They believed that with college, they gained the skills to responsibly participate in civil affairs. In their view, college helped male students achieve maturity to go out into the world of business and politics. White men across the nation permeated these ties between higher education and the building of white elite political men.

White men completely dominated political power across the United States. Often these leaders came from higher education institutions and white men in administration and faculty positions as well as students themselves saw higher education as a way to train white men for that power. Thus, even as Black men entered colleges, white men preferred Black men to be trained industrially or agriculturally, not intellectually.⁵⁰ The nineteenth century expanded voting and citizenship rights immensely as any man born or naturalized in the United States received the right to citizenship and voting rights. However, laws across states often refused this right to non-white men. Voting expansion created an insecurity among white men that led to them defining their nationhood and citizenship among basis of education and intellect or ancestry.⁵¹ As enrollment at higher education institutions increased, students and administrators called for a college education for men to earn their places as good citizens contributing to the nation.

⁵⁰ William H. Watkins, William Ayers, and Therese Quinn, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865–1954*, 2nd edition (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2001), 20–23.

⁵¹ Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 57.

White male students viewed their higher education as vital for their career, manhood, and citizenship. One Baylor article perpetrated this belief when analyzing the purposes of a specific Christian education. The writer expressed “that [education] has become inwrought into the man’s being—education not simply for a career but to enrich manhood and promote the highest citizenship.”⁵² In another article, a Baylor student wrote, “take the list of the United States Senators and Representatives from Texas and the most of them are college men.”⁵³ This emphasis on college men’s duty to their country to use their education to better the country through their careers appears across different schools.

In an article discussing a professor’s speech on student problems, he stated that men “should equip themselves to do something. They should be neither soft nor flabby, [they] should be men of action as well as thought, and that each one should aim to do something great for the betterment of American life.”⁵⁴ The administrators believed that collegiate men must use what they saw as a superior education to aid in leading and bettering America. While discussing the university and its place in society, one Baylor student claimed that “only the man with college training is fitted to lead.”⁵⁵ The future occupations of these college men divulge that they saw their education as steppingstones to careers and helpful in fully realizing their manhood as well as citizenship.

⁵² “The Practicability of Baylor Ideals,” *The Lariat* (Waco, TX), January 24, 1903, Baylor Digital Collections.

⁵³ Untitled Announcement, *The Lariat* (Waco, TX), Saturday, July 23, 1904. Baylor Digital Collections.

⁵⁴ “Dr. Thwing’s Lecture: Noted Educator Talks Interestingly on Student Problems,” *The Lariat* (Waco, TX), April 29, 1905. Baylor Digital Collections.

⁵⁵ “The Rapid Rise to True University Rank,” *The Lariat* (Waco, TX), August 26, 1905. Baylor Digital Collections.

When writing about what mattered to them while in school and in their futures, these men brought up confident answers that made jokes or discussed their future public responsibilities. In the University of California's yearbook, the *Blue and Gold*, the senior students crafted a section where they answer questions about things like what occupied their time in college, their future professions, their favorite drinks, and their overall motive in life. Each year of the yearbook has slightly different questions for the students, but they always related to what the students believed were their most important characteristics and their outlook on the future. Often, the students answered ironically, poking fun at the questions.

These answers reflect and outline the interests of the students and show the gendered lines. The male students frequently made jokes around drinking or sexual innuendos as well as being ladies' men and bragging about their muscular bodies while the women often are more serious in answering these queries. The female students' serious answers about their future revolved around teaching, families, and novel-writing. Meanwhile, the men's responses involved business, politics, science, or other jobs in the public sphere. When the women joke, they say things such as that they are specializing in subjects like gossip or flirting. These responses over the course of 1892–1910 reveal answers all along these same lines.⁵⁶ The male students value their confidence around women and hoped to work public arena jobs upon exiting school, many which would contribute to the country through politics, scientific research, or economically. Although these students openly joke about drinking and philandering, they seemed to exaggerate

⁵⁶ University of California, "Senior Statistics," *Blue and Gold*, (Berkeley, CA: 1892–1910), *Hathi Trust*.

their relation to these activities, showing that the concept of frequently doing these activities is seen as comical in their eyes. Thus, these men saw these activities as being something to do in moderation.

When addressing women entering collegiate education, one Baylor man stated that Christianity has allowed women to equal men in society while also influencing manly men to gracefully allow the “more gentle sex” to be praised for their intellect.⁵⁷ Although this male student acclaimed women, he still addressed women as the tender sex and different from men. The discourse of these men which separates female students from male even if they are trying to equalize them illustrates that the men saw women as distinct from them. If these articles continuously refer to male and female students and rarely ever just students as a whole, the men and women of the student body as well as the faculty believed they were different from one another.

The Baylor yearbook also contained a senior section, called portraits, where students wrote quips about each other and their personalities or future. These words reveal how they viewed each other as male and female students. The female student portraits usually commended their kind, poise, patient, faithful characteristics and discussed their future marriage. Meanwhile the male student portraits joked about pranks or praised each other for practicality and business-sense. For several of the male students throughout the years, they stated their only fault as flirting too much or dating too many girls. For the male students, they never mentioned marriage or teaching, focused more upon flirting, pranks, or business and politics. The outlines of what these men believe is

⁵⁷ W. E. Mason, “A Barbarism,” *The Lariat* (Waco, TX), December 15, 1900, Baylor Digital Collections.

important shows through these portraits. They drew attention to the significance of careers, praising those in business, politics, medicine, or law, and they also discussed the silliness ensued while dating or pranking while in college.⁵⁸

A piece in the Baylor newspaper reprinted an article from a different newspaper stressing the importance of a college degree and that businesses desired college men. This author pointed to how college men embodied “loyalty,” “enthusiasm,” and “hard work.”⁵⁹ He emphasized that businesses want to hire college graduates as “it is the trained mind of the college man that gives the employer confidence in him.” The choice for the *Lariat* to publish this article gave confidence to the male college students that if they strived for diligence, dedication, and loyalty, they could get jobs in business after graduation.

In a pamphlet addressing the organization of the regents and their selected president of the university, the writers called for “the great democratic principle of coming together,” rather than allowing the regents to choose the president. These allies of the university hoped for “the truth...at the fountainhead of our educational system, and that if it were in operation there our youth would get from it a lesson in self-restraint and true democracy that would do more than anything else in their education to make of them good citizens.”⁶⁰ These writers emphasized that education is needed to make good citizens and that the men in the regents effectively ignored democratic wishes of the faculty to weigh in on the new president of the university. This pamphlet again proposed

⁵⁸ Baylor University, “Senior Portraits,” *The Round Up*, Waco, TX: 1900–1910, Baylor Digital Collections.

⁵⁹ H.J. Hapgood, “The Young College Man’s Chances in Business” *Saturday Evening Post*, reprinted in *The Lariat* (Waco, TX), July 16, 1904. Baylor Digital Collections.

⁶⁰ “To the Alumni of the University of California by Some Friends of the University,” July 1899, University of California History Digital Archives.

that these men at different levels of colleges or society believed a link between higher education and American citizenship. Furthermore, the writers stressed truth and democratic ideals in all aspects of college life.

Faculty repeatedly wrote about their desires for colleges to produce effective and successful men. One professor in the *Michiganensian*, the yearbook of the University of Michigan, appealed to the administrators for a larger graduate school program to train the professional men of the U.S. better. He mentioned, “the State depends upon efficient men; but efficient men are only to be obtained by constant remembrance of duty to the University as the centre, par excellence, of the highest instruction and research that the human mind can compass.”⁶¹ This professor stressed the importance of colleges in training men to be effective, successful, and loyal to the college. Furthermore, he stated that colleges help “extend man’s dominion over things material” and that colleges “put the chains of intelligence upon gross matter for the benefit of the race.”⁶² He emphasized the need of higher education to help solve world problems scientifically, economically, politically, and socially.

Administrators and faculty spoke about why men attended colleges in their speeches, but the male students themselves rarely directly discussed their reasons for an education in the newspaper. However, by looking into what futures these male students aimed for and by analyzing those teaching or leading the schools, the culture of professionalization for these men is visible. Francis L. Patton, a Princeton President, stated in one 1892 speech that “there was something indefinable and indescribable which

⁶¹ Robert Mark Wenley, “The Importance of Graduate Studies,” *The Michiganensian* 1897.

⁶² Robert Mark Wenley, “The Importance of Graduate Studies.”

a man got by going to college which he could get in no other way. The attrition of mind and association of students gained in dormitory life were of inexpressible advantage.” He also thought "a college man was responsible for the tone of the society in which he lived.”⁶³ This speech implied that college created intelligent and connected individuals with advantages over the rest of society. Furthermore, the years spent at college crafted men who influenced and thus, directed society. The adults teaching the students viewed the social and academic benefits to college vital for men desiring power. Male students typically saw college in a similar way to the administrators. When students discussed the purpose of their education, they referred to its ability to provide social interactions, maturity, restraint, as well as the competitive and collegiate spirit. However, men disagreed with faculty when it came to the independence desired by students.

When these white male students wrote in newspapers, they typically mentioned different ways they demanded freedom and independence due to their maturity and honesty. While camaraderie was proclaimed often, the men also emphasized independence and persistence in their work and athletics. Furthermore, white collegiate men repeatedly protested different rules that they felt took away from their freedom or independence. A recurring complaint and interest that male college students wrote about was the watchful eye of faculty during exams. William Sallmon protested these procedures with advocating for the complete removal of any faculty watching them with their exams. He argued for “The abolition of the unjust and iniquitous system of espionage at examinations. Few things in college life can be more repulsive to the self-

⁶³ “College Men’s Meeting,” *Daily Princetonian* (Princeton, NJ), January 8, 1892, Papers of Princeton.

respecting man than the elevation of platforms for watch-towers, and the employment of a small army of examiners to guard against cribbing.”⁶⁴ He believed the present system as “an unendurable stigma upon the honest man and a failure in reaching the dishonest.”⁶⁵ From his language, he appeared to trust the most Yale undergraduates, believing them honest and self-respecting men.

This outrage at the administration for distrusting students illuminates the male students’ idea of college creating independence and righteous men. Princeton students also addressed the problem of faculty keeping a close eye on them during tests. Analogous to the Yale men, these students believed themselves mature enough to avoid testing and attendance rules. A student reporter asserted, “We are not members of a kindergarten, and we object to being treated as children. We have demonstrated our ability to deal with the question of cheating in examinations.”⁶⁶ These protests around testing and cheating resulted in the creation of an honor pledge for students. These men demanded to be seen as independent adults, outside of the strict proctoring of administrators.

Although college men discussed growing accomplished in college, they emphasized the maturity, intelligence, honesty, and independence of the entirety of their university. The hope to gain independence and responsibility in college reflected their desire to be good citizens for America. These ideals around good citizenship and

⁶⁴ William Sallmon II, “Improvements for Yale,” *Yale Daily News* (New Haven, CT), March 20, 1895, Yale University Library Digital Collections.

⁶⁵ William Sallmon II, “Improvements for Yale,” *Yale Daily News* (New Haven, CT).

⁶⁶ “The University and its Late Controversies,” *Nassau Literary Magazine* (Princeton, NJ), January 1, 1898, Papers of Princeton.

leadership also connected to racial prejudices. Many white Americans believed in the power of education for uplifting Black Americans. They saw education as a way to achieve voting and civil rights for Black men and women, while university for white men gave them what they hoped was leadership and dominance in all affairs.

Racial Thinking

The racist thinking of these white men—framing Black Americans as the other—appears in these newspapers. Generally, these student newspapers avoided specific discussion of Black Americans and their lives. The majority of instances where they talked about African Americans were when announcing lynchings, court cases, or talks on race by leading academics or activists. The students, at least publicly in these newspapers or yearbooks, rarely explicitly examined race as a concept or issue. That said, when race appears in their discussions, these students express the otherness of African Americans in their eyes.

To this end, Yale and Princeton held a debate in 1901 over the adoption of the fifteenth amendment, which guaranteed universal Black male suffrage in 1870. Both student newspapers report on this debate and describe the remarks of each side, Princeton debaters represented the affirmative, arguing for the fifteenth amendment, while Yale argued against. Yale ultimately won the debate. Each school's newspaper focuses more on their team's arguments, often breaking it down by each individual member's thoughts. Princeton argued that the fifteenth amendment "was unfortunate because it compelled the white man to recognize the negro in a higher political status than his own."⁶⁷ The

⁶⁷ "Yale Wins the Debate," *Daily Princetonian* (Princeton, NJ), December 7, 1901, Papers of Princeton.

Princeton debaters acknowledge their unhappiness about giving Black Americans too much power, believing that the fifteenth amendment allowed African Americans to overpower white men politically in the South. They believed that Republicans taking control of politics during Reconstruction and giving voice to Black men resulted in the white men losing their strong political power. However, despite that, these college men considered the fifteenth amendment important as it was “inevitable,” and the Southern white men should not have “unlimited power.”⁶⁸ These Princeton men called out white male Southerners for exercising too much power over Black Americans and letting it corrupt them. Without the fifteenth amendment, the Princeton team asserted that the white man would continue to disenfranchise the African Americans.

However, the Yale team asserted that after the amendment, African Americans dominated the South politically and thus caused the white Americans to “resort to fraud to overcome this domination.”⁶⁹ These Yale college men thought that Black Americans should have had their voting right withheld until after receiving education, without acknowledging that uneducated white men voted. The Yale team proclaims that the freedmen needed to first be provided an educational background in order to vote. The Yale team also regarded the fifteenth amendment as pointless due to the fourteenth amendment already granting citizenship to Black Americans, thereby incentivizing voting rights be granted to them across America. The Yale debate team emphasized that they believed Black Americans caused “turbulence” among the South after the fifteenth

⁶⁸ “Yale Wins the Debate,” *Daily Princetonian* (Princeton, NJ).

⁶⁹ “Yale Wins the Debate,” *Daily Princetonian* (Princeton, NJ).

amendment.⁷⁰ These views by both Yale and Princeton demonstrate that the elite college white men thought less of Black Americans and the administrators clearly believed the fifteenth amendment was a debatable topic. As a school with more southerners, Princeton still held the pro-fifteenth amendment position and lost in the end.

In the *Nassau Literary Magazine*, a Princeton man, Halsey A. Frederick, wrote about “The Negro Problem in America,” detailing what he sees as causing the tension and difficulties between Black and white Americans.⁷¹ He pointed to the lack of education for Black people as the main issue as to why they are not “independent and useful citizens” yet.⁷² He highlighted the importance of transforming African Americans into “self-supporting, intelligent, economical, and valuable citizens.”⁷³ By stating this, he implied that it is a given that white men are independent, smart, and efficient citizens. He emphasized that industrial education is necessary for Black Americans, and that “the negro does not need training in Latin and Greek, or in Music and Art while he lives in a hut.”⁷⁴ The traditional liberal arts education for a Black American, he argued, is useless. Frederick sided with Booker T. Washington in the controversy over Black education. Throughout the late nineteenth century, W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington debated over what form of education a Black American should receive. Du Bois believed that a liberal arts collegiate education helped raise Black students to the educational level

⁷⁰ “Yale Wins Debate,” *Yale Daily News* (New Haven, CT), December 7, 1901.

⁷¹ Halsey A. Frederick, “The Negro Problem in America,” *Nassau Literary Magazine*, May 1, 1909, Papers of Princeton.

⁷² Frederick, “The Negro Problem in America.”

⁷³ Frederick, “The Negro Problem in America.”

⁷⁴ Frederick, “The Negro Problem in America.”

of white people, while Washington thought labor education would lead to Black Americans gaining their civil rights. White men and women often supported Washington's view as it kept Black Americans separate from most white people and in unskilled labor jobs. Frederick evidently wanted Black Americans to take agricultural and industrial jobs without advancing the rest of their skills. Frederick even stressed that,

The negro should be encouraged to take up farming. He is most familiar with this and can succeed best in this line.... Although the negro can be raised from the position of a menial to a position of power and respect, although he may rise to the point where we may respect him and do business with him, still there is an absolute and fundamental difference between the two races so that they can never mingle socially.⁷⁵

Frederick believed that Black Americans needed education in order to participate in citizenship, but even if they received it, he still saw them as essentially different from white Americans. White male college students and faculty often drew this distinction between white and Black students.

Although these students often only brought up the lives of Black Americans publicly in the newspapers when activists or leaders in racial politics gave speeches, their discourse around important attributes in men reveal the racial distinctions. When white male students acclaimed specific traits in their male peers or leaders, they were separating those traits as significant to the white male experience, as distinct from the qualities present in women and other races. Furthermore, when these students do bring up race, they clearly show their belief in the difference among Black and white Americans.

The gender and race ideals believed by these collegiate men and the culture embodied among their schools offers insight into the larger understandings of elite white men. Collegiate white men repeatedly attested to confidence, honesty, maturity, and

⁷⁵ Frederick, "The Negro Problem in America."

restraint as important to good citizenship. Thus, these men combined older masculinity with newer ideals and defined themselves as distinct from female students as well as Black men or women. Elite white men began to associate education with the creation of white nationhood. As all men's lives vary, these ideals may not have represented every white male student exactly, but by analyzing these diverse schools, college men revealed they valued these principles and aimed to personify them on some level. By addressing the cultures present at these institutions across the nation, the perpetuation and continuance of these masculinity principles is exposed.

These masculinity principles developed to differentiate white men from white women as well as Black men and women. White men needed to prove their believed supremacy over others by dictating that they possessed greater confidence, strength, honesty, maturity, and restraint than Black men. Although larger American society saw white women as ultimately more compassionate and pious than white men, these collegiate men hoped to develop enough self-assurance, maturity, and restraint at least in the eyes of others, to marry one of those women and obtain an influential career. These collegiate masculinity cultures sustained the prejudiced thinking of these white men.

CHAPTER FOUR

Fighting for Their Education: The Black College Student Experience

We do not claim superiority, we do not accept inferiority, we assent to equality. We claim for the black boy and girl the inheritance of the same culture granted the white. Again, this defense rests upon the capacity of the Negro.

—Reverend Henry H. Proctor, “The Fisk Idea,”
Address Delivered Before the College Alumni of Fisk University, June 13, 1898

Reverend Proctor’s words rung true for Black Americans struggling to receive the same opportunities as the white population. Black American voices in government and education demanded the equality deserved by Black Americans. The opinions of how to achieve that equality varied among supportive Black and white Americans. With white Americans creating an increasing number of colleges for both sexes in the late nineteenth century and beyond, white communities left behind Black Americans fighting to access similar opportunities. However, increasingly more Black Americans attended college as the twentieth century began. Black students and educators regularly struggled for funding and support from the government, the public, and even their own communities. The opinions on the matter were mixed among those involved: some completely resisted any education for the Black population, certain Americans supported only industrial education, some desired separate higher education, while others believed in integration. Thus, colleges and faculty that taught Black students were distinct in their approaches to teaching and organization. Throughout the United States, Black Americans of all classes strained to receive equal educational instruction to white Americans or even any education at all. Due to societal pressures and these issues, Black male and female

college students admired similar attributes as their white colleagues but also carried the added pressure of uplifting their race and combating rampant racism.

The cultures formed at Black colleges show the adversity these students faced and how they grappled with prejudice and their desire for an education. Black collegiate culture valued similar attributes to white students because they believed this action would lead to equality, but they vied with more as they tried to achieve respect and citizenship. Consequently, even though Black students glorified similar values as white students, they also needed to actively work against harmful stereotypes. African American or mixed-race schools repeatedly referred to Christian values as reasons for the importance of Black education. The general ideals extolled among white and Black women remained similar, but Black women appreciated more direct, intelligent, and confident attributes. African American men revered parallel attributes to white men but praised quick-thinking and a dedication to morality more. Both Black men and women consistently mentioned persistence as a vital trait to personify.

Conflicting ideals dictated the lives of many Black Americans. As they worked to achieve equal rights with white Americans by gaining an education and participating in the industrial domain, systemic racism created a world where few African Americans could rise and operate in the vicinity of white Americans. Even though Black communities admired educated women, they still held onto the Cult of True Womanhood ideals of piety and purity. Shirley Carlson in “Black Ideals of Womanhood in the Late Victorian Era,” discusses the duality of Black American culture, by examining how Black communities saw higher education and economic opportunities for these Black women as positive for racial uplift, but still hesitated as they expected the women to continue living

by society's guidelines.¹ Therefore, when Black teachers avoided marriage and prioritized their career or education, they simultaneously experienced strong criticism and approval. W.E.B. Du Bois and other Black scholars of the time identified the "twoness" of Black American lives, meaning African Americans thought of themselves as Black and American.² White Americans tended to deny this dual identity to African Americans and saw race over anything else. Thus, their rights were debated among white leaders. One historian, Darlene Clark, asserted the "fiveness" of her Black woman identity, including her race, gender, nationality, class, and sexuality.³

Black women attending collegiate institutions, saw themselves more with a future in domestic or teaching work than their white counterparts. White women expanded more into social work and other professions. However, especially in the South, white women viewed higher education as ways to learn homemaking and find suitable husbands, whereas Black women joined college in hopes to improve Black Americans' places in society.⁴ Due to this desire, Black women anticipated having an impact through teaching, social work, or community influence.⁵ Unlike the more elite white women who received higher education, Black women attended these institutions to prepare them for jobs,

¹ Shirley J. Carlson, "Black Ideals of Womanhood in the Late Victorian Era," *The Journal of Negro History* 77, no. 2 (1992): 65.

² Carlson, "Black Ideals of Womanhood in the Late Victorian Era," 71; McCandless, *The Past in the Present*, 2-3.

³ Darlene Clark Hine, *Speak Truth to Power: Black Professional Class in United States History* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Pub., 1996), 34.

⁴ Perkins, "The Impact of the 'Cult of True Womanhood' on the Education of Black Women," 17-18.

⁵ Richard M. Breaux, "To the Uplift and Protection of Young Womanhood": African-American Women at Iowa's Private Colleges and the University of Iowa, 1878-1928," *History of Education Quarterly* 50, no. 2 (2010): 164.

motherhood, and uplifting their race. Thus, most Black women continued on to a vocation; they could not simply acquire “culture,” they were expected to fulfill more community duties than white women.⁶ The educated Black population anticipated to hold many positions in their community, wherever needed. For instance, “teachers were often required to be nurses, and settlement workers as well as educators,” and all knew they must endeavor to improve the reputation and lives of Black Americans.⁷ Black men, white men, and white women heavily outnumbered Black women in higher education. Black women experienced the strongest incidents of prejudice at these schools. Historians have explored the toxic environments these Black women and men were forced to endure while seeking an education.⁸ Richard Breaux addresses acts of bullying and violence towards Black students and identifies “four major expressions of white students’ fear, anxiety, and resentment.”⁹ He labels these four acts as the establishment of the student honorary Ku Klux Klan on campuses, the rise of blackface at white fraternities and the on campus minstrel shows, creation of racial and ethnic caricatures in yearbooks and newspapers, and the taunting of African American Greek letter organizations.¹⁰

This “twoness” of Black identity continued within the structure and curricula of higher education. As James Anderson states in *The Education of Blacks in the South*,

⁶ McCandless, *The Past in the Present*, 63–66.

⁷ McCandless, *The Past in the Present*, 62.

⁸ McCandless, *The Past in the Present*, 123.

⁹ Richard M. Breaux, “Nooses, Sheets, and Blackface: White Racial Anxiety and Black Student Presence at Six Midwest Flagship Universities, 1882–1937,” in *Higher Education for African American Before the Civil Rights Era, 1900–1964*, ed. Marybeth Gasman and Roger L. Geiger, vol. 29, Perspectives on the History of Higher Education; (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2012), 43.

¹⁰ Breaux, “Nooses, Sheets, and Blackface,” 43.

1865–1935, “two contradictory traditions of American education emerged, “that of democratic citizenship and second-class citizenship demonstrating the “struggle between two social systems—slavery and peasantry on one hand, and capitalism and free labor on the other.”¹¹ Anderson draws attention to the ways that Americans believe education creates valuable democratic citizens while also perpetuating the existence of second-class citizens, people of color. The problems occurring presently reflect the issues that developed when American higher education institutions formed and began admitting Black Americans during the nineteenth century.

The years after Reconstruction and entering the twentieth century, caused changes for Black and white students. Following the widespread push to aid Black Americans’ recovery from slavery, many white Americans in the Progressive Era largely abandoned ideas of equality and equity and instead supported segregated spaces. Across institutions, scholars have traced an increase in racial prejudice. Christi Michelle Smith addressed this trend at Oberlin and Berea College at the turn of the century.¹² Although white Americans moved towards more segregationist policies, Black Americans still fought for their education as a basis for their equality. Black students saw education as essential to their freedom after emancipation.¹³

Due to the dramatically alternate reality for Black Americans, Black college students revered distinctive attributes more than white students and expected different

¹¹ James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 1–2.

¹² Smith, *Reparation and Reconciliation*, 2–4.

¹³ William H. Watkins, William Ayers, and Therese Quinn, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865–1954*, 50192nd edition (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2001), 16–17.

outcomes from their education. Despite the opportunities that opened up, they still struggled immensely for positions at the top even in Black business, educational, or social institutions. For example, Black Americans frequently held no control of their higher education as white men usually worked as the administrators and leaders of these schools.¹⁴ Many educators of these Black institutions placed a heavy burden upon their students. The leaders wanted these students to fight for the equality of their race.

The education of the Black population represented a sore point for white Americans across the United States. Black Americans also disagreed about how to fix the racial divide through education. W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington characterized two key perspectives of this divide. W.E.B. Du Bois argued for the liberal arts training of Black individuals instead of the vocational or industrial preparation Washington desired. As the producer economy pervaded America, Washington hoped that industrial capitalism would continue to expand to give Black Americans equal opportunities over time.¹⁵ Du Bois regarded education as a means to teach them how to get through life and uplift their race. As Du Bois stated, education is "not to make men carpenters, it is to make carpenters men."¹⁶

W.E.B. Du Bois' Assessment of Black Higher Education

Du Bois wrote a detailed account of Black education in his sociological study *The College-Bred Negro American*, released in 1910. This work explored statistics and

¹⁴ Watkins, Ayers, and Quinn, *The White Architects of Black Education*, 20–21.

¹⁵ Watkins, Ayers, and Quinn, *The White Architects of Black Education*, 15.

¹⁶ Alridge, "Of Victorianism, Civilizationism, and Progressivism," 434.

experiences of Black students across colleges. Du Bois called out the obstacles Black Americans pursuing an equal education faced at the turn of the twentieth century. Explicitly, he stated that Black colleges lacked enough funding to support their students and faculty. Additionally, the strong racial prejudice against African Americans pervaded all communities, and Black Americans held prejudice themselves towards schooling.¹⁷ Numerous scholars, researchers, and members of the public condemned the systemic oppression present against Black Americans. The harsh restrictions of funding and opportunities for Black Americans pervaded all levels of society. Du Bois explained the benefits of higher education for Black Americans by showing the connection between college education and careers.

To further explore the availability of higher education for the Black population, Du Bois attempted to track down the numbers of graduates at each institution. As with many education statistics on the cusp of twentieth century, the numbers lack complete accuracy. Institutions often unreliably tracked the data of their student population, and the preponderance avoided distinguishing race and sometimes even gender in their records. This unpredictability of racial statistics was especially present at the white majority schools and those located in the North.¹⁸

According to Du Bois, about 738 Black students graduated from higher education establishments from 1880 to 1889, 1,126 from 1890 to 1899, and 1,613 from 1900 to 1909.¹⁹ Similar to white students, the number of college graduates more than doubled

¹⁷ Du Bois and Dill, *The College-Bred Negro American* (Atlanta, GA: The Atlanta University Press, 1910), 91.

¹⁸ Du Bois and Dill, *The College-Bred Negro American*, 50.

¹⁹ Du Bois and Dill, *The College-Bred Negro American*, 45.

within a twenty-to-thirty-year period.²⁰ The numbers from mixed schools could not compare to those at dedicated Black institutions. For instance, Du Bois identified that Oberlin only graduated 149 Black students since its inception, Yale, only 37 total, Vassar, a singular Black graduate, Harvard, forty-one, University of California, only five from 1905 to 1909, and Mount Holyoke, merely two.²¹ While these white majority schools lacked Black students, Howard, Spelman, and Fisk graduated hundreds of Black students since their origins in the later nineteenth century.

Du Bois' invaluable work tracking the careers of Black graduates demonstrated that most Black students entered preaching or teaching jobs. Particularly, 53.8 % reported that they joined teaching positions, 20% turned to preaching, while 7% entered the medical profession, and 3.8% practiced law.²² These numbers seemed promising to Du Bois while also convincing him that more Black Americans needed to branch out into the professional and business fields. As the church united African Americans across the United States for centuries, Du Bois understood the large percentage wanting to continue that tradition with religious occupations.

Black women tended to lean towards normal school or a liberal arts and music education, similar to white women, especially white women earlier in the nineteenth century.²³ Quotes from Black parents expressed the difficulty of providing education for their children and the dissimilarities between the futures they saw for their children

²⁰ Du Bois and Dill, *The College-Bred Negro American*, 45.

²¹ Du Bois and Dill, *The College-Bred Negro American*, 48.

²² Du Bois and Dill, *The College-Bred Negro American*, 66.

²³ Breaux, "To the Uplift and Protection of Young Womanhood," 161; Carlson, "Black Ideals of Womanhood in the Late Victorian Era," 65.

versus white students.²⁴ One parent specified that “it is my intention to give them the very best education that they can assimilate.”²⁵ Furthermore, the emphasis on avoiding Black stereotypes came through within these excerpts, as another parent asserted that, “I desire to have them brought up at a school such as Fisk....But first of all I shall teach them the fundamentals of politeness, hygiene, and the art of doing work assigned them smoothly and with polish.”²⁶ Black Americans understood education to allow them to create leaders among their race to help give better lives to those who came after. Higher education spread hope within Black communities that they would gain the same citizenship rights as white Americans.

Although Du Bois commended Black Americans for receiving higher education, he professed that Black women must play their part in uplifting the race by bearing children.²⁷ Writing in an article to Spelman women, he articulated the “duty of motherhood...as the first and greatest function of their lives.”²⁸ Generally, Black women attending colleges went on to start families and raise children. This contrasted slightly with educated white women, particularly those in the North. Du Bois also expressed that educated Black women made the best mothers as they “were best suited to transmit vital knowledge and culture to subsequent generations.”²⁹ This view of women aligned with

²⁴ Du Bois and Dill, *The College-Bred Negro American*, 82–86.

²⁵ Du Bois and Dill, *The College-Bred Negro American*, 83.

²⁶ Du Bois and Dill, *The College-Bred Negro American*, 83.

²⁷ Alridge, “Of Victorianism, Civilizationism, and Progressivism,” 429.

²⁸ W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Work of Negro Women in Society,” *Spelman Messenger* (Atlanta, Georgia), February 1902, Atlanta University Center.

²⁹ W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Work of Negro Women in Society,” *Spelman Messenger* (Atlanta, GA), February 1902.

white Victorian ideals as well. Du Bois still advocated for Black women entering the workforce but stood by his idea that women should prioritize motherhood. Black culture commonly respected employed mothers due to the community need for working women as discussed earlier. Although the Victorian ideals were in transition during the end of the nineteenth century for white women, many Black women and men still clung to some of these principles as ways to uplift their race.

Black Americans experienced a heavier burden of improving themselves and supporting their entire race with their education.³⁰ The larger community of Black Americans weighed on Black students. Furthermore, leaders of the Black institutions placed more importance on morality, responsibility, and endurance. These desired characteristics and teachings tied directly into nationalism and civil rights.³¹ Especially among Black men, their citizenship was heavily connected with their access to education. The discourse surrounding Black male education emphasized independence, citizenship, marketplace involvement, patriarchy, and the mastery of the environment.³² White and Black leaders both believed that with this moral instruction and perseverance, Black Americans could gain their civil rights across the nation.

Fisk, Howard, and Spelman all represented colleges founded by religious groups and abolitionists after the Civil War. They vowed to educate African Americans in order to assimilate into society and lift up their race. Howard University, a private nonsectarian University, was founded in 1867 in Washington D.C. to educate freed men and women.

³⁰ Carlson, "Black Ideals of Womanhood in the Late Victorian Era," 63.

³¹ Summers, *Manliness and Its Discontents*, 2–3.

³² Summers, *Manliness and Its Discontents*, 4.

However, both Black and white students attended Howard, but with the majority being Black.³³ Fisk University was founded in 1866 in Nashville, Tennessee by Christians in the Congregationalist tradition—it now holds connections to the United Church of Christ—and the American Missionary Association. Fisk directed its educational efforts at freedmen, but women also attended in smaller numbers. Spelman College was originally established as the Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary in 1881 by two white northern educated women. Studying these three colleges offers different perspectives: Northern vs. Southern and focusing on men vs. women. With easy access to Howard’s newspapers, letters, and catalogs, their large numbers of primary sources demonstrated the culture of the school. Howard also published articles that constantly discussed race, and hence exhibited the ways race affected their thought processes about their own education and living situations on and off campus. However, Fisk and Spelman likewise demonstrated their cultures through faculty addresses and catalogs. Spelman also published a student newspaper like Howard. Overall, these three schools provide a strong basis for understanding the differences among white and Black collegiate students during the Progressive Era. The students and faculty at all of these Black colleges prized moral instruction and the continued endurance of the African American race.

Fisk University

Fisk focused their efforts on educating the Black population, but still accepted other races. Until around 1915 and beyond, Fisk generally taught both an industrial curriculum and a liberal arts one. Their population consisted mostly of male students, but they taught women too. Leaders proclaimed that their male and female students must go

³³ Smith, *Reparation and Reconciliation*, 71.

on to uplift the race, prize their knowledge, and stay dedicated to their Black communities. These represented similar desires of other colleges, such as the racial and communal burden of improvement, but Fisk shied away from immense emphasis on moral instruction while still valuing it. With Fisk's mainly male student population, their primary source documents provide more insight into Black collegiate masculinity.

Since Fisk stressed a mix of liberal arts and industrial education, they hoped to send off their graduates into skilled labor sectors to help the Black race. Du Bois, 1888 alumni of Fisk, presented several commencement speeches over the years, explaining what he hoped for the future of Black Americans. He urged the graduates to join skilled labor occupations. During a commencement address at Fisk University in 1898, Du Bois laid out the future of these students and the purposes of their education.³⁴ With the mostly male Black student population at Fisk, Du Bois directed his words towards these young Black men. Du Bois saw that these educated men could create their own Black spaces within land-owning and business sectors. Du Bois believed that Black Fisk students must be “self-supporting” and become “a source of strength and power instead of a menace and a burden to the nation.”³⁵ Du Bois underlined that these college men needed to join the skilled workforce and leave industrially trained men for other labor. Du Bois also emphasized several points when closing his speech. He referred to the fact that they were Black Americans and that they must “cherish unwavering faith in the blood of your fathers, and make sure this last triumph of humanities.”³⁶ Then he discussed that a

³⁴ W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, “Careers Open to College-Bred Negroes: A Commencement Address at Fisk University, 1898,” in *Two Addresses Delivered by Alumni of Fisk University, In Connection with the Anniversary Exercises of Their Alma Mater, June 1898* (Nashville, TN: Fisk University, 1898).

³⁵ Du Bois, “Careers Open to College-Bred Negroes,” 8.

³⁶ Du Bois, “Careers Open to College-Bred Negroes,” 14.

training in the liberal arts “has lighted the world from its infancy and guided it through bigotry and falsehood and sin.”³⁷ Du Bois wanted these students to recognize the importance of their Black ancestry and that liberal arts training helped humanity.

In another address to Fisk alumni, Reverend H. H. Proctor, refused to shy away from outright calling upon America on behalf of Black Americans. He specified, “we do not claim superiority, we do not accept inferiority, we assent to equality. We claim for the black boy and girl the inheritance of the same culture granted the white.”³⁸ His speech explained that Black people fought again and again over prejudice and will persevere to demand their right to liberal education. Proctor also highlighted a trend he noticed that “most of those going to industrial school, end up becoming teachers, preachers, doctors, instead of the professions the school is preparing them for.”³⁹ Du Bois similarly observed this tendency among Black graduates, calling for them to pursue more skilled work in business and other sectors rather than just teaching and preaching.⁴⁰

The faculty and Black national leaders pressured the Black students about their communal responsibility outside of their vocation. Thus, further on in his commencement address, Du Bois also declared that “the German works for Germany, the Englishman serves England, and it is the duty of the Negro to serve his blood and lineage, and so

³⁷ Du Bois, “Careers Open to College-Bred Negroes,” 14.

³⁸ Henry Hugh Proctor, “The Fisk Idea,” in *Two Addresses Delivered by Alumni of Fisk University, In Connection with the Anniversary Exercises of Their Alma Mater, June 1898* (Nashville, TN: Fisk University, 1898), 17.

³⁹ Proctor, “The Fisk Idea,” 18–19.

⁴⁰ Du Bois and Dill, *The College-Bred Negro American* (Atlanta, GA: The Atlanta University Press, 1910), 66.

working, each for each, and all for each, we realize the goal of each for all.”⁴¹

Consequently, according to Du Bois, white Americans worked for America, while Black Americans worked for their race and community. The community accountability of their race influenced why they pursued education and what they decided to use it for.

The importance of morality and justice appeared frequently in Black students’ writings. Within a letter from the Extempo Club to Du Bois in 1908, members of the club, students at Fisk, discussed the continued success of the club since Du Bois graduated. They stated, “a spirit of fairness and harmony is yet a treasured possession of the club.”⁴² The pictures of Extempo club available only featured male students. Therefore, the male students saw keeping the peace and a level head as important attributes to embody.

These leaders supportive of Black education often brought up the idea that Black Americans manifested endurance and thus, could achieve education, as well as racial and community uplift. Within a letter written to Du Bois from Mary White Ovington, an advocate for racial justice, one founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and a suffragette, explained that students at Fisk personify a “Puritan ability to endure hardness.”⁴³ Ovington stressed the fact that these students would face “greater difficulties than other young people.”⁴⁴ This capacity for strength in the face of

⁴¹ Du Bois, “Careers Open to College-Bred Negroes,” 7.

⁴² Extempo Club of Fisk University, “Extempo Club to W. E. B. Du Bois, December 23, 1908,” Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Library, 2.

⁴³ Mary White Ovington, “Mary White Ovington to W. E. B. Du Bois, June 27, 1905,” Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Library, 1.

⁴⁴ Ovington to W. E. B. Du Bois, 1.

adversity came up often as an attribute these Black students personified. These students needed strength and determination to undergo the prejudice and difficulty that came with being Black in America and struggling for an education when many fought against them. Generally, Fisk blended in with other Black colleges opened following the Civil War by the AMA, promoting racial and community improvement along with perseverance and morality.

Howard University

The way students and faculty spoke about Howard showed the institution's acceptance of all and its dedication to fostering resilient and moral students. Howard desired to prepare Black students for skilled labor but stressed a liberal arts education even more than Fisk in order to provide an education equal to white male higher education institutions. The catalog for Howard identified itself with, "this institution was established by the friends of the freedmen—especially through the instrumentality of the distinguished soldier whose name it bears, and whose spirit its teachers seek to emulate."⁴⁵ Furthermore, it clarified, "It has always welcomed all nationalities alike."⁴⁶ This introduction to the school clearly demonstrated that they wanted to establish their commitment to equality, morality, and justice.

With a larger population of female students, discussions of gender appeared in the school's documents. In the Progressive Era, colleges still frequently barred women from joining literary societies or clubs with male students and especially organizations where

⁴⁵ Howard University, *Catalog of the Officers and Students of Howard University 1890–1891* (Washington D.C.: Gibson Brothers Printers and Bookbinders, 1891), 20.

⁴⁶ Howard University, *Catalog of 1890–1891*, 20.

students spoke publicly. Male members of the literary society at Howard complained about this in the student newspaper. One student mentioned the large complaints about small amount of attendance at literary meetings and how several believed the reason to be “the absence of the young ladies of Miner Hall.”⁴⁷ He brought up that efforts had been made to allow women to attend. This fight on behalf of male and female students to allow women in the society reflected that these women desired public speaking and more power, while the men thought a woman’s presence helped them participate extra.

Furthermore, this article revealed that students and those in charge considered attendance at meetings and students sticking to their obligations important. Thus, students and faculty praised determination, honesty, and follow-through, especially among male students. Another article laid out the significance of these traits when discussing football practices.⁴⁸ The captain specified that they continuously experienced the problem of men avoiding practice by lying and not showing up. The captain and faculty resolved to require doctor’s notes after the problem persisted. This article also captured the idea that the men must show their talent with their actions, not words. He stated, “past reputation in itself was not sufficient, and that old men would have to win their right to positions on the team by actual play.”⁴⁹

The literary society issue arose in 1901 after the school stopped allowing the women to contribute to the society. Another student wrote into the newspaper to

⁴⁷ J.S.C., “Our Literary,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), November 15, 1903, Digital Howard Archive.

⁴⁸ “Football at Howard: Captain Washington Says a Word,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), November 15, 1903, Digital Howard Archive.

⁴⁹ “Football at Howard: Captain Washington Says a Word,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), November 15, 1903, Digital Howard Archive.

complain about this development, asserting, “Let the young ladies attend. Their presence and their efforts will arouse the young men from their present state of lethargy and as collaborators they will do honor to themselves and to the school.”⁵⁰ Clearly, this student believed the men to be lazy without women in attendance, as fewer and fewer men appeared at the meetings. Moreover, this writer believed in the importance of literary societies in bringing honor and respect. Several students thought the decision to refuse women entry reflected poorly on the school and the organization. The acceptance of women among these men show that the Howard students did not see separation of the sexes necessary. Those supporting said separation did not appear in the student newspaper throughout these years.

In an additional article about their literary society, a different student criticized the exclusion of women. This student questioned, “Why should the young ladies in Miner Hall ever have been denied the benefit of the literaries? Do they not need the training in literary work which they can obtain from these societies? These same young ladies attend the weekly meetings of the two religious societies fostered by the school, but when it comes to the literary societies, they are prohibited from attending.”⁵¹ By pointing out how the work of literary societies benefitted both men and women as well as how women participated in religious organizations on campus, this particular student saw no reason for the prohibition of women. College societies commonly were separated by gender as generally people thought women and men needed separate extracurricular spaces.

⁵⁰ S. N. Y., “Back to the Days of Prosperous Literary Societies,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), December 1, 1903, Digital Howard Archive.

⁵¹ J. F. C., “The Decline of Literary Societies,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), November 15, 1903, Digital Howard Archive.

Within this same newspaper, an advertisement for a literary society for both men and women appeared. This ad proclaimed that the society trained “the development of the mind” and “the readiness and fluency of speech, which is attained by the investigation and free discussion of religious, educational, political, and other topics.”⁵² These black male and female students hoped to openly and honestly grow their mind by deliberating all kinds of topics amongst themselves. The desire for open and honest communication as well as expanding the mind compared similarly to white students, but the Black students wanted these because of their underlying desire for equality. While white students at white colleges felt honesty and knowledge important for their future leadership, Black students and administrators believed that they must improve in order to gain respect and citizenship.

Attributes acclaimed by male students were displayed in articles written by the students themselves in the newspaper, especially when discussing football. Since only male students played football, they wrote the articles about it as well. Parallel to the way white men praised football, Black men commended “the suppression of self to the good of the greater number.”⁵³ Both Black men and white men thought football and other sports promoted teamwork but also individual hard work. These men admired confidence on its own, but not cockiness. The captain of the 1893 to 1894 team, clarified that “we thought our team invincible; and it was this overconfidence, perhaps, that cost us that

⁵² “The Eureka Society,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), November 15, 1903, Digital Howard Archive.

⁵³ Elmer C. Campbell, “Football at Howard, Captains Comment on Games History on Games History of the Teams of 1893–94,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), December 1, 1903, Digital Howard Archive.

game.”⁵⁴ The students and faculty also discouraged the indecency of betting at Howard, just like at white colleges, even though some students participated in betting on sports.⁵⁵

In that same newspaper, another captain, W. H. Washington, this one from 1901 and 1902, admired certain football stars and their characteristics.⁵⁶ For example, he celebrated Dwight Holmes’ quick-thinking and persistence. These two characteristics show up often in Black male students’ writings. Washington further praised another player, Jack, for consistently throwing himself into the fray no matter what. The admiration of Jack and Holmes’ determination also shows the desire for male students to embody resolve. Washington additionally commended the other team for playing a clean, plucky game, and persisting strongly throughout.⁵⁷ Their compliments of the honesty, bravery, and perseverance of the other team exhibited that these Black men wanted to personify these features. Black male students more often than white students saw determination as a vital trait. The prejudice and difficulty of their lives probably influenced the embodiment of willpower among Black students.

Comparable to the white collegiate life in the Progressive Era, the Black students started to consider athletics an imperative part of a student’s education. One student, a football player, declared that “since football has been permanently installed as a necessary adjunct to American college life, what is more natural than it should be gaining

⁵⁴ Campbell, “Football at Howard.”

⁵⁵ Campbell, “Football at Howard.”

⁵⁶ W. H. Washington, “Football at Howard, Captains Comment on Games History of the Teams of 1901–1902,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), December 1, 1903, Digital Howard Archive.

⁵⁷ Washington, “Football at Howard.”

favor among the Negro colleges?”⁵⁸ Discussing the football programs widespread at the whiter colleges, Holmes pronounced that Black students deserved football teams as well. The Black American college, according to Holmes, has “always proven itself not only willing but eager to fall into line with any advance in this progressive civilization.”⁵⁹ Referring back to the ideas around civilization during the Progressive Era, the Black students wanted to continue to show that they equaled white pupils in their characteristics. Holmes asserted the qualities that made Black men “good athletes,” such as their “brain, pluck, endurance, enthusiasm, etc.”⁶⁰ African American male students celebrated these traits within their newspapers, especially bravery and persistence.

Holmes also protested about the financial troubles, Black programs and schools experienced, pointing out the reasons for their small or nonexistent athletic programs all came down to insufficient funding. He further highlighted the systemic oppression upon Black students by identifying that many Black students who wanted to participate in athletics could not since they spent all their free time working extra jobs to pay for their education. Moreover, he specifically described how Black colleges needed better equipment and coaches and that the tiny funds explained why no intercollegiate competitions existed for Black people. Ultimately, Holmes understood that many white leaders expected a lot from Black colleges but refused to fund their pursuits and, thus, the Black students could not rise to the level they should.

⁵⁸ Dwight O. W. Holmes, “Football in Negro Colleges,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), December 15, 1903, Digital Howard Archive.

⁵⁹ Holmes, “Football in Negro Colleges.”

⁶⁰ Holmes, “Football in Negro Colleges.”

Students and faculty understood their situation as a school which relied upon these white donations and assistance. A professor at Howard wrote an acknowledgement for the Northern missionaries who helped bring freedom and education for Black southerners. This article called white southerners “ignorant and degraded, they had not been permitted to taste the tree of knowledge.”⁶¹ This professor expressed that northern missionaries helped educate these ignorant individuals and claimed that “nowhere, in all the sweep of history, has the transforming effect of education sustained a higher test of its power.”⁶² Evidently, the significance of education for Black students continually appears in the writings of these schools. They believed education represented a vital part of the racial uplift. The Black communities understood the power of education even more than their white equivalents due to their hundreds of years of oppression and the restriction of their knowledge. The intersection between gender and race often put Black women with the least access to opportunities.

This professor moreover acclaimed the “courage, self-sacrificing devotion, sincerity of purpose, and purity of motive” of these missionaries. Again, this article in the Howard newspaper praised bravery and honesty.⁶³ The honest desire for the upward mobility of the Black race underlined their reasonings for educating the South. Moreover, the missionaries, according to this professor hoped to bring the African American race “from ignorance to enlightenment,” and “from corruption to purity of life.”⁶⁴ Seeing

⁶¹ Kelly Miller, “A Tribute to the Northern Missionaries,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), December 15, 1903, Digital Howard Archive.

⁶² Miller, “A Tribute to the Northern Missionaries.”

⁶³ Miller, “A Tribute to the Northern Missionaries.”

⁶⁴ Miller, “A Tribute to the Northern Missionaries.”

ignorance as corruption framed the Black race and much of the white race as previously corrupted in the eyes of this professor.

Analogous to white college students at other institutions, Howard students declared that they needed to learn manners and politeness and understand discipline. In an article, the older students wished for courtesy and respect amongst the younger students.⁶⁵ However, they clarified, “It is proper here to explain that we do not believe on passive obedience in every case. Do not always submit to authority.... Every reformation is proceeded by an insurrection, a rebellion against authority.”⁶⁶ This elucidation illustrated that although these students demanded courtesy, they only believed in submitting to authority when it came from a place of love and morality, not punishment. Again, morality and justice appeared as important aspects of Black education.

Within a rather comical article listing different strains of thought, one student wrote, “I am certain that the phonograph is of the feminine gender, because it repeats everything it hears.”⁶⁷ This student insinuated that women gossip too often and thus they always told all information that they heard from others. Similar to white students, Black women gossiped, and others declared they should be more truthful and respectful. The pervasive belief in the importance of honesty showed through these student newspapers but even the advertisements brought it up too. For example, in one advertisement for a

⁶⁵ “Discipline,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), May 26, 1905, Digital Howard Archive.

⁶⁶ “Discipline,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.).

⁶⁷ “Random Thoughts,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), March 3, 1905, Digital Howard Archive.

clothing store, it said, “Honesty is, after all, the best capital that any man can have, and we are quite willing to bank on your promise to pay.”⁶⁸

Despite this claim to honesty among men, the students still complained about those who snitched on others. In one article, a student discussed how harmony among students broke when someone told on other students to professors.⁶⁹ This student asserted that students must establish law and order between themselves to create pleasant school environments. To this end, the student emphasized that, “the most powerful reform agency in any school is student sentiment.”⁷⁰ Students actions and feelings created the environment and if professors pitted them against each other, disagreement would occur. Thus, this student also advocated for a sense of honesty and communication on campus. They proclaimed, “Let everyone when he sees a fellow student breaking a rule step up and remind him of what he is doing” rather than telling a professor on him.⁷¹ The students hoped for the morality and honesty of the individual.

Also similar to white students, these Black students demonstrated their priorities at college as “the literary, the athletic, and the social sides.”⁷² These priorities illuminate that the Black students cared about knowledge, learning, strength, competition, and community. Furthermore, these students also refuted favoritism and wanted people to earn their spots with individual efforts. Nevertheless, strength of character and resilience

⁶⁸ Peter Grogan & Son Co. Advertisement, *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), May 10, 1908.

⁶⁹ “The Snitcher,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), May 10, 1908.

⁷⁰ “The Snitcher,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), May 10, 1908.

⁷¹ “The Snitcher,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), May 10, 1908.

⁷² “What We Have Stood for,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), May 18, 1906, Digital Howard Archive.

appeared more often in these Black student writings than white. One editorial laid out exactly what this student believed about manhood and school politics.⁷³ When discussing how men campaigned for the athletic leadership positions, this writer disapproved of trading votes, lack of discretion, and catering to the preparatory department, which focused on teaching students not yet equipped for an undergraduate education.⁷⁴ Specifically, this student wrote, “it is to be deeply regretted that educated young men do not use some discretion, display some initiative and demonstrate their manhood.”⁷⁵ This writer expected men, especially these educated Black men to possess the ability to use caution when acting, rather than clearly voting for their friends and making deals with others. Additionally, this article called for “the most efficient, most energetic men, and men having the time to devote” to be voted into office.⁷⁶ Time and time again, these students desired diligent and dedicated men for leadership positions.

While the white male students debated Black enfranchisement and the existence of the fifteenth amendment, Howard student vehemently described the massive importance of these two for Black livelihood. Students, professors, and leaders shared their opinions in the newspaper on the arguments against the fifteenth amendment not being enforced. These opinions decisively called these arguments illegal and oppressive

⁷³ C. H. G., “Editorials,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), December 16, 1910, Digital Howard Archive.

⁷⁴ C. H. G., “Editorials,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), December 16, 1910.

⁷⁵ C. H. G., “Editorials,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), December 16, 1910, Digital Howard Archive.

⁷⁶ C. H. G., “Editorials.”

for Black Americans, principally in the South. In comparison to the white student newspapers, the fifteenth amendment was not up for debate.

The President of Howard, Wilbur P. Thirkield addressed the school about the education of the Black American, stating that “without debate, every higher institutions of the land are open to the white man, why not the Black man?”⁷⁷ He called upon the humanity of all to fight for the education of African Americans as they are men, just like white Americans. Furthermore, he explained that Black Americans have the same capacity for education and deserved to be “educate(d) as a man,” and that America needed to “open the door to highest opportunity in the intellectual life.”⁷⁸ Instead of white Americans arguing over whether African Americans should get access to higher education, Thirkield asserted that everyone should work on furnishing equal institutions for the Black American, instead of relying on only the “benevolence of people” for funding.⁷⁹ He also illustrated the resilience of the Black people by discussing the trials they had faced. He praised oppressed people in the past, those that had “intelligent trust and strength of purpose” and “large-minded, virile men.”⁸⁰

One student when bidding farewell to the school year and discussing the future challenges out in the world, expounded on the necessity of bravery and endurance when not in school anymore.⁸¹ In addition, the student stressed that everyone must “keep the

⁷⁷ Wilbur P. Thirkield, “The Higher Education of the Negro,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), May 18, 1906, Digital Howard Archive.

⁷⁸ Thirkield, “The Higher Education of the Negro,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), May 18, 1906, Digital Howard Archive.

⁷⁹ Thirkield, “The Higher Education of the Negro.”

⁸⁰ Thirkield, “The Higher Education of the Negro.”

⁸¹ “Au Revoir,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), May 10, 1908, Digital Howard Archive.

method and power of intellectual research; the alertness, vigor and sanity of mind given by long drill; quickness of apprehension, breadth of vision; the facile acquisition and logical reasoning which have been gained by years of strenuous grappling with subtle and meta physical problems.” Again, the characteristics of courage and endurance appeared regularly when students discussed attributes they should exemplify or when praising others for attributes they already embody. Quick thinking and logical reasoning appear often, but less than the other two.

Another set of articles where characteristics the students admired gleaned through was in a large article praising all the retiring employees of the newspaper for their different strengths.⁸² The article honored the retiring student editor for his “ruggedness and determination and resolution.”⁸³ Student workers continuously chose this man for several years as president. As illustrated by the nonstop admiring of perseverance and willpower of men, clearly, Black students believed these traits vital for success in life, especially in leaders. Another quality of a strong leader comes across as sociable and communicative. The students commended their business manager as able to easily socialize with the entire campus and listen to others. Learning from others and paying attention seemed to earn this manager much approval from his peers.

Discussions of the living conditions and problems of Black Americans appeared significantly more frequently in the Black collegiate newspapers than the schools with all or mostly white students. A piece in the *Howard Journal* discussed the few job openings

⁸² *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), May 27, 1910.

⁸³ “Praising the Retiring Student Editor,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), May 27, 1910, Digital Howard Archive.

for Black Americans in the North and the abysmal conditions of city living for them.⁸⁴ The urbanization and industrialization of the Progressive Era continued the oppression experienced by African Americans. This article emphasized the ways urbanization and industrialization worked against Black Americans due to systemic racism. The writer decreed that, for the urban Black American, “the temptations to vice and crime” proved too strong, “especially among young people.”⁸⁵ This writer avowed that nicer southerners and the creation of better environments in the South could stop Black Americans from subjecting themselves to the horrid northern conditions. This study and reporting on systemic oppression came across in another article discussing the dedication of the new science hall. The speaker exclaimed that the Black American death rate in Washington D.C. stood twice as high as the white population. He tasked Howard with improving this number with their future science graduates.

One article addressed the decision of what work to pursue after graduation.⁸⁶ This writer discussed the difficulty of finding a man’s calling. They stated that, “many men do not find their spheres of usefulness until middle age, while others never find them. Education ought to help a man to find his true sphere.”⁸⁷ The importance of education showed up again and again in Howard’s newspaper. In addition to stressing how men will work several jobs usually before coming upon their vocation, this writer also explained

⁸⁴ “Condition of Negro in North,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), May 10, 1908, Digital Howard Archive.

⁸⁵ “Condition of Negro in North,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.).

⁸⁶ “Choosing One’s Work,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.), December 16, 1910, Digital Howard Archive.

⁸⁷ “Choosing One’s Work,” *University Journal* (Washington D.C.).

that men should avoid versatility and attempt to specialize to join the professional class. Furthermore, this writer described that men should stick to one place to rise in the ranks as much as possible.

These Howard students praised similar attributes to white students such as honesty, decency, business-sense, sociability, and strength. However, just like Fisk, the faculty and students believed in endurance and community responsibility. They knew these principles needed to be embodied. Moreover, these students and faculty understood and addressed the systemic oppression causing problems for Black communities. Although white students and faculty addressed racism and the need for Black advancement, the majority avoided mentioning systemic oppression and the problems caused by white men in power making the decisions for another race.

Spelman Seminary

Parallel to white institutions, Spelman desired their female students to gain a breadth of knowledge. However, slightly divergent from white female students, Spelman stressed the significance of training of industry and practical responsibilities more often. The catalog of Spelman in 1891 plainly indicated its commitment to the Christian faith, but also its openness to all students. The catalog stated, “The seminary is distinctly Christian, as its founders willed it to be, and it welcomes those of every faith to its advantages.”⁸⁸ Following this assertion, the catalog explained the purpose of their institution as a place to “build character” and that with “Christianity and morality” at the

⁸⁸ Spelman Seminary, *Annual Circular and Catalogue of Spelman Seminary for Women and Girls, 1890–1891* (Atlanta, GA: Spelman Messenger Office, 1891), 16.

“foundation of all” their teaching, they claimed to guarantee character building of their students.⁸⁹

In the mid-twentieth century, Florence Matilda Read, a white woman and president of Spelman from 1927 to 1953, wrote a history of Spelman College from before its inception well into the twentieth century.⁹⁰ Spelman received their collegiate charter in 1924, instigating the name designation from seminary to college. Read focused upon the leaders of the college as well as its financial struggles throughout the years but drew attention to the racial reasons behind these problems. However, Read avoided discussing much of the experiences of the students or faculty members and left out specific sources for her information, only including a partial bibliography. Furthermore, Read explored the involvement that the Woman’s American Baptist Home Mission Society and John D. Rockefeller had in supporting the institution but did not analyze the issues that arose with more affluent white Americans influencing the decisions surrounding the school for Black women. Notwithstanding those missing factors, Read, as a former president of the school as well as having lived through much of the history, gave a detailed account of what went into creating and maintaining Spelman. The two founders, Sophia B. Packard and Harriet E. Giles, a white same-sex couple devoted to bringing education to women of any race, worked through many financial problems to educate Black women.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Spelman Seminary, *Annual Circular and Catalogue of Spelman Seminary*, 16.

⁹⁰ Florence Matilda Read, *The Story of Spelman College* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961).

⁹¹ Similar to female students, it was not uncommon for female teachers and academics to find romantic companionship with women and live with their partners. In the eyes of the public, these women were often seen as dedicated to their career, never marrying, and living with other teachers, but it is well-documented that many same-sex relationships flourished in these settings. To find more on the LGBTQ history of colleges, see Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women’s*

Again, and again, Packard and Giles chose to navigate difficult situations to keep the institution afloat. When originally advocating for a Spelman-like school and rejecting others demands for a coeducational school, Packard and the other women working with her “believed earnestly that better and more effective work in all departments could be done by women working with women.”⁹² Packard strongly thought that schools needed to impart religious morality to their female students without the presence of men. With her instruction, she saw improvements in their knowledge and “their ability for culture.”⁹³ This Victorian belief that women must hold higher morals than men pervaded the ways these white women hoped to teach their African American female students.

Corresponding to other schools, especially female institutions in the South, Spelman laid out rules of orderliness and respect in the catalog as “pupils must be courteous and polite to their schoolmates and respectful and obedient to their teachers. . . . Neatness, cleanliness, industry, and economy are with us indispensable virtues.”⁹⁴ The polite, diligent, hygienic, and submissive female student prevailed at Spelman. Female students were expected to learn manners and respect. Spelman also emphasized religion and religious morality. Another article by L. P. Pinckney from Atlanta Baptist Seminary stressed the importance of men of high character, those who were “sober, peaceful, truthful, thrifty, intelligent, virtuous, and Christian.”⁹⁵ The Spelman women preferred

Colleges from Their Nineteenth Century Beginnings to the 1930s, 2nd Edition (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 159–168.

⁹² Read, *The Story of Spelman College*, 77.

⁹³ Read, *The Story of Spelman College*, 78.

⁹⁴ Spelman Seminary, *Annual Circular and Catalogue of Spelman Seminary*, 19–20.

⁹⁵ L. P. Pinckney, “Character,” *Spelman Messenger* (Atlanta, GA), February 1891, Atlanta University Center.

Christian men who embodied these characteristics of honesty, nonviolence, caution, and gentlemanliness, aligning more with Victorian ideals of masculinity.

The difficulty of accessing higher education as a Black American in the Progressive Era contributed to the major characteristic acclaimed by these students: determination. Black Americans that desired education had to persevere through many obstacles to get to a campus. A father of a Spelman student wrote into the newspaper admiring Spelman for correcting the “ignorance and superstition” that prevailed in the South.⁹⁶ He remarked that Spelman provided a place where “most ignorant of our boys and girls may obtain a true conception of education, the training of the head, the heart, and the hands, which is necessary to the weal of any nation.”⁹⁷

Compassion and respect were revered among the female students and leaders. This father proclaimed that Spelman “taught how to labor with the hand, Christianity, true virtue, and honesty, are to come forth and be leaders among their people and hew out a path for posterity.”⁹⁸ Honesty came up as a desirable attribute for both Black male and female students. Virtue, however, appeared more often as a characteristic that women should strive for. Closing out his letter, the father referred to how Spelman and schools like it helped to ease the racial tensions in the country. He referenced that the two races must end the hatred between them and be brought “to a true realization of the fatherhood

⁹⁶ Pinckney, “Character.”

⁹⁷ “From a Letter from Mr. J. J. Jackson of Tampa, Fla., Father of One of Pupils of Spelman,” *Spelman Messenger* (Atlanta, GA), February 1890, Atlanta University Center.

⁹⁸ “From a Letter from Mr. J. J. Jackson of Tampa, Fla., Father of One of Pupils of Spelman,” *Spelman Messenger* (Atlanta, GA).

of God and brotherhood of man.”⁹⁹ According to this father, the brotherhood shared among man in the face of God should conclude the racial hatred. Ultimately this father’s letter complimenting Spelman for its work educating Black women expressed the significance and pressure on all of these students, faculty, and administrators.

Students tackled the question of their future and wants in life within these student newspapers. One student, Clara Simon, questioned how to find true happiness in life. Simon reasoned that money and riches would not bring her happiness and it would result in selfishness and “no one who is selfish can be happy.”¹⁰⁰ Simon promoted living a life of compassion to find true happiness, rather than gaining riches or recognition. This article and others in Spelman’s newspaper differed from those of their male equivalents. Following the same patterns as white students, Black male students tended to promote lives devoted to business or industry, while women venerated spreading compassion.

Further on in this same newspaper, a student wrote about how women needed to be able to pursue jobs and trades without judgment. She reported the common reaction of anxiety to women training for work with immediate assumptions of spinsterhood and unhappiness.¹⁰¹ Success to this student came down to trying for perfection in the trade each woman pursued. Thus, she proclaimed, “every woman should not only have a trade, but should endeavor to reach perfection in occupation” and that “the majority seem to be

⁹⁹ “From a Letter from Mr. J. J. Jackson of Tampa, Fla., Father of One of Pupils of Spelman,” *Spelman Messenger* (Atlanta, GA).

¹⁰⁰ Clara Simon, “True Happiness,” *Spelman Messenger* (Atlanta, GA), February 1890, Atlanta University Center.

¹⁰¹ “Every Woman Should Have a Trade,” *Spelman Messenger* (Atlanta, GA), February 1890, Atlanta University Center.

easily satisfied with very low attainments.”¹⁰² This student encouraged success in trades across the board and women must aim for ascension in their chosen profession rather than solely spreading compassion as other articles often wrote. However, she accentuated that women, Black women especially, need to seek professions and success despite the extensive disapproval among the general public. Another student wrote on how each woman needed to find her own talent and trade. She clarified that every woman must make sure they use their talents to serve God for his glory.¹⁰³ She expressed that as long as each woman found their profession and devoted themselves faithfully and acted in God’s will that they will find accomplishments.

The cultures of these Black colleges demonstrate the ways that these Black students strived to achieve equality through admiration of similar characteristics as white students and their reliance on determination. The Black students believed in their education as a way to help communal needs of their race and local areas. Thus, Black students held a stronger sense of collectivism reasoning for their education rather than white Americans. Moreover, Black men and women struggled and continue to fight to receive the same opportunities as white Americans. The establishment and structure created and maintained during this time period shows that even though some white Americans supported Black education, seldom did these white Americans actually provide enough support financially, vocally, or governmentally.

¹⁰² “Every Woman Should Have a Trade,” *Spelman Messenger* (Atlanta, GA).

¹⁰³ S. M. Sloan, “Using Our Talents,” *Spelman Messenger* (Atlanta, GA), February 1891, Atlanta University Center.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

White and Black college students shared experiences and characteristic aspirations despite the stark disparities in their political, economic, and social realities. This range of similarities and differences demonstrates how race, as well as gender, affected students' lives. Scholars have long understood the ways that the Progressive Era changed American society and the roles played by changing gender ideals and growing attendance. However, fewer scholars have compared the gendered experiences of Black and white college students. The distinctions and connections between these students highlight how the intersection of higher education, race, and gender contributed to the era's ideals. These ideals cast a long shadow. Many of the institutional biases around race and gender in place today can be seen in Progressive Era higher education.

By studying the lives of these students, it is clear that race and gender distinctions dictated their experiences in educational institutions. Understanding the cultures at these schools suggests the attitudes of many middle- and upper-class Americans. Analyzing the student voices present at these colleges reveals different masculinities and femininities between white and Black populations. Typically, scholars have focused solely on illuminating the hegemonic masculinity and femininity through administrative or elite student voices. Addressing the experiences of Black college students enlightens how white culture impacted other races. The cultures of these colleges were evident in the goals of faculty and shown through the students' choices post-graduation. Many of those

attending college would join the workforce as businessmen, teachers, politicians, and leaders in different industries.

Thus, these cultural beliefs permeated American spaces outside of higher education. With white men's emphasis on efficiency, professionalism, and individual success, white women's focus on service and reform, and other Progressive Era transformations occurring, colleges constituted a mixing ground for various beliefs.¹ Victorianism, Civilizationism, and Progressivism collided on these campuses creating environments where a blend of ideals were praised by the students. Studying students and their experiences helps to fully apprehend the nuances of American masculinity and femininity. These white male students idealized confidence, strength, maturity, independence, honesty, and restraint. Black men admired similar ideals but avoided displaying the same level of confident and competitive natures as a means to stay safe in prejudiced America. Furthermore, while competitiveness thrived mostly with white men, teamwork appeared as a vital trait among Black and white men. Many of these ideals conflicted before the more aggressive and strength-based characteristics won out as the twentieth century continued. Black men changed along these same lines, but with more focus on honesty, restraint, responsibility, and community uplift.

Black and white college women likewise experienced contradicting ideals in this era. White female students venerated kindness and domesticity while advocating for progressive societal changes. Black women also dealt with clashing ideals, but Black communities celebrated strong and dominant women more than white Americans. Moreover, Black women felt the added duty of domestic concerns along with community

¹ Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era*, 4.

and racial accountability. During these two decades, higher education was a battleground for older ideals of Victorianism and the coming changes of the twentieth century, leaving behind the strong emphasis on purity and submissiveness for women. However, Black female higher education institutions still valued compliance with authority; analogous to Black men's focus on restraint more than white men. These beliefs around race influenced how white and Black students saw themselves and their education.

The student and faculty sources studied here divulge the shifted gender ideals among the white and Black collegiate student population from earlier nineteenth-century America. The characteristics championed by students showed what they hoped to embody and what many of them did. Examining white collegiate women's voices reveal that compassion, altruism, and erudition surpassed the priorities of purity, piety, and submission. Wider American culture, outside of the higher education or progressive organization bubbles, often still prioritized the earlier versions of womanhood, especially among southerners. Therefore, colleges represented one place where these new ideals took hold even amongst some conservative southern schools. Still, women's collegiate culture also mirrored the strong sense of progressivism spreading around the nation as insistence on compassion and altruism increased. Concurrently, male collegiate culture esteemed confidence, independence, honesty, and restraint. These values lined up with larger America, but these sources show how they admired these qualities in their day-to-day lives, through sports, student government, and their hopes for the future. Both white male and female students distinguished themselves from Black Americans. However, they also mutually wrote about the desire to educate Black Americans, even if individual student writers disagreed about whether they supported Black liberal arts or industrial

education. Overall, white men and women mainly avoided discussing race within their documents. Contrary to white students, Black college students and faculty frequently considered racial issues. Nevertheless, Black male and female students respected similar ideals as white students, with the additional burden of fighting for improvements for their race and communities. White students typically pursued education for more individualist ideals, hoping for their own future vocations or social lives. However, many white women wished to help others in their family or community with their attained cultural knowledge, and white men desired the continued persistence of racial superiority. Black students, meanwhile, acted with understanding that their education led to collective achievement and uplift. With exploring sources from Black student and faculty perspectives, evidently Black students at these institutions admired and embodied determination. Furthermore, they saw themselves as adaptable and persistent when the white population continued to elude supporting them financially, politically, or socially.

This examination tells the story of the interconnected gender and racial ideals on college campuses across the nation in the Progressive Era. These principles were built upon in the twentieth century and would eventually develop into the bending of gender roles in the 1920s, when women gained more independence politically and socially. The racial attitudes of students reflected the intense prejudice of white Americans towards the Black population, which would continue to persist through the powerful systemic racism in America. The mindsets of these students in the Progressive Era influenced university culture and the futures of both Black and white populations. Looking at these campus cultures divulges how college students interacted with, reflected, and contributed to mainstream gender and racial ideals.

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