VOLUME II

WOMEN'S CULTURE AND COMMUNITY:
RELIGION AND REFORM IN GALVESTON, 1880-1920

by

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Suddenly in the 1880s, as if the zephyrs from the Northeast had brought notions of self-improvement to the flatlands of the Southwest, women in Texas set about taking stock in their own learning. Years of benevolence to others had melted their hearts and turned their faces outward to see and relieve the disadvantaged. Now the time had come for white southern ladies to see to their own improvement.

No dissembling could mask the fact that education for southern women was woefully inadequate to meet the demands of the modern world of the 1880s, and few elite women born in the unsettled 1860s could afford to be educated in female seminaries (schools). With a few important exceptions, the first generation of activist Galveston women born in the 1850s and 1860s, because of wartime exigencies or postwar economic difficulties, missed opportunities even for finishing schools. Women born in the 1870s were able to take advantage of the public high school completed in 1885, or if wealthy, were sent off to female seminaries or to instructors in art or music in other states including New York or even in Europe. Children of the 1880s looked out upon a world with wider openings for women’s education, but only a few gained a liberal arts degree or training in a profession.
A desire for better education became a national phenomenon. Beginning with the lyceum and culminating in the Chautauqua movement, self-improvement for adults, who, especially in the South, may have had no access to public schools, betokened a wish for culture and edification. This carried beyond the occasional lecture or a summer interlude of speakers and classes and resulted in the establishment of public school systems across the South in the 1870s and 1880s.

The women's club movement in its initial stages began as an educational and cultural self-improvement plan for women whose lives had formerly been privatized in the home, or whose organizational experiences consisted of church or synagogue societies, and in cities where benevolent institutions existed, on boards of lady managers. Learning to focus on intellectual matters, handling abstractions, coping with contradictory ideas, dealing with written assignments, delivering papers before a club and then a larger assemblage of women, speaking before mixed groups, handling the arrangements for annual conventions, traveling to the conventions unaccompanied by male escorts, assuming responsibility for committee work, and leading others into the public arena confronted and challenged middle and upper-class women as they sought self-improvement together.

The Galveston Tribune captured some of these challenges in an article entitled, "Club women are the Most Severe Critics."

No after anguish ever compares with that first time a woman reads a paper or makes a speech in public. Though she may have the eloquence of a Hypatia and the self-confidence of a Mary Ellen Lease, she is doomed on that debut to a torture which, if known to Dante, would have inspired him to establish an extra purgatorial circle. ... She
is positive every other woman in the club is comparing the paper with an individual and superior effort. ... People comment on what she says or reads in subdued tones. Unable to make out whether the remarks are favorable or unfavorable, the unaccustomed one loses her place, and while the club sits silently waiting for her to resume she blushes and shivers with mortification.²

But such an education brought rewards to the women who persevered. And despite the terrors, the women's club movement became the largest and most widely accepted national women's movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Its membership eclipsed the Women's Christian Temperance Union by 1900 and represented for many women in small towns their only affiliation outside of churches and families.

Women's club beginnings trace back to the antebellum period when outcroppings of isolated study groups organized by women dotted mostly New England towns. Study clubs in the South were rarer, but Galveston women in 1856 organized their own scientific club, the Electro Auto-Biological Society, which was inspired by a course of lectures at the Galveston Courthouse by Professor Lawrence Hale. Undoubtedly this was one of the first secular women's clubs in the city, for the children who accompanied their well-bred mothers to the meetings found mysterious "the arrival of the members unattended by masculine friends."³ The Civil War, historians argue, provided a stimulus for women's sectarian activities. While literary club activity declined in the face of pressing war needs, women's voluntarism increased. The postwar period brought renewed concern for women's professional, legal, and educational rights, hence the spread of literary clubs accompanied a host of organizational drives by women.⁴

The exact origins of the national women's club movement began in
1868 when the Press Club of New York invited Charles Dickens to dine with them at the close of his United States tour. When journalist Jane Cunningham Croly and other women requested tickets to the grand event, they were accorded "churlish treatment." In her frustration, Jane Croly, with the help of a few well-stationed friends, revealed designs for a secular club solely of women, "that should manage its own affairs, represent as far as possible the active interests of women, and create a bond of fellowship between them." They called their club Sorosis. Skeptics thought that creating a club merely for the purpose of self-growth would ultimately end in failure. Had the women chosen to do something in the nature of charitable work, critics would not have lifted a pen to comment. But self-improvement for women was a novel idea, implying that "self-interest was incompatible with ladydom." With the founding of Sorosis and the New England Woman's Club, a movement was launched that within two decades reached even remote towns in Texas.

The increasing need for education in and cultivation of the fine arts was at the heart of the appeal to women in the Southwest. Yet no progress on this front was made until the state saw sufficient urbanization. By 1900, notes one recent author, Texas boasted three of the largest cities of the Old Confederacy. Towns along shipping routes and railroads, where increasing population brought a measure of prosperity, provided the first setting for the women's club movement in Texas. Luxuries such as gas lighting, electricity, telephones, sewing machines, and servants eventually relieved the genteel woman in urban areas of the constant drudgery of housework, freeing her for cultural pursuits. Women in professions, the few that existed in the 1880s and 1890s, sought companionship with women interested in pursuing topics
beyond dishes and diapers. Women who had already invested in volunteer situations — church and immigrant or poor relief societies, benevolent institutions — sought another avenue for their public interests that combined the opportunity for self-improvement with female fellowship. They accepted the notion that women of different faiths (but not different races) had much to offer in a forum for ideas.

The ideology of informed motherhood, that is, a concern that children receive their first and best education at home through their mothers, also led women to seek a broader, more liberal training. Always aware that the first place for women was within their separate sphere, the club movement carefully articulated a credo of women's self-cultivation that had as its ultimate aim the improvement of family life and especially the rearing of children. Self-improvement had another end — child improvement.

Eventually word of clubs begun by women in other states spread through Texas. Galveston had its own direct connection to New York and cities on the New England coast through shipping and through family networks. Sorosis was not an unfamiliar group to Galveston women; their own Anna Maxwell Jones had moved to New York and had become a member. By 1892, a year after Galveston women formed a Wednesday Club and the founding year of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, 495 clubs affiliated nationally with 100,000 members.

Beyond all of the practical explanations for the rise of women's clubs nationally and in Texas, historians have recently come to understand the movement as the last great moment of exalted womanhood — the epitome of the notion of a separate, superior, more cultured, spiritual, and cultivated women's sphere. The women's club movement provided an extension of
women's sphere to more public forums, yet it remained self-contained, admitting no men. Upper- and middle-class women grew within the movement to take pride in themselves as women, no longer apologizing for an inferior status, indeed, finding an elevated moral position. Women rejoiced in their sense of exalted womanhood and preached the virtues of truthfulness, purity, strength, courage, democracy, generosity, humility, and uplift. Within individual clubs, women sought nobility of purpose, encouraging one another in intellectual, artistic, and later civic pursuits. At conventions members congratulated themselves on the wonderful changes that had been wrought because of their efforts.

Women gathered unto themselves the mantle of cultural appreciation for art, drama, and music as well as literature, because "culture and the arts were, by the late nineteenth century, like religion in that they were widely considered female terrain." In short, middle- and upper-class white club women challenged late nineteenth-century notions of privatized domesticity and broadened their domain to include the world of art, music, history, and literature. Once embarked on a combined course of self-improvement, i.e. self-understanding and learning, women at the turn of the century could not ignore societal problems nor affronts of sex discrimination. Hence the movement shifted; by 1900 women in clubs began to respond to the pressing need for their worldly involvement.

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Clubwomen believed that all educated, refined women "had an inherent interest in culture," that women were innately attracted and were sensitive to music, art, and drama. Stemming directly out of what they
considered "woman's culture," the world of the belle arts was appropriated by women in the same way that community politics at the turn of the century became the province of men. While women would eventually find themselves involved in politics as well, they never did relinquish the notion that somehow the bond between women and "culture" was graced with a certain spiritual content divorced from the workaday world. Even those who employed their musical, artistic, or literary talents in a professional calling were given genteel approval because these talents were considered women's talents.

The connection between intelligent, well-traveled, sophisticated women and the fine arts allowed women to believe in their own sensitive natures, elevating them above men to higher realms of moral superiority. But it also elevated them above the masses. The fact that artistic study required money and taste meant that the consumers of culture stemmed from the upper strata, thus emphasizing what everyone knew already, that "cultured" women were elite women. Less clear was the relation of men to cultural pursuits. Although the world's great artists were men, clubwomen strongly suspected that educated women had an affinity for the arts that their aggressive, materialistic menfolk lacked. Notions of elitism, moral superiority, and innate sensibilities provided women with a modicum of pride in themselves and acted as buffers to counter attempts to trivialize women's artistic pursuits. Karen Blair has boldly stated that "women used culture to soften the reality of sexism."11

The fact is, women who studied painting or music during the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s did so because access to state universities seemed remote, and women were discriminated against when seeking admission. Even with the
establishment of colleges for women — Vassar in 1861, Wellesley in 1870, Smith in 1871, and Bryn Mawr in 1885 — only a few women from Texas took advantage of opportunities for college educations in the Northeast.\textsuperscript{12} Southern seminaries and colleges for women more often attracted students from the southeastern states rather than from Texas. Moreover, southern customs also worked against the idea of women entering universities for intellectual training. Enhancing musical or painting talent was considered a far more useful occupation for a woman than the rigors of academe.

Concerts, recitals, and exhibitions were contributions to the community that, because they belonged to women's sphere and culture, did not compete with the world of business, law, or medicine, nor put women out of their proper place. Many intelligent Galveston women of affluent families were directed or chose to take training in the arts instead of attending a college or university. As one Galveston journalist wrote, "Then [turn of the century] the children of all the 'best families' were taught music along with their alphabet and the girls went to the continent after graduating from preparatory school to complete their musical training in Paris and Berlin instead of going to college to finish."\textsuperscript{13}

More Galveston women from the upper economic strata chose to study art or music than attended institutions of higher learning. For some their early training had little to do with their adult "careers." Jean Scrimgeour Morgan, who spent her life in civic activism, trained as a young woman under New York artists at the Art Student's League. While she continued her painting as an avocation, delighting her friends with handsome drawings and paintings, the importance of her involvement in women's civic reform groups — the Red Cross, the Women's Health Protective Association, and
the Public Health Nursing Service — far outweighed her artistry. Margaret Sealy Burton received training in music from Hernoni Bjorksten and Francis Fisher Powers of New York, yet presided over the Women's Civic League, making city beautification her principal life's work. Rebecca Brown of Ashton Villa, daughter of railroad magnate James Moreau Brown, studied music in the major European capitals, yet spent her most useful days presiding over the Letitia Rosenberg Home for Women.

Galveston newspapers gave ample publicity to the phenomenon of genteel young ladies studying with great artists. "Studied Under Famous Master: Many Galveston Girls are Pupils of Celebrated Teachers of Music," announced a headline in a 1914 Galveston Daily News. "Miss Ethel Randall studied under Bruno Oscar Klein and Richard Burmeister of New York, the latter now one of the great teachers in Berlin ... Miss Linda Fowler, with Mr. Sigismund Stojowski of New York and the famous Russian pianist, Mr. Ossip Gabrilowitch of Berlin (accepted as one of his few pupils)...." The article went on to list no fewer than seventy-five women who studied under music masters.

For some, the training in music provided them careers as vocal soloists, teachers, or as choir directors, though seldom as orchestra conductors. For others the training provided them with cultural skills useful to the community in the form of entertainment. Churches, incubators of women's talents and culture, supplied the first entree into the world of musical performance. Talented young ladies, nurtured in youth choirs, were invited to sing or play before their church families rather than first attempting larger audiences. As mentioned earlier, Etheldreda Aves, daughter of the Reverend Charles Aves, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church,
began her musical career in the church choir. She eventually went on to receive formal training and joined the New York Metropolitan Opera.

Open-air evening concerts at the Garten Verein, an outdoor concert hall, provided Galvestonians with a welcomed diversion from the heat and humidity of Gulf Coast summers. Frederick Roeck, who informally led Trinity Episcopal Choir, commented frequently to his wife Kate on the quality of individual local vocalists who were well known to the community. "Last night [was] a beautiful clear, cool, evening and all [were] enjoying themselves. At 8 o'cl. the concert began," he recounted, "and was quite good with a very large audience. They have built a stand in the middle of the hall for the orchestra but the recitations and singing were done on the stage. Carrie Bright sang "Beware" very prettily, Mrs. Carothers sang better than I ever heard her (result of Rosetti's teaching) ... Mrs. Mansfield... was in spendid voice and sang an air from Lucia."16

Ladies with musical talent were often invited to perform in the interest of charity. When Nellie Roeck, Frederick's daughter, journeyed to Lampasas, Texas, on a youth retreat, she wrote to her mother that Mrs. George Sealy, wife of Galveston's leading banker, had organized a benefit for a local church. "There is to be a concert in the hotel this evening for the benefit of the Episcopal Church which is being built here. I think Mrs. Sealy and one or two other ladies in the hotel got it up. Mrs. S[ealy], Mrs. Byrne, and Mrs. Fowler will sing. Margaret [Sealy] will recite or play. Mrs. Arden will play and they will have several other things. The programme is quite long and select. ...Mrs. Byrne is to sing "Angel's Serenade" with piano and violin. She is practising it now below my room, it is a beautiful thing. Mrs. Sealy will sing one of Helmund's new songs, I think "The Daily Question" which is lovely
Clearly the program and its contents were of importance to both the young woman and her mother, who obviously shared a keen interest in music. But the event, although not unusual from the participants' perspective, is significant for the view it affords of a women's cultural evening designed and executed by the city's social leaders. The fact that it benefited a parish within their own denomination points to the intercultural connections between women and the church.

Women's clubs also provided performance forums for all kinds of musical talent. It seems that every time women held a meeting or a conference they called upon local musicians to provide "the entertainment." The fact is that before the 1920s most Galvestonians only heard live music performed by residents of the city or by visiting artists. Without local homegrown talent, there would have been little to recommend Galveston as a culture center. But those were times when communities encouraged and admired local productions, grateful for the artists in their midst. Women felt keenly that they enhanced community living through these performances and understood that their training kept culture alive for the average and not so average resident.

Most women of musical training and talent eventually joined with others of like interest to create women's musical clubs. While there were women in Galveston who may have imbibed the philosophies and theories of the compatibility of women to culture, there were also those who wanted to perform simply because they had developed their modest talents. The desire to sing, for example, could not be satisfied through the study of music in literary context, but needed to be met with actual performance. Two such clubs emerged at the close of the nineteenth century in Galveston to meet the
demand: The Ladies Musical Club and the Girls' Musical Club. The first, formed in 1888, limited its membership to thirty-five women who agreed to perform three "musicales" a year for the public. They met every Saturday afternoon for rehearsals and paid $6 for the privilege of joining. Louise Fowler Parker, director of Trinity's Church Choir, directed the Ladies Musical Club performances which consisted of a number of piano and harp solos, string quartets, arias and other vocal solos, and always a performance by the ladies' chorus.\textsuperscript{18}

The programs gave Galveston its first women's performance group, and every woman of true musical talent belonged. Of the forty-nine chorus members also active in other clubs, thirty-two (65 percent) belonged to Episcopal churches where sacred music reached heights of elegance (See Table 5: I). The officers were generally the same women who were active in other community endeavors, indicating that musical performance was as much a part of women's world as literary club life. Unlike literary pursuits, however, performances were open and public, therefore, women may have used them to justify their entrance into community life. The fact that the arts took women out of the home while employing talents suitable to their nature constituted another means for women's escape from domestic confinement, but did nothing, of course, for their real liberation from social stereotyping. Still, the visible nature of women's performances went far toward winning them plaudits from the crowd, and their connection to the community through the arts advanced their status as champions of cultural, if not civic, improvement.

A Galveston music teacher, Mrs. L. P. Gruenwald, with a highly successful private studio, organized young women into the Girls' Musical
Club in 1892; this group outlived the older Ladies Musical Club, performing until well into the twentieth century in Galveston's Scottish Rite Cathedral. They scaled down their choral performances to one a year, bringing to the city at other times exemplary professional talent — Ignace Jan Paderewski, Vladimir de Pachman, and Geraldine Farrar, among others. Reorganized in 1894 by Iola Barnes Beers, a member of Trinity's choir, the club's purpose was to "provide the best facilities for musical culture of its members and the uplifting of the standards of music in the city of Galveston." As the girls who had been vested with expensive musical educations matured into adult women, they continued to sing, maintaining the club's original name. Performances provided the city with great "social moments, "attracted capacity crowds, and displayed women as hostesses to the enhancement of culture. In their private meetings, the members studied music history and great composers. In 1916 for example, members of the Girls' Musical Club undertook the study of Russian music, beginning with a paper, "Eighteenth Century Music in Russia," read by Edith Fordtran and ending with "illustrations" or illustrative musical pieces performed by three other members. To maintain membership in the musical club, performing talent had to go hand in hand with an active mind. Crossovers between officers of the musical clubs and the literary clubs were common.

As the perceived bond between artistic culture and womanhood motivated women to found musical clubs and art leagues, so too did the search for "cultural authority" compel women to study literature in clubs. The course of study was not the only good to come out of clubs, however; middle- and upper-class women achieved a certain intimacy as they shared their feelings about the works or risked criticism over their own intellectual
capacities. Unlike boards of lady managers that administered institutions or musical clubs that emphasized performance, literary clubs drew women into discrete circles, inviting them for a time to abandon their servant roles and travel down the path of mutual intellectual activity. Galveston women proved ready for the journey.

The generation of women who initially introduced literary clubs to Galveston were born in the 1840s and 1850s. Betty Ballinger (born 1854), her sister Lucy Ballinger Mills (1852), and Maria Cage Kimball (1844), co-founded Galveston's first literary women's club. The two Ballinger women had enjoyed a privileged upbringing as daughters of one of Texas' finest jurists, William Pitt Ballinger. Their father received the first license to practice law issued by the state of Texas in 1846. He was appointed United States district attorney for the Texas District in 1850, acted as a receiver for the Confederacy, and obtained a pardon from President Johnson. After the war he was appointed to the Texas Supreme Court, an honor that he declined, but in 1875 served as delegate to the Texas Constitutional Convention. He and his partners set up a successful law practice in Galveston, where he settled into a comfortable life until his death in 1888. His wife, Hallie Jack Ballinger, as we have seen, served as president of the Galveston Orphans' Home at its incorporation in 1880.

With this illustrious background and with a library stocked full of books, Betty and her sister were able to gain an education despite the postwar struggle. The two were first sent to Miss Hull's French School in New Orleans until they advanced to the Southern Home School in Baltimore. Upper crust, educated, and thoroughly genteel, the two Ballinger sisters in October 1891 persuaded Maria Cage Kimball, a professional artist, to join them
in forming the city's first literary club -- the Wednesday Club. For a time they met in Kimball's studio, where the women decided on a course of study that would eventually include new and classic works of literature. For the first year, however, they and twenty-two other invited members embarked on a thorough investigation of Texas history. Coinciding with the founding of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, the idea to study Texas history, no doubt, complemented the women's endeavors not only to rescue Texas heroes from oblivion and to honor them as patriots but also to educate women of the greatness of their state's past.

Subsequent years found the club joining first national then state federations. In 1894 the club joined the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC); and in 1897 the club sent Betty Ballinger and Mary Davis as delegates to the first convention of the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs (TFWC) in Waco, Texas. In April 1899 the Galveston Wednesday Club hosted the second convention of the Texas federation, at which time the Texas clubs joined the General Federation. Maria Cage Kimball greeted the delegates with these words: "Our grandparents would have been scandalized at the thought of a convention of women, presided over and addressed from the rostrum by a woman, yet we are no whit less womanly than the purely domestic creatures of their day. It is the change in conditions and ideals, the result of evolution." Despite the fact that women had "evolved," Kimball still extolled the virtues of housewifery, remembering that homemakers made up the majority of the audience. Mentioning that inventions had lightened their labor with leisure to devote to "doing good outside our own doors," Kimball averred that today's women were not less womanly, "but we have more time to exert that womanliness in various channels." Later in the
evening, the delegates were given a taste of the combination of womanhood and culture when they visited Kimball's flower bedecked studio, viewed her artwork, sipped "frozen tea," and tasted sherbet and cake, while listening to the strains of the orchestra provided by the Wednesday Club. Domesticity and artistic culture stood hand in hand.

By virtue of the fact that Galveston was one of the few cities in the state large enough to hold conventions and scenic enough to invite visitors, the Wednesday Club received a form of recognition and stature that many women from smaller towns envied. The newly built YMCA building, "fitted up with every facility for seating a large delegation" accommodated the sessions. To emphasize the domestic touch, individual Wednesday Club members hosted events in their own homes: Betty Ballinger gave a luncheon in honor of the delegates; Mrs. L. C. Fisher, the mayor's wife, hosted a luncheon; and Mrs. H. A. Landes gave a dinner in honor of her delegate guests. Music was furnished by a ladies' sextette and a violin quintette made up of Galveston women.

At the third convention, held in San Antonio in April 1900, Maria Cage Kimball, by then president of the Wednesday Club for nearly ten years, presented an "interesting address" representing the art department, wherein she "deplored the ignorance and apathy concerning art that prevailed in Texas cities where opportunities might be provided ... for the enjoyment of culture in this direction." She pointed to barren walls in schools and homes and suggested that these be hung with prints of the great masterpieces "until the eye became trained to the really true and beautiful in art." Libraries and assembly halls would make excellent temporary art galleries for towns where artistic interests lay dormant, she counseled. And for those places where
paintings were hard to come by, the Wednesday Club had established a fund to start a traveling picture gallery, akin to the traveling library already established by the TFWC. All that was needed was a call from other clubs to "start the collection on its rounds."28 Taking their interests to the public, especially to children, would continue throughout the twentieth century as women found a reception among schools, libraries, and galleries.

Cultivation of art, music, literature: these had fallen to women, their clubs becoming the academies of cultural pursuits.

Wednesday Club women avidly pursued literary quests amidst an increasing climate of sisterhood. Although Episcopal and Presbyterian women still predominated, the club encouraged a wider representation among women from various religious groups than did the boards of lady managers of the benevolent institutions. (See Table 5:1.) The only surviving minutes for the Wednesday Club before 1920 extend from 1904 to 1909, but from these we can gain a glimpse of life inside the club. Apparently part of the unchartered mission of the club was to foster fellowship leading to greater intimacy and friendship. The Wednesday Club met every other Wednesday at 3:30 for study, discussion, and refreshments, but in months where a fifth Wednesday occurred, the members planned an "entertainment." One such event required that each member present an original limerick about another member as her ticket of admission to the party. Most of the rhymes were tributes to one another, flattering and encouraging. But bonds were also formed by identifying their common burdens as women. Full recognition of their mutual responsibilities as daughters, sisters, and especially wives and mothers was evidenced in the occasional jabs taken at women's domestic duties:
A newlywed fellow named Skinner
Came home to his wife and his dinner
Found his wifie at club
And no dinner for "Hub"
Alas for the poor young beginner.

Dear babies, no more capers
While your mothers write those papers
For the club,
Mrs. Garrett, Mrs. Blum
Little lullabies must hum
O'er the stub.²⁹

The Wednesday Club served two distinct functions aside from fellowship. The first was to promote "mutual improvement by the encouragement of individual study, as preparation for discussion in the Club," and the second, to cooperate "in any work which may advance the welfare of humanity."³⁰ These seemed to be the members' only stated missions; besides sponsoring lectures and providing funds for a traveling art exhibit, in the years between 1891 and 1920 they never took up any sustained civic projects either locally or at the state level. While women actively pursued projects all around them, from replanting the island to fighting tuberculosis, the Wednesday Club, to the probable consternation of their state-level sisters, took no steps toward civic activism outside of study, discussion, contemplation, and possible endorsement.

Except from 1900 to 1901, when the club took up sewing for the storm victims, and during 1917-18, when they volunteered for war work, the members devoted themselves to classic works of literature. Saturated with the study of American authors, the women in 1904 studied Honore de Balzac and Victor Hugo. The next year they read Scandanavian literature, which was followed by three years of Shakespeare, one year of literary criticism, and two
years of Greek drama.

Several events conspired to lure them away from their ivory-tower studies. First, as soon as they united with the GFWC in 1894 and the TFWC in 1897 they began to receive letters and information channeled to them through state and national officers concerning current issues important to women. Second, in 1901 progressive women formed civic reform associations that at once took the pressure to become reform minded off the Wednesday Club, while at the same time activating interest in reform topics. Third, the composition of the members of the Wednesday Club changed from 1891 through the second decade of the twentieth century. At first elite members who were wives of influential commercial types dominated the club, but later a greater number of professional women — librarians, nurses, and most especially teachers who made their own living in the world — joined the club. Diversity, both within and without the club altered its curriculum and the women's outlook.

After the rise of the Progressive Era, no club remained immune from news of the pressing need for greater protection for the environment, for libraries, for child-labor legislation, for protection for working women, for the need for state agencies to regulate and control industries that affected women, their families, and the home. Not a meeting went by that there was not a communique from some level of the women's club movement asking for their support or endorsement. In the years between 1897 and 1920 when Texas clubs not only federated but became interested in civic work, the women clamored for action regarding the establishment of free libraries (75 percent were started by women's clubs), kindergartens, manual training centers in public schools and in state institutions, child labor laws, city
beautification, women's prison reform, pure food and drug laws, hospitals for tuberculosis patients, parks and playgrounds, juvenile courts, civil service reform, and movie censorship.32

In the years between 1904 and 1909 many of these issues filtered to Wednesday Club members. They discussed the need for police matrons, a state industrial school for girls, kindergartens, pure food and drug laws, the creation of a state library commission, cooperation with the Anti-Tuberculosis Association, the need for a juvenile court, and at the national level, support for a bill to protect children and animals. In many cases endorsement for the state or general federation's action was requested and was usually granted. But as an indication of the club's lingering conservatism in the early years of the twentieth century, the members tabled an endorsement of suffrage requested of them from the GFWC in 1906, pleading that politics should not enter club work. Then in 1909 when the chairwoman of the district committee on laws affecting women and children sent information regarding "the all important but little understood subject of the legal status of women in Texas," the members moved to table the letter, filing the information away "for the future reference of any member of the club wishing to give the subject further attention."33 Both topics would later find their way into their formal course of study.

In 1912, the year Galveston formed a suffrage society, Wednesday Club members took up the study of "sociological subjects," including women in industry, the social settlement movement, modern educational movements, changes in municipal governments, Texas laws relating to women and children, socialism, and, of course, woman suffrage. By 1913 they had incorporated the problem of women and delinquent children into their
curriculum. In subsequent years, they either returned to fiction or studied the
problems of nationalism and democracy in Europe in response to World
War I.34

If direct missives from state and national-level associations were not
enough to convince Galveston women to adopt a more progressive agenda,
Wednesday Club members could read all about the actions of other women
locally and nationally in the Galveston Daily News. Every Monday, a section
called "The Woman's Century," conceived first by the Dallas Morning News,
devoted itself to issues of national importance to women—from Texas
clubwomen and WCTU members to homemakers with interests such as
childrearing, nursing, teaching, and writing. Pauline Periwinkle, a
pseudonym for Isabel Calloway, graced the page with her syndicated column
reciting the accomplishments of women in clubs and coaxing them to see
issues and problems of concern to women long before women were ready to
take action. With her prodding, cajoling, and needling about environmental,
health, child-labor, and children's educational issues, Texas women could not
claim ignorance of the problems or the tasks before them.35

Progressive era Galveston saw the formation of several reform minded
women's civic associations before 1911: The Women's Health Protective
Association, the Juvenile Protective Association, the Council for Jewish
Women, Mothers' Clubs, and a reorganized chapter of the WCTU, to name a
few of the more prominent ones. The gradual accumulation of women's
civic groups had the affect of encouraging Wednesday Club members in the
study of issues important to women. Also, as women moved in and out of
the club, the presence of these other groups infused the staid Wednesday
Club with members whose experiences had already been shaped in reform-
minded ways.

By 1907 teacher members such as Annie Hill, a feminist who taught civics at Ball High School, began to assert that the club "should broaden the scope of its activity and fall in line with the work being so generally done by other clubs in sociology." As more teachers, librarians, and nurses entered the ranks of the Wednesday Club, it lost some of its old-guard prestige and took on a more liberal air. After all teachers made wonderful members: they already were professional educators, many taught in schools the subjects studied in the club, and they motivated women to see the connection between literary training and professional life. Librarians were useful for their full range of knowledge of current books. Women in the medical profession saw problems that society women missed. But, most important, professional women were generally eager to pursue topics such as women's legal status or women's right to vote.

Although the members of the Wednesday Club let no civic projects interfere with their study of Balzac, Shakespeare, and Euripides, the result of the above mentioned incursions did bring changes over time in their coursework — some literary, some sociological — as they absorbed current issues. Inevitably they adapted the study of literature to their own purposes. The first evidence of a glimmering of understanding of woman's subordinate position in the eyes of men, for example, was addressed in the November 1905 study of Henrik Ibsen's "The Doll's House." It was telling that the woman presenting the paper on the play's indictment of man's trivialization of woman, was Jean Scrimgeour Morgan, one of the most active progressives in the city. As each woman was required to give a paper discussing the work just read, she also chose a quotation from that work to be printed in the club's
annual program. Jean Morgan chose as her exemplary quotation this statement from the play, "Why, my Nora, what have you to do with serious things?" In 1905 Galveston women were heavily engaged in a host of "serious things" including the already discussed benevolent enterprises and recovery from the disastrous 1900 hurricane. In addition, by 1908 Jean Morgan had begun her four-year presidency of the Women's Health Protective Association, the city's foremost women's civic reform association.

In 1914 women turned in their volumes of Shakespeare for books and stories authored by women such as Mary Wilkins Freeman, who wrote "The Revolt of Mother," the story of a farm wife's quiet rebellion against an autocratic husband. They chose to study the "Proud Women" of George Meredith's novels, which confirmed the existence of "the new world for women." They devoted time to the problem of unhappy marriages in literature -- perhaps with personal lessons for themselves.

Was it coincidental or purposeful that Wednesday Club members chose subjects that would eventually draw them into public life? Minnie Fisher Cunningham, who later became Galveston and then Texas suffrage president, chose to discuss woman suffrage in 1912, the year the club decided on "sociological" subjects. Her authoritative sources were the four-volume work edited by Susan B. Anthony, History of Woman Suffrage, and the Progressive Woman, a journal published in Washington, D.C. "Since women have so much at stake in the community," went her statement in the club program, "and since they possess a point of view and information which is sometimes not possessed by the men, it is desirable from the standpoint of their own welfare as well as the welfare of the community as a whole, that they should be given the right to vote." For Minnie Fisher Cunningham,
the Wednesday Club served not so much as a source of her own edification as a forum for her passion for woman suffrage. Probably Cunningham's goal was to convert the members of the club because they represented the intelligent and influential leaders of the women's community.

Mrs. H. H. Haines, using Edith Abbot's text, chose to present a study of "Women in Industry," which apparently fit her particular interests. Two years later she joined the building committee of the Young Women's Christian Association, an organization whose initial design was to protect working girls from the uncertainties of the city and the workplace. She educated the members to the fact that in 1900 over five million women were gainfully employed in the United States, an increase of 33 percent over the previous decade. Solutions suggested in the program included protective legislation for women, trade unions, and the increase in wages.

Melanie Pimstein, an unmarried Jewish teacher, presented a paper and led the discussion in 1913 on "Modern Educational Movements." In that year the Jewish Council for Women opened a free kindergarten for immigrant Jewish children; Pimstein recounted the advantages of instruction beginning with kindergartens and leading eventually to "manual training." One of the Lasker sisters, all of whom became professional social workers and suffragists, chose as her topic of discussion in 1912, "Delinquency in Children," using Jane Addams and Sophonisba Breckinbridge, *The Child in the City*, as her authoritative sources. Mrs. Charles McMaster, suffragist and wife of the publisher of the *Galveston Tribune*, brought forward "The Problem of Woman," illustrating her paper with quotations from Olive Schreiner's *Woman and Labor* and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's, *The Un-Sexed*.

Concluding with the question, "What's wrong with the world?" Wednesday
Club members went on to discuss the Mother's Pension Law in Illinois and eventually entertained the provoking notion of the origin of the dual standard between men and women. No modern topic seemed to escape their notice after 1912 — settlement houses, changes in municipal government, Texas laws concerning women and children, and a lucid discussion of socialism led by the redoubtable Betty Ballinger all entered the agenda.41

The seeming progressive nature of the club is deceiving because other clubs across the state preceded the Galveston group in updating their curriculum. The Wednesday Club was conservative in its refusal to follow other women's literary clubs that often eschewed private study and took on a "do anything" program. Nonetheless, despite what appears to us as private, exclusive, and limited action, there were reasons for their reluctance to quit self-education. Their course of study served as a well-spring for the community of women who in actively seeking to enact progressive reform were opening the door to women's public life. Just as educational institutions seldom ventured into the political arena to lobby for social change, so the Wednesday Club, Galveston's women's institution for "higher learning," taught its pupils the principles of critical reasoning, discipline, logic, and debate, informed them of the issues at hand and sent them out into the battle for progressive change. Other Galveston women's clubs took to the streets and alleys, challenging power and authority in the seats of government.

There may have been one other reason why the Wednesday Club chose to remain aloof from civic activism—by doing so it avoided conflict for its members with the codes of social convention. Although the movement as a
whole espoused democratic principles (at least for whites), and although after
1900 the membership increased in professional women, the Wednesday Club
remained primarily exclusive if not aristocratic. Its membership was limited
to twenty-five active women who were received into the club by the
recommendation of two members and a vote that did not exceed two
blackballs. Not all who applied were accepted, and there were always more
who wanted to join than the club could accommodate. Founded in an era
when Galveston boasted of patrician families, and published directories to
identify them, the Wednesday Club, at least until 1912 remained imbued with
class pretensions.

Although women's clubs after 1900 became gradually more open to
women of the middling classes, elitism remained an important factor in the
life of Galveston's women's societies before that time. Elitism was reflected
in the appearance in 1896 of the city's first blue book. The Galveston Blue
Book, claimed to be the first such guide ever issued in Texas. Adding prestige
to novelty, it professed that "in every fin de siecle city of both Europe and
America a Blue Book is given a welcome place in all the best families. It finds
no lodgment elsewhere." Listing prestigious families as well as
organizations, the blue book served notice that Galveston and its elite clubs
had "arrived," their places in society secure. But just in case Texas "society"
proved a diamond in the rough, a section entitled "Social Code" was included
to serve as "a pleasant reminder to polite memory and gentle breeding."42
The Social Code consisted of twenty pages of instructions in how to navigate
through "society" —from the shallows of male and female introductions to
the white water rapids of calling cards, at homes, dinner parties, balls, and
weddings. Confessing that the code was "sometimes extreme in its formality," it was also, according to the publisher, based on "kind feeling and good sense. The conventionalities of society restrain and direct merely to remove friction and assist life to freer and easier movement."43

Every instruction that detailed social intercourse between the sexes guarded and protected women in ways that restricted them, serving notice that while men were free to move about inquiringly after women, women were free only to accept or reject such attentions. In cases between two young people of the opposite sex meeting for the first time, "the gentleman alone can express gratification. . . ," and "excessive cordiality on first acquaintance is not to be commended." Calling on one another and using cards involved complicated rules of etiquette that, as usual when between the sexes, cloistered women. "A gentleman having been introduced to a lady may be uncertain whether she desires to continue the acquaintance. If he wishes it, he leaves a card, and her mother or chaperon sends an invitation to visit the family,... after which he is expected to call and pay his respects." She might like to see him again, but if the woman was unmarried, convention forbade her from telling him so. Moreover, the book counsels, she may not accompany him to the parlor door as he takes his leave. These arrangements, the authors apologized, provide a "wall of defense against strange and unwelcome visitors" a fact that every "true gentleman" will recognize, for they erect "barriers across the sacred threshold of home."44

Once inside the home, rules of decorum between the sexes continued. Dinner parties were staged events requiring strict attention to form. Gentlemen chose partners or were given partners by the hostess, but after dinner the two always separated, the men to smoke, the women to withdraw
to the drawing room. Appearances in public where women might be mixed with men usually required escorts or chaperones, and rules of behavior applied even more severely. The majority of the dicta applied to social relations between the sexes, the result of years of relegating men and women to separate spheres. The rules for crossing over the sex barriers for Galvestonians of society in 1896 were elaborate and complicated, based on the assumption that polite society needed guides to maneuver between the two worlds — home as an enclosure for women, and the world outside for men. Once the rules were internalized, proper behavior became a matter of habit, an unthinking response to the position of woman as unfree, the object of protection, a prisoner of social convention. True, blue books simply prescribed behavior; whether ladies and gentlemen followed them is quite another matter. But references to New York society reinforced the pattern, and with the names of elite Galveston families printed in the same book with the code, the inference was powerful. Galvestonians of this social class should follow these rules, thereby bringing themselves up to the standard of New York society, the mecca of social chauvinism.

Blue books served another purpose in the postwar South — they indicated who had moved up the social ladder. According to Don H. Doyle, mug books, a corollary to blue books, were not to be found in cities such as Charleston and Mobile, where elite society remained static and newcomers were a rarity. Everyone knew who was who; there was no need for guides. In cities with bustling economies, where upward (and downward) mobility changed the social register with each passing decade, those interested in society matters needed a guide to who was new and successful. There were powerful incentives not only to make the acquaintance of the old and new
elites but also to follow the regimen of social etiquette: to use calling cards, to isolate women in the home, to treat the worlds of men and women as separate. The space between became a treacherous field mined with social faux paux.

Wednesday Club members both acquiesced to some of these rules and acted to alleviate women from their straitjacket conventions. By remaining exclusive, by inviting to membership those listed in the social register, and by conforming to the rules of separation between men and women, the members acted in accord with the spirit of the code. But by bringing women out of the home into a club of their own (just as men had clubs of their own, but for different purposes), by introducing each other to worlds beyond the drawing room, by encouraging independent thinking, the Wednesday Club counteracted the pull toward social suffocation for women. There were no blue-book rules for women speakers at public conventions (even if the assemblants were mostly women), so the women invented their own guidelines free of male and conventional proscriptions. There were no regulations as to the course of study except those devised by the women themselves. Yes, there were formal proceedings and Robert's Rules of Order was strictly followed, lest anyone accuse the women of frivolity of intentions, but Henry M. Robert, who wrote the rule, did so in order to take arbitrary power out of the hands of the chairperson allowing everyone at the meeting an opportunity for participation. Its intent was democratic; its usage by women almost universal.46

Eventually in the post-1900 period, Wednesday Club membership became more open as well, calling to its ranks professional wage-earning women who were not necessarily blue blooded. Members learned that
connections to society did not give one special advantages in subjects of logic
and discourse. In other matters to which women attended, the blue book by
1896 was already too late in regulating their behavior. With church
benevolent societies, orphanages, the old woman's home, and kindergartens -
matters of grave importance to the future of the city and to the women and
children therein — society women dropped the mantel of protection and
headed into the community unescorted. Of course these activities belonged
to woman's separate sphere, yet they prepared women intellectually for
integration into the public sector. 47

It is ironic that just as ascriptive rules of behavior were foisted on
Galveston —by then at the height of its wealth and social prominence— that
the woman's club movement should be making simultaneous forays against
the codes that insisted on cloistering women. In fact, it would appear that the
1896 blue book, with its directions for cards, calling, and visiting customs, was
the last defense for a fading world. Coming as it did at the end of the century,
blue books tried to counter the democratizing trends of society as a whole.
Women's artistic and literary clubs represented transition vehicles — at once
reflecting society's desire to limit women to separate sphere type functions,
yet acting to move upper-crust women beyond restricting conventions.

At any rate Galveston's second blue book, published in 1914, carried no
social code and listed men and women in the community whose status
depended as much on professional position as on inherited social station.
The publication read like an endorsement from the Chamber of Commerce;
it advertised Galveston as "The Ultimate City" — "a wide-awake, hustling and
progressive city of approximately 40,000 people...." Clearly the scent of
business profits had come to replace old-fashioned notions of social snobbery.
By the 1930s and 1940s, Galvestonians published "mug books," historic elegies to those (mainly men, of course) who had been or were successful, a who’s who for the community that endorsed hard work over high birth. 48

If the women’s club movement acted to counter, at least in part, elitist trends among those in or aspiring to high society, there were other groups of women who countenanced the world that blue books signified and formed organizations, that if not purposefully fostering class pretensions, perpetuated them nonetheless. These too made their appearances in Galveston in the 1890s — the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR 1895), the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT 1891), the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC 1895), Society of Colonial Dames, and the like.

Of course patriotism, reverence for fallen heroes, and the perpetuation of family loyalties were the ostensible reasons for the outcropping of patriotic-hereditary organizations founded by women. Social exclusivity was an unspoken desired end, especially with the DAR and the DRT, and later with the UDC. As the tide of immigration into this country from Eastern and Southern Europe swelled into a tidal wave and as blacks sought integration into public places, Anglo-Saxon nativism, — inconsistently juxtaposed to national values of freedom, democracy, and opportunity — broke forth into foreign and racial discriminations. These were manifested in various ways — in laws to restrict immigration, in labor-union bashing, in psycho-social theories of superior and inferior races, in Jim Crow laws and lynchings, and in exclusive clubs. Curiously women were at times the objects of discrimination by those who justified exclusion. Yet they too formed patriotic-hereditary societies that perforce excluded the recent immigrant and, by virtue of racial segregation, blacks and other races.
Some Americans responded more sympathetically to immigrants and blacks, setting up societies and settlement houses to aid in their assimilation. Others, threatened by the fear that these newcomers would not absorb patriotic sensibilities, formed organizations that established rules of hereditary exclusivity, thus assuring themselves that they were perpetuating true American values that would eventually drown out the din of foreign voices. They created elite enclaves, far above the teeming masses, justified on the grounds of patriotism and loyalty to country.

Southern patriotic and hereditary organizations for women fit in well with southern upper-crust culture. Reverence for family and ancestors constituted a natural part of a southern young lady's upbringing. Pride in ancestral accomplishments became even more pronounced after the Civil War as southerners sought to rebuild a sense of regional honor. They held on to the assumption that good breeding could not be bought, in fact remained a priceless treasure that one trotted out at appropriate times along with the family heirlooms. These notions validated women with tap roots in colonial American or southern soil and set them apart from the the recent immigrant and the nouveau riche without ancestral credentials. Defeat heightened the need to find solace in genealogy and provided a distorted antidote to grief, disappointment, and anger. Southerners would be hard pressed to confess shame over the events that nearly severed a nation, but they could admit anger and resolve to keep alive the spirit that led to the forming of a nation, the founding of a republic, or the fomenting of a war to preserve states' rights. Ancestor worship and adoration of fallen heroes – American Revolution, Texas War for Independence, Civil War – was a means of turning sorrow, even wrath, into what they considered constructive
Pride was the main item being dispensed, and southern ladies with a penchant for glorifying the past needed it more than men. Unable to glory in tales of combat, women patriots sought honor for themselves vicariously. Patriotic societies, moreover, served to elevate the members in an age when other women were moving beyond the Old South plantation legends. The transition to New Womanhood, still in its infancy, acted as a countervailing force to the pull of the past. As the nineties found southern urban ladies running orphanages, dispensing welfare, presenting concerts, and staffing the churches with volunteers, rural idylls seemed overrun by the needs of the present.

For urban women who felt sentimental over the loss of the role of plantation mistress along with the war, however, patriotic hereditary clubs connected to the Confederacy restored to them a sense of ennobled southern womanhood based on Old South values. This allowed them to grieve over their sullied regional honor, to reminisce about lost "civilizations," or to celebrate past victories in the context of modern club life. Always southern women extolled the virtues of a past "southern life" that they sensed was slipping away from them by the changes in technology as much as through defeat. Among the hallowed memories was not only a picture of southern belles but also of hard-working plantation mistresses, wives, and sisters who sacrificed for the war effort or tended wounded soldiers. Among the more truthful aspects of women's glorification was the picture put forward of mistresses laboring beside their husbands and their servants in the cooperative economic effort that plantation life demanded. Women whose lives were nearly at an end probably never gracefully make the transition
from southern lady to new woman, while others used patriotic organizations as transition clubs to civic life. In a curious blend of modernization and feminine conservatism, officers of patriotic clubs were often officers of women's civic associations at times endorsing suffrage along with the adoption of Jefferson Davis Day.

What makes the study of exclusive patriotic clubs for women fascinating if not infuriating are the contradictions that the organizers readily accepted and somehow managed to work around. Denied admission to the military and hence to men's veteran organizations, women nonetheless made war and soldiers the object of their veneration. Gratitude for the sacrifices made in their behalf, one supposes, motivated them to be content with their auxiliary status in return for a measure of the glory that veterans reflected. From our twentieth-century perspective, their actions appear absurd - women were asked to accept society's glorification of men as the stronger, more intelligent sex, while at the same time finding contentment in woman's moral superiority. Morally superior beings would not countenance war, would in fact beat swords into plowshares, and yet these peace-loving women honored warriors. Because men made little attempt to allow women an equal sense of participation in the remembrance of decisive military events, patriotic ladies created their own associations, and withal still ended up lauding men. Without ever sanctioning glory for themselves, always honoring and serving others, members, nonetheless, garnered the pride that before their collective action had been missing.

There was more to it, of course. Veterans and their descendants in Texas were long on celebrating and short on monument raising. In the viewpoint of the women, monuments to fallen heroes validated sacrifices
made, and if women could not fall beside their soldier brothers, they could at least memorialize them with monuments. Moreover, these ladies were able to call themselves members by virtue of the fact that their ancestor fought or lived at the time. Few traced their lineage to generals or colonels, yet even the common soldier or laborer deserved recognition. Hence they churned out genealogical lists, not only to verify membership credentials but also to find and honor the unsung heroes of the past. Women had the time to pursue such tasks, and because these ventures had to do with family, they fell well within woman's cultural sphere.

Preserving the past took on multi-dimensional properties: the women encouraged the writing of histories according to the principles of patriotism and placed heroes' pictures in schoolrooms to instruct children visually. Much of what women did to reward past sacrifices concerned taking care of homes, women's "natural" terrain, either the birthplaces or the homesteads of notable statesmen, rescuing them from demolition and preserving them for future generations to view and appreciate. This went along with their goal of educating the public and especially youth on the history of sacrificial events, to impress the young with the knowledge of their past and the proper respect for its symbols. It served, moreover, to place women, mothers, wives, and sisters who were guardians of the hero's domestic circle, in strategic positions. Thus families of heroes became heroic too, and women in particular were elevated along with the men. 49

In the matter of beneficence, some women's patriotic groups built and maintained homes for aged veterans or for aged women connected with the organization. And concerns for fallen soldiers or patriots brought them into graveyards, where before the advent of perpetual care cemeteries run by
corporations, women considered themselves guardians. In whatever manner
women chose to remain close to the font of liberty, we can be sure that their
projects were extensions of woman's culture — redefined, reshaped — but still a
part of the culture connected to women and the home.

It is true that only a small percentage of women became members of
these groups. But like the elite of any community, their influence
outweighed their numbers. They and their values were generally accepted by
communities across the land, regardless of their nativist messages. As they
worked their magic on statehouses, educating politicians in the art of patriotic
politicizing, erecting statues and monuments, caring for veterans, and
educating the young, their deeds were given ample attention by the press.

* * *

Historians generally consider the Daughters of the American
Revolution among the most elite of organizations whose membership was
pegged to a historical event. The older the event — the American Revolution,
the Republic of Texas, the Confederacy in descending order — the more status
was attached to the requirements for membership. Julia Washington
Fontaine, the great-great niece of General George Washington formed the
George Washington Chapter of the DAR in Galveston in 1895.50 Julia
Washington's father, Dr. Lawrence Augustine Washington of Winchester,
Virginia, had come to Texas in 1850 where he continued cotton planting in
Colorado County. Julia was born in 1852 on the plantation surrounded by
wealth and tutored in music, art, and literature. She married a native Texan,
Colonel Sydney Fontaine, moved to Galveston, and remained there for
thirty-eight years. She was appointed State Regent for Texas from 1900 to 1902.
The first meeting of the DAR, convened by Julia Fontaine, took place in the home of Mrs. George Seeligson, descendant of one of the oldest surviving families in the city. This home, a model of Galveston wealth in the 1890s, was resplendent with towering cupolas and carpenter Gothic gables, and represented old money and status. Nineteen women became charter members; by 1908 their numbers had increased to sixty. If membership in the Episcopal church may be taken as a sign of elitism, (62 percent were Episcopalian) then the DAR was indeed the most prestigious of all patriotic groups. (See Table 5:1.) Of the fifteen first regents (presidents) of the local chapter, twelve were Episcopalian.51

Their principal contributions to Galveston stemmed from their interest in upholding the American flag and in educating children about the heroes of the past. Laura Ballinger Randall, sister to Betty Ballinger, served as regent of the local chapter and as national vice-president general of the DAR. During that time she made a gift of a large United States flag to each of the public schools of Galveston.52 In keeping with their concern for women, the members researched the lives of eleven women of Galveston born before 1864 who had "been of special benefit to their fellow men." Two of these sketches were eventually published in the association's national publication, *Women of History*. However stilted and amateurish their efforts may have been, they nonetheless brought to light women's history in an age when men's biographies held center stage.

Patriotic-hereditary organizations such as the DAR became the repositories of antiquarian relics. Women collected bits of memorabilia, transforming them into objects of veneration. "Our greatest treasure is our gavel," read a report to the state association. "The wood of the mallet is a
piece of the framework of the original "North Bridge" at Concord, Massachusetts, over which was fired the first shot in the war for independence.... The handle is a piece of flooring from the old house occupied by General Washington as his headquarters at Valley Forge. ... It is banded in silver from a spoon once owned by General Washington, and given by Mrs. Julia Washington Fontaine, our founder." Representing both war and domesticity, the gavel brought together in one object the stirring events of the American Revolution with the role of women as domestic caretakers of the treasures of the past. Banners and flags embroidered by members punctuated the connection between historic events and women's handiwork. The members of each patriotic organization found ways to connect the duties and rituals of their domestic world with glories of the past. It allowed them to celebrate the prosaic and to experience "ego magnification" in connection with the creation of a nation. Managing to integrate women's culture with national culture satisfied their need to feel included rather than separated, important rather than insignificant. Although practiced in separate organizations, members symbolically and ritualistically used objects from the home to insert themselves into past events, thereby transcending the limitations of their sphere.

Most women were ineligible for the rarified atmosphere of the DAR, but membership in the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT) was even more uncommon. No more than fifty women in the years between 1891 and 1921 belonged to this exclusive group because most people emigrated to Texas after the Texas War for Independence (1836) and the Civil War. The fact that this group honored Texas heroes was not lost on most of the citizens of Galveston, who after allegiance to God and nation made Texas an object of
veneration.

It was with pride then that citizens observed the founding of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, the first patriotic-hereditary association to become a part of Galveston society. The women who formed this organization not only created a local chapter but they established the state organization as well. Several events conspired to help the women create both organizations. First, the annual reunion of the Texas Veteran Association met in 1891, and Betty Ballinger and her cousin Hallie Bryan, both descendants of veterans of the 1836 Texas Battle for Independence, met at "The Oaks," the Ballinger home at 29th Street and Avenue O. They came together to discuss the discovery of the forsaken graves of two Texas heroes, David G. Burnett, first president of the Republic of Texas, and General Sidney Sherman, veteran of the decisive Battle of San Jacinto. The women had found the graves while tending to the last resting place of another relative, also a patriot of the Texas Revolution. Tending graves was a role that fell to women within the family and in the churches, an extension of their ties to family and kin and an integral part of southern women's culture. Galveston women in several churches formed the core of committees to care for church graveyards until perpetual care endowments removed the management from their hands. (See Chapter 2). Extending the tradition and custom of grave maintenance from home to church to secular patriotic organization provides us a glimpse of the continuity and reshaping — although along the same lines — of women's culture. Southern women in particular have held on strongly to the tradition of gravetending, as maintaining family ties in life and death came under their domain.56

According to folk tradition, the cousins next took to reading Henderson
King Yoakum's *History of Texas* in William Pitt Ballinger's law office and library that was built away from the house, so the story goes, in order for him to get away from "feminine chatter." This library (ironically ever after associated with women) later was consecrated "The Cradle," wherein the idea of the DRT was born. The cousins, in sympathy with the forgotten heroes of the republic, began a campaign to reclaim past memories, tidy up and memorialize their last resting places, and spread the study of Texas history throughout the state. Rescuing the Alamo in San Antonio from destruction and commercial exploitation would eventually follow as women across the state organized chapters of the DRT. 57

To accomplish their goals the two women planned to solicit support from other women of Texas whose husbands or ancestors had helped the republic achieve and maintain its independence. Hally's father, Guy M. Bryan, president of the Texas Veteran Association, introduced the women to Mrs. Anson Jones, widow of the last president of the Republic of Texas, and to Mrs. Andrew Briscoe, widow of the Texas patriot. The organization was approved and on November 6, 1891, seventeen women, including Mrs. William Pitt Ballinger, assembled in Houston to form the Daughters of the Lone Star Republic. Betty was chosen a member of the Executive Committee that drew up the organization's constitution and by-laws.58 From November until April of the following year, the charter members sent out circular letters to each member of the Texas Veteran Association and to "prominent ladies in different localities who [were] eligible, urging them to qualify and organize local chapters in their communities...."59

The first annual meeting of the DRT took place on April 20, 1892, in Lampases in concert with the Texas Veteran Association. Meeting separately
at the Methodist church, they decided to change the name to the Daughters of
the Republic of Texas. Mrs. Anson Jones became the DRT's first president,
Mrs. Briscoe, its first vice-president, while Betty Ballinger agreed to serve,
fittingly, as historian general. The official purposes of the organization were
then spelled out: To perpetuate the memory and spirit of the men and
women (!) who achieved and maintained the independence of Texas; to
encourage historical research into the earliest records of Texas; and to
promote the celebration of Independence Day (March 2) and San Jacinto Day
(April 21).60

The next year Betty Ballinger delivered the keynote address in
Houston to the DRT in which she explained the rationale behind the forming
of such an organization of Texas women. Her words are most instructive in
that they display the longing that women felt to be a significant part of the
celebration of patriotism.

Houston and San Jacinto! What Texan can hear
those words and not feel his heart beat higher? A
woman in this generation must be dear indeed who
does not hear from all sides appeals to her to come
forward and bear her fair share of the heat and
burden of the day. The dullest of us is set to
wondering where lies woman's duty to the State.
For the women of other States I cannot speak.
Texas, our home, has an individuality possessed by
no other State. Alone she has achieved her
independence and stood erect in her own strength a
free Republic. ...Her boundary lines are drawn red
with the blood of her oldest sons — the blood of our
fathers.61

Having established that women wanted to be included, indeed had a
duty to bear part of the burden, she then outlined how, within the confines
of convention, Texas women could accomplish this. "The material welfare of Texas is secure," she mused, "Her future is in the hands of her sons. Daily they go forth to achieve great things, and we must not blame them if, strong in their own strength, dazzled by the splendor of the present, they have somewhat forgotten the . . . past" Not so, with women, she announced. She mistakenly concluded in 1893 that women would have no part in creating the material future of the state. 62

[Woman's] work lies at home. Surrounded by the history of the family life, it is her duty to keep alive the sacred fire of tradition. . . . At the fireside, and for the most part in the school room, the children are hers. . . . Our duty lies plain before us. Let us leave the future of Texas to our brothers, and claim as our province the guarding of her holy past. . . . Let us love to study Texas history and teach it to her children until they shall have learned that Goliad is as glorious as Marathon, and San Jacinto as sacred as Bunker Hill. Let us teach the boys of . . . Stephen F. Austin. . . . Let us teach our girls to revere the memory of those noble women... who amidst the hardships and roughness of frontier life were ever true gentlewomen.

Then she outlined the rest of woman's duty: "Let us seek out the graves of our heroes and having found them, let us care for them with grateful reverence. Be ours the duty to visit it and mark the spots where Texas was won for us, Gonzales, the Alamo, Goliad, San Jacinto – milestones along the bloodstained path to freedom."63 The clear exposition of women's patriotic responsibilities was borne out of woman's cultural experience – home fires, children, reverence for family, gravetending, and glorification of historic heroes.

Betty Ballinger and other patriotic ladies in Galveston lost no time in
forming a local group, the Sidney Sherman Chapter, named for General
Sherman who fought at the Battle of San Jacinto, made his home in
Galveston, and sacrificed a son in the Battle of Galveston in 1863. The
organizing meeting took place at the home of his daughter, Mrs. J. M. O.
Menard, who also assumed the presidency of the chapter but due to illness
relinquished the office to Betty Ballinger. Before a year was out, the little
chapter had removed the remains of General Sherman and President Burnett
from the abandoned cemetery on the east end of the island to a plot donated
by the Lake View Cemetery Association. By 1894 the Daughters had raised
enough money to place a twenty-three-foot stone obelisk over their graves,
and they celebrated the event in one of the first public outpourings of
patriotic fervor expressed by the newly formed Daughters.

The ceremonial day, March 2, 1894, began with the arrival of a trainload
of guests from Houston, who were brought to the Garten Verein veranda
where a "dainty" breakfast of fried oysters, trout, potatoes, quail, green peas,
fruit, and assorted cakes for some sixty invited guests had been prepared by
the Sidney Sherman Chapter. Afternoon exercises began promptly at 2:30
with a procession of mounted police; a band; the Daughters and their guests;
clergymen; the mayor; aldermen; veterans of the Texas, Confederate, and
Union armies; school children; the Screwmen's Benevolent Association;
Carpenters and Joiners; Painters and Decorators; the Texas Labor Conference;
the fire department, and all of the city's orphans (in that order), who marched
in a body to the cemetery. The unveiling ceremonies attracted an estimated
1,600 people. Catholic Bishop Gallagher offered prayer, and Judge Norman G.
Kittrell of Houston eulogized the two patriots. Afterwards the DRT members
pronounced the affair "an interesting and important event."
It was exactly the kind of recognition the women so desperately needed and sought, always couching the desire for pageantry, ritual, and symbolism not in terms of enhanced self-esteem for women, which it was, but in terms of patriotism. Women had hit upon memorializing heroes as a means of elevating themselves in the eyes of a world that they admitted rewarded with material favor men's roles of aggression over women's roles of nurturance. Taking patriotic sentiment from their brothers and pushing it further, they hoped, in symbolic if not in real ways, to find equal prestige with men — not to be men, but to be valued as women the way men were valued by society.

It worked for a time, but the enthusiasm of leaving the future of Texas to the men while the women picked up the pieces of the past, for Galveston women at least, did not last. Membership in the Sidney Sherman chapter dipped from a high of forty-eight to a low of thirty-one after the storm. Projects such as the monuments to Sherman and Burnet were not as grand thereafter in Galveston; the glory was transferred to other parts of the state that had bigger, more impressive sites to preserve — Goliad, the Alamo, and the San Jacinto Battle Ground. Unveiling the Texas Heroes' Monument at Broadway and Rosenberg Avenue on April 21, 1900, at the behest of Henry Rosenberg, proved to be a momentous occasion for the city but not for the Texas Veterans or for the DRT, who except for the Sidney Sherman Chapter, were meeting in convention in San Antonio. Of course the local chapter promised to care for the heroes' monument, championed the cause of Texas history to the Galveston schools, convinced the school board to name elementary schools for Texas sites and heroes (Alamo, San Jacinto, Sam Houston, and Goliad schools), every year placed flowers and flags on the graves of Texas warriors, and began a project to place a marble slab marker on
each Texas veteran's grave. 67

Women from Galveston with time and money to spare on the DRT usually involved themselves in projects at the state level. Betty Ballinger and Cornelia Branch Stone, for example, pushed state senators to have statues of Sam Houston and Stephen F. Austin sculpted by the best known artist in Texas, Elisabet Ney, and erected in Statuary Hall at the Capitol in Washington, D.C. in 1903. 68 In this way patriotic-hereditary societies provided some women with a channel into state-level forums. The proximity to politicians and politics must have enhanced their desire to see women in the assembly, for Betty Ballinger eventually took the position that, indeed, women should be there.

Betty Ballinger stopped believing in the nonsense of leaving Texas to its sons alone. She understood better than most the value of women's active participation in community life; not only did she join the male dominated board of trustees of the Rosenberg Library and the Red Cross, she belonged to more women's groups than any other woman in the city. Each association she joined represented a different aspect of woman's public role: as president of the Woman's Aid Society of the First Baptist Church she understood women's church work; from membership on the board of lady managers of the Johanna Runge Free Kindergarten she understood women's benevolence; through membership in Colonial Dames, the DAR, and of course the DRT, she came to know women's longing for a share of patriotic pride; by founding the Wednesday Club and remaining an officer in the Women's Health Protective Association she learned well to appreciate both types of women's clubs — literary and civic; and by proclaiming the right of women to vote before an audience of 150 and serving as the suffrage society's first vice-
president in 1912, she signalled to the state that women also would share in the future of Texas.69

Born in the antebellum South, where cultural proscriptions confined ladies to the traditions of family, children, domesticity, and church, Betty Ballinger, an exemplar of southern womanhood, changed with the rise of a New South. Ironically, women's organizations such as the DRT, whose functions perpetuated domestic values, in fact encouraged women to gain greater exposure to public life, animating them to participate in the future of Texas through emphasis on education and maintenance of historic sites. Ironic, too, is that fact that southern women were complicated, did not fit into neat categories of progressive or conservative, and somehow lived with contradictions as great as blue book social codes and suffrage speeches. Yet they shared with women all over the nation the idea that they, as women, were culture carriers and transmittors. Men, they believed, would abandon the past for the future, would ignore the aesthetic for the practical, and would rather drive a hard bargain than teach a child poetry or history.

This notion that men would abandon the past was especially troubling to women who bore scars from a more recent national upheaval, the Civil War. The animus that drove women to join the United Daughters of the Confederacy was in many ways similar to that which impelled women to join the DRT—to educate the young with proper histories lest they forget the sacrifices of their fathers and mothers, to tend and mark the graves of fallen heroes, and to erect in regal monuments symbolic gestures of gratitude. But there were other concerns for Confederate daughters: aged veterans and female survivors of the war suffering from neglect needed care, and, of course, overarching all was the fact that there had been heroic struggles for
nationhood but no ultimate victory. Theirs was a Lost Cause in fact; Confederate Daughters would not let it be a cause lost to memory.

Nothing worried southern women more than to think that southern children might be subjected to "distorted" views contradictory to the "true" picture as presented by the UDC, guardians of the region's past. Mary Hunt Affleck, chairwoman of the textbook committee for the Texas Division of the UDC, exhorted her audience to concern itself with the selection of books for their children's schools and for their town libraries. "Southern schools should use such books bearing on literature that give proper emphasis to Southern productions; on civics, that discuss the deeper constitutional questions, as did the ante-bellum statesmen and jurists; on history that recognizes the great war of the sixties as a civil war, in which both sides were equally patriotic and both honest defenders of unsolved national questions, and in which neither was in rebellion." Histories that did not make the grade were "condemned," their expulsion from southern schools insisted upon by the UDC and often acted upon by Veterans of the Civil War in towns across Texas. Resolutions were passed in 1905 that propelled the Texas UDC, under the guidance of its president, Ida Smith Austin — First Presbyterian Sunday School teacher, YMCA Auxiliary and future YWCA president — to use its influence "as a body to have books teaching Southern authors and their works... in our public schools..." The result was a purging of southern schools and libraries of any history that did not present a "true history for the children of the South." 72

The Daughters of the Confederacy put substantial pressure on women's clubs in Texas, which were beginning to establish libraries in little towns across the state, to select carefully those histories, biographies, novels,
magazines, and volumes of literary criticism that were acceptable to southern views. The report from members of the Fortnightly Club of Brenham, Texas, to the annual meeting of the UDC stated boldly that its members were "true Southern ladies, all of whom are eligible to the Daughters of the Confederacy. Its policy has ever been to place upon the library shelves the very best of Southern literature. Especial attention has been paid to juvenile books pertaining to the growth and true history of our beloved Southland."73 The urgency Texas clubwomen felt in establishing libraries involved not only educating the public but also educating them according to southern prescriptions. The library movement was propelled by women who maintained guardianship over the ideas, literature, and history that might reside upon library shelves.

Open-mindedness that accompanies intellectual inquiry never presented itself for adoption among members of the UDC. The goal was propagandistic and was aimed at children who had never lived with slaves or experienced the war and who might at some future point endanger the region's collective memory with views critical of slavery or of the Lost Cause. Hence, the justification of nationhood, secession, and the description and adulation of "southern civilization" for the future of the region remained one of the UDC's most important missions. Mothers were singled out for special admonition. "I urge upon you as Southern mothers the sacred duty of teaching your children the truths of history and ask you to use as a home textbook the UDC Catechism written by our beloved Mrs. Cornelia Branch Stone. Its truths will sink so deeply into their young hearts that their after lives will be firmly imbued with the belief in a cause that was just."74

Cornelia Branch Stone, prominent Galveston clubwoman and former
president of the General UDC, wrote for the Texas Division a question and answer booklet, the "U.D.C. Catechism for Children." Its sale contributed substantially to the monument fund, another project that UDC members rigorously upheld, and was widely used among Galveston households to train and instruct young people in the proper history of the South. Typical passages included:

Question: "What causes led to the war between the States?"
Answer: The disregard on the part of the States of the North, for the rights of the Southern or slave-holding States."

Question: What were these rights?
Answer: The right to regulate their own affairs and to hold slaves as property.

Question: How were the slaves treated?
Answer: With great kindness and care in nearly all cases, a cruel master being rare, and lost the respect of his neighbors if he treated his slaves badly.

Question: What was the feeling of the slaves toward their masters?
Answer: They were faithful and devoted and were always ready and willing to serve them.

Question: How did they behave during the war?
Answer: They nobly protected and cared for the wives of soldiers in the field. They were always true and loyal.

To suggest that southern men would unnecessarily lead the region into a disastrous and futile war would bring dishonor on the family; to admit that slaves were mistreated or that slaves proved their objections to slavery by disloyalty during the war would have also disgraced family honor. When viewed from the very personal aspect of "home and family protection" that southern women upheld as their duty, the dissembling seems almost understandable. The notion that southern honor was a male ideal alone is indefensible given the evidence manifested by members of the UDC.
Southern women simply could not admit to themselves or to their children that their forebears had erred; to do so would disgrace the family. The logical extension of this cultural trait was to invest an entire region with glory and honor.76

A stereotypical lecture given in 1916 by Historian General of the UDC, Mildred Lewis Rutherford, justified, whitewashed, and carefully revised southern history. She baldly stated that "the selling of slaves in the South did not separate mother and child as often or with as much cruelty as did the slave trafic [sic] in Africa. . . . There was no such thing as chattel slavery in the South." Reconstruction came in for severe criticism. "This unwise policy [Reconstruction government] was the real blow aimed at the overthrow of the civilization of the Old South. The men of the South were then put under military discipline which actually tied their hands and only the Ku Klux, the 'Chivalry of the Old South,' could break these bonds that fettered them."77 The seriousness of the fact that southern men perpetrated violence in the form of war and later in vigilante groups compelled southern women (including Galvestonians) to practice a kind of self-delusion, to pretend that the Old South held no imperfections, to insist that slaves were treated fairly, and that violence on the part of whites was fully justified. It was a subterfuge that produced no guilt, for the women were totally convinced that they were correct. Moreover, they again were duty bound by southern cultural traditions to preserve the honor of their ancestors and family. Caught up as they were in the traditions of cultural transmission, southern women had no choice but to defend, preserve, and protect southern civilization wherein their ancestry, family, and pride resided. Protection of family was the driving force behind their compulsion to preserve "true history." The motives for
producing shiboleths for southern schools and libraries was a very personal one, bound inextricably with southern women's cultural traditions of family honor, protection of the home and homeland, and grave site memorialization of loved ones.

Galveston women took seriously the admonition to train children in southern truths. A children's auxiliary to the local UDC chapter was set up in 1910 by Mrs. David Killough, where children of UDC members attained proper southernerizing at least once a month. James S. Hanna recounts that his boyhood was filled with such attempts to construct his thinking along proper channels. Apparently it worked, for he wrote of the "shameful atrocities that occurred during the period of Reconstruction." But his reminiscences betray a certain cynicism toward the method of indoctrination. "I, and my sister Margaret, Dorothy and all of the other children of the prominent Southern families of Galveston were drafted into [the children's auxiliary of the UDC], and for several years had to attend monthly meetings where we were compelled to listen to accounts of the brave deeds of our ancestors, and wind up the meetings singing "Dixie."78

Southern songs, ballads, and patriotic anthems were essential to the preservation of oral traditions from the Old South, and member of the UDC, also caught up in the musical culture peculiar to women, understood this better than most. Attempts to revive and bring into popular usage songs of their childhood were facilitated by their own singing and by their admonition to others. Their annual meetings rang with renditions of the Bonnie Blue Flag whose stanzas repeat "Hurrah for southern rights" and old ballads such as Annie Laurie, and Ben Bolt and Lily Dale. Children needed to learn these songs, the members insisted, for emotional ties to the old
homeland are often best bound through music and lyric. They romanticized the "old songs that black mammy crooned to drowsy children, when gray heads were golden, and starlit dusks [were] odorous with lilacs, clove pinks, and old-fashioned Southern roses." "Oh Daughters of the Confederacy," they pleaded, "open your old music books before your descendants, and strike upon the harps of the past, and teach them in home and school, the fireside songs and grand old battle hymns of the Southland, while time plays softly on the pipes of peace."79 Music had its patriotic uses as well.

The Galveston UDC chapter, known as the Veuve Jefferson Davis chapter, was established in 1895 at the instigation of Mollie Macgill Rosenberg, who remained its president until she died in 1917. Within three years it had enrolled 100 members and by 1908 had reached its peak membership of 390. The passage of time and the death of Old South and Civil War contemporaries thinned the ranks by 1921 to 100 members. Mollie Rosenberg, widow of financier/philanthropist Henry Rosenberg, is best known for two things: for furnishing and supplying the interior artwork that portrayed women in prominent Christian roles in Grace Episcopal Church and for presiding in queenly fashion over the Veuve Jefferson Davis chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy. Like many of her contemporaries in the organization she was born and raised in comfort, living her childhood in the ancestral home in Hagerstown, Maryland. Her family endured deprivation and hardship during the war as four brothers fought under southern skies and as she and her sisters survived Union occupation. It was through these experiences that she came to live a life devoted to the perpetuation of southern cultural values. Grace Episcopal Church received the benefits of her spiritual devotion to an aristocratic southern church, and the UDC gained its
most generous and ardent patroness. As if epitomizing a genteel feminine culture, Mollie Rosenberg, one of the wealthiest women on the island, spread her fortune only among select semiprivate organizations. In both cases she made sure the emphasis was on women and family. While we can not pretend that this constitutes a feminist political perspective, it does represent, nonetheless, a concentration on women's values that tended to enrich their self-esteem while at the same time locking them into an ecclesiastical and regional conservatism. The elevation of women as disciples of Christ and as guardians of Old South values and culture comes from the same piece of cloth — that of southern women's culture.

Mollie Rosenberg expressed her devotion to the Lost Cause through her maternalism over the local chapter. As president she not only presided over meetings and influenced the agenda and activities of the chapter but she also was in a position to shower the chapter with gifts. Her authority allowed her to play the role of lady bountiful — from stationary to pianos — without appearing to "buy" the chapter. "Again our gracious president has given us evidence of her continued and generous care, and at her own expense provided official stationary, of beautiful quality, and complete and personal design, for the use of her official family," wrote one grateful member, who saw more in the term "daughters" than simply the official appellation.

Rather than meet in a church parlor or in someone's home, Rosenberg built a fully furnished meeting hall on her property, named it Macgill Memorial Hall for her parents (where her mother's wedding dress remained on display), and insisted that the chapter conduct its business under her wing. Cornelia Branch Stone best described the scene:

Her boundless generosity gave no pause, but filled
[the hall] with one hundred chairs, a cabinet in oak for relics, a handsome bookcase, a beautiful and convenient desk, ... and then she crowned this wonderful bounty by the splendid gift of a piano that our lives here may be full of melody. In the corner closet ... will be found the brooms in two sizes, which is a reminder that royal gifts require royal care.\textsuperscript{82}

Many of the symbols of women's culture abounded: a cabinet for relics, a piano for musical entertainment, and brooms to suggest a tidy home. Although the officers were elected annually, her office may as well have been self-perpetuating. One indication of the group's conservatism rests on the fact that no other women's club surviving to the twentieth century allowed one "patron saint" to dominate its activities. Yet, no one dared oust their patroness from her position. In effect the organization not only revered the culture of the Old South, it practiced it as well, perpetuating a form of matriarchy, and, as long as enthusiasm lasted for the club, a conservative hierarchy among women that would barely be challenged by New South progressivism.

Besides Mollie Rosenberg, the local chapter's two most influential and prominent members were Ida Smith Austin, who became president of the Texas Division of the UDC in 1905, and Cornelia Branch Stone, president-general of the UDC from 1907 to 1909.\textsuperscript{83} Ida Austin remained the teacher of the Bible Class named for her at the First Presbyterian Church; curiously the class motto, "With God everything; without God nothing," was adopted by the Veuve Jefferson Davis chapter of the UDC, every chapter letterhead containing this imprint. While it is well known that the connection between religion and the Lost Cause found expression in civil religion, in this case the direct transference of the Presbyterian Bible class motto to the Daughters of
the Confederacy, surrounded by the symbols of the Confederate flag,
confirmed for women the sanctity and religiosity of their attempts to preserve
the memory of southern antebellum civilization. Just as Mollie Rosenberg
had provided a home so the Daughters would never be far from the hearth,
so Ida Austin reaffirmed their close affiliation to the church and legitimated
their mission with the symbols of divine guidance. As heirs and guardians of
family traditions, as enthusiastic participants in church endeavors, and as
preservers of "southern civilization," the Daughters of the Confederacy wove
a conservative tapestry of blue and gray, heavily decorated with the symbols
of religion, home, and ancestry.

Cornelia Branch Stone, born in Nacogdoches in 1840, and already
mentioned for her work in creating the "U.D.C. Catechism," spent much of
her time in establishing memorials for Confederate soldiers and sailors (she
sold over 1000 copies of her catechism in one year, which helped pay for the
monument in Galveston), in promoting the Confederate Veterans' Home in
Austin, Texas, and in serving on the board of managers for the Home for
Wives and Widows of Confederate Veterans also in Austin. Although
memorials honored the dead - and women particularly felt the need to
perpetuate the memory of fallen heroes - homes served the living. The need
for a home for Confederate women, indeed, the need for benevolent
institutions of any kind for elderly women, was great. Although imbued
with exclusivity, allowing only relatives of veterans to reside in the home,
the UDC was one of few organizations that cared about the future of its
elderly women as well as its veterans. Every annual meeting brought tales of
hardship for women who had once served the Cause but who had ended up
poorly. "Grandma Harold ... who ministered to the wounded soldiers after
the Battle of Lookout Mountain ... finally died in the Bexar county poor house and was buried in a potter's field, all for want of this Home and the proper care of the U.D.C." The women passed biblical injunctions recounting the buried talents that "have never been dug up yet" and admonished the chapters to send in their donations. 86 Land for the Home was finally purchased in Austin in 1906 and a $10,000 structure built to house the women. Eventually maintenance of the Home was assumed by the state. 87

Although remembered for her involvement in Confederate Homes, perhaps Stone's most important connection was to the women's club movement. As first vice-president of the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs (TFWC), she chaired the committee to secure a poll tax, "one-fourth of which [was] paid to the school fund of Texas." Then serving as chairperson of the TFWC's education committee she worked indefatigably for clubs to increase their interest in education and to provide scholarships for students to universities. Her work toward education bespoke of her interest in the future, but a future tinged with the cultural baggage of the past. In her position as both UDC president and leader of the Texas women's club movement she was able to marshall an impressive following for the UDC's brand of truth. In this she was able through her affiliations to influence a generation of young southerners in the verities of southern civilization. 88

The Daughters of the Confederacy have been credited with perpetuating behavior that epitomized southern womanhood. Well educated, upper-middle class women banded together to raise money for commemoration, rituals, and education, and to keep alive the memory of heroic service rendered by men and women during wartime. 89 UDC members who assumed officerships took their responsibilities to the Lost
Cause far more seriously than one would expect, which resulted in deadly earnest elections for the honor of presiding over the organization at state and national levels. In the process of campaigning and promoting themselves for candidacy, albeit with the trappings of gentility, some abandoned their traditional ladylike decorum and acted more like the aggressive leaders they in fact were. Mollie Rosenberg conveyed genuine shock when she unmasked as "unladylike" the actions of a candidate for state president from another city. "Miss Adelia A. Dunwant has been most insulting to Mrs. Sampson. She tried to 'walk over her with both feet' ... and threatened to tear her to pieces in her own home, did you ever hear of any thing more dreadful? . . . Col. Dunwant says his sister shall be the next state president if it takes every cent he has. Can you inform me how money can buy votes of a true Southern lady?" 90 Of course, Mollie Rosenberg knew very well how money can buy votes; she bought them every year for her election as chapter president, but her methods employed the usual device of benign benevolence rather than aggressive vote mongering.

Even within their own chapter tensions and rivalry broke out between Ida Austin and Cornelia Branch Stone, which must have aggrieved Mollie Rosenberg, who treated them with equal consideration. Cornelia Stone sought the office of president-general of the UDC in 1906. Ida Austin served as a delegate to the twelfth annual meeting of the UDC and carried with her a number of votes from members of the Texas delegation. When Cornelia's name was proferred for election, it became clear that Ida Austin would not give those votes entrusted to her to Stone; in fact, the proxies had been specifically pledged to another candidate. Stone declared that if the Texas delegation did not vote for her unanimously, then she would withdraw her
name from nomination, which she did. Although Stone finally won her election in 1907, she never forgave Ida Austin for her "principles" and circulated a "defamatory" letter criticizing Austin's work in the chapter and as Texas division president in 1905. This put Austin in the position of having to exonerate herself among the 388 members of the local chapter and among the 5,000 Texas members. Aside from the unpleasantness of the whole situation, it points up an interesting fact: that in contests for high office southern ladies, even Daughters of the Confederacy, displayed a telling aggression in battling for positions of authority and prestige. While there may be nothing new in this observation from our twentieth-century perspective, these situations of exposure to the machinations of politics for some turn-of-the-century clubwomen increased their political awareness, sharpened their parliamentary skills, and honed their talents for larger battles outside the arena of an all-woman's world. As Anne Scott stated: "Clubs also became a training school for women who wanted to serve in public life."  

In the halcyon years of the 1890s, wealthy Galveston families enjoyed the fruits of their merchant capital. They lived in elegant homes that towered over boulevards lined with palms and oleanders and sent their daughters to Europe for musical and artistic training. Women from this class ventured into the world of secular clubs. The Ladies' and Girls' Musical Clubs, the Wednesday Club, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, and the Daughters of the Confederacy emerged to grant women a separate but elevated world of refinement in a rapidly changing society. These organizations differed entirely from
benevolent institutions; their principal purpose was not charity. And while they differed from one another, as well, in mission, they shared a commonality in bringing well-to-do women together for esteem building and education.

In every case women built their clubs and societies on the foundation of women's culture. Musical and artistic emphasis found expression in clubs where performance and edification raised their art to community-level acceptance. Women's artistic cultural pursuits were legitimated via churches, women's clubs, and public community concerts. A calling to self-improvement brought a select number of women together to explore first the great literary masters, and later the world at their doorsteps. Interest in the position of women turned them into careful articulators of the needs for social change, even as they remained firmly embedded in the social hierarchy. Finally, an urge to join in the great patriotic celebration and to exclude the declasse, led Galveston women to found and to join patriotic-societies wherein the great celebrations of history could be domesticated. Each of these endeavors shared a common basis in woman's culture, and each woman sought elevation for herself in the protected environment of exclusivity. Association among the town's elite led to a certain upper- and upper-middle class sorosis, a combination of female sympathies for one another that presaged the more open democratic women's community of the twentieth century. Certainly culture and self-improvement were the common themes of these late-nineteenth century associations, but the clubs retained their nineteenth-century "blue-blood" identification.

Beyond elitism and self-edification, however, there were major differences between literary clubs and patriotic-hereditary groups. Music and
literary clubs remained separated into discrete groups of women but brought into their midst intellectual stimuli. Music, plays, novels, histories, mostly objects of the world outside the separate sphere were incorporated into their club life and hence their lives. They adopted patterns of feminine behavior to deal with the material, but they also tried to use this material to change women's attitudes, behavior, and world outlook. Literary clubs invited women to change themselves in preparation for their emergence into the public realm. Consequently, literary clubs provided unconscious training for its members in the world of ideas and public action, a world that would encompass their future.

Patriotic club women responded similarly to the stimuli that provided their raison d'être. Battles, treaties, constitutions, and heroes constituted manifestations of a world that men for the most part occupied. In attempting to integrate these into their club life, the "Daughters" first turned them into symbols -- relics, flags, portraits, histories. Then they transformed the symbols into domesticated vestiges of male events by shrouding them in the winding cloths of woman's culture. Rather than allowing the events of the past to change them, the "Daughters" sought to domesticate the events, to interject symbolically, ritualistically, and religiously the importance of womanhood into the patriotic celebration. To say that they domesticated patriotism does not go far enough. They sought no important future for women with these acts; they sought instead to entomb the events of the past, symbols really, in feminine caskets. The metaphor of death, used here to illustrate their worldview, surrounded their activities as well-- marking graves, memorializing fallen heroes, erecting statues, and building homes for people to die in. Perhaps there was a noble purpose in seeking to place
women next to, around, even above historic moments, but women needed at that point to transform themselves for the twentieth century, not change history to fit a version of their domestic ideal. In terms of preparation for the future, literary clubs served women better, not just for what they studied but for the way they handled and dealt with the material in their midst.

Galveston clubwomen before 1900 had not yet discovered civic activism; rather the 1890s proved to be a wellspring decade, as women gathered together and focused on self-improvement and commitment to the preservation of patriotic ideals. Altogether the estimated number of women in clubs of the type mentioned here reached 300 in 1900. In the pre-1900 period women's clubs remained small, just large enough to be accommodated by a drawing room or a church parlor. By 1915, with the introduction of four large and more democratic women's organizations, the numbers swelled to approximately 3,500.

The early women's clubs and the boards of lady managers for benevolent institutions were not democratic in nature. The women continued their exclusivity either by limiting the size of the organization, by voting on new members, or by imposing ancestral safeguards. True, the Wednesday Club after 1900 included more teachers and other genteel working women and the Daughters of the Confederacy had the potential for greater openness than the older patriotic-hereditary organizations, but their by-laws insisted upon some form of exclusion. Throughout the Progressive Era, therefore, some club women maintained a conservative or even reactionary posture to the progressive ideals of direct democracy or to the inclusion of women from all classes as equals in their own organizations. With the advent of progressive civic reform clubs open to all white women, Galveston female elitism
was challenged. But we must always keep in mind that social exclusivity was a strong feature of southern women's club life well into the twentieth century.

A few women from Galveston campaigned and won election to associational offices at the state and national levels. Cornelia Branch Stone, Ida Smith Austin, Betty Ballinger, and Julia Washington successfully advanced beyond the local club to associate, plan, and coordinate on a greater scale. Their skill as administrators and parliamentarians, and in convincing women of their leadership abilities, afforded them opportunities for service and exposure to a broader political world for women. In a few cases, notably with the patriotic societies, women leaders who rose to state and national levels were empowered to approach the seats of male political power to request funding for their projects and to view firsthand the machinery of government. Indicative of the conservative nature of these groups, however, only Betty Ballinger joined in the struggle for women's right to elect their own representatives.

The shift for clubwomen from self-educators to progressive civic reformers occurred at different times in communities across the South. In Galveston none of the women's clubs or boards established before 1900 ventured into what may be called civic reform work after the dawning of the twentieth century. Perhaps this class of self-satisfied women needed to be shaken from their sunny complacency, for models of progressive reform work in other cities seemed not to disturb their serenity. It would take a great disaster and then the instruction of clubwomen from outside the city to help Galvestonians see opportunities for civic activism and civic reform.
Table 5:1  Activist Women’s Membership in Select Women’s Clubs by Church Affiliation, 1890 to 1920

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church Affiliation</th>
<th>Wednesday Club</th>
<th>Ladies Musical Club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Episcopal</td>
<td>41 (46.59 %)</td>
<td>32 (65.31 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>11 (12.5)</td>
<td>6 (12.24)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>10 (11.36)</td>
<td>2 (4.08)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>7 (7.95)</td>
<td>1 (2.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>7 (7.95)</td>
<td>1 (2.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>5 (5.68)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>4 (4.54)</td>
<td>4 (8.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Church</td>
<td>1 (1.14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>1 (1.14)</td>
<td>2 (2.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<th>DAR</th>
<th>UDC</th>
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<td>52 (100 %)</td>
<td>45 (100 %)</td>
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Note: DRT = Daughters of the Republic of Texas. DAR = Daughters of the American Revolution. UDC = United Daughters of the Confederacy.

Source: Compiled from 370 activist women who were officers of or belonged to at least one community-oriented women’s organization.
1Found in the Wednesday Club Records (Rosenberg Library).

2Galveston Tribune, October 22, 1898.

3Dallas Morning News, October 18, 1897. I am indebted to Elizabeth Y. Enstam for bringing this citation to my attention.


7Galveston Daily News, April 26, 1899.


9Seaholm, "Earnest Women," 85 (quotation); Blair, Clubwoman as Feminist, 15, 118.


11Ibid. 27.


13Galveston Tribune, December 13, 1930.


15Ibid.

16Frederick Roeck to Kate Waters Roeck, July 23, 1881, Waters-Roeck-Thompson Papers, in the possession of Mrs. Henry W. Cave, New York, New York.

17Eleanor Roeck to Kate Waters Roeck, September 8, 1889, ibid.

18City Directories, 1886-1910; By-Laws of the Ladies' Musical Club; Programs, Ladies' Musical Club, 1899-1905, Subject Files (Rosenberg Library).

Betty, never one to lose momentum concerning women's activities, also co-founded with her cousin Hally Bryan, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas that same year.


Betty and Lucy Ballinger Mills were also related to the state's first patriot, Stephen F. Austin, through their mother's sister, Laura Jack who married Guy Morrison Bryan, nephew of Stephen F. Austin. "Guy Morrison Bryan," *Handbook of Texas*, 1: 233.

The Ballinger daughters and Hally Bryan were descendants of William Houston Jack, noted Texas patriot, and Captain James Jack who, legend has it, carried the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, written May 20, 1775, from North Carolina to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia.

*Fifty Years of Achievement: History of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas* (Dallas: Banks Upshaw and Co., [1942]), 15-17. The Wednesday Club was founded on October 7, 1891.

"The Wednesday Club of Galveston, Texas," compiled in 1948 by Corinne Smith and revised in 1978 by Mrs. Elizabeth Head, Mrs. James E. Johnson, and Mary Tramonte, typescript history, in the possession of Elizabeth Head, Galveston.


*Galveston Daily News*, April 26, 1899.


The members met twice monthly; at each meeting they reserved one-half hour for business and the rest for paper readings and discussion.


Minutes, Wednesday Club, March 16, 1904 to May 19, 1909. Quotations from April 7,
1909.


35 Christian, History, 42.

36 Wednesday Club Minutes, December 4, 1907.

37 Wednesday Club Program, 1905-1906.


39 Wednesday Club Program, 1912-1913.

40 Wednesday Club Program, 1912-1913.

41 Wednesday Club Programs, 1912-1913, 1913-14.


43 Ibid., 137.

44 Ibid., 142.


46 McComb, Galveston, 138. Ironically, Henry M. Robert, a civil engineer, had worked in Galveston on various projects from the harbor to the seawall between 1899 and 1901.

47 For an endorsement of the separate sphere as training ground for solidarity among women see Estelle Freedman, "


I am indebted to Elliott J. Corn who writes of the cultural adaptations of southern backcountrymen to the hardships of the frontier and to their exclusion from gentry dueling culture. Although there is little resemblance between southern post-bellum urban ladies and his antebellum backcountrymen, their mutual needs to participate in the national culture led them to invent patterns of behavior that enhanced their egos. "Gouge and Bite, Pull Hair and Scratch": The Social Significance of Fighting in the Southern Backcountry," American Historical Review 90 (February 1985), 18-43, quotation on p. 30.

Betty Ballinger was the granddaughter of William H. Jack, veteran of the Battle of San Jacinto and statesman during the Republic years. Hally Bryan was the grandniece of Stephen F. Austin. Fifty Years of Achievement, 51.

Southern women by tradition had been concerned with the care and upkeep of their ancestors' graves. The fact that these women were incensed by the neglect of the patriots' graves was in part a consequence of the responsibilities that women felt devolved upon them. See Shirley Abbott, Womenfolks: Growing Up Down South (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1983), 1-3.

Fifty Years of Achievement, 50-51. Henderson King Yoakum, History of Texas from Its First Settlement in 1685 to Its Annexation to the United States in 1846 (2 vols.; 1855).

Fifty Years of Achievement, 51-52; Galveston Tribune, August 29, 1924; Galveston Daily News, December 18, 1921.

Constitution and By-laws of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (Houston: Gray's Printing office, 1892);

Constitution and By-Laws, DRT, 1892; Proceedings of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas Held at Houston, Harris County, Texas, April 20th and 21st, 1892 (Houston: n.pub., 1893).

Proceedings, DRT, 1893, p. 2.

Ibid.

Ibid., 2-3.

The chapter began November 1891 with eight women; dues were fixed at dollar a year. By the following year the chapter claimed forty-two members, by 1894, forty-seven. The San Jacinto Chapter (Houston) made immediate plans to buy the San Jacinto Battle Grounds for memorialization and preservation. Constitution and By-Laws, DRT, 1892. Proceedings, DRT, 1893, p. 4.

Sidney Sherman Chapter, DRT, Memorial of the Unveiling Ceremonies of the Monument to David G. Burnet and Sidney Sherman (Galveston: Clarke and Courts, 1894), 8-9.
66Ibid., 3.

67Proceedings of the DRT... 1898; 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903; Fifty Years of Achievement, 107-110; Galveston Daily News, December 18, 1921. According to the Galveston Tribune, February 2, 1923, DRT members were instrumental in persuading Henry Rosenberg of the importance of leaving a monument to Texas heroes.

68Brief History of the Work of Placing in the Hall at Washington D.C., the Statues of General Houston and Stephen F. Austin," typescript, Cornelia Branch Stone Scrapbook (Rosenberg Library).


70Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Convention of the Texas Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy ... 1905 (Weatherford, Texas: Herald Publishing Co., 1906), 50.

71Ibid., 52. Gaines M. Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 186-88, notes that the UDC became something of an annoyance to professional historians trying to reconstruct the history of the South.

72Ibid., 50. In minutes to the Galveston UDC chapter, a letter to the president from J. William Jones, Secretary and Superintendent of the Confederate Memorial Association in Richmond, listed "suitable Confederate books to be used in the libraries...." Minutes, Veuve Jefferson Davis Chapter, March 3, 1905, United Daughters of the Confederacy Veuve Jefferson Davis Chapter #17 Records; hereinafter cited as UDC Records (Rosenberg Library).

73Ibid., 52.

74Ibid., 51.

75Cornelia Branch Stone, "U. D. C. Catechism for Children" UDC Records (Rosenberg Library).

76Bertrand Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor:


78James S. Hanna, What Life Was Like When I Was a Kid (San Antonio: The Naylor Co.), 74.


80Her behavior toward the chapter is best described as paternalistic, but this term is not really suitable for women.
Minutes, Veuve Jefferson Davis Chapter, August 24, 1901.


City Directories, 1898-1921; Mary B. Poppenheim, The History of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (2 vols.; Richmond: Garret and Massey, 1938), I, 3.


Proceedings of the UDC, 1905, p. 86.

Ibid., 46-47.

Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Convention of the Texas Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy ... 1906 (Weatherford, Texas: Herald Publishing Co, 1907), 58; Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Convention of the Texas Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy ... 1909 (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1910), 40-47.

Mrs. James Britton Gantt, "Mrs. Cornelia Branch Stone," clipping from The Confederate Veteran in Cornelia Branch Stone's Scrapbook.


Mollie M. Rosenberg to Ida Austin, August 24, 1901, UDC Records.

Minutes, Veuve Jefferson Davis Chapter, January 5, 1906, February 2, 1906.

Scott, Southern Lady, 162.
Probably the best known fact about Galveston, Texas, besides singer Glenn Campbell's lyrics about its "sea winds blowin'," is that the city was nearly demolished by hurricane in 1900 – the worst natural disaster in the history of the North American continent. Historians of the Progressive Era will quickly recall that out of the destruction citizens implemented structural reform and turned a formerly aldermanic governing body into a five-man city commission. Hence city commission government was born, a practical and utilitarian method of governance that took the nation, if not by storm, at least by drizzle as some 500 mostly small- to medium-sized towns and cities across the nation adopted the efficient and "progressive" plan.¹

Less well known, indeed lurking in obscurity, is the fact that the adoption of this governing political body was not the only change to follow the storm. Six months prior to the installation of the five city commissioners, sixty-six upper- and upper-middle-class white women survivors of the storm created the city's first civic reform organization, the Women's Health Protective Association (WHPA). Although accustomed to working in groups quietly for the public good, these women found that after the storm they too held a vision for a restored Galveston, and through their newly created reform association they began to vie openly with city hall for the power to shape public policy.

Some may view public policy as determined solely by decisions from officially appointed or elected bodies and individuals. The definition of public policy employed here is broader and includes the actions of private groups and
voluntary associations that ultimately affected city life. Urban historians have traditionally asked how members of powerful and influential urban groups, who were not elected city officials, have "realized their own will in a communal action". This is an especially appropriate question when considering the activities of influential upper- and middle-class white women's organizations of the Progressive Era and their ability to effect change. Probably at no other time in the history of organizational life were women better able to implement their vision of civic improvement. Yet few historians outside the realm of women's history have given attention to the political and quasi-political activities of women in urban areas and related their actions to the creation of public policy.

Considerable debate exists over who held power at the community level during the Progressive Era: Did a single elite or competing elites retain power? Was power invested in a ward-boss system? Or was power more widely dispersed among laboring, immigrant, charitable, and women's groups, especially with the advent of rapid urbanization? The debate shifts slightly when discussing cities of the New South, which in most cases were not governed by professional politicians or by city bosses and their machines, but rather by merchants, tradesmen, and professionals. Even though local governance after 1900 may have been in the hands of legally elected or appointed officials, Progressive Era groups with a host of new issues emerged to challenge city hall. Labor unions, commercial associations, chambers of commerce, even private cabals of well-placed businessmen and lawyers influenced and shaped the direction of city life. Against this milieu of competing interest groups, women in organizations emerged as relative novices in the pursuit of their goals.
In Galveston after the storm the structural reform of city government allowed women to gain entrance to public policy making despite the fact that they were not voters. The women read the agendas of national women's clubs and associations, and they were influenced by national progressive trends; this gave them access to a vision of reform beyond their own community. How they managed to choose their own goals for Galveston and to gain experience in their implementation, how successful they were in achieving them, how they interacted with the city commission, what tactics they used, and how the process of politicization affected them is the subject of this chapter. Employing Galveston, Texas, as a case study has advantages, for while there were older interest groups at work in determining public policy after 1900, the storm was a catalyst in the creation of two new influential bodies -- the much-discussed city commission and the Women's Health Protective Association (WHPA). Although the WHPA was a private voluntary association outside the formal political structure and was concerned primarily with domestic issues, it gained sizable influence, even power, in the creation of public policy.

* * *

Galveston, like most mid-sized towns, had welcomed the new year never expecting that upon its emergence into the twentieth century the city would receive a blow from which it would never entirely recover. Newspaper accounts just prior to the storm of September 8, 1900, give no hint of the misfortune that would follow. Headlines chronicled the news from China: Americans were concerned over Russian aggression in northern China and found frightening the threat of attack by Chinese Boxers on Peking. While the United States government had committed five thousand Americans troops to
China, in another part of the world the Taft Commission had declared the Filippinos incapable of ruling themselves. On the domestic front, the papers showed concern over William Jennings Bryan running again on the Populist ticket. Locally, city officials quibbled over the latest census report that placed the city at 37,789 citizens -- too low a figure according to the compilers of the Galveston city directories. No headline indicated that a cataclysm was approaching. No front-page weather reports of impending disaster penetrated the calm.

Hints that there was a storm brewing in the Caribbean and traveling through the Gulf Coast reached the island on Friday, September 7. Storm-warning flags went up, and Dr. Isaac M. Cline, Chief of the Galveston Weather Bureau, issued news of the approaching hurricane to telephone callers. No defenses lined the coast except for a few salt cedars planted at shore's edge; no seawall protected the densely packed houses upon an island whose elevation stood no higher than nine feet at its tallest point. No lessons were learned from the hurricane of 1875 that brought winds of over 100 miles per hour and left 176 dead. Without precautions the city stood naked and vulnerable, waiting to be victimized by nature's cruel might.

Saturday morning brought mother-of-pearl skies and a mild wind that reached twenty-four miles per hour by 10 a.m. John Newman reported that the waters in the streets of the business section, where curbing was deliberately elevated, were up to his waist as early as noon. By 2 o'clock the waters were flooding homes and businesses. Ida Austin, who only the night before had given a "beautiful and well-attended moonlight fete" at her home on Market Street, noted then that the salt water "surged over the gallery driven by a furiously blowing wind. Trees began to fall, slate shingles, planks, and debris of
every imaginable kind were being hurled through the air. We brought our cow on the gallery to save her life," she wrote, "but soon had to take her in the dining room where she spent the night." Wind velocity increased to possibly 120 miles per hour that evening. The wind gauge atop the weather bureau registered 100 miles an hour before blowing away at 5:10 p.m. 8

The most intense period of the storm came between 8 and 9 p.m. when the barometer dropped to its lowest point; the storm still raged on, however, until the next morning. In the howling darkness homes were shattered, their occupants flung into the roily sea, some to survive, many to perish beneath the collapsing structures. Henry M. Wolfram, after securing safety for his wife and children in a brick building, returned to his home only to find the house lurching off its foundations. He managed "to grasp the rafters " and there spent the next five hours. Isaac M. Cline, after warning citizens of the impending disaster, found his own home in trouble, his wife drowned. St. Mary's Catholic Orphanage, built next to the sea on the island's West End, was completely washed away, 101 of the children and all of the sisters gone. One of the sisters died trying to save the children; she was found with nine orphans tied to her cincture. Henry Wolfram found that among those he met the morning after the storm, many who had ventured out to help others had lost their entire families and were left to recover alone. 9

When the survivors emerged from their shelters Sunday morning, they were greeted by scenes of incredible destruction. Sarah Littlejohn, daughter of school superintendent E. G. Littlejohn, described in wonderment the view from her home at 37th Street and Avenue O 1/2: "We looked out of the window and of all the beautiful homes that were between our house and the beach not one was left. It is just a clean sweep; nothing but desolation." Gid
Sherer exaggerated only slightly when he wrote that "Every house in the East End went in the storm, except a few large Buildings. You would not know the city now if you should see it." Ironically Sunday dawned bright and pleasant as if to mock the horror over which the day presided. "Oh what a glorious morning it was," wrote John Newman. "The sun spread its golden robe over a new creation. ...huge areas were entirely denuded of houses and trees, and the general aspect completely changed. Here and there were tangled masses of telephone wires and overhead electric cables. Huge piles of timber flung here, there, and everywhere by the raging elements during the previous night -- demolished human dwelling houses, stables, byres, and warehouses, under which were buried beneath the debris both man and beast. Sorrow and sadness everywhere. Parents searching for their children, among the dead and injured. Weeping children looking for their parents. Husbands inquiring for their wives, and heartbroken almost hysterical women [searching] for their beloved ones."10

In the wake of the September 1900 storm Galveston was unlike any other city in the nation, north or south. At least 6,000 of 38,000 citizens had lost their lives in a fifteen-hour period. Approximately 4,000 or nearly two-thirds of the city's structures were demolished or were so badly damaged they could not be salvaged, and between $17 and $30 million worth of property was destroyed. Water completely covered the island and flooded the city to a level in some places of thirty-one feet when the tide from the Gulf of Mexico met the Galveston Bay. Structures closest to the Gulf had the least chance of survival; winds exceeding 100 miles per hour drove fifteen- to thirty-foot waves against small clapboard houses, most of which could not withstand the force of water and wind and collapsed with their hapless occupants either buried under the
debris or flung out into the tide. Over half of those living near the beach chose not to seek shelter within the city's more substantial buildings, leading to extraordinary loss of life. The hurricane winds loosened slate tiles from roofs, which acted as lethal missiles mutilating those caught in their path. Collapsed structures became battering rams against the houses north of them, as wind, water, and debris forced the destruction of homes, schools, and public buildings. 11

Mounds of shattered buildings accumulated in a semi-circle and ringed the commercial and fashionable East End residential district for three miles, creating something approximating a protective barricade. The storm left in its wake mountains of detritus containing the remains of houses, furnishings, dead animals, and sodden human corpses. Survivors sought their dead and buried them in shallow graves in any available plot of ground. Disposal of the unclaimed was left to the hastily devised Committee of Public Safety. At first the bodies were taken to a makeshift morgue near the docks. Volunteers searched for identification and allowed survivors to view the remains for signs of their loved ones. But as the day heated up, and as the numbers of dead swelled past 500, the futility of providing decent burial became apparent. Initially volunteers tried interment, but the ground was too saturated for mass graves. Despite a shortage of horses and "willing hands" to carry the dead, the first 700 bodies collected in the makeshift morgues were gathered and sent out on barges for burial at sea. But the remains washed ashore. Ida Austin captured the moment: "The mournful dirges of the breakers which lashed the beach, the sobbing waves and sighing winds, God's great funeral choir, sang their sad requiem around the dead. The sea as though it could never be satisfied with its gruesome work washed these bodies back upon the shore, the
waves being the hearses that carried them in to be buried under the sand." 12

In the 88 degree heat of September corpses quickly reached a state of putrefaction before the workers, bribed with whisky, could remove them from the tangled mounds. Finally at the insistent demand of the city's medical community, the Committee of Public Safety decided to burn the bodies in great funeral pyres across the devastated wasteland of the once thriving port city. The ghastly charnal mounds, as many as twelve at a time, burned for six weeks. Observers said that descriptions rendered by eyewitnesses were inadequate, although many tried to report the desolation. Fannie B. Ward of the Red Cross wrote, "Over on Galveston island, a long line of flame, mounting to the heavens, marked the burning of ruined homes and corpses; while other fires, in all directions on the mainland, told of similar ghastly cremations. ...Early in the morning a strange odor drew attention to a fresh funeral-pyre, only a few rods away.... That peculiar smell of burning flesh, so sickening at first, became horribly familiar within the next two months, when we lived in it and breathed it, ate it and drank it, day after day." Teams of men were pressed into working to clear the island of bodies and debris. They even worked on Sundays because, as the News reported, "It is a holy office to care for the dead and the health of the city demands that the work be continued without interruption until finished." In addition to problems with the dead, an estimated 10,000 living were left homeless; the city lacked water, electricity, gas, plus rail line and telegraph connection to the mainland; moreover, looting became a problem. 13

It is difficult to measure the shock and grief that citizens undoubtedly experienced in the aftermath of the disaster. Everyone had lost something; some had lost everything. Cases of insanity were reported by several
eyewitnesses, but more often people responded with determination to carry on with their lives. A certain stoicism marked the columns of the Galveston News as it editorialized about the city and its citizens:

The sorrows of the past few days are overwhelming and we all feel them and will continue to feel them so long as we live. It could not be expected that our friends and relatives and loved ones should be so suddenly torn from us without leaving scars from which those in the ranks of maturity can never recover. But it is all in the past now. We can not recall our dead thousands. Wherever they sleep ... we will love their memories and recall as long as we live the unspeakable and mysterious tragedy which destroyed them. But it must be remembered that we have more than 30,000 living, and many of these are children too young to have their lives and energies paralyzed by the disaster which has overtaken us. Our homes must be rebuilt, our schools repaired, and the natural advantages of the port must sooner or later receive our earnest attention. We have loved Galveston too long and too well to desert her in the hour of misfortune. Our distress and destitution are going to be relieved.... We must look to the light ahead.14

Part of the solution to mollifying the grief consisted of hard work. Ida Austin may have seemed prideful when she described the survivors at labor, but she was not inaccurate. "Galvestonians are a brave people and they are taking heart again and are busy trying to rehabilitate their city and their homes. The necessity of work for all classes has been the salvation of the city. ... Galveston will be rebuilt more beautiful, more massive, more enduring than before."15

The work of repair, restoration, and relief provided Galveston citizens not only curative relief but also examples of the ways in which a governing commission would function with voluntary groups. Clearly, disposal of bodies, relief of storm victims, and removal of debris were the city's first
priorities; the day after the disaster Mayor Walter C. Jones called a meeting of "prominent citizens" and appointed nine of the city's leading businessmen to form a Central Relief Committee with himself as chairman. Eventually six of the men were assigned specific tasks heading up departments of relief, finance, burial, hospitals, correspondence, and public safety. The Relief Committee (not to be confused with the Central Relief Committee), headed by W.A. McVitie, became a focal point of industry. Within hours after the general meeting the Relief Committee had met to "district" the city, to requisition food from local warehouses and grocers, to appoint a chairman for each ward who would be responsible for the establishment of supply stations for the distribution of food and for the removal of debris from the ward. "Any able-bodied man who will not volunteer for this work must not be fed," cautioned the committee instructions. For months members of the Relief and other temporary committees, including those added for clean-up and transportation, saw Galveston through the worst of the emergency. Thus in the crisis of the moment a prototype of a city commission was born. 16

An equally important prototype for women workers emerged through the Red Cross, led by the indomitable Clara Barton. On September 25 an item appeared in the News indicating that "a number of ladies met yesterday at the headquarters of the Red Cross society, on Twenty-fifth and Mechanic streets, to assist in the distribution of stores sent through that organization to the Galveston flood sufferers." Twenty-six women leaders, all active in Galveston's women's organizations, gathered determinedly to help where needed. Clara Barton paid them high tribute when she reported: "The ladies of the city, inspite of the shock, grief, and mutilated homes, came grandly to the work of relief, asking to form a Red Cross auxiliary and take charge of the
distributing stations in the various wards of the city, under the name of the Red Cross." 17

Once more the city was divided into twelve districts with a Red Cross supply station in each, headed by one of the women volunteers. In order to eliminate duplication of efforts, on September 27 the city "committee on relief, of which Mr. W. A. McVitie is chairman, ... and the ladies' relief committee, were amalgamated, and the Galveston auxiliary of the American National Red Cross was launched." It was decided to elect a "lady chairman in each ward, the gentlemen chairmen of the wards who have been working under the relief committee ...to continue their good work." But McVitie thought that the ladies should "predominate," as they could "do this work better than the men." It was true that the task of identifying the needy and provisioning them fell to women because women's benevolent societies had traditionally investigated the resources of the poor by direct visitation, and women were thought to be better suited for this sensitive work. But at a meeting the next day, McVitie made it clear that involving the women was also a means of reducing expenses. Within the relief stations, assistants had been paid, and he wanted women volunteers to do the work free, thus reducing the emergency payroll. Women ward leaders found themselves, not for the last time, obliged to cooperate with the men in their traditional volunteer roles. 18

Still, gains were made for the women leaders. They joined men officially in the distribution of food, clothing, and materials for temporary shelters and the removal of the dead. The women were responsible for going out among the people of their wards to determine need; a census was compiled and distribution organized along much more efficient lines. As quantities of supplies poured into the city, the massive task of sorting, labeling, and
distributing became a shared opportunity for women and men. It provided the women leaders of Galveston their first official positions within the structure of emergency governmental relief and became a significant forerunner to their entrance into civic reform politics.

Out of the eleven women ward leaders identified in the newspaper, eight had extensive experience with women's organizations. Six had served on the boards of lady managers of the city's orphanages, suggesting interest in the welfare of children, who along with their mothers would be most helped by the ward relief stations. Two of the women were officers of the hospital aid society, and four belonged to women's patriotic societies. Their average age was approximately fifty, not a young group but one with matronly experience. As in most cases of civic involvement, Episcopalians predominated: four were Episcopalian, three were Presbyterian, and one was Methodist. Of this group two would later become active suffragists. Not coincidentally, five of the twelve chairwomen assigned to wards later became officers and members of the Women's Health Protective Association.

At this point in the city's post-storm history, events dictated public policy; and citizens responded with a sense of urgency seldom seen in city council meetings. The volunteer Central Relief Committee, momentarily more powerful than the city council, collected $1,258,000 in donations from around the world and used this immediately to replace 483 homes and over 1,500 private plumbing systems. The committee spent at least $500,000 in providing food, clothing, and household supplies, in removing the dead and insuring public sanitation, in rebuilding private homes, and in replacing lost tools, including 222 sewing machines.

No comparable disaster had ever struck an American city, so no one
knew for certain how quickly the city should recover. Through the diligence of carpenters, engineers, and alderman C. H. McMaster, water was restored through the city’s pumping plant and into the water mains by September 12. Those homes and businesses with intact pipes were able to receive water. Banking, brewery, ice plant, and telegraph services were restored within the first week; by the second week streets were cleared for traffic, telephone lines were laid underground, and railroad service was resumed. And by the third week electricity returned, ships began to ply in and out of the harbor, and, as an indicator that the worst was behind them, saloons were allowed to reopen.22

Restoring the city’s commercial position became paramount, and in order to do so something had to be done about city government. Before the storm, Galveston had been the state’s primary port, exporter of more cotton than any other city in Texas. Most citizens agreed that after the disposal of bodies the city’s primary goal was to reestablish the port and resume business. The opportunity for survival as an important southwestern entrepot still existed because the majority of Galveston’s civic-commercial elite lived in the island’s more sheltered neighborhoods and had been spared the worst ravages of the storm. This group had also proved disarmingly capable in the emergency relief crisis. The mayor and the city aldermen, who actually had succeeded rather admirably in conducting city business during the crisis, appeared discredited when they offered no plan to protect the city from future assaults. Consequently the Deep Water Committee, a group of eighteen capitalists—bankers, corporation directors, and large property holders—who had long engineered public policy in Galveston from behind the scenes and who also had served on the emergency Central Relief Committee, took a proposal to the state legislature to push through the city commission form of
Within a year after the storm the Texas legislature had granted the charter changes without a referendum by Galveston voters, and city commission government was in place. Founded on the principle of efficiency, the commission system, also known as the Galveston plan, consolidated power in a five-man board and rationalized government processes by allowing one commissioner to be mayor-president, the other four to head departments of finance, fire and police, waterworks and sewerage, and streets and improvements. It eliminated a system of checks and balances and city ward representation, thereby breaking up bloc voting patterns from working-class and black neighborhoods. In part this complemented the move toward disfranchisement of black voters. As states across the South legalized voting restrictions, black voting bloc power diminished. Texas adopted the poll tax in 1902, making the burden of suffrage heavier on blacks (and poor whites), but Galveston as early as 1895 had implemented structural changes that successfully terminated black office-holding on the city council. Thus the way was cleared for the adoption of a governing body made up of three appointed and two elected city commissioners, all of whom directly represented the white middle and upper classes.

On the one hand city government had passed from a more broadly representative mayor-alderman system to a more narrowly representative city commission. Efficiency and businesslike "reform" structure had won out over a more decentralized and more democratic public body. On the other hand, as the door to public policy influence was closing to working-class men, it was opening to middle- and upper-class women. The hypothesis that Progressive era municipal reform encouraged the rise in power of middling businessmen
backed by their wealthier silent partners and was therefore basically a closed movement does not take seriously the important Progressive era gains made by women in politics, who earlier had been consistently underrepresented in policy making. Although it would appear that the increasing influence of elite white women meant solidarity within the ranks for that class, in fact women of this social station often carried with them priorities for urban reform at odds with those of their male cohorts.

Women approached politics differently than men did. Their nonvoting status forced them either to effect compromise through parlor politics or to use confrontational tactics in hopes of winning voter support. Beyond tactics, however, gender created basic differences in the way women viewed the opportunity for shaping public policy. Although not opposed to the advancement of commercial interests, upper- and upper-middle-class southern women were more interested in issues of aesthetics and health, both of which stemmed from basic values and attitudes shaped by women's culture. Women's public activism had emerged first from their homes and churches, and was imbued with values that fostered nurturing of dependents (orphans, elderly women, children of factory workers) and care for the unprotected. These charitable aims were given coherency and direction through the founding of benevolent institutions and through instruction provided by the women's club movement. A more beautiful environment and better health for urban citizens were extensions of the earlier goals of protection for the indigent and represented a broadening of women's outlook toward public policy making. No longer content to look after the orphan or the widow, the city became their mission field. If the truth be known, these same women were more willing than their male counterparts for government to exert
control over lower-class habits of industry in the name of protection.

In Galveston the storm was the great catalyst for political reform. It demanded the creation of an emergency Central Relief Committee made up primarily of entrepreneurs, brought an old elite faction of capitalists openly into politics, stimulated the creation of a city commission, and mobilized women survivors of the storm to create a permanent organization to promote their goals for a better community. But where the women had had very little public voice before the storm, with the creation of a city commission government in Galveston and their own civic reform association, the WHPA, they began to participate in the formation of public policy. In many ways the four groups — Central Relief Committee, Deep Water Committee, the city commissioners, and the WHPA, were sympathetic to one another. Direct and informal connections between the male members of the Deep Water Committee, the emergency Central Relief Committee, and the city commission abounded. And the male leaders all had links to the women reformers. Four of the women appointed to the relief subcommittee of the emergency Central Relief Committee became officers of the WHPA. One-third of the wives of Deep Water Committee members became officers in the WHPA. Three of the five wives and one daughter-in-law of the first city commissioners joined the WHPA.26

For women the September storm created the very worst kind of social disorder, especially with respect to burial of the dead, loss of vegetation, destruction of family homes, and unsanitary health conditions. Within a month after the storm, city officials had brought in from New York City Dr. George Soper, who advised them to continue with the cremation of bodies and the disposal of debris. But he also pointed to the need to "put [the city] in a very
clean condition. The gutters and the alleys in which liquid filth has accumulated should be thoroughly cleaned out and disinfected. "Streets should be cleaned by sweeping and carrying away the matter collected,... the privies and stables should be looked after and...the sewers should be investigated to see that they are in working condition...."27 Advised to clean up in order to ensure the health of the citizens in the wake of the storm, the city health department provided disinfectant depots with cleaning solvents for domestic purposes. Systematic removal of trash and debris from barrels or boxes put out on the sidewalk or in the alley was implemented by cart garbage collectors. But the message to women was clear: "the good housewife [should gather] up the refuse for collection by the health wagons," and women should take advantage of the availability of free cleaning disinfectants. In other words, cleaning and clearing out trash began with the housewife and extended into the community. 28

The message that women were intimately connected with the sanitary condition, indeed the health of the city, was not lost on the women leaders. Consequently, in March 1901, six months before the establishment of city commission government, sixty-six women survivors, veteran organizers from the women's congregational societies, benevolent institutions, literary clubs, patriotic associations, and the Red Cross, gathered to establish the Women's Health Protective Association (WHPA). The first officers represented the accumulation of years of women's voluntary service and old-guard elitism. Among them, Magnolia (Mrs. George) Sealy, wife of the city's prominent banker; Lucy Ballinger (Mrs. A. G.) Mills, daughter of judge William Pitt Ballinger and Hallie Ballinger, founder of the Galveston Orphans' Home; and Isabella (Mrs. Moritz) Kopperl, philanthropist in her own right and niece to the
founder of Temple B'Nai Israel, all comprised the first executive committee. Elitism may have launched the club, but after fifteen years of reform work, the association evolved into a powerful 500-member investigative, inspection, and lobbying group for a cleaner, healthier, more beautiful city. The name itself indicates the supreme importance sanitation had taken in the wake of the hurricane, but it was not original to the island women. As early as 1884 women of New York had created the Ladies Health Protective Association to address the problem of refuse in the streets.29

In the formation of the WHPA Galveston women were greatly influenced by a former resident, Anna Maxwell Jones, who lived in New York, belonged to many women's clubs including Sorosis, and imbibed the progressive ideas of the more liberal Northeast. Anna and her sister returned to Galveston annually, and she more than any other outside force was responsible for advising the women on the creation of a Progressive era city-wide civic organization. Mrs. Waldine Kopperl explained the connection in a letter to Margaret Sealy Burton, president of the successor organization to the WHPA: "I think Anna [Maxwell Jones] can justly be called the Inspirer and Founder of the Health Protective Association, for its spirit, its aims were hers. I remember so well the occasion the idea was born. It was ... February 1901. Mrs. Isabella Kopperl had the first big 'Come get together' Friendship party after the Storm. Every one in Galveston was there. I was pouring tea. ... When Anna got up everyone clapped." Referring to the work of the women who had served in the Red Cross ward relief stations, "she said ...' You brave people of Galveston have buried the dead, clothed the naked and fed the hungry. Now you must not stop at that. You must safeguard the Beach of the City, plant trees and flowers, and make it again the City Beautiful.' We all caught fire
from Anna’s inspired talk, and I think each woman silently consecrated herself for further service for Galveston. She was the real Founder for we took fire from her idea. We all had worked so hard and were oh, so fatigued and stunned with the tragedy of it all, and we needed just that heart counsel that Anna so well knew how to give."30

Thus Galveston women who were eager to bring their talents to bear and who had performed private acts of charity through the women’s societies of their church and synagogue and through serving on the boards of lady managers of benevolent institutions drew upon the concept of a national network of women’s civic clubs and finally mobilized for action. The women declared that "the time had come when the Galveston women rich and poor, club women and non-club women, must work hand in hand and heart to heart to make Galveston a beautiful town [aesthetics] and a law abiding place [protection], and the only way to do this is to have the cooperation of every woman in the city...."31

This call for a democratic organization for women was significant. Unlike the boards of lady managers of the benevolent institutions, which had been exclusive and self-perpetuating, the WHPA was open to all white adult women in the community, and members elected their own officers—ten executive officers and as many as seventeen committee chairwomen, not to mention the scores of women who chaired and served on ad hoc committees. The association combined the elements of elitism in its officer corps with an open democratic body. It appeared elite, however, because most of its elected executive officers were from the wealthier classes. Still, in the midst of crisis, the first democratic, citywide women’s association had been created. It heralded the formation of a progressive women’s community in Galveston.
The notion of a women's community is both old and new. The recognition that women in the nineteenth century belonged to a separate woman's sphere is now accepted wisdom. The origins of the sphere, the manner in which women responded to their separation, the extent to which this sphere created a woman's culture, and the differentials within it based on class are still being explored and debated by feminist theorists. Historians agree, however, that the ideals of the separate sphere operated well into the twentieth century, perpetuating a kind of cultural lag with respect to the changing economic and social status of women.  

The sphere was alive and well in Galveston in 1900 as evidenced by the city's forty-one separate women's managing boards, societies, clubs, and associations. Most women belonged to more than one association, or were elected to more than one board; virtually all belonged to a church or synagogue. Growing out of the separate sphere yet grounded in its tenets of enobled womanhood and a woman's culture, a network of women interested and active in urban affairs became visible both to the community and to other women. Judging from the numbers of women engaged in club or association work, the pull must have been magnetic and presaged a time when all of this woman power could brought together for a combined purpose. A women's community committed to Progressive ideals, experienced in the complexities of organizational work, and open to women of different classes and religious backgrounds evolved between 1901 and 1920 when women faced collectively the immense problem of urban reconstruction.  

While the storm of 1900 was the immediate catalyst that prompted the formation of the WHPA, there remain questions about the origins of the
reformers and the influence of the pre-1900 women's congregational societies and benevolent institutions. Who were these women officers? Where did they receive their "training"? Officers of the WHPA constituted an elite corps of Galveston women who had been active in public affairs long before 1901. Examination of the organizational histories of sixty officers of the WHPA between 1901 and 1911, show that the majority, 55 percent, belonged to a church or synagogue women's society; 42 percent belonged to Episcopal and Presbyterian women's societies – the very societies that had first directed their ministries to the city's poor. Also 55 percent of the WHPA officers had once served on a board of lady managers for one or more of the four benevolent institutions founded and maintained by women in the 1880s and 1890s (Galveston Orphan's Home, Letitia Rosenberg Home for Women, Home for Homeless Children, and the Johanna Runge Free Kindergarten). More important, 89 percent, or twenty-five of the twenty-eight WHPA executive officers (president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, auditor, executive committee member) had served on boards of benevolent institutions. Of the congregation-affiliated WHPA executive officers, 100 percent had served on boards of lady managers for benevolent institutions, indication of the important link between congregation, benevolence, and civic-reform leadership. Although the officers were elected, it is clear that women who had been active in leadership positions in the 1890s before the advent of the women's community continued to be sought for leadership in the city's first progressive reform association.

Of the sixty officers, twenty-eight held executive positions and thirty-two held committee chairmanships; fourteen, or 23 percent, could not be identified by religious affiliation. The remaining forty-six officers, or 77
percent, belonged to eight religious groups: Baptist, Catholic, Episcopal, Jewish, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Swedenborgian. If the WHPA officers of unknown religious affiliation are removed, the number of officers who belonged to women's congregational societies reaches 72 percent, 54 percent of whom were affiliated with the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches. Again, it would appear that the combination of elite social status and membership in churches that emphasized relief for the poor outside of church membership provided training and incentives for Progressive era reformers.

The most striking evidence of the influence of the two community-oriented women's societies (Trinity Church Guild and the Ladies Aid Society of the First Presbyterian Church) and the four benevolent institutions can be seen in the histories of the first four presidents of the WHPA: Mary Elizabeth (Mrs. Henry A.) Landes, wife of the mayor of Galveston; Emily (Mrs. Joseph) Clark, wife of a successful steamship agent; Albertine (Mrs. Bertrand) Adoue, whose husband owned extensive banking and industrial interests; and Jean (Mrs. George D.) Morgan, whose prominence in city life stemmed from her own and her family's civic benevolence. Clark, Adoue, and Morgan belonged to Trinity Church Guild; Adoue served as president from 1875 to 1883, Clark became president of the Guild in 1918, and Morgan belonged to both Trinity and Grace Episcopal sisterhoods and served as president of Grace Episcopal's sisterhood in 1901. Landes had been a member of the Ladies Aid Society of the First Presbyterian Church in the 1890s. All four of the WHPA presidents had been officers on one or more of the boards of lady managers for the benevolent institutions. In addition, all had extensive experience in women's clubs and patriotic societies. And two became active in the city's
A continuum existed between the women's church societies that provided poor relief, women's benevolent institutions, and women's reform and suffrage organizations of the Progressive Era. Women who had been active in these societies were also more likely to belong to one of the city's secular women's clubs formed in the 1890s (Ladies' Musical Club, Wednesday Club, and patriotic-hereditary associations). Unusual for a southern city was the fact that evangelical women's mission societies and the WCTU played virtually no role in the creation of a coterie of volunteer progressive female reformers in Galveston. Wealth, of course, constituted a significant factor in determining which women had leisure to perform civic duties, and most evangelical women were not of the elite. But single professional women — teachers, librarians, doctors, and real estate agents — also joined the progressive reformers. Generally these women belonged to religious organizations that encouraged acts of charity beyond the church or synagogue doors. In the South especially, the links between women, religion, and reform were very close, but the notion that southern evangelical groups were responsible for their reforming impulses is challenged by this Galveston case study.

The rise of organized groups of women pursuing cultural and civic activities is a common theme in historical literature. Perhaps less well known is how each local women's club came to choose its particular agenda of activity. Ideas and issues available through national women's club periodicals (among others Club Woman, Texas Club Woman, Club Woman's Argosy) and published proceedings, provided guidelines for the WHPA. At first members appointed committees to survey a wide variety of community problems —
cemeteries, streets and alleys, markets and restaurants, sewers, dairies, schools, jails, hospitals, and parks. Despite the diverse agenda, the women chose first to concentrate on the reinterment of storm victims and second on revegetating the island. The storm had provided a unique opportunity for the WHPA, on its own, to affect public policy and to extend influence over community rebuilding. The needs of the community dictated this choice, illustrating that regardless of exposure to wider possibilities, policy decisions within an organization were ultimately filtered through a parochial lens. 36

Within the first year members of the WHPA transported the remains of storm victims to a cemetery on the west end of the island. These bodies had been buried by relatives, often by stealth, before the work crews had found a chance to consign them to the flames. The appalling lack of decorum in the consignment of fellow citizens to their eternal resting places weighed on the consciences of WHPA members, many of whom, following southern tradition, had cared previously for the graves of their relatives. After the Central Relief Committee closed its operations the WHPA continued to care for the removal of the dead from the makeshift graves. Rather than contact city government, citizens who owned property on which bodies were interred as well as relatives of hastily buried storm victims petitioned the WHPA to help in removing the remains to a proper cemetery. Funding for this task was aided in part by the New York State Federation of Women’s Clubs, which, through the urging of Anna Maxwell Jones, sent $1,000 to the Galveston association. The WHPA also applied for funds to Governor Joseph Sayers, who responded with over $1,000 for the work of "reinterment of storm victims not properly buried." 37

Public health was a consideration, but decent burial and reverent memorialization were equally important. More often than we realize today,
women were responsible for maintaining the traditions that accompany death. Before there were mortuaries women prepared the dead for burial, and funerals were more often conducted in homes; more women than men donated funds to churches or synagogues for the purpose of founding or maintaining cemeteries. Southern women especially made the maintenance of family gravesites and cemeteries a part of their female traditions. And women, as shown previously, were often assigned to church cemetery committees before they gained access to any other church committees. Patriotic and hereditary societies, such as the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the United Daughters of the Confederacy, committed themselves to the maintenance of their heroes' graves. Not surprisingly the women of the WHPA, following the imperatives of a woman's culture, chose to continue the work of removing the dead to their final resting place long after the Central Relief Committee had disbanded. When the grisly work was finished, the women voted "to take charge of the little cemetery of the unknown dead" and donated a memorial headstone to mark the common grave. Although in most instances women in the Progressive Era sought to politicize their domestic concerns, in this case, women sought to reclaim from governmental control and return to private hands the sensitive tasks related to death and burial. Thus Galveston women influenced public policy by removing from city commission auspices work that they believed women were better suited to perform.38

In contrast to the desire to take from public control the tasks of burial and memorialization, the WHPA's campaign to create a more beautiful Galveston through replanting the island illustrates well the desire by the WHPA to give public acclaim to domestic tasks. Their work followed closely
behind the immense structural changes made on the island by city and county governments. As soon as the city commissioners had been sworn in, they met to discuss how to protect the city from future storms. Through complicated bond and tax maneuvers involving the county, the state, and the U. S. Army, the commissioners were able to erect a seventeen-foot-high solid cement seawall along the coast for four miles. When this was completed, the island needed to be elevated to meet the wall, gradually sloping one foot for every 1,500 feet to the bay. To raise the grade of the island engineers lifted some 2,000 buildings—homes, churches, schools, businesses—on jacks and then pumped ten million cubic yards of sand from the bay under the structures. The grade raising was completed in 1911, but because of the fill's salt content no vegetation survived. As Herbert Mason wrote: "Almost every sign of vegetation south of Broadway had been stripped away, and until the long and expensive business of relandscaping with trees, shrubs, and flower gardens was over, the once-lush city reminded onlookers of certain desert communities in the American West."39

There was obviously work for the WHPA to do in beautifying the city with new plant life, and they accomplished this with few funds from city hall. Fortunately, just as the women were about to embark on their plans for a complete replanting of the island, national trends for city beautification were beginning to excite urban reformers. The "City Beautiful" movement, stemmed from the Columbian Exposition at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. There gleaming neoclassical buildings rose above a blue lagoon and rich green lawns, statues, and marble bridges graced the landscape, proving to the American public that cities did not have to be utilitarian, grubby, unplanned, and unadorned. This new vision of urban beauty passed from the exhibition
to municipal art societies and local improvement societies. Springfield, Ohio, in 1899 launched the first of many local improvement societies; a year later the National League of Improvement Associations was formed to direct reformers toward the emerging ideals of beautification and sanitation. Aside from the efforts of many smaller communities, Washington, D.C. in 1901 launched an enormous urban beautification project that resulted in the now familiar mall with its park and reflecting pool connecting the three architectural focal points - - the Capitol, the White House and the Washington Monument. 40

How much WHPA members knew of these projects is difficult to determine, but they did join in 1901 the National League of Improvement Associations, thus implementing their plans for a more beautiful city within the context of national City Beautiful campaigns. In order to accomplish their tasks efficiently, the women consulted agricultural experts to determine the best plants for the soil and climate; they operated their own nursery on land donated by J. C. League at Avenue M 1/2 and N, hired a gardener to tend the seedlings, and convinced the Gulf, Colorado, and Santa Fe railroad to transport without charge thousands of palms from Florida and California. The WHPA became a non-profit clearing house for the distribution of plants and seeds, which it provided at cost; citizens bought rose bushes, for example, at ten cents a piece. The women raised money for seeds, trees, and shrubs through benefits such as horse shows, garden contests (first prize, $75, total $300), and rose bush sales. Palm, oleander, and live oak plantings commenced on the esplanades of Broadway Boulevard and Rosenberg Avenue almost as soon as the curbing was in place. Schools organized auxiliaries, mothers' clubs helped distribute the plants, and local businesses gave cuttings to every school child on arbor day. 41
The relationship between the city commission and the WHPA over planting city-owned property seems curious to us today because, in effect, private citizens sought to give to the city improvements on publicly owned land. Naturally the commissioners accepted the offer. Once WHPA members had spent several years in landscaping city boulevards, parks, and esplanades, they asked the city commission for a *quid pro quo* in the form of support. They wanted the commissioners to pay the gardener $75 a month and provide water for the nursery without charge, and they wanted the city to finance a watering system and to maintain the plantings. The commissioners agreed to this in exchange for the continuation of the planting program. Because the city commission did not take charge of the problem of landscaping city-owned property, the women presented them with a plan and then a fait accompli. Ultimately, the city would have to assume responsibility for maintaining the shrubs and trees. A mixture of private service given by the women in return for public control over the result of their efforts was to continue throughout the Progressive Era. The women probably did not realize that turning over the function of landscaping public property to city government would diminish their own control over beautifying public spaces. Nonetheless, the women knew they had had an important impact on public policy. They had envisioned a city beautiful, won public support for its implementation, acted on their goals, and then brought city government into their scheme. 42

In this case cooperation between the women and the commissioners existed for several reasons. First, although beautification was a domestic issue and an attempt by women to make their city more homelike, it was also good for business. It boosted town pride, drew attention away from the scars of the
1900 disaster, and indicated resilience among the citizenry inviting investments in the rebuilt community. It was exactly what the town boosters had wanted when they launched their Greater Galveston campaign during the early years of physical reconstruction. The Christian Science Monitor editorialized that "We find the women of Galveston, like advocates of beauty in other communities, laying much weight upon the contention that it pays a city to be beautiful. They are obtaining a hearing on this basis that otherwise might be denied them. By presenting beauty in the light of an investment that will pay a good rate of interest and pay it regularly — by holding it forth as an attainable and permanent asset — they are able to command the serious attention of many men of affairs to whom beauty in architecture, in street and square planning, in shaded walks and roadways, in watercourses, lawns and flower-beds does not appeal for its own sake."43

The second reason that WHPA members were successful in their dealings with city commission was that, unlike labor or immigrant groups, the WHPA officers and the commissioners were social equals, and parlor politics played no small role in winning cooperation from city commission for the women's vision of a beautiful environment. For example, the WHPA elected Mary Landes its first president; her husband, Henry A. Landes, served as mayor over the city commission in 1905 after the death of the governor's appointee, William T. Austin. The Landeses, like so many of their class, were related to the business elite: her brother and sister both married into families belonging to the Deep Water Committee. It is hard to know exactly what went on between elected city officials and WHPA officers outside of their official roles. But the gossip columns of the daily newspapers were filled with the reports of their social meetings. Because they were often family friends, city
commissioners were accessible to and compatible with WHPA officers.
Structural reform of city government had created an opening to white women
civic activists that had not existed under the pre-storm mayor and alderman,
most of whom were from the laboring classes.

The third reason why cooperation existed between the two groups is
related to the nature of the women's organization itself. Officers of WHPA
were elected by constituent members, and for the first time in organizational
life, white women from all classes, denominations, and economic stations were
able to cast votes for their organizational officers. In a sense, the WHPA
officers paralleled male elected officials; they were the city's highest elected
women officials. Male voters elected their representatives to the city
commission; women elected theirs to the WHPA. True, the WHPA was an
extralegal body and able merely to influence public policy through activity,
demonstration, and petition, but for the first time white women came together
in a single body to act democratically and collectively upon their goals. Soon
many of the women officers would be active in the suffrage movement. Male
elected officials ignored or irritated this body only at their peril.

Finally, cooperation lasted for ten years between the women and city hall
because the WHPA had won enthusiastic support from the community. They
had managed to generate an enormous amount of publicity through the years,
enlisting citizen, and more important, voting support for their cause of
beautification. Although apathy was one of their worst opponents, the WHPA
officers had managed by 1911 to enlist a woman from nearly every block in the
residential section of the city to act as a committee of one "to encourage and
look after the planting of trees and flowers and the building of uniform
sidewalks." The Galveston News was unstinting in its praise. "With the
appointment of a committee of one in practically every residence block of the city, . . . the Women's Health Protective Association . . . launched a city beautifying campaign. . . . wonderful results have already been obtained, organizations of the city, as well as children of the schools and individuals, endorsing the plan and entering actively into the work. The city beautifying movement, in short, has the undivided support of every loyal Galvestonian."

In addition the WHPA received the endorsement of the School Board of Trustees, the Business League, the Commercial Association, and the newspapers. "This organization of business and professional men [The Galveston Commercial Association] has given its unqualified support to the WHPA voting to a man ... to become associate members of the WHPA. The Galveston public school board, ... was unanimous in its endorsement of the WHPA.... These facts, coupled with the general expression of opinion by men and women interested in the welfare of Galveston and their own homes bears ample testimony, if any were needed, to the important part the WHPA has exerted and will continue to exert in the upbuilding of the city."44 Without community support, city commissioners might have been less willing to negotiate with the WHPA, but the commissioners realized their political futures were, whether they liked it or not, tied up with the women.

City beautification was not the only project adopted by the WHPA. By 1912 it had become a complex deparmentalized organization that supported reform through voluntary compliance in other areas. They bought and placed in public places trash cans for refuse, supported the "Swat the Fly" campaign, urged citizens to use private incinerators, suggested the enactment of building codes for improved housing, demanded cleaner streets and alleys, railed against billboards, requested the city to hire building, sidewalk, food and milk
inspectors, and police matrons. They organized inspection committees; members marched into meat markets, groceries, and bakeries to inspect the premises for sanitary conditions and then reported their findings at the monthly meetings. They lobbied for women on the school board (the city elected one in 1917), sought hot lunches in the schools, regular medical examination of school children, better parks and playgrounds, women's restrooms in the downtown and on the beaches, and silent zones surrounding hospitals. The WHPA was responsible for establishing a Neighborhood (settlement) House in the West End and sponsored programs there for the neighborhood children. Through the WHPA Jean Morgan personally began the sale of Red Cross Christmas seals for the prevention and cure of tuberculosis; sale of the seals aided in the establishment in 1913 of the Walter Colquitt Memorial Children's Hospital for Bone and Glandular Tuberculosis in Galveston. The WHPA did not go as far in their demands or expectations for child welfare as some northern women's clubs did, or as some communities such as New York and Cincinnati did. Citizens of northern cities, who sought a logical extension of the pure milk campaign, set up community milk stations that would eventually become child and family welfare (well baby) centers. The WHPA did not advocate such a move although it agitated furiously for pure milk sold to consumers at reasonable prices; it acted on behalf of infant and child welfare separately through schools, visiting nurses, and well-baby clinics. 45

The harmonious period of cooperation between city commission and the WHPA lasted for ten years until 1911 when, the grade raising completed, the women turned their attention to public health and sanitation in the markets,
restaurants, bakeries, and dairies. WHPA members had never entirely neglected the area of public health protection, but their concern for beautification, dictated by the grade raising, had taken first priority. Thus they entered a second phase in 1912 when they demanded enforcement by city authorities of the ordinances controlling sanitation in establishments that prepared food for public consumption and enactment of new ordinances in keeping with the advance of sanitation information and technology. This contrasted sharply with the superficial Greater Galveston promotional campaign that asked for voluntary citizen cooperation in planting trees, in clearing alley ways, and in using trash receptacles. The women were embarking on a confrontational campaign that demanded enforcement of the laws and punishment of fellow citizen offenders.

Reports of the monthly WHPA meetings bristled with a variety of problems needing attention. Citizens, instead of taking their concerns about sanitation directly to the city authorities, brought them to the WHPA, which became a clearing house for citizen complaints about garbage collection, trash in the streets, cases of ptomaine poisoning, and the like. One petitioner seeking garbage removal asked the WHPA to "stir up the health department in that direction." Petitioning Galvestonians, recognizing the former successes of the WHPA, empowered the women to act on the community's behalf. Thus, by 1914 the WHPA was in step with other women's civic clubs across the nation in its fight for improving public health.

By contrast the city of Galveston definitely lagged behind in the establishment of effective public health agencies for the enforcement of pure food and milk standards. For years the technology surrounding the purification of milk had been improving, and cities in the North were
beginning to adopt advanced methods for the selling of clean, wholesome milk. The invention in 1890 by Dr. S. M. Babcock of a method for determining the amount of butter fat content in milk not only aided commercial milk purchasers in pricing milk; it also gave pure milk advocates a tool to test for unlawful skimming. In 1892 the first bacterial counts of milk in America were made for such deadly diseases as streptococcus, diptheria, scarlet fever, typhoid fever, and infant cholera, which caused severe diarrhea. Between 1892 and 1900 Theobald Smith had identified the germs of bovine tuberculosis in milk, and some milk industries had begun to pasteurize milk, at first in secret, as it was thought that boiling milk reduced its nutritional value. Simple procedures, such as the use of small-mouthed milking pails that kept dirt and manure out of fresh milk, advocated in 1903 helped cut down on bacteria. Then in 1906 the thermal death point of pathogenic bacteria on temperatures necessary for sterilization of milk was discovered, and the industry had yet another study useful for the manufacture of pure milk.

Following the discoveries of methods for identifying diseases in milk, twenty-seven medical milk commissions were organized in principal cities across the nation. The New York City medical milk commission, organized in 1900, determined after studying bacteria in the milk supply that contamination from healthy cows was occurring in transit due to unsanitary handling. The commission promptly called for certification of milk sold to the public. Just at the point when scientists were better able to understand the integrity of milk, the incidence of milk-related epidemics rose. Typhoid epidemics caused by milk rose from a low of five per year in 1887 to a high of twenty-three in 1905. Thus, the need for better sanitation was made dramatically clear. The result: in 1907 New York City launched its own regulatory agency, the New York Milk
Committee, which in the years following established infant milk depots to dispense clean, pasteurized milk. In 1908 Chicago adopted an ordinance for the pasteurization of all milk, and in 1910 the American Public Health Association established standard methods for the bacterial testing of milk. This brought about standard testing procedures in cities across the country and the formation of a National Commission of Milk Standards. By 1912 New York City had adopted milk grading systems, enforced pasteurization, and was experimenting with the introduction of vitamins to milk.\textsuperscript{49}

The technology for the advancement of pure milk was already well known by the time Galveston citizens became concerned over their own milk supply. Moreover, other cities through regulatory agencies were already taking steps to enforce pure milk standards on the dairy industry. Galveston, by contrast, had no pasteurization laws, no grading system, and lacked effective mechanisms to enforce local dairymen to clean up their barns and cattle. The lack of any regulatory agency meant that, aside from the health department's meager rounds, no single body was looking after the city's milk supply. Does this imply that because cities in the South lacked regulatory agencies for pure food and milk that southern women had greater opportunities for public policy making? Possibly: this absence provided a fundamental opening for the members of the Women's Health Protective Association to act as if they constituted a regulatory agency. Women stepped in where no governmental body existed.

\textit{WHPA members concentrated their efforts where they knew they had severe problems locally and where they felt they could save the most lives. Their campaign for pure food and milk followed closely the battle for pure standards in other cities. Much has already been written about the passage of}

pure food and drug laws at the state and national levels, but legal enactment was only the beginning; in Galveston enforcement of the state Pure Food and Drug Act of 1907 and the Galveston ordinances of 1906 and 1907 in support of pure food claimed the attention of the WHPA from 1912 until its successful resolution in 1917. The women employed political lobbying tactics in their campaign: they secured advice from sanitation experts, they drew support from men's voting civic groups, newspapers, and the consuming public, and they gained inspections and eventually appointments for themselves from state bureaucrats.

In 1913, anticipating resistance from the city health department, the WHPA in concert with the Galveston Commercial Association, paid for a sanitation survey prepared by Dr. J. P. Simonds, head of preventive medicine at the University of Texas Department of Medicine in Galveston. By then sanitation surveys were becoming a national phenomenon, and often it was women professional "sanitary engineers" who handled the inspections. The Women's Municipal League in Boston hired a special "market inspector" and also conducted its own report; thus Galveston was in step with national progressives. The survey claimed to be the first of its kind in Texas, and the plans "to make Galveston the cleanest city in Texas' [were] to be built on a scientific foundation." Dr. Simonds, with the help of a bevy of medical students, promised to investigate the city's milk supply, garbage collection, food handling in public establishments, conditions for the breeding of flies and mosquitoes, street cleaning, and housing problems.

The thirty-page survey concluded that Galveston, although a comparatively healthy city, indeed had sanitation problems. Fortunately Galveston's water supply was deemed "almost ideal," one of the few bright
spots in a long list of inadequacies. Because Galveston had no building code, the surveyors found some housing "deplorable," and one of Galveston's "crying shames." Conditions surrounding the disposal of rubbish and garbage were deemed "astounding"; the report called for more garbage collectors, more frequent pick-up, better carts, and more citizen cooperation. The sewer system was "not up to the best standard of efficiency." The schools needed more and better playgrounds, the introduction of vaccinations and medical inspection of children, and abolishment of the common drinking cup. The surveyors found the condition of markets, bakeries, and groceries in "serious need of improvement" and suggested the appointment of extra inspectors. Alleys, and streets should be cleaned up, the report said, as should stagnant pools that bred mosquitoes and manure piles that encouraged the breeding of flies.52

Finally the survey gave its greatest emphasis to the problem of the city's milk supply, because milk was deemed "an essential article of food; one that is probably accountable for more sickness and more deaths than all other foods put together." The unsanitary condition of the city's dairies was to blame for the high bacteria levels found in the milk that led to infant intestinal disorders, dehydration, and even death. Thorough and to the point, the survey described appalling dairy conditions—inadequate water for washing cows, flies in the bottling room, manure falling into milk buckets, visible evidence of dirt in the bottled milk, and a primitive bottling technique in which a boy held milk bottles under a faucet of flowing milk while the overflow fell into a bucket: "When this bucket became full, this milk in which the boy had practically washed his hands was poured back into the large can, bottled and sold." The report pronounced unclean milk a contributor to tuberculosis and typhoid fever, and gave statistics on the number of deaths in Galveston from these
diseases. Cleaner dairies, markets, and restaurants were deemed essential to lower child mortality and improve public health. Moreover, vigilant inspection of milk that entered the city was necessary to prevent the two most common practices of milk adulteration — watering and removal of fat content, or skimming. This scientific report gave the women a tool with which to coerce commissioners to enforce existing pure milk, food, and sanitation laws.53

Others began to clamor for action. The editor of the Galveston Daily Herald proposed that the city board of commissioners appoint a WHPA member "with full pay" to inspect city alleys, streets, and yards. The advent of the sanitary survey prompted the Herald to lambast city health officer, Dr. C. W. Trueheart, by saying that "the trouble is that the health department is headed by an old fossil and that his assistants are relics of the stone age.... Appoint some woman on the police force and we will guarantee that she will see that these unsightly, these unsanitary places disappear." Despite calls for their elevation to city officialdom, the women had to continue lobbying for reform. Promises were extracted from city commissioners for reports on the conditions of dairies, but the results in early 1914 showed little improvement since the publication of the sanitation survey. Of the forty-seven dairies subjected to inspection, twenty-one exceeded the standard 100,000 bacteria per cubic centimeter; three showed over one million bacteria. And this in the middle of winter! 54

WHPA members sent their own inspectors out to check on the conditions of dairies, groceries, and meat markets and proposed circulating a "whitelist," or a list of safe dairies. By publishing and distributing a monthly milk bulletin compiled by the city health officer, WHPA members hoped that
"everyone may know which dairymen are supplying their customers with pure milk." Publicity was the key to resisting the dairymen's intransigence, and the agitation was beginning to show some success. The city health department requested more inspectors and tougher enforcement from city commissioners. The board of directors of the Galveston County Dairy Men's Association met to discuss hiring their own milk inspector, preferring self regulation to law enforcement. And by July 1914, WHPA members had convinced members of the Galveston Commercial Association, who comprised the city's upper and upper-middle class merchants, to turn their attention to the pure milk problem. The men budgeted $500 to lobby city government for more effective punishments for milk offenders. Finally, it was decided that revocation of licenses would be more effective than fines, and the health department, after repeated urgings, adopted this policy. 55

But conditions did not improve quickly enough. In December 1914, after a city inspection from C. O Yates, commissioner of the Texas food and drug department, in which he determined that "some of the milk could scarcely be worse," the WHPA declared war on "dirty foodshops." 56 The women wanted substantive changes in the way shopkeepers handled perishable items sold to the public, such as bread, fruit, meat, and especially milk. Meanwhile city commissioners were bombarded with demands by irate merchants to stop treating pure food offenders leniently. The city health officer, Walter Kleberg, who had "promised to revoke licenses of dairy men and dealers who sold adulterated milk . . .," by 1915 had listed eight dairies as in danger of losing their licenses. None did, and while city officials dragged their heels, WHPA took offenders to court where defense attorneys interrogated the women about the cleanliness of their kitchens. The women faced strong opposition from
dairymen and from a hard-to-move city commission.\textsuperscript{57}

Pure food advocates were pleased in February 1915 when the commissioners accepted the proposal to hire an extra inspector at the WHPA’s expense. This resulted in another curious blend of public service paid for by private means: consequently the WHPA then legally shared the cost of policing city entrepreneurs. A small victory came in May when the state pure food and drug commissioner appointed two WHPA members, Mrs. Waters S. Davis, Jr., chair of the milk inspection committee, and WHPA president, Mrs. Jens Moller, as deputy state food and drug inspectors. The WHPA hailed this as a "notable victory" as the women "will have the right to go into any place in the city or county where food is produced or sold." But the right to inspect, or even to pay for inspection, was not the power to enforce; eventually the women would have to combine public pressure with qualified voters in order to make city government ensure a pure food and milk supply.\textsuperscript{58}

The WHPA found success at last in 1917 when it was able, with the direct aid of several men’s associations, to coerce the commissioners to stand firm in enforcing the 1907 ordinance and in enacting a new ordinance that called for a milk inspection, grading, and cooling system. "Plainly displayed grading of milk," insisted city pathologist and new WHPA president Dr. Ethel Lyon Heard, "was one of the main improvements desired: that all receptacles used by milk sellers be marked in classification of A, B and C, and that the city give wide publicity to the grades these letters stand for." That way, "all dairies would strive to have their milk in the highest classification...." The Galveston County Medical Society and the WHPA formed a joint committee headed by Dr. Heard. This committee, which had the support of the Galveston Commercial Association, the Rotary Club, and the Galveston Labor Council, drove home
the point to city commissioners in a December meeting that the lack of improvement in the milk supply was the fault of poor enforcement, an issue that rested entirely with the city commissioners. The struggle to convince the community, specifically bourgeois men's groups, and finally the city commission, took the WHPA more than five years. As unenfranchised voters the women learned that parlor politics was no substitute for votes, and that by directing their campaign for pure milk toward voters, especially organized men's groups, they were able to accomplish collectively what they could not do alone. For obvious reasons, many WHPA officers were also officers of the Galveston Equal Suffrage Association.59

City officials had reacted slowly to the demands, in part because they thought they lacked voter support, and in part because they were reluctant to interfere with free enterprise by regulating even small businessmen. Mrs. Jens Moller reported that "for a long time they [WHPA] were unable to get any real assistance from the city authorities, for although the latter were willing [?], they appeared to lack support in enforcing the law. Finally the women had determined to go into court themselves . . . to insist on pure and clean foods." Women, who had formerly endorsed the spirit of free enterprise by creating a beautiful city more favorable to attracting business, changed their emphasis to promote health as a domestic ideal even though it meant stricter control over dairymen, shopkeepers, and restauranteurs.

In fact, one of the most important principles that the WHPA centered on the issue of the enforcement of sanitation at all levels of production and consumption — even among upper-class hotel owners. After Isaac Kempner, Bertrand Adoue, John Sealy, and H. S. Cooper built the extravagant Galvez Hotel overlooking the Gulf waters in 1911 and opened an elegant restaurant,
the issue of inspection of restaurant kitchens came to a head. Mrs. Waters S. Davis, Jr., filed a report at the monthly meeting stating that the "kitchens of some hotels and restaurants [are] decidedly unsanitary." This led to the creation of a six-woman committee on hotel and restaurant kitchens with Mrs. Davis in charge. The committee was authorized to "take steps at once to obtain a thorough inspection of the kitchens of public eating places and exert every effort to bring about a better state of sanitation where needed." 60

Apparently the notion of inspecting restaurants owned by members of the upper and upper-middle classes struck a conservative nerve among some of the members, and a vote carried to rescind the action. Those who spoke against inspecting hotel and restaurant kitchens pointed to the fact that this was the duty of the city health department. WHPA president Mrs. Morris Ujffy argued that women had no authority to make the inspections; unless invited, they were "not privileged to enter public kitchens for the sake of making inspections." Mollie Rosenberg, who represented old-guard Galveston, agreed and offered that it was sufficient to inspect the bakeries, butcher shops, and groceries (which women could inspect uninvited); "the cleanliness of these places would insure the cleanliness of the food served by hotels and restaurants." Those who favored the inspection of all facilities that handled food were pointed in their response to the obvious class bias present. "The association must stand for protection against all bad food," said Mrs. J. C. League, "and must not discriminate in favor of hotels and restaurants when the inspection of groceries, bakeries and other establishments is going on." Mrs. Waters S. Davis counseled that "the whole work of the association would be useless unless the inspections were made to include the hotels and restaurants." 61
A few weeks later, in a spirited meeting that lasted nearly three hours, Mrs. Ujffy lost the presidential election to Jean Scrimgeour Morgan, who was returned to office after retiring from the presidency in 1913. The major election issue was inspection of hotels and restaurants. Opposition to Mrs. Ujffy had developed quickly after the January meeting and mounted in the women's election campaign in the following weeks. Mrs. Moritz Kopperl, and Mrs. Waters S. Davis's sister, Emma Gonzales, nominated Jean Morgan, who obviously sanctioned the inspections. Thus the majority of WHPA members, understanding that there was no privileged class when it came to sanitation, took a stand against protecting owners of elite establishments from the humiliation of bad reports. Their positions as traditional guardians of the home, including the health of the family, overrode any allegiance they may have once held to men of the elite or governing classes who sought freedom for business pursuits. In other words, the coalition of upper- and upper-middle-class white civic leaders, broke apart over issues peculiar to a woman's culture. In this case, gender asserted hegemony over class. 

In vying for a share of the power to direct public policy toward control of dairymen and shopkeepers, WHPA members adopted confrontational political tactics. Their strategies included conventional lobbying methods: they sought scientific evidence that Galveston indeed had a pure food problem, employed nativist rhetoric against the "foreigner" who kept dirty shops, attempted boycotts and initiated law suits against offending dairymen, brought in state health officers and sought to legitimize their position through state inspector appointments, won editorial support from the city dailies, and finally sought coalition with sympathetic male organizations in petitioning the city commission.
Although too little has been written about southern women reformers in the Progressive movement, clearly the Galveston example highlights the fact that a national women's reform movement reached into New South cities. The WHPA's choice of agendas was informed by national issues but decided by local needs and opportunities, including a badly damaged economy, by a lack of regulatory agencies, and by issues closely tied to southern women's culture. This particular group of organized women, the first in the city to pursue political ends, met successes in its early years for various reasons: They linked themselves politically with the 1901 city commission government, which had consolidated decision-making power in the hands of commercial-civic elites, a class from which the women also stemmed. Commissioners were more accessible to and more compatible with WHPA members than aldermen had been. Elite consanguinity existed between the two groups over burial of storm victims and city beautification. But the thornier issue of imposing elite domestic values of cleanliness on middling shopkeepers and dairymen brought women and city commissioners of the same class into conflict; class cohesiveness broke down over gender issues. Power still resided with conventional civic-commercial elites, but by the clever use of gender issues and lobbying techniques that enlisted the press and male voters, women activists in Galveston gained, if not power, then substantial influence in turning domestic politics into public policy.

The Women's Health Protective Association's activities were considerable, especially given the city's destitution in 1900, and the rewards for the women members were manifold. Members found that by acting collectively they had formed the rudiments of a women's community, which, borne of women's culture, constituted a powerful lobbying force for municipal
housekeeping. As the first democratic Progressive era women's organization, they brought all the organizing skills learned in their earlier institution-building days to a larger forum—the city. They transferred their concern for the indigent individual to the revegetation of a denuded island. This concern for the larger community compelled them to insist on decent burial for storm victims, beautification, clean streets and alleys, pure milk, and sanitary markets even if it meant imposing progressive standards on reluctant dairymen and grocers. They learned the arts of inspection, of rhetoric, of petitioning for change, and of working around commissioners—in short, they learned practical politics. But without direct access to political power they found their organizing talents limited to mere influence. In their own words, "without the ballot, [we] have little or nothing to say with regard to how such laws should be carried into effect. The day will come when we will have a voice, that's sure." 64 It was clear through their experience with city hall that women needed and deserved the vote.


6Galveston Daily News, September 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 1900. The News printed on Friday, September 7, a brief story about the storm raging in the Gulf near Key West, Florida, but by then the storm was off the coast of Louisiana. Herbert Molloy Mason, Jr., Death from the Sea: Our Greatest Natural Disaster. The Galveston Hurricane of 1900 (New York, 1972), 60-61.
7 Mason, Death from the Sea, 71; McComb, Galveston, 123. Houston Chronicle, September 15, 1988.

8 Mason, Death from the Sea, 79, 80; McComb, Galveston, 124; John Newman to the Editor, August 31, 1934, John Newman Letter (Barker Texas Library, University of Texas at Austin); Ida Smith Austin, "Letter Describing the 1900 Storm," November 6, 1900 (Rosenberg Library); Galveston Daily News, September 12, 1900.

9 Henry W. Wolfram to Dear George, September 21, 1900, Henry M. Wolfram Letter (Barker Texas History Center); McComb, Galveston, 125; Houston Chronicle, September 8, 1934.

10 Sarah Helen Littlejohn, "My Experiences in the Galveston Storm, September 8, 1900" (Rosenberg Library); Galveston Daily News, August 9, 1978; Gid Scherer to Mary Hutson, September 28, 1900, Charles Woodward Hutson Papers (Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill); John Newman to the Editor, August 31, 1934.


12 Galveston Daily News, September 12, 1900 (first quotation). Austin, "Letter Describing the 1900 Storm." Mason, Death from the Sea, 194, 198, 200, 209-10, 217-18; McComb, Galveston, 126-27; Ousley, Galveston in Nineteen Hundred, 37; Galveston Tribune, September 12, 1900.


14 Galveston Daily News, September 14, 1900.

15 Austin, "Letter Describing the 1900 Storm."

16 Galveston Daily News, September 10, 1900. "1900 Storm Meetings, September 9, 1900 - September 14, 1900," City Council Minutes (Galveston City Hall, Galveston). Ousley, Galveston in Nineteen Hundred, 255-264. The committee members were: Mayor Jones, chair, Bertrand Adoue (Finance member), John Sealy (Finance chair), I. H. Kempner (Finance member), Jens Moller (Finance member), W.A. McVitie (Relief chair), Ben Levy (Burial chair), Morris Lasker (Correspondence chair), and Daniel Ripley (hospital chair).


20The ward leaders were: Annie B. Hill, Mollie Settle, Margaret Griffin, Ella Goldthwaite, Lucy Quarles, Mrs. J. W. Keenan, Mrs. Forster Rose, Lucy Ballinger Mills, Mary E. Reading, Iola Barns Beers, and Lucy Gregory. Later Mrs. A. Kenison, Mrs. Charles Scrimgeour, and Mrs. J. H. Miller replaced some of the women who fell ill. Galveston Daily News, September 28, 30, 1900.

21Ousley, Galveston in 1900, 259; McComb, Galveston, 134; Mason, Death from the Sea, 222-26.

22Galveston Daily News, September 12, 1900; McComb, Galveston, 132; Mason, Death from the Sea, 230; Galveston Daily News, September 12, 14, 1900.

23Rice, Progressive Cities, 4-15; McComb, Galveston, 134-7; Mason, Death from the Sea, 234-36; Grantham, Southern Progressivism, 115, 283-86; Joe B. Frantz, Texas: A History (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1984), 160; J. Morgan Kousser, The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880-1910 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974), 208. See also Weinstein, "Organized Business and the City Commission and Manager Movements," 166-82; and Clinton Rogers Woodruff, ed., City Government by Commission (New York and London: D. Appleton and Co., 1914). The constitutionality of the reform was challenged in court, and in March 1903 a new charter was adopted that removed the governor's appointive power. The five commissioners were then elected at large by voters. One man, Isaac H. Kempner, age 27, became a sustaining link between all of the groups interested in municipal government. He served first as city treasurer, was a member of the Central Relief Committee, the Deep Water Committee, and was appointed to the City Commission by Governor Sayers in 1901. Three other Deep Water Committee members also served on the Central Relief Committee—Morris Lasker, John Sealy, and Bertrand Adoue. Although no Deep Water Committee members other than Kempner consented to appointment or election to the newly created city commission, their influence, nonetheless, remained strong in promoting a public policy that favored business interests principally in banking, merchandising, and shipping.

24The five city commissioners represented varying occupational, religious, and ethnic groups—an Episcopalian judge, a Presbyterian realtor, a Methodist cattle broker, a Jewish financier, and a German Lutheran wholesale grocer. Among those not represented directly were blacks, Catholics, Baptists, laborers, and, of course, women.

25Bradley Rice notes the distinction between Progressive Era social reformers, who sought to "improve general social conditions" and structural or administrative reformers, who urged changes in city governmental structure in order better to cope with the rising problems of an urban environment. Although the advent of city commission government, also known as the Galveston Plan, brought with it a reduction in representation by working-class voters through the elimination of the ward system, it was considered a reform over the (possibly corrupt) ward-based boss and his machine in some cities and over the mayor-alderman system in Galveston. Rice, Progressive Cities, xii, 98. Samuel P. Hays, "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government," 228, notes the paradox in the use of the term "reform."

26The lower number of wives of Deep Water Committee (DWC) members in WHPA activities may be explained by generational differences. Most DWC wives were approaching retirement after years of volunteer service to women's organizations before 1900; those wives young enough to take on the sacrifices required of them in the WHPA for the most part did.
Even so, the average age of a DWC wife who accepted officership in the WHPA by 1910 was 55. The wife of one city commissioner who did not belong to the WHPA was Mrs. A. P. Norman. She typifies women who did not participate in women's civic reform organizations. Her affiliations were exclusively to the West End Methodist Women's Missionary Society and the Alamo School Mother's Club. Although she was president of the Methodist Wesley House, a religious settlement house, she did not participate in women's groups beyond the church and her children's school. Women of evangelical religious background were arguably least likely to make the transition to citywide civic reform organizations.

27 Galveston Daily News, October 2 (first quotation), 3 (second quotation), 1900.

28 Galveston Daily News, October 9, 1900.


30 Margaret Sealy Burton, "I'm Telling You," typescript, Margaret Sealy Burton Letters, (Barker Texas History Center, Austin, Texas), letter 54; Galveston Daily News, February 8, 1932.


33 Morrison and Fourny's General Directory of the City of Galveston, 1899-1900.

34 All statistical and biographical information is taken from the database.

35 Recent studies of northern women's antebellum societies have found little indication that individual women progressed from church to benevolent to reform societies, yet in postbellum Galveston there is sufficient evidence to suggest that this was the case. See Anne M. Boylan, "Women in Groups: An Analysis of Women's Benevolent Organizations in New York and Boston, 1797-1840," Journal of American History, LXXI (December 1984), 502, 514; and
By contrast Barbara A. Springer and Anastatia Sims found that in the states of Indiana and North Carolina, the WCTU provided much of the leadership for Progressive era reform. Springer, "Ladylike Reformers: Indiana Women and Progressive Reform, 1900-1920" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1985), 11-12; Sims, "Feminism and Femininity in the New South: White Women's Organizations in North Carolina, 1883-1930" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1985), 83-84.


38 W. L. Ratisseau to Jean S. Morgan, June 6, 1902, WHPA File, Morgan Family Papers. Galveston Daily News, July, 1901, clipping, ibid. Galveston Daily News, December 3, 1902 (quotation); Galveston Tribune, May 12, 1906. Examples abound of women concerning themselves with cemeteries. As already noted in Chapter 2, in Galveston the Jewish cemetery was founded through the will of Rosanna Dyer Osterman just after the Civil War. The vestry of Trinity Episcopal Church, which had its own cemetery, beginning in 1878 asked a committee of women to be responsible for its upkeep including fund raising. Rosanna Dyer Osterman's will, filed March 26, 1866, Will Book 2, pp. 229-44; and Rosanna Dyer Osterman's inventory, Inventories Book 1, pp. 405-11, both in Galveston County Courthouse; A. Stanley Dreyfus, "Hebrew Cemetery No. 1 of Galveston," typescript, A. Stanley Dreyfus Papers (Rosenberg Library); Vestry minutes, Trinity Episcopal Church, January 16, 1878, Trinity Episcopal Church Records (Rosenberg Library); William Manning Morgan, Trinity Protestant Episcopal Church, Galveston, Texas, 1841-1953 (Houston and Galveston, 1954), 711. Shirley Abbot, in Womenfolks: Growing Up Down South (New York, 1983), 1-3, describes with grace and humor the traditions of southern women and family grave tending. In another poignant scene, playwright Alfred Uhry, in Driving Miss Daisy, makes sure that Daisy Werthan, a Jewish matron in Atlanta, is shown in typical southern posture tending to her husband's grave.


41 Galveston Daily News, July, 1901, clipping. Unidentified clippings in the WHPA
File, Morgan Family Papers. *Galveston Tribune*, February 6, 13, May 2, 11, 12, 17, 1906, April 25, November 12, 13, 1907, March 3, October 10, 1908; *Galveston Daily News*, May 2, 8, November 6, 10, 1906, March 10, November 3, 14, 1907, March 15, October 7, 17, 1908, April 8, 1908. October 4, 8, 15, October 25, 27, 31, November 2, 5, 13, December 11, 12, 16, 1911.


43 *Christian Science Monitor*, November 14, 1911.

44 *Galveston Daily News*, November 5, 1911 (first two quotations); October 9, 1911 (third quotation). See also *ibid.*, October 15, 19, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 31, November 2, 12, 13, 16, 23, December 11, 1911. "How They Are Doing It in Galveston," The Tradesman, November 16, 1911, article found in WHPA File, Morgan Family Papers.


46 *Galveston Daily News*, January 12, March 5 (quotation), 6, 7, May 7, 8, 1912, January 10, February 5, February 22, 23, 1913, January 6, 7, 9, 10, 17, February 4, 7, 10, 12, 15, March 15, 21, April 11, May 6, 31, June 4, July 3, November 4, 1914, January 6, February 2, 3, April 7, May 5, July 6 1915, October 5, November 3, December 1, 17, 1916; *Galveston Tribune*, December 3, 1912, February 2, 4, 12, 20, 21, December 1, 1914, January 5, March 2, April 11, May 4, 1915, October 4, 21, 1916, July 11, 1917.


50 Seaholm, "Earnest Women," 144-47; see also Mitchell Okun, *Fair Play in the Marketplace: The First Battle for Pure Food and Drugs* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois


52 Report of a Sanitary Survey of the City of Galveston, Texas (Galveston, 1913) in WHPA File, Morgan Family Papers, 20, (first quotation) 14 (second two quotations), 16 (third quoted word), 19 (fourth quotation), 25 (fifth quotation).

53 Ibid., 6 (first quotation), 9 (second quotation), 4-13. Deaths from tuberculosis ranged from 64 in 1910 to 78 in 1912; deaths from diarrheal diseases reached a high of 99 in 1907 to a low of 23 in 1910; cases of typhoid fever ranged from a low of 42 in 1906 to a high of 132 in 1909. Galveston's population was 37,789 in 1900. U. S. Census Office, Twelfth Census of the United States... 1900: Population (Washington, 1901), 643. Okun, Fair Play in the Marketplace, 8, 22.

54 Galveston Daily Herald, March 5, 1913; Galveston Daily News, January 7, 9, 1914.


60 Galveston Tribune, January 20, 1914. McComb, Galveston, 171.


63 The black population in Galveston in 1900 was 22 percent; the foreign-born population was 17 percent. U. S. Census Office, Twelfth Census of the United States... 1900: Population, 643. Curiously the women did not use racist rhetoric to underscore the need for improved sanitation, rather they blamed the immigrant shopkeeper who had not yet become thoroughly "Americanized " for unclean shops. This most often included German and Italian food purveyors. Galveston Daily News, June 3, 1903.
Chapter 7
Women Organizing for Women

"This talk about women having enough moral suasion to get what political changes they want reminds me of the dog barking at the moon."¹

In March 1913 many of Galveston's "leading ladies" found themselves engaged in entertaining an audience at the Grand Opera House that was filled "almost to the last seat from gallery to pit." The dramatization "of good-humored raillery and entertaining comedy," for which these women willingly shed their earnest upper-crust demeanor, was actually an appeal for the cause of woman suffrage. The three-part program featured an "Anti-Suffrage Monologue" that poked fun at the "antis"; "Lady Geraldine's Speech," a suffrage comedy that enlisted the acting talents of at least seven local suffragists; and "A Dream of Brave Women," a tableaux in which the women dressed in elaborate period costumes defined by "electrical effects." This last segment, most interesting for what it reveals about local suffragists, presented female characters from the past, who they felt most symbolized "convincing proof of the part...women have played in the world's history and progress."²

The women chosen to signify progress, both as historical characters and as their Galveston models, represented a curious mixture of national pride and local status. Pocahontas was played by Loula Lasker, daughter of Galveston's great Jewish philanthropist, Morris Lasker; Jane Alvey, granddaughter of John and Margaret McCullough, who were among the first Presbyterian missionaries to Texas, played the role of Molly Pitcher; Elizabeth Cady Stanton was represented by Mrs. Moritz O. Kopperl, daughter-in-law of
another prominent Jewish philanthropist couple, Isabella and Moritz Kopperl; Minnie Fisher Cunningham, who would become president of the local and state suffrage leagues, played Clara Barton; and lest the audience forget that these ladies were southerners, a Daughter of the Confederacy was represented by one of the UDC's own. Then, to emphasize to Texans the urgency in joining the "suffrage states," tableaux depicting the states of Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Washington, California, Kansas and Arizona, which had already passed suffrage amendments, were filled by young women many of whom were just finishing their debutant season.³

The affair had taken weeks of elaborate preparation by some of Galveston's wealthiest and most civically active women. It was presented in the city's cultural palace to a paying audience that, for the most part, supported the aspirations of the women on stage. The plays were humorous and light, pointed yet inoffensive. Since clubwomen had often used the technique of raising money for their causes through "entertainments" of this type, supporters and promoters were comfortable with the medium. Most important to the cause of suffrage was the fact that the tableaux and plays gave opportunity to prominent Galveston women and their daughters to show themselves in favor of the vote in a manner that did not make them look or seem strident.⁴ The campaign for women's rights was just getting started in Galveston, but the entertainment had the air of familiarity. Suffragists, who also were much involved in all sorts of women's club activities, understood this and used the oft-familiar clubwomen's fundraising techniques subtly but persistently to purvey to male citizens the radical notion, that women should have the vote too.

As we have already seen through the actions of members of the WHPA
in the years after 1914, Galveston women were capable of confrontation and assertiveness in the cause of public health or community betterment, but they began their campaign for their own rights in a much softer tone, packaging a radical idea in comfortable wrappings. Eventually, career suffragists, women who had staked their lives on suffrage, would grow weary of these innocuous methods and would stride off to wage fiercer battles in the statehouse. But in 1913 the drive for equality in Galveston very much resembled the ways and means that southern women had always used to drum up support for their goals. The presence of club women in the mobilization for suffrage, the persistence of club women's techniques, and the growing tension that this created is indicative of one of the enduring contradictions of southern suffragism. Without club women there would have been no southern suffrage movement; with them, the movement at the local level remained torn between the conservatism of the region and the need for militant mobilization.

Galveston suffragists would become less tolerant of political obstructions at the same time that WHPA members became more aggressive in their pursuit of pure milk and food. And as the women's community grew stronger in the Progressive Era, especially with the founding of the city's first Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in late 1914, a newfound vitality emerged among women progressives that accelerated their energies and drive toward their own goals. Of course the national and state campaign for suffrage, the continued incorporation of women into nationally affiliated women's organizations, the increased agitation among progressives for reform legislation, and then the massive drive for women to help in the war effort also spurred women (particularly in Galveston which had a military
base) on to greater public service, both for the city and for the women's community. This chapter will discuss all of these subjects: the local suffrage movement, the founding of the YWCA, the pushes and pulls of national movements influencing their actions, and most important, the emergence of a progressive women's community made up of civic activists.

* * *

Understanding the woman suffrage movement in the South from a local perspective has not been easy. The existing articles and books on suffrage are primarily studies of state organizations or of individuals who gave their wholehearted energies to the cause. Although the subject is far from exhausted, we now have a better picture of the politics involved at the state, regional, and national levels. In studying the rise as well as the role and function of local suffrage societies in the South, different sets of questions emerge: did the grass have any roots, for example, and if so, how healthy were they, and did these local roots advance or hold back the greening of the general suffrage movement. Remembering that there were many more foot soldiers than commanders mobilizing for suffrage, we need to ask what kind of southern woman was willing to organize, campaign, march, and hold meetings in her own community for the ideal of equal voting rights? How were clubwomen, the so-called white-gloved ladies of the South, able to transcend their domestic culture in order to emerge as "New Women" campaigners for suffrage? What forces brought them publicly to espouse feminist goals? Was it religion, professional training, club work, youthful idealism, or some combination of several influences? And, finally, how did
local societies sustain suffrage in their immediate communities while fostering state-level associations and leaders?

The answers are beginning to emerge as we explore the issue in Texas, the first state of the Old Confederacy and the ninth state in the nation to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment. It is no doubt axiomatic to point out that strong popular suffrage sentiment in the South was most likely to be found in cities. In Galveston the roots for a suffrage movement had been developing since at least the 1880s with the growth and spectacular rise of the city as the state's leading cotton export center. Prosperity promoted an ever more sophisticated citizenry, and as the community of 22,000 in 1880 almost doubled to 40,000 by 1900, so too did the diversity of economic prospects in the form of merchant houses, cotton factoring, shipping, railroading, banking, and insurance. Industries such as cotton mills, presses, seed, and oil companies; bagging and cordage manufactories, flour mills, foundries, and cracker and barrel factories provided employment for thousands of working men and women. 6 Local entrepreneurs in 1891 billed Galveston as "the wealthiest city in the world of its size."7

 Accompanying the impressive aggregation of wealth was an equally imposing growth of clubs, societies, and private associations. By 1910 the city directory listed no fewer than sixty-eight church and synagogue societies (of which forty-four were women's), eight benevolent institutions (six managed by women), thirty clubs (eight for women), forty-six fraternal associations (six for women), and fourteen immigrant relief societies (three managed by women). 8 All this points to the fact that membership in societies, clubs, leagues, unions, and associations was an important element of town life in the first decade of the twentieth century for both men and women and added
a sense of integration for individuals into community life. Discrete groups provided the necessary preconditioned environment for the formation of women's reform associations. But the fact that Galveston in 1910 was swimming with little clusters of self-defined groups did not alone set the stage for the formation of a feminist suffrage society. More essential to the process was the type and success of groups that women created both before and after the turn of the century.

As has already been shown, between 1880 and 1895 four permanent benevolent institutions, conceived and managed by white women, provided leadership and training for elite, civic-minded women. In 1891 women interested in furthering their education and broadening their intellectual horizons founded the city's first literary club, the Wednesday Club, accompanied by several musical and patriotic-hereditary clubs. Then six months after the disastrous hurricane of 1900, women survivors united to form the Women's Health Protective Association (WHPA), the first city-wide progressive reform association open to all white women.

Of course, the Galveston suffrage league did not develop in a vacuum independent of the rest of the state. There had been suffrage associations earlier, and they involved Galveston women nearly from the beginning. Although petitions had been sent to the Reconstruction and Redeemer constitution framers in 1868 and 1875 without success, no suffrage society came into existence in Texas until after the establishment of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in 1890. In 1893, however, Galveston resident Rebecca Henry Hayes, whose background in journalism and vice-presidency of the National American Suffrage Association no doubt fueled her mobilization, organized the Texas Equal
Rights Association (TERA). After her election to the presidency of the TERA, Hayes articulated her thoughts upon suffrage in the South: "I have met with the warmest sympathy for my views and was myself surprised at the rapid growth of equal suffrage sentiment among conservative people." Her leadership of the movement lasted for two years, from 1893 until 1895, and in that time she traveled 9,000 miles for the sake of enfranchisement. Unfortunately the association developed ideological differences and Hayes lost her bid for reelection. This first association did not last beyond 1896. 9

Not until 1903 did women organize another suffrage league, this time in Houston under the leadership of Annette Finnigan. The Houston society invited Carrie Chapman Catt, president of NAWSA, to come and speak, and the result was the formation of several local societies, including Galveston with twenty-five members. Following this success, a state suffrage league was formed in Houston and several Galveston women joined the executive board. The next year, Galveston sent delegates (among them Julia Runge, daughter of Johanna Runge, founder of Galveston's free kindergarten) to a statewide suffrage convention in Houston. But finally Annette Finnigan left the state for several years and the movement once again died. As long as there were individual leaders willing to stimulate interest in suffrage, the societies stayed viable. But when leadership failed, there was little on which to fall back. The reason this was so rested on the fact that few urban women's civic groups had as yet experienced politicization of their goals. Until women's civic clubs, such as the WHPA in Galveston, confronted intransigent government officials or apathetic citizens, mobilizing for the vote seemed an abstraction at best. Needing the vote to gain their civic improvement agendas and realizing the impotence of their political
positions necessarily preceded the upsurge of viable local suffrage societies. And in Texas, no state association flourished until local societies had already been well established. 10

The demise of the second state suffrage society coincided with the youth and promise of the Women's Health Protective Association in Galveston. As we know, between 1901 and 1912 WHPA members replanted the island with trees and shrubs killed by the grade raising while at the same time forming committees to inspect and report on the condition of streets, alleys, markets, bakeries, restaurants, dairies, and housing. This early period of civic activism was marked by cooperation with city officials, and the women showed more annoyance than resolve at the lack of support for clean alleys, more efficient trash removal, and sidewalk construction. But after 1913, with the publication of the sanitation survey, members began to agitate for the enforcement of the pure milk and pure food and drug ordinances of 1907. Just at the point that the WHPA members were heating up in anger over governmental footdragging, enthusiastic women formed a local suffrage society. At first suffragists had not yet witnessed the full wrath of the WHPA and were therefore acting more like polite club women than irate feminists. But as the battle for safer milk and food ensued, becoming louder and more virulent, suffragists began to feel themselves further politicized. Consequently suffrage tactics changed from "entertainments," such as that shown earlier in 1913, to lobbying directly before the public and parading in the streets. Thus, in politicizing women's domestic goals, the WHPA brought activist women of all sorts directly into the political process as public policy makers and, consequently, became the most important predecessor to a Galveston suffrage society.11
Another lesson learned by would-be suffragists through the WHPA concerned voting: constituent members elected WHPA officers. Casting votes for association officers represented the first opportunity for Galveston white women of all classes and religious backgrounds to learn about open balloting. Previously elite groups of women confined their voting to officer elections in clubs or in church societies, neither of which had the advantage of size or openness. The democratization of the white women's progressive reform movement served to awaken women to their potential voting strength and instituted among them the habit of voting. Elected officers handled the business of domestic politics, that is the goals of the WHPA, while city commissioners handled the business of city politics. At some point in the minds of women across the South, these two concepts merged and city politics became women's politics. When women began to see themselves as potential city office holders and certainly as voters for city office, the suffrage movement moved into high gear.

Once women experienced voting within a civic association and began to work with, then struggle against, city hall over issues peculiar to women, the stage was set for the advent of a successful suffrage society. It was a great leap, and not every woman was willing to travel the distance from civic-mindedness to feminism or from arguing a woman's agenda before the city commission to joining a suffrage society. Nevertheless, in February 1912 seventy-four women and seven men became charter members of the Galveston Equal Suffrage Association (GESA). The Galveston Daily News reported sardonically,

If the men of Galveston doubt that the cause of woman's suffrage is knocking loudly at their doors clamoring for
admission they need but have peeped into the ballroom of the Hotel Galvez Thursday ... where ...[150] Galveston women... were in session to discuss the question.12

Just as the WHPA in 1901 had received its impetus from an "outside agitator," Anna Maxwell Jones, so the local suffrage society depended on her again for the push it needed in joining the nationwide suffrage army. Anna M. Jones, by then described as "a leading suffragette," and her sister Etta came from New York for the express purpose of mobilizing suffrage societies in their native state. The Galveston Daily News reported that the women of the city "have been informing themselves for a long time on this subject, and have been waiting for some leading spirit to call them together." First, Jones enumerated the nations in the world — twenty-two — that granted the franchise to women, then she recounted the triumph of six American states, all in the West, granting women the vote. As Texas considered itself both a western and a southern state she pointed proudly to the women of California as the western inspiration to follow; 80 percent of the women of Los Angeles went to the polls at their first election. Then she spent time describing the women of the Southeast who were mobilizing their states for suffrage: Mary Johnston of Virginia, "Miss Brackenridge" of Kentucky, Mrs. Hoke Smith of Georgia. But she finally eluded to the reasons why women in general should have the vote: "As guardians of the home, protectors of the health of the family, intrusted [sic] with rearing and training of the children, we women are interested in the public welfare." Finally, pointing to the pure milk issue, she preached that "much is being done by women's clubs and other organizations toward arousing the public conscience to the necessity for pure food laws, wholesome surroundings and sanitary uprightness." She intoned
that the "physical welfare and the moral uplift of the community [would] be more quickly brought about through the direct influence of the ballot in the hands of women."13

Jones was not alone in speaking out at the organizing rally; several local women gave their reasons for wanting the vote. Sally Trueheart Williams, daughter of a prominent realtor and a staunch Presbyterian, went right to the heart of the conflict with city government. "Housekeeping," she reasoned,

used to begin at home and end there. But time has changed all this. It begins now ... in the public laundry, the grocery, the dairy, the meat market, or the candy store; it only ends in the home. ...The woman who keeps house must in a measure also keep the laundry, the grocery, the market, the dairy,... and in asking for the right to vote they are following their housekeeping in the place where it is now being done, the polls.

Rebecca Brown, one of the wealthiest unmarried women in the city, argued that "every property holder should have the vote." Moreover, she resented the inequality that an equal education brought women. Remembering the days when school children and Sunday School students of Trinity Episcopal Church competed for scholastic honors, she complained "that girls often carried off the highest honors, but that when each reached the age of 21 the boy had a vote in the government but the girl was not permitted to be progressive...." Julia Runge, a kindergarten teacher, wanted "equal salary for men and women who do equal work."14 Since Galveston was a southern town, no one brought up the issue of votes for black women, nor did any woman address the more radical view that as women they were all -- black and white -- entitled to equal citizenship based on natural rights. Privately
Galveston suffragists wrote what they could not express in public. "I feel humiliated over the position of women," wrote Cordia Sweeny, "and the way she has been looked on in the past, as a slave or a plaything. I want to be neither, and want woman equal with man before my daughter grows up." 15

Although Galvestonians were relatively late in organizing for suffrage compared with more western states, in Texas they were actually riding a wave of organizational fervor as women formed local societies between 1912 and 1913 in San Antonio, Dallas, Waco, Tyler, San Marcos, and Houston. (Austin had organized in 1908.) Other suffragists from New York and Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), stumped the state in 1912, thus aiding Texans in their struggle to mobilize. By 1913 seven local societies carried the banner, by 1915 twenty-one, by 1916 eighty, and in June 1918, one year before ratification, ninety-eight societies and leagues across Texas supported votes for women.16

The founding of local suffrage societies was critically important to the movement as a whole. No viable, permanent state-level association in Texas existed before the forming of strong local societies. Sentiment for suffrage in the cities, supported by women active in local affairs, ensured the establishment and maintenance of a state organization. And support for the franchise, as demonstrated in the case of Galveston, depended upon a sufficient level of women's club activity that addressed community problems.17

In 1913 Texas suffragists formed a state association that eventually positioned itself to work in three major directions: first, at the national level, to support and remain under the guidance of the NAWSA; second, at the state level, to lobby the Texas legislature for passage of a state suffrage
amendment; and third, at the local level, to aid and guide the activities of the local suffrage societies, particularly in organizing new suffrage leagues within their same counties. This put tremendous pressure on the state officers, especially the president and the state field workers, to give their time exclusively to suffrage work. The state association needed dedicated, energetic women who were willing to make enormous personal sacrifices for the sake of the cause and who would be able to reside in Austin when the legislature met. Texas women who were "called up" to lead the state suffrage association more closely resembled "career" suffragists whether salaried or not. Their past lives as southern ladies quickly blurred under the demands for "New Woman" leadership.

The Galveston Equal Suffrage Association, as with all local suffrage societies, differed from the state organization in its responsibilities to the movement; its duties fell into five basic categories: to educate and agitate, not only its own members but also non-members and male voters; to increase membership both in Galveston city and by aiding the field workers in establishing new associations within Galveston County; to petition the legislature with as many local signatures as possible; to help raise money for its own work and for the campaign at the state level; and occasionally to send delegates to state and national meetings and to lobby the state legislature.

Local suffragists differed from state suffrage workers also in style and level of commitment. It is here that we find some white-gloved ladies and New Women acting together, although not always in concert, for the goal of enfranchisement. "White-gloved ladies" should be understood as a synonym for club women, who represented respectability without controversy, who took part in the round of women's teas and fundraisers for patriotic causes, or
who studied Shakespeare and Milton in literary clubs such as the Wednesday and Echo clubs. A few white-gloved ladies made the important decision to campaign for women's votes openly and joined the Galveston Equal Suffrage Association. But many of them found that the commitment to suffrage needed not only a decision to struggle for rights for women, which they made, but also a change in the way they approached the struggle.

Conventional literary or patriotic club tactics — endorsing national issues at the local level and then adjourning for refreshments — would not suffice in the campaign for equality. Aggressive and determined action, much like that eventually displayed by the women of the reform-minded WHPA, would win the fight. In short, the ideals of equal suffrage demanded that New Women both in mind and deed stir the southern conscience in favor of rights for women. New Women saw themselves as movers and motivators of others, not just protectors of status, convention, and the social order. All suffragists were New Women, but those with conservative tendencies fostered by years of club work wherein few challenges were made to the existing order offered the movement respectability without innovation. State-level officers made these observations — they clearly saw the difference between New Women and white-gloved ladies — when they evaluated the fire and determination of individual local suffrage societies. Yet for the sake of the movement in the South, too much belligerence could turn voting and supporting men against the cause. Judge Robert G. Street, a suffrage supporter, cautioned the women "to be conservative, yet persistent in their methods to obtain the franchise." A fine tension presented itself between the usefulness of aggressive tactics and genteel confrontations of the sort southern women dispatched with grace. To be successful, the New Women
would need to borrow some of the gentle tactics of the white-gloved ladies.18

Local suffragists confronted another problem in their quest for political equality. Suffragists in Galveston had no "city hall" against which to struggle. Unlike the members of the WHPA who targeted a single body of city officials (or a city health department) for reform, suffragists labored to change the attitudes of the entire male electorate. WHPA members could see immediate results, or lack of them, when confronting elected officials over issues of sanitation. But the campaign for political equality seemed diffuse and abstract compared to the fight for public health. WHPA reformers could rail against city hall without appearing altogether unladylike. Afterall, they were fighting for the public good. Suffragists were in the business of persuading male voters to change the law for the sake of women, which, however much they couched it in terms of the public good, still appeared self-serving. Local suffragists tried through plays, lectures, booths, and parades to convince voters of the need for equal enfranchisement. But tangible results, or lack of them, were seen most visibly at the state level where true confrontation was waged. The consequence in Galveston was that WHPA members seemed more strident than suffragists, who hesitated to appear too forward in asking men to vote for their cause.

In Galveston, women supporters contended with these conflicting ideals and processes. Many, though committed in principle to votes for women, were unable or unwilling to rearrange their lives to make the movement their sole activity or to adopt measures that would brand them as controversial. This does not mean that their efforts were nonessential or immaterial. A. Elizabeth Taylor is correct when she states that "local societies played an important part in the votes-for-women movement, for on
them rested the chief responsibility for promoting favorable sentiment in their communities."19

In order to gain "favorable sentiment," an image of white-gloved respectability with involvement in many other community and club activities needed to accompany their commitment to equal suffrage (white gloves symbolized both purity and activism; gloves were worn for public occasions). Local suffragists were not entirely free to abandon their club and church work, for these interests proved to male opponents that Texas suffragists were not wild-eyed harpies but, rather, responsible civic leaders whose dedication to home, family, and community entitled them to a deferential hearing. Local suffragists also differed from their state-level sisters in their inability to remove themselves for long periods from the community or from civic work. By honoring their pledge to the city as well as to suffrage, local suffragists protected the movement from the taint of radicalism.

Most Galveston suffragists continued their involvement in the circle of women's associations. During the Progressive Era there were multiple distractions — the WHPA sanitation fight with city hall waged for five years until 1917; then the war effort commenced with Liberty Loan drives, anti-vice committees, and soldier comfort stations. All claimed the attention of activist island women. During this same period women formed branches of the YWCA, the Red Cross (reorganized), and the Anti-Tuberculosis Association, requiring teams of women to canvass for both members and money. In a general sense the suffragists' involvement in these varied activities supported the argument that equal dedication to community and nation earned equal voting rights. But involvement meant time away from suffrage campaigns, limiting the wholehearted advancement of the movement. This
proved extremely frustrating to the women at state suffragist headquarters who wanted maximum commitment to the cause. They understood the need for credibility and respectability but also saw opportunities for suffrage slipping away.

This was understandably discouraging for the locals as well. As white-gloved ladies they wanted to maintain their involvement in the community because their work directly and tangibly affected themselves and their families. But as New Women, imbued with feminist ideals, they often felt shackled by the very commitments that gave them access to public life. In order better to understand the problem these women faced, we need to discover who these white-gloved New Women were.

The suffrage association rolls make it very clear that in an open (to white) membership association there were two types of members—those who supported the association nominally and those who committed themselves to work as officers. Nominal members, who comprised by far the largest percentage, were willing to be listed as suffrage supporters in print and were often tapped more heavily for financial support. By 1913 the GESA had grown to 175 members and by 1915 to 300. This compares favorably with other Progressive era women's associations in Galveston. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) climbed to 100 members and the WHPA reached a maximum of 500 members in 1915; the YWCA opened with 2,000 members in 1914, a level it maintained until 1920. Of the 300 members of the GESA, 36 were men; about two-thirds of the women were active in at least one other women's group (many of the members were from other towns), and 29 were active as officers in the years 1912 to 1919. 20

It is the officers' biographical and organizational profiles that provide
the clearest picture of who southern grass-roots suffragists were (information is available for twenty-four of the twenty-nine). The roll of officers for the GESA in its first year contains the names of women who were known in the community for the prominence of their families and for their involvement in other areas of municipal housekeeping. Nine of the seventeen officers of the GESA in 1912 had held or would hold executive positions in the WHPA; seven of the seventeen belonged to commercially wealthy families that practiced civic philanthropy (five male members of these families became charter members of the GESA, as did Rabbi Henry Cohen). At least twelve Galveston suffragists were native Texans; nine were born in Galveston, seven were from other states, and five were of unknown origin. With respect to age, eight (32 percent) were in their thirties in 1915, six (24 percent) were between forty and fifty, while five (20 percent) were in their fifties; only one was older, but four were in their twenties. The southern women who marched for votes were not necessarily young and idealistic; most were mature women in the prime of life. 21

With respect to religious ties one might expect to see a high percentage of Methodist women, as Methodism in the South has often been linked with a lively reform tradition including the establishment of settlement (Wesley) houses and, of course, the endorsement of prohibition. But a search through the suffrage officer rolls turned up only two Methodists and one Baptist. The majority of suffrage officers were Episcopalian (ten) and Presbyterian (four). A significant number of suffrage officers came from Episcopal and Presbyterian backgrounds because in these churches status and wealth interfaced with a strong tradition of community service.22

Particularly striking was the fact that sixteen of the twenty-four officers
(66 percent) were married. Two of the married women, Dr. Ethel Lyon Heard and Maud (Mrs. Jens) Moller (both served also as WHPA president), combined marriage with careers as a physician and a real estate agent respectively. Maud Moller served as president of both the WHPA and the GESA. The fact that Mrs. Moller and Dr. Heard were childless may, in part, explain their ability to spend time with the movement outside of their professional lives. But the majority of the other Galveston suffrage officers were also childless.

With respect to motherhood among suffragists, of the twenty-four officers for whom data are available, seven bore children. Of those who could be identified as mothers in 1915, only four had children under the age of ten at home. If anyone should wonder about birth control among southern women, one need only look at the drop in the number of children per childbearing suffragist between 1890 and 1915. Mary Fowler Bomefeld, first president of the GESA, born in 1860, and married in 1882, bore her first child in 1883 and continued to have a baby every two years thereafter until 1893 when her sixth and last child was born. By contrast, younger suffragists who married after 1900 limited their families to a maximum of three. Although the sample is too small to make generalizations about the efficacy of the birth control movement in the South, the fact that so few suffragists had children at all is a significant factor in considering who joined the movement at the local level. 23

Perhaps the most unifying characteristic of these married suffragists was the fact that their husbands belonged to the white-collar and professional classes: three lawyers, two physicians, two shipping agency owners, two prosperous merchants, one newspaper publisher, four transportation agents,
one clerk of court, and one bookeeper. It is safe to conclude that a comfortable middle- to upper-class lifestyle and the relative absence of maternal responsibilities provided the leisure time necessary to organize for club and suffrage work. 24

Eight of the active suffragists in 1915 were single (two widows); here wealth clearly marked the difference in their status. Three were independently wealthy with sizable inheritances; three were teachers, one was a librarian, and one a medical student. Discrepancies in wealth did not appear to prejudice one worker from another, but every active suffragist was considered "socially acceptable." No Galveston suffrage officer came from the working class, where, for working women, finding leisure even for union activities was a problem. Suffragists and labor spokeswomen lamented the absence of working women in the suffrage ranks but found few solutions to the problem.

Recruiting working women to the suffrage movement proved difficult. State suffrage president Annette Finnigan wrote to Eva Goldsmith, a member of the Legislative Committee of the State Federation of Labor, about the situation. "Galveston women of their own accord brought up the subject of reaching the working woman and said that they felt that they were not reaching the people." Finnigan asked Goldsmith if she would travel to Galveston and help the suffragists "in reaching the working women and the labor element." Goldsmith complied but recommended that the young state field-worker, Pearl Penfield, "go down and speak for them. . . . I think Miss Penfield can do some good work at this time by visiting the different shops and making the girls talks, for suffrage is being talked of more and more all the time and some outsider could do more good than my continued talk
every day." But Goldsmith cautioned that not every suffragist could do the job: "Now I am going to be frank with you, do not send Mrs. [Edward] Harris to Mr. Young [president of the Galveston Labor Council], because it will do no good and may do harm. It seems that Mrs. Harris is stiff and can not reach the laboring people there." 25

Appeals were also made to working-class mothers and homemakers, but they too did not join in great numbers or become part of the association’s leadership. Perhaps both groups continued to see the vote as an abstraction divorced from the realities of their lives. Purely feminist goals were ideals that could bring few tangible and immediate rewards to alleviate either low wages or inadequate housing. State and Galveston suffrage leaders gave the matter of organizing working-class women their attention, corresponded with labor spokeswomen, and sought solutions on how to penetrate the labor pool, but Galveston suffragists, many of whom were traditional club women, had great difficulty presenting their message to working-class women.

With respect to immigrants and blacks, Galveston suffragists saw them as even more troublesome. White women were no more free of racism than were white men. The immigrant vote was considered a "counterbalance [to] the intelligent vote of Galveston...," 26 while the voting rights of black women, as well as black men, were discussed as problems that would have to be eliminated with disfranchisement measures. Minnie Fisher Cunningham, Texas Equal Suffrage Association president, stated in 1917, "the same moral influence that prevents the negro man from gaining control of political matters can, and will, serve a similar purpose with respect to the negro woman." When a black woman petitioned for admission to the Texas
association, Cunningham wrote that the idea of affiliating with black suffrage organizations had never before been considered. She wrote NAWSA president Carrie Chapman Catt about the matter, but Catt retreated to a states' rights position. The black suffragist was hence denied admission to the Texas association. Belle Critchett of El Paso shed the best light on this sordid picture when she explained: "We want to help the colored people but just now it is a rather hard question." The hard question was, of course, whether southern men would ratify the amendment if suffragists aligned themselves with black feminists. Pervading racism — for white men and women — kept the question of black women's voting rights out of the suffrage campaign. 27

Because active suffragists in Galveston were middle-to upper class, their leaders came with persuasive powers attached to class status and prominence. Status and elitism cut two ways, however. Apparently Texas suffragists carried their strength borne of their respectability to the statehouse, where they were well received by progressive assemblymen. But their middle- to upper-class respectability repelled working-class women (and excluded black women) whose voting menfolk were most in need of education on the issue of woman suffrage. 28 The tendency to repel or exclude the laboring classes poses the question whether there ever was much working-class support for suffrage. The fact is that prominently placed or highly educated urban white women waged the suffrage campaign in Texas by appealing mainly to progressive white men for financial support and to progressive legislators for political support.

In Galveston, suffrage officers regarded respectability as paramount. But worthiness did not rest alone on age, occupation, and their husbands' economic and social status (hence their own status). Equally important were
their impressive organizational histories. Twenty-one of the twenty-four officers for whom data are available were involved in other women's clubs and church societies. The three that had no activity besides suffrage were the youngest women, all in their twenties, who had not yet had time to amass a "civic leadership portfolio." It is a credit to the GESA that its members elected three eager but unproven workers. The remaining twenty-one give an impressive record of volunteer activism.

Logically, the older the woman the more associations and activities were to her credit. Among the twenty-one older women at least nineteen other clubs and societies were represented. Nine of the women were officers in four or more other associations. (Miss Bettie Ballinger, age sixty-one, and the only Baptist, was an officer in six other clubs and associations. Single and independently wealthy, she co-founded both the literary Wednesday Club and the patriotic-hereditary Daughters of the Republic of Texas.) Eleven of the leaders held offices in from one to three other clubs. Dividing the clubs and associations into such categories as church societies, boards of lady managers for benevolent institutions, literary and performing arts clubs, patriotic-hereditary associations, and civic associations including the WHPA, YWCA, Red Cross, and Mothers Clubs, one finds, not surprisingly, that suffragists preferred active leadership in civic associations, followed by literary clubs, patriotic-hereditary associations, women's church societies, and benevolent institutions.

Clearly, this was a very involved group of women. Mostly Texas born, middle-aged, patriotic, educated, well informed, industrious, and convincingly civic-minded, Galveston suffragists projected an image of unblemished respectability, an image that at times masked their feminist
goals. The Galveston Tribune gave them what it considered high praise in 1915 when it wrote: "Galveston women are not the kind that go in for every fad that comes along. They are in some respects old-fashioned, meaning they are not feverishly new fashioned. They are inclined to proceed wisely, conservatively; and that is why they haven't been shouting their heads off these past 20 or 30 years about the ballot."29

The local women leaders may have appeared conservative to the Tribune editors, but the GESA differed from popular women's clubs in one respect: nine of its twenty-nine officers were professional women who, undoubtedly, had seen the inequality in their paychecks and were willing to campaign for the vote in order to gain equal earning opportunities. Minnie Fisher Cunningham, who had trained as a pharmacist before assuming presidency of the GESA and the Texas Equal Suffrage Association, said that in 1901 in her first position as a prescription clerk at a Huntsville drugstore, she earned "$75 a month and everybody else $150. And now you could see what made a suffragette out of me — Equal Pay for Equal Work, only it wasn't equal work, I was the professional!" The fusion of women professionals with women volunteers who had long been prominent in civic improvement gave the GESA both a more worldly composition and certainly a more strident feminist spirit.30

Although we have accounted for suffragists in other types of organizations, there is one group conspicuously absent from the list of civic organizations to which suffragists were linked — the Women's Christian Temperance Union. The WCTU flourished in other parts of Texas, but it never became a strong women's organization in Galveston. Frances Willard founded the first union in Galveston in the early 1880s; this group was
reorganized in 1888. By 1906 a third union was founded with twenty members, then failed, and was finally replaced by a successful union in 1914, organized not by a southerner but by Margaret Bilz, a national WCTU organizer from Michigan. In its first years the local union focused on "working toward the suppression of the liquor traffic" and the "best interests of the community." This meant opening a chapter to the soldiers at Fort Crockett, convincing the school board to allow temperance education for children, holding a bazaar fundraiser, organizing a union among the city's black citizens, persuading ministers to set aside special Sundays for temperance, and holding educational lectures with Minnie Fisher Cunningham as speaker on votes for women.31

Suffrage was among the WCTU's several points of interest, but it was not the main item, consequently suffragists and members of the WCTU were not close. Only one suffrage officer maintained membership in the WCTU, and the tension between the two groups was so intense that in 1915 she resigned from the GESA in a huff over perceived slights on the part of suffragists toward WCTU leaders.32 The truth is that in Galveston suffragists and WCTU members moved in different circles bound by religion and economic status. The issues of class and religious preference in southern women's reform have often been overlooked, but in Galveston, and perhaps in other urban areas, members of the WCTU belonged almost exclusively to evangelical (Baptist and Methodist) churches and were mostly middle to lower-middle class in economic status. As a rule WCTU members belonged only to Protestant associations such as church missionary societies and the YWCA. The WCTU and the YWCA were the only two women's civic organizations in which at least 50 percent of the officers came from
evangelical churches. In other words, when entering the public sphere WCTU members, along with evangelical women in general, tended to confine their activism to those organizations where Christianity provided the organizing principle.

The GESA, by contrast, was more heterogeneous in membership. The officers belonged to eight different denominations, and their record of service to the community, contributed mostly through secular organizations, was far broader. Economic status varied among the suffrage officers: Miss Etta Lasker, for example, came from a family that could afford to donate a park and $35,000 to the city school system; Miss Mary Gardner, who moved to Galveston in 1903 from Montana (a suffrage state), worked all of her life as a librarian. If any link can be established between religion and suffrage in the island city, it was to those churches that had long promoted women's societies concerned with clothing and feeding the poor and that continued to emphasize community service. As discussed earlier, the women of Trinity Episcopal and First Presbyterian churches as early as the 1880s had taken charge of relief for those citizens (mainly women and children) who were in no way served by any other rescue or relief agency. Finally, suffrage officers did not confine themselves to Protestant groups; rather, they expanded upon their religious bases to embrace secular and political associations.

The evidence gathered from Galveston challenges the prevailing notion that the southern suffrage movement sprang from evangelical Protestant roots, or that WCTU members who fell in line after Frances Willard's organizing tour of the South in the 1880s became suffragists when assemblymen "listened politely but refused to act" upon temperance legislation. The view that Anne Firor Scott and others have painted of an
orderly progression from Methodist missionary society to WCTU to suffrage may well be true for suffrage leaders at the state level, but this view does not account for the origins of suffrage support among Galvestonians. The great storm of 1900 was a major catalyst for women's involvement in city reconstruction and political reform, but organizational experience among women had preceded the storm by twenty years. The origins of a suffrage movement in Galveston began not with Frances Willard's organizing tour of the South but with the advent of urban problems brought on by the rapid rise of the city's population, the discrepancy in wealth among citizens, and the attendant dislocations caused by a more mobile and industrialized society. Members of the Galveston Women's Health Protective Association and other groups that had fought city hall in order to ensure pure milk for children or parks and playgrounds for their families were the most anxious to preserve their gains by winning the vote and by entering into public office. Women in southern cities with strong progressive agendas for reform had the most to gain from access to the voting booth.33

Other cities need to be tested, of course. In a cursory review of the founding of suffrage societies in other southern states, a similar pattern of dependence on urban centers prevailed. In most cases urban suffrage societies preceded permanent and viable state equal suffrage associations. A majority of the states experienced the beginning of fledgling state suffrage leagues in the 1890s, but they sputtered and died only to be resurrected after permanent local societies formed usually after 1910. (See Table 6:1.) 34 Although urbanization acted as a catalyst in advancing suffrage, it was not the only causative agent. If that had been so, then suffrage societies would have formed in the cities of the South a decade or two earlier, especially in some
cities — St. Louis, Baltimore, New Orleans, Richmond — where the population was sufficient to bring women together in cohesive groups. Margaret Nell Price observed that "suffrage agitation in the South falls roughly into three periods of time: 1) Before 1885 with individual interest, and isolated societies. 2) 1885 to 1912, when some state-level associations formed. 3) 1912 to 1920 when organizations that had disappeared revived and permanent local suffrage societies spread. The period roughly between 1912 and 1920 coincided with the culmination in major southern cities of women's progressive civic reform activities. Prior to 1912 women worked for the betterment of their communities and at the state-level fought for "progressive" goals to improve health, child labor, prison reform, and education. The rise of women's civic and state reforming activities actually precedes the formation of permanent local societies suggesting a logical progression from community activism to suffrage. Women had to experience some form of politicization of their goals and values before they were ready to take on the struggle for their own rights. It is my contention that the WCTU was only one organization (and a weak one at that) among many by 1910 that helped women gain the political savvy necessary to mobilize. Because cities provided the most common arena for politicizing women's goals, they were essential to the suffrage movement, more essential than the ideals of the WCTU. Southern suffrage at the grass roots should perhaps be viewed first as an urban-based phenomenon supported and maintained by women with an investment in community building and only secondarily as a movement fueled by evangelical reforming sentiment.  

How women used their political know-how, their traditional club training, and the opportunities provided by an urban environment can be
illustrated through the activities of the Galveston Equal Suffrage Association members after 1912. In the first year suffragists made arrangements for no fewer than six speakers—from a local judge to NAWSA President Anna Howard Shaw and Mrs. Philip Snowden of Great Britain. Among the speakers was Perle Penfield, state suffrage fieldworker and Galveston medical student. In her address to the women she alluded to the WHPA campaigns in Galveston for pure food and milk and the need for women to struggle for the vote in order to see that health regulations were enforced. "The present campaign being waged ... here for pure milk has brought home to this woman the relation between disease and bad milk, and the necessity of control by enforced regulations. ... Not only pure milk, but pure water, clean meats, pure drugs, ... unadulterated foodstuffs...The housewife... should have the responsibility and power of requiring enforcement of the laws. ... she must become a voter."36

At first GESA members held teas, but later they set up a booth at the annual cotton carnival, and established headquarters inside a downtown store, all in order to distribute literature and gain new members. They performed in the 1913 suffrage play that entertained, educated, and brought in revenue. They raised money for state coffers by soliciting pledges from wealthy men and women supporters within the city. They endorsed a married women's property rights bill in the Texas legislature and canvassed door to door for signatures on petitions for a woman suffrage amendment to the U.S. Constitution. They placed a subscription to the Woman's Journal in the public library, persuaded the local press to feature once-a-week articles on suffrage, and edited a "Suffrage Edition" in the Galveston Tribune. Minnie Fisher Cunningham "spoke for the right of women to vote from the back seat
of a touring car" in her first speech to the public in 1914. The GESA persisted in such activities for most of its seven years before 1919. The results began to show at home: the Wednesday Club opted to study the suffrage movement and the rights of women at several of its meetings; the public schools used "this live topic as subject for debate"; and "even at social gatherings hostesses have given their friends the opportunity of hearing experienced speakers on woman suffrage." In 1915 the Galveston Tribune gave special coverage to the city's women's organizations, counting among the top three the WHPA, the YWCA, and the Galveston Equal Suffrage Association. In July 1916 suffragists entered a float in the "floral parade which was given by the women's organizations of the city...."37

Galveston suffragists also looked beyond their community for state and national opportunities. Emma (Mrs. Edward F.) Harris, wife of the mayor, represented them at the NAWSA convention in 1913; other delegates attended the state suffrage conventions through the years. The Galveston association hosted the Texas Equal Suffrage Association convention in 1915 and sent several of its own members, including its chapter president, to proselytize those parts of Texas where no suffrage leagues existed. In 1916 two suffragists from Texas City and Galveston attended their first Republican national convention in Chicago, where they marched with the Texas suffrage delegation in a "rainy cold parade," and the Democratic convention in St. Louis, where they hoped to see the endorsement of woman suffrage. 38

All of these activities — fundraisers, lectures, booths, canvassing, open-air speaking, convention attending — were important to the development of the movement at the local level. They necessarily strengthened the resolve of suffrage supporters, helping them to focus on politicizing their goals for
equality in the voting place. The power of the movement depended on just this sort of grass-roots mobilization. But local work alone could not bring voting rights to the women of Texas. It also took an intensive lobbying approach to push the Texas legislature in the direction of suffrage. This meant that a few women leaders within the state would need to give up their local agendas and assume state-level priorities. Here, local suffrage societies performed one of their most important yet unassigned tasks — the fostering and "training" of women who would make suffrage and politics their careers. The Galveston Equal Suffrage Association "promoted" several such women to the state level, but none was more important or influential to the movement than Minnie Fisher Cunningham.

Minnie Fisher came to Galveston from New Waverly, Texas, in 1898, weathered the storm of 1900, and graduated with a degree in pharmacy from the University of Texas Medical Department in 1901 — the first woman in Texas to accomplish such a feat. She then left the city to work as a prescription clerk in a Huntsville drugstore, where she met and married Beverly J. Cunningham, a promising young lawyer and insurance businessman. In 1907 they returned to Galveston, where Cunningham became involved in women's associational work. Just how the Galveston suffrage society and other women's clubs influenced Cunningham's decision to advance from local work to state work can be seen in a series of letters she wrote to the second state suffrage president, Annette Finnigan.39

Cunningham joined the GESA at its inception in 1912, but at the same time she was also invited to become a member of the exclusive Wednesday Club, which as we have seen was founded in 1891 and held its active roll to twenty-five members. Although Cunningham served as secretary, remained
a member until 1916, and addressed the club on woman suffrage, she suspected that club women in general were holding back the suffrage movement. This was confirmed for her in 1914 when the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs (TFWC) met in Galveston. In the suffragists' opinion, TFWC organizers handled the issue of votes for women badly. First, according to GESA first president, Mary Fowler Bornefeld, the Wednesday Club "declined to give the Suffragists any part whatever in the entertainment of the Federation." Then the federation refused to endorse suffrage and would not allow Cunningham and other suffragists to speak openly about it. "I feel black and blue all over about that business," Cunningham wrote Finnigan. I feel so culpable in allowing myself to be bound to silence on such an important subject. ... I can't help regretting that I didn't make a 'scene'!" Later she cast aspersions on Fort Worth's "miserable antediluvian clubwomen" but saved her most critical asides for Anna (Mrs. Percy V.) Pennybacker, a Texan and president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, whom Cunningham regarded as a latecomer to the movement. Clearly Cunningham was not cut out to be a literary clubwoman. Her association with the Women's Health Protective Association, however, was a happier one, although it did not lead directly to suffrage for women. In 1913 she assumed chairmanship of the School Hygiene Committee, which made an inspection of all the public schools. As a consequence "conditions have been remedied, and relief has been afforded the school room...." The following year she took on a job closer to her goals; under the auspices of the WHPA, she worked toward the establishment of restrooms for women on the beaches and in the downtown area. She belonged to an age when no other avenue for women's civic activism was available. So she joined women's
clubs, used them where she could to promote equal suffrage or improvements for women, and moved on.42

In 1914 the GESA elected Cunningham its president. She brought efficiency and zest to the organization but was compelled to leave it too, not for its members' lack of feminist beliefs, for as already evidenced they proved their dedication to the cause, but for what seemed to her their old-fashioned methods influenced by years of traditional club work. At one time she was optimistic and wrote Finnigan that the state could "count on Galveston for teamwork."43 Cunningham simply brimmed over with energy and ideas for how to promote the cause in Galveston. Her enthusiasm for suffrage outdistanced even her most ardent sisters in the GESA. But one frustration after another caused her to reconsider her position in local work.

The beach headquarters incident illustrates her frustrations with the GESA's foot dragging. She wrote Finnigan in May 1914,

The darling hope of my heart for three years
has been a beach headquarters in the summer, and open air speaking on excursion days. It seems to me we are letting a glorious opportunity to reach all Texas slip right through our fingers. ... Last year we had money in the bank which we had made for the express purpose of establishing a headquarters, and because the price was high we kept our money in the bank. ...

... I wish you could come down .. and see the potential readers of Suffrage literature and listeners to Suffrage speeches wandering up and down the Boulevard with nothing to do. 44

A little later in the summer she pleaded, "But O! Please worry about Galveston! We should be doing so much more than we are."45 The state president approved her plan for a beach headquarters but could not afford to
help with even one-half the cost. The Galveston women turned down the idea again and opted instead for a less expensive booth at the Cotton Carnival for one week in August. Even then, organizers were unable to make suffrage speeches on Sunday "on account of a few very strict Sabbath keepers" in the association. 46 Minnie Fisher Cunningham made the most of it, but she was clearly disappointed with the GESA's fiscal and religious conservatism.

Cunningham's belief that Galveston suffragists did not do enough or spend enough on the movement was typical of the conflicts that arose between state-level and local officers, or, to put it in historical context, between women whose volunteer careers had been shaped by a "popular women's culture" found in club work and women whose lives were fully engaged in feminist politics. 47 The GESA offered no less support than did other local groups, and its conservatism and respectability aided the cause in other ways. Cunningham, however, was unusually impatient, the mark of a leader ready to move on to larger projects. Her attitudes were bound to create tension among the more traditional suffragists, and yet recognizing her talents, they reelected her president. She confided to Finnigan, "The Galveston organization at its annual meeting Saturday did me the honor of returning me to office for another year. In spite of my stern determination not to be returned. It makes me feel like a 'spell' of sickness to think of another year, but please don't tell on me." 48 Cunningham was rescued from local work by her election to the state presidency in May 1915, a position she held until the passage of the amendment. Annette Finnigan had nothing but praise for her successor: "She [is] the best one for the Presidency. She has the time to give to the work, the ability, and I believe, the deepest interest in the cause." 49
By then Cunningham's personal life was such that she was able to become a full-time servant for suffrage. Childless, she virtually took a sabbatical from her thirteen-year marriage. Putting the best face on the situation, she explained, "Mr. Cunningham and I have agreed that the fight is well worth giving up a lot for, and we will simply close the house and he will board, for as long as the State organization needs my services." Thus freed from domestic responsibilities and from what was for her the cloying conservatism of the Galveston association, she became one of the South's most effective state presidents. Both she and NAWSA president Carrie Chapman Catt came into office the same year; together they provided new energy and winning leadership for the suffrage movement.  

The Galveston Equal Suffrage Association continued to do what it did best—educate, organize, and raise money. Although successive presidents were competent, none had Cunningham's unique leadership ability. This is not to say that the more traditional civic leaders were unnecessary to the suffrage movement; on the contrary, to mobilize for suffrage both types were critically necessary. White-gloved New Women, rooted in the soil of their native city, held the community respect that was essential to dispel the taint of radicalism. They also remained in the city to encourage and lead other women and men in the cause of suffrage, while their more peripatetic sisters canvassed the state. Local suffragists provided the home support essential to the firm planting of the movement. Women such as Minnie Fisher Cunningham, who made gaining passage of women's right to vote a career, moved on to the state level, constantly traveling, organizing, stumping, lobbying. Her leadership, drive, sacrifices, and organizational skills not only sustained her life in politics (she later ran for United States senator and
governor) but also pushed the movement to its successful conclusion in the state of Texas.

Perhaps we should look beyond filiopietistic notions of solidarity among white women and see the campaign for the vote as it was—a complex political movement destined to bulldoze aside forever the staid traditionalism of the nineteenth century. Clearly Cunningham thought that there were major differences between individual suffragists; some, after years of conventional club work, she felt, were too conservative for the good of the movement. In any such mobilization there are tensions, rifts, slights, and worse. The results of these differences were beneficial to the movement, however; eager and aggressive leaders rose to the state level, while more traditional community activists supported suffrage from their home bases. There was, it seems, room for both types in the Texas woman suffrage movement.

While the GESA opened its leadership doors to professional women, to younger women who were just beginning civic activism, and to older experienced hands in the struggle for civic reform, who had not previously been active in a reform movement, and while it focused upon the need for women to gain access to the political process, it failed in its efforts to attract immigrant and working-class mothers and daughters or women from evangelical churches. The progressive women's community was growing with the advent of the Galveston Equal Suffrage Association, but evangelical and working-class women had not yet found a place amidst the leadership.

The opportunity for incorporating middle-class evangelical and traditional elite leaders of the women's community into an organization to
aid working-class women was filled in part by the appearance in late 1914 of the Young Women's Christian Association. In Galveston as in other southern cities the YWCA served as an advocacy agency for working women and was a much more conservative version of New York's Women's Trade Union League, or Chicago's Consumers' League, associations founded by women of means to advance the economic status of working women through legislation and consumer education. The YWCA was among the first organizations founded by leisured ladies to seek improvements for self-supporting women whose wages were lower and opportunities limited by sex discrimination. The first YWCA opened its doors in 1866 in Boston; thirty women met to consider the needs of young women who came to that city to seek jobs. By 1912 northern YWCA officers were proclaiming their organization "the greatest and strongest group of women ever found ... of women, by women, for women." Southern cities, slower to experience industrialization, lagged behind their northern counterparts in establishing women's associations that aided factory workers, clerks, telegraph and telephone operators, and shop girls. And Galveston dallied longer than most cities. By 1914 the YWCA had already been established in all the nation's port cities and in most of the larger southern cities. 52

Galveston was the last Texas city of its size to initiate a YWCA, and once again it took a combination of an outside agent and about thirty interested women to launch a local chapter. Mabel K. Stafford, executive director of the YWCA's Southwest region, came from Dallas to help start a Galveston chapter. Once the membership drive began, it proved to be the most successful campaign in Galveston's history. On November 30, 1914, 170 women divided the city into districts (a technique that reached back to 1875
when Trinity Guild sought to distribute aid to storm victims) and canvassed door to door for membership in the YWCA. On the first day of the drive seventeen teams of women brought in some 440 members. The newspapers kept up the momentum as each daily issue detailed the planning, the enthusiasm, and the gains made. By the third day the women had secured 675 members; and by the end of the week 1,908 women had paid at least $1 to belong to the city's most promising women's organization with a national membership of 324,000 and with branches in fourteen countries. In the words of the organizers, "the YWCA is striving to make actual reality 'universal sisterhood from sea to shining sea'." The YWCA continued to maintain its popularity; in 1920 the association remained stable at 2,000 members. 53

A democratization process that had begun with the WHPA reached new proportions with the YWCA, enlarging and expanding the boundaries of the progressive women's community. In terms of membership, the YWCA was the largest of the city's progressive women's associations. The WHPA never exceeded 600 members, the GESA attracted 300, and the WCTU in 1915 reached 100 members. More important was the fact that the YWCA's first twenty-two-member board of directors was comprised of an equal number of women from evangelical Protestant (4 Baptist, 5 Methodist, and 2 Disciples of Christ) and liturgical Protestant churches (6 Presbyterian and 5 Episcopalian). Episcopal women still predominated among the elected executive officers, but evangelical women whose names had not appeared as leaders in either the WHPA or the GESA were found on the YWCA's elected board of directors. This may be explained both by the broader constituency that elected them and by the fact that the YWCA was a Christian association whose purpose was to "extend the kingdom of God." Evangelical women whose sole outlet had
been church women's societies no doubt felt a natural affinity toward the YWCA with its religious committee, prayer meetings, Sunday vespers, and its women missionaries in foreign lands. Episcopal and Presbyterian women, no less ardent in their desire for a structured program of Christian emphasis and protection for young women, backed the organization with funds, volunteer labor, and officers. In fact, a wealthy Episcopalian, Cornelia B. (Mrs. J. C.) League, donated $200,000 for the completion of the YWCA building in 1924. Finally, of the fifty-four YWCA board members found between 1914 and 1920, at least twenty-one (38 percent) had been actively engaged in women's church societies. 54

Religious affiliation was not the only link to the broader community of women. Among the YWCA board members fifteen (27 percent) had served on a board of lady managers for a benevolent institution, twenty (37 percent) were members of the WHPA, sixteen (30 percent) were suffragists, but only three (5 percent) were members of the WCTU. Five WHPA officers were also executive officers of the YWCA, indicating that women whose talents had proven instrumental in civic reform were elected for their experience in the hope that their abilities to implement improvements for the city would be useful in instituting practical advancements for women. 55

What did the YWCA offer women in 1915? It first brought protection, especially to single working women. Mabel Stafford put it in the context of the times: The YWCA is like the Monroe Doctrine that protects America from the war in Europe; it is "a stone wall protecting unattached girls from the perils of industrial life in which so many are now engaged." The founders of the YWCA, imbued as they were with the combined ideals of motherhood and community servanthood, sought to protect unattached
working girls not only from the dangers of the workplace but from Galveston's red-light district and other evils of the city. "The YWCA ...may play an honorable part in properly caring for and protecting those who have been attracted to us by opportunities held out, [and who will] come in contact with those influences which make the cities of the land their lurking places...." Galveston was never what one would call an industrial city. It sported a few manufactories but was primarily a city whose economy was based on servicing the flow of goods in and out of the port. Its principal economic base was commerce, not industry. Still, the YWCA officers estimated in 1914 that the city had 1,500 self-supporting women working in clerical positions, in shops as clerks, in professional occupations such as teaching and nursing, and in factories. In 1916 another study raised the figure to 1,700.56

Galveston women of means had long been concerned about the problem of fallen women, prostitutes, and unwed mothers but had done little to protest women against it. Other Texas citizens did not shy away from the problems of this group. At least seven institutions for prostitutes, unfortunate women, and wayward girls were founded in Texas before 1900. Galveston's problems with prostitution were notorious. Finally, after hearing about homes for fallen women in other cities of the state, a few Galveston women opened a rescue home, Bethesda Door of Hope, in 1898. It lasted two years, was swept away in the hurricane of 1900, and never reopened. Its principal organizer and president was Hattie Carter, wife of the rector of Grace Episcopal Church, who made rescue homes her life's mission; its matron, Mrs. E. W. Nichols was a member of the Presbyterian Ladies Aid Society and took referrals for the home from that group. Surviving with a
minimum of three officers and a matron, the home struggled to maintain itself, first at 1720 Avenue O and the next year at 1311 27th Street, which was in a section of the city destroyed by the storm. Little is known about this home, how many women it tried to rescue, or the way Galveston elites perceived the problem of prostitution and unwed mothers. We know that women in church societies discussed the pitfalls for young girls in the city and sought to prevent their staying in Galveston. Taking precautions against temptations for women constituted their greatest effort, which finally culminated in the opening the YWCA in 1914.

Steps were immediately taken both to protect and to aid working women. Rented headquarters acquired at the corner of 23rd and Mechanic streets offered office space for two salaried administrators (a general secretary and an assistant secretary) and a gymnasium for "physical culture classes." A canvass committee headed by Dr. Ethel Lyon Heard, who managed to combine her medical career with volunteer work for the WHPA, the GESA, the YWCA, and the Red Cross, sought out "stranger girls" to the city through merchants and manufacturers. Minnie Fisher Cunningham and several other suffragists served on the committee to attract these girls to the YWCA's "wholesome fun and recreation." To meet newcomers to the city the officers hired a traveler's aid agent and set her up in Union Station with a desk, a chair, and a badge. Her duties were to meet every incoming train (at least twelve a day) and to advise young women who sought lodging, employment, or who were lost and in distress. With the numbers of young women increasing daily (between 300 and 400 women were aided in the first six weeks), "the railroad men are glad indeed to have us inaugurate the travelers' aid work," noted Ida Austin, the YWCA's first president.
At first the travel agent gave a list of boarding houses to the new arrivals who sought work and a place to live, but in 1915 she was able to direct girls to the YWCA's boarding rooms (an expansion of the headquarters), where girls found temporary or permanent shelter for $3.50 a week. By 1921 the Brewer W. Key family donated an entire house to the YWCA for boarders. Ironically the house, at the corner of Broadway and 24th Street, had once belonged to Rosanna Dyer Ostermann, whose legacy to the city had provided for city dependents. By March 1915, just four months after the association's inception, the women opened a cafeteria selling complete meals for less than $.30 (1 cent for bread, 1 cent for butter, 10 cents for meat, 5 cents for vegetables, 5 cents for milk) and serving 6,000 people a month. The directors announced that "the new cafeteria ... is a premeditated thrust at the high cost of living for Galveston girls and women," but it served working men as well and became the association's most popular asset. 60 An employment bureau secured jobs for women; classes for immigrants in English as well as typing, stenography, salesmanship, first aid, and mathematics attracted young women determined to improve their skills in order to earn better wages.61

The YWCA offered a variety of social and cultural outlets for young women: classes, parties, clubs, athletic teams, picnics, entertainments, a one hundred-member glee club, and an orchestra. Physical exercise classes were among the most sought after by young women in 1915. In voting for classes, the girls chose gymnastics and swimming (in the Gulf) over all other offerings, which included among others dressmaking, millinery, Bible study, china painting, sketching, Spanish, French, German, stenography and typing, bookkeeping, and elocution. Members of the various clubs and classes organized their own parties or outings. The one-hundred member "Young
Business Women's YWCA Gymnasium Class announced an "Old Fashioned Party" for its monthly social event. In order for young women, particularly working girls, to practice and internalize organizational techniques, only self-governing clubs were encouraged. The officers of the Girls Athletic Club, organized for boating, basketball, swimming and tennis, included two bookkeepers, one insurance clerk, a stenographer, a hat trimmer, and one co-owner of an art supply store. Training the daughters of craftsmen and small businessmen in the art of self-government was one way that civic leaders imparted middle-class values to working girls and hence potentially broadened the women's community. 62

The YWCA also encouraged and abetted friendly meetings with the boys from the YMCA. The era of blue books and formal etiquette rules was giving way to informal gatherings of chaperoned young people. In May 1915 some 250 youths attended a YMCA party for members of both organizations; they ate lunch, played billiards, and organized an improvised indoor baseball game between teams of young ladies and men. YWCA members returned the favor in June by inviting the boys to a "bathing party" and beach picnic; 150 came and roasted green corn, held potato races, and were regaled with vaudeville numbers sung by the YWCA Girls' Glee Club. 63

While social events attracted women of all ages and classes to the YWCA, the board of directors promoted progressive causes. The YWCA observed Child Labor Sunday on January 24, 1916, by providing several lectures on such topics as "Street Workers," "Texas Cotton Pickers," and "State and Federal Laws on Child Labor" presented by labor spokeswomen, Eva Goldsmith. Nannie Webb Curtis, president of the Texas WCTU, spoke to the members about temperance. Lecturers from the GESA on the benefits of
woman suffrage were frequently invited to the YWCA parlors. In consultation with United Charities, a committee of women leaders including WHPA president Jean Morgan, opened a woman's exchange for the "benefit of Galveston women who must add to their incomes or depend entirely for support on handiwork created at home." Teams of officers visited the factories, laundries, shops, and markets that employed women to give entertainment at the workers' break and encourage them to join. As a follow-up enticement often city matrons offered excursions to young working girls: "About fifteen girls of the Model Laundry enjoyed an auto ride last evening down the west beach," read one YWCA report. "In the automobiles of Mrs. Waters S. Davis, J. E. Thompson, and Tudor Nichols, a party of YWCA girls ...went down the island on a crabbing expedition this evening." Eventually these impromptu excursions were replaced by the YWCA's organized summer camp sessions about thirteen miles down the island. Ethel Lyon Heard taught a Red Cross class in First Aid every time new classes were organized, and she conducted in the YWCA parlors a Better Baby Conference under the auspices of the Child Conservation League. The YWCA's finest hour came through its association with the Red Cross during World War I. Several hundred women made hospital supplies, served in canteens, and worked in the United War Work Fund Drive, where in their $10,000 fund drive they brought in $12,585 in 1918. And for the young women who were left behind during the war, the YWCA offered classes "to improve the earning ability of the girls and fit them to fill the places of the men who have gone to war." Although offered too late to do much good, the fact is that the YWCA stood ready to help women move into better paid male jobs. In more ways than one, the YWCA countered the limitations that surrounded
women. There are, of course, limits to the claims that we may make for the YWCA. It did not include blacks. Jews and Catholics, although eligible for membership, were not eligible for election to the board of directors, which may help explain the larger presence of evangelical women in executive positions. Lutheran women also were not adequately represented among its officers. The YWCA did not represent trade unions, did not espouse radical designs for intensifying the class conflict to obtain social justice, did not argue for redistributing the wealth, did not challenge the business community often enough or loudly enough to give equal pay for equal work, and did not advocate racial equality. Yet no other organization offered comparable opportunities for white women's independence in education, housing, social, and civic concerns. The YWCA stood at the heart of Galveston's progressive women's community by challenging women to reach beyond the strictures of their class. Ida Austin announced in 1916: "This is not an organization of one class working for the same class, but of all classes working for all classes." Working women of marginal means were subsidized through affordable room and board and were invited to improve themselves physically, intellectually, and spiritually. Women civic leaders were called upon to socialize, teach, and volunteer their administrative skills to an organization devoted to the material advancement of women. And professional women -- administrators and executive secretaries -- found advancement through the YWCA in ways that resembled the reformers of Hull House in Chicago, who advanced to professional positions in governmental work.

How much mixing between the classes occurred is difficult to
reconstruct, but the opportunity for social interaction between the daughters of shopkeepers and department store owners was there. A great breakthrough was made by women of evangelical denominations into the leadership ranks of the women's community through YWCA officeholding. And, finally, it is important to remember that the opening of the YWCA doors was accomplished by the concerted efforts of the women's progressive community, which itself had imbibed the protecting, nurturing values of a women's culture; it was they who offered the YWCA's services to all white women, focusing on them and their needs in a practical, tangible way as no other association had done.

* * *

The Galveston Equal Suffrage Association should be credited with steering the momentum of women's public activism in two corresponding directions. First, suffragists sought to make permanent the gains made by women progressives. They argued that women needed the vote in order to improve the community; they saw themselves as protectors of children and the public's health, and that included guarding home, schools, streets, alleys, markets, dairies, and restaurants. In order to fulfill their responsibilities as municipal housekeepers they politicized their goals; they required the right to vote and to elect public officials who would help them in their plans for sanitation and civic improvement. Galveston suffragists never hesitated to remind male voters of these public service ideals. Equally important, suffragists comprised the first Progressive era group to promote the rights of women for the sake of their own equality. Moving away from community-oriented projects to a woman-centered agenda, the Galveston Equal Suffrage
Association sharpened the focus of the progressive women's community, encouraging it to look inward toward the needs of women. Never abandoning civic outreach entirely, suffragists, nonetheless, permitted women to think in terms of their own rights, their own desires, and their own limitations. For many these ideas were too abstract, too unconnected to the reality of working lives to make much difference, and consequently, the GESA constituted only part of the components of the women's community. But suffragists, in permitting women to see their own needs first, pointed the way toward the creation of a practical organization for women in the city.

Abstractions could not compete with practicalities, hence the Young Women's Christian Association outdistanced the other Progressive era reform associations in diversity of class and in total membership. In 1914 Galveston women borrowed from women's culture values of protection and nurture and created an organization that materially benefited white urban women -- working women, ladies of leisure, and the daughters of both groups. It too had parallel goals that broadened and enriched the women's community. First, women leaders from evangelical churches worked alongside women from the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches, bringing into one boardroom civic leaders of differing religious and economic backgrounds. Then, the YWCA brought together under a single roof young women of varying classes and tried through ameliorative economic measures (room and board, an employment bureau), programs, lectures, and classes to impart a vision of community sisterhood. Rather than concentrating solely on women's economic needs and potential advancement, the YWCA sought to enrich their lives socially, to shape their leadership skills, and to introduce them to progressive ideals. In the minds of the organizers and directors, this
meant bringing working-class girls into the milieu of middle-class progressive values and introducing them to the women's community — the more converts to the women's community, the more power for women's goals. Thus Progressive era women's associations — the Women's Health Protective Association, the Galveston Equal Suffrage Association, and the Young Women's Christian Association — complemented one another, each serving different and overlapping segments of a world of women that in reality was divided by class, ethnicity, and religious affiliation.
Table 7: Suffrage Associations by State.

The following table shows the state, when a permanent suffrage organization formed, whether the first association was local or state level, the cities of the first societies, and the city population at the time or at the decade closest to the time of incorporation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>When Formed</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>First Cities</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Selma</td>
<td>13,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1911</td>
<td></td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>132,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Little Rock</td>
<td>46,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Jacksonville</td>
<td>57,699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>17,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1894</td>
<td></td>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>65,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Lexington</td>
<td>21,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>New Orleans</td>
<td>287,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>434,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>21,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>687,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Morganton</td>
<td>2,712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1913</td>
<td></td>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>34,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Spartanburg</td>
<td>17,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1914</td>
<td></td>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>26,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1914</td>
<td></td>
<td>Charleston</td>
<td>58,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Knoxville</td>
<td>36,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1911</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nashville</td>
<td>110,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>1908</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>29,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1912</td>
<td></td>
<td>San Antonio</td>
<td>96,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>127,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Quotation from "C.A.T." in the Galveston Tribune, June 14, 1913.


3Ibid.

4It is important to realize the numbers of teen-age girls actively engaged in suffrage plays, fundraisers, and activities. I counted at least seventeen participating in this play. Few young women are seen in women's club work before this, indicating the desire on the part of suffrage mothers to imbue the next generation with feminist goals.


7"Galveston and Deep Water," pamphlet, p. ii in Subject Files (Rosenberg Library, Galveston).


9A. Elizabeth Taylor, "The Woman Suffrage Movement in Texas," reprinted from the Journal of Southern History, 27 (May 1951), in Winegarten and McArthur, eds., Citizens at Last, 16-23 (hereinafter cited with reprinted page numbers). "Minutes of the First Session of the Texas Equal Rights Association, May 10, 1893," in Citizens at Last, 89 (quotation). Letters explaining Hayes's involvement in the split may be found in the Laura Clay Papers; RHH to Laura Clay, November 8, 1894; and July 1, 1895; Grace Danforth to Laura Clay, August 3, 1894, Laura Clay Papers ( Special Collections, University of Kentucky Libraries, Lexington, Ky.). Thanks to Judith McArthur for copies of these letters.


Galveston Daily News, February 16, 1912; Galveston Tribune, June 14, 1913.

Ibid.


Prior to 1913 women in Texas had formed two state organizations. In 1893 the Texas Equal Rights Association was formed and remained active until 1896 when it died. Another Texas Woman Suffrage Association was formed in 1903, but by 1908 had become dormant. That same year, however, Austin formed a permanent local society when Dr. Anna Howard Shaw stumped that state for suffrage. It remained the only suffrage society in the state until 1912. Taylor, "The Woman Suffrage Movement in Texas," 16-26.

Galveston Tribune, June 14, 1913 (quotation). Anne Firor Scott offers the best description to date of the meaning of the term "New Woman" for Southerners. "Like the lady, the new woman represented only a small minority of all women in the South. Unlike the lady she did not become the universal ideal. At her best, she maintained the graciousness and charm which had been the sound part of the chivalric ideal and, without losing her femininity or abandoning her responsibility for the propagation of the species, became an important force in
public as well as in private life" (p. 220). Scott, Making the Invisible Woman Visible (Urbana and Chicago, Univ. of Illinois Press, 1984), 220. See also Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930 (Chicago and London, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970), Chap. 9. I am suggesting that "New Women" were also white gloved but that there were elements of tension here. Too many clubwomen were content with the status quo and were unwilling to campaign for suffrage or risk their positions as community leaders even after 1912, a period when suffrage was considered safe. Those local women who chose to become suffragists were, for the most part, also white-gloved ladies who found fulfillment in community activism. But the white-gloved lady was at times in conflict with the "New Woman" side of herself. This tension carried over to suffrage groups where some favored traditional women's ways while others sought more aggressive approaches to gaining enfranchisement. For a similar vision of clubwomen nationwide and in Texas see Karen J. Blair, The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914 (New York and London: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1980), 119; and Megan Seaholm, "Earnest Women: The White Woman's Suffrage Movement in Progressive Era Texas, 1880-1920" (Ph.D. dissertation, Rice University, 1988), esp. Chap. 4. For a study of clubwomen in a southern city that views their organizations as "cultural phenomena" rather than "political bodies" see Darlene Rebecca Roth, "Matronage: Patterns in Women's Organizations, Atlanta, Georgia, 1890-1940" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1978).


21Biographical entries for these twenty-four suffragists were acquired by combing the two daily newspapers, The Galveston Daily News and the Galveston Tribune, between 1900 and 1920, the Galveston Equal Suffrage Records, Wednesday Club Records, Morgan Family Papers (for WHPA officers), Galveston YWCA Records, the four benevolent institution records, Galveston Red Cross Records, blue books, city directories, the 1880, 1900, and 1910 manuscript census returns for Galveston County, obituaries, and community (mug) books, all in the Rosenberg Library, Galveston. A similar project using the Woman's Who's Who of America, 1914-1915 can be found in Barbara Campbell, The "Liberated" Woman of 1914: Prominent Women in the Progressive Era (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979). The nine suffragist officers who were also officers for the WHPA were: Bettie Ballinger, Minnie Fisher Cunningham, Caroline Waters Garrett, Emma Davis Gonzales, Bessie Grundy, Emma Harris, Dr. Ethel Lyon Heard, Helen McMaster, and Maud Moller. Suffragists from wealthy families included: Bettie Ballinger, Lucy Kenison Bornefeld, Mary Fowler Bornefeld, Emma Davis Gonzales, Etta Lasker, Rebecca Trueheart, Sally Trueheart Williams.

22In order to discover the suffragists' religious affiliation church and synagogue records and directories have been thoroughly searched along with any existing women's church and synagogue society records. Three remain unidentified (or unchurched); the other suffragists were Lutheran (1), Jewish (1), Catholic (1) and Swedenborgian (1). For a discussion of Methodist women and their reform activities in the South see Hall and Scott, "Women in the South," 489; and John Patrick McDowell, The Social Gospel in the South: The Woman's Home Mission Movement in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1886-1939 (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1982). Education, even for upper-class women, was more difficult to determine. No information for fifteen of the twenty-four could be found. The remaining nine received professional training appropriate to their careers.
I was unable to verify if four of the twenty-four suffragists had children or not.

Despite their comfortable positions economically, surprisingly few suffragists hired live-in help. A reading of the 1910 manuscript census for Galveston shows that Mrs. Jens Moller had no live-in servants, but her parents lived with her and presumably provided some assistance. Only three suffragists employed live-in servants, but of these, two also kept boarders.

Annette Finnigan to Eva Goldsmith, July 7, 1914 (first two quotations); Goldsmith to Finnigan, July 20, 1914 (third quotation), February 3, 1916 (fourth quotation), all in McCallum Papers. There were virtually no farm women active in Galveston civic affairs, although there were truck farms and dairies on the island.


This was borne out in 1919 when the Texas legislature introduced a woman suffrage referendum to Texas voters. Working-class immigrant, Catholic, and anti-prohibition voters rejected the amendment. One month later progressive assemblymen ratified the Nineteenth Amendment. Eva Goldsmith to Annette Finnigan, February 3, 1915, McCallum Papers.


Ronnie Dugger, "Spanning the Old to the New South: Minnie Fisher and Her Heroine Mother," The Texas Observer, November 21,1958; Patricia Ellen Cunningham, "Too Gallant a Walk: Minnie Fisher Cunningham and Her Race for Governor of Texas in 1944" (M.A. thesis, University of Texas, 1985), 24. Thanks to Patricia Cunningham for this citation. See also John Carroll Eudy, "The Vote and Lone Star Women: Minnie Fisher Cunningham and the Texas Equal Suffrage Association," East Texas Historical Journal, 14 (Fall, 1976), 52-59.


For a discussion of the links connecting Methodism, the WCTU, and suffrage see Scott, The Southern Lady, 144-48( quotation on p. 148); Jean E. Friedman, The Enclosed Garden: Women and Community in the Evangelical South, 1830-1900 (Chapel Hill and London, Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1985), 111-20; and Hall, Revolt Against Chivalry, 22, 25, 36, 66.

Stanton, Anthony, Gage, and Harper, eds, History of Woman Suffrage, VI, 1-3, 16-19,
113-16, 121-22, 207-09, 216-19, 248-50, 326-29, 342-44, 490-93, 579-80, 596-99, 630-33, 665-66. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910. Vol. I: Population (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913), 80-97. In a few of the state histories of suffrage authors in History of Woman Suffrage made reference to the importance of cities to the movement. "As Baltimore is the only large city and contains more than half the population of the State it is not surprising that this city has been the real battleground of the movement" (p. 248). "The movement did not gain much impetus until the Nashville League was organized in the fall of this year [1911] and Chattanooga and Morrison soon followed" (p. 597). In Table 1, the smaller towns cited as forming first suffrage societies (Selma, Alabama; Columbus, Georgia; Morganton, N.C.; Spartanburg, S.C.; Austin, Texas) were soon followed by the state's more populated cities. For a similar table extracted from The History of Woman Suffrage that shows southeastern interest in suffrage at its earliest (before a network of permanent local societies formed) see Margaret Nell Price, "The Development of Leadership by Southern Women Through Clubs and Organizations" (M.A. Thesis, University of North Carolina, 1945), 97; and Scott, The Southern Lady, 177 n21.

35 Price, "The Development of Leadership by Southern Women Through Clubs and Organizations," 96. Dewey W. Grantham, Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1983), 200-217. Jean Friedman in The Enclosed Garden, Chap. 6, also maintains that a strong suffrage movement in the South was not possible until modernization triumphed over ties of kinship that prevented women from forming independent women's societies.


37 Dugger, "Spanning the Old to the New South: Minnie Fisher and Her Heroine Mother," The Texas Observer, November 21, 1958 (first quotation); Galveston Tribune, June 14, 1913 (second and third quotations) Special Edition, March 17, 18, 1915; Galveston Daily News, July 12, 1916, October 22, 1922 (fourth quotation). Wednesday Club Program, 1912-13, Wednesday Club Records (Rosenberg Library). In Galveston 1917 and 1918 were slump years for suffrage activity especially when the war intervened.


40Membership roll, 1903-1919, Program 1912-13, Wednesday Club Records (Rosenberg Library, Galveston). Mary Fowler Bornefeld to Annette Finnigan, n.d. [October or November 1914], McCallum Papers (quotation).

41Minnie Fisher Cunningham (MFC) to Annette Finnigan, n.d. [November or December, 1914], McCallum Papers.

43 MFC to Finnigan, July 15, 1914, McCallum Papers.

44 MFC to Annette Finnigan, May 8, 1914, ibid.

45 MFC to Finnigan, June 2, 1914, ibid.

46 MFC to Perle Penfield, n.d. [July 16, 1914], ibid.

47 Hall and Scott, "Women in the South," 491.

48 MFC to Finnigan, n.d. [January 1915], McCallum Papers.

49 Annette Finnigan to Mrs. J.S. Sweeney, June 5, 1915, ibid.

50 MFC to Finnigan, n.d. [January 1915], ibid.

51 Flexner, Century of Struggle, 272-73.

52 Helen Bittar, "The Y.W.C.A. of the City of New York: 1870 to 1920" (Ph. D. dissertation, New York University, 1979), 34 (quotation); Galveston Daily News, November 23, 1914; Carl N. Degler, At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present (Oxford and other cities, Oxford University Press, 1980), 322. For background information on the national YWCA see Mary Sims, The Natural History of a Social Institution: The Young Women's Christian Association (New York, The Woman's Press, 1936); Sims, The YWCA: An Untwolding Purpose (New York: Woman's Press, 1950); Grace H. Wilson, The Religious and Educational Philosophy of the Young Women's Christian Association (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933). A "Colored Women's Branch" of the New York YWCA was not organized until 1905, and no facility was built for them until 1911. In Galveston a branch for black women was not established until the 1954; Plans for the Mary Patrick Branch, YWCA for Black Women, File 14, Box 1, YWCA Records.


55 Percentages were compiled from YWCA records and from WHPA and ESA lists of officers and members found in local newspapers.

56 Galveston Daily News, November 30, 1914 (first quotation), November 24, 1914
Between 1890 and 1900 Galveston "industrial establishments" increased from 190 to 295 (55.3 percent), but after the 1900 storm dropped to 64 in 1904. By 1909 manufactories had risen to 81. According to the 1910 census report among the Texas cities that ranked fifth or lower in size, "the largest industries in 1909 were the flour mills and gristmills in Galveston." U. S. Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States...1910. Vol. IX: Manufactures, 1909 (Washington, 1912), 1204. Galveston Daily News, December 1, 1914, May 8, 1915; clipping February 2, 1916, YWCA Scrapbook, 1916.

57 U. S. Bureau of the Census, Benevolent Institutions, 1904, (Washington, D.C., 1905), .292. Texas cities with rescue homes included Arlington, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, Pilot Point, and San Antonio (2); City Directories, 1898-1900; Ladies Aid Society First Presbyterian Church, March 24, 1892, March 23, May 4, June 1, 1893, October 4, 1894, FPC Records (Rosenberg Library).


60 Galveston Tribune, March 10, 1915. Samuel C. Griffin, History of Galveston, Texas (Galveston: A. H. Cawston, 1931), 402. We must always keep in mind that the facilities in this period were for whites only.


Conclusion
Toward a Progressive Women's Community

The summer breezes wafting off the Gulf of Mexico gently blessed the island on July 11, 1916, as women in the city paraded their floats down Market Street. The great civic pageant associated with the Eighth Cotton Carnival featured a parade of twenty-one floats "portraying in concrete form the lines of work to which nineteen organizations of women in the city are devoting their efforts."\(^1\) The Johanna Runge Free Kindergarten and the Council of Jewish Women presented floats that showed "the kindergarten school in session, with the children playing with their lesson blocks in the class room." Representing the artistic side of womanhood were floats from the Girls' Musical Club, the Galveston Art League, and the Wednesday Club. The Veuve Jefferson Davis Chapter of the UDC portrayed "Memories of '61," a happier year for the Confederate cause. "Purity" was the theme featured by the WCTU in its float; the slogans "Health is Wealth" and "Civic Beautification" graced the two floats entered by the Women's Health Protective Association. The YWCA entry featured a white angel; "the outstretched wings symbolized the protecting spirit" of the city's newest women's organization. The Galveston News pronounced it "the most successful parade ever staged in the city." It celebrated the accumulated energies and the visible organized presence of Galveston's white women and was symbolic in this southern town of the great strides that women had made in advancing from home to church to public arena.\(^2\)

Fifty years earlier there would have been no parade, no celebration of the public roles that women had assumed in concert with one another. The "coming out" of women's organizations in 1916 was evidence of women's
organizational prowess developed in the intervening years and of the public's acceptance of the values of a women's culture. In the South women's culture began with home and family, and there it would have remained had it not been for churches, where women found a semi-public outlet for the extension of their values. Imbued with ideals that included artistry and music for the enhancement of the environment, reverence for family, learning for the young, nurturing of dependents, and care for the unprotected, women transformed their churches into sanctuaries for themselves and their culture, and in the process elevated and sanctified women's values.

Galveston, the principal port of Texas until 1914, supplied an environment conducive to middle- and upper-class women's advancement from church life into community activism, and thus helped to extend women's culture into public forums. Proximity to one another, leisure occasioned by family income derived mainly from commerce, and compassion for the poor, who grew increasingly more prevalent as industrialization commenced, motivated Protestant and Jewish women to establish congregation-related poor relief societies. Those members of societies that served the poor outside their denominations — Episcopal and Presbyterian — were more likely to understand the pressing needs of the city for institutions to care for city dependents. Thus charity, which began in sacred circles in the 1870s, moved to a secular forum in the 1880s through the creation of benevolent institutions managed by women agents.

Women's artistic aims, first nurtured in churches via choirs and the creation of memorial windows, were given further coherency through the founding of women's music and literary clubs in the 1890s. The desire to venerate families, again first expressed through family and then church
graveyard tending, found secular dimension in the forming of patriotic-hereditary associations for women. Music clubs for the first time focused on women's talents, preparing them for public service through concerts and performances. Self-improvement associations and literary clubs educated refined women, eventually leading them to the study of modern problems including the inferior position of women. Patriotic-hereditary associations, involved as they were in self-importance for southern ladies, focused on women in the context of heroic events, thus dispensing pride in women's abilities to memorialize the past. The threads of women's culture that had been woven in rich tapestry at home and in church parlors were being rewoven into new fabrics of secular design.

Although turn-of-the-century women's secular organizations carried women into more public roles (still within the women's sphere), they also manifested the hierarchies and divisions of the city's social classes. Boards of lady managers of benevolent institutions, while theoretically representative of most of the city's congregations, were actually elitist and self-perpetuating. Women's clubs and patriotic-hereditary associations encouraged selectivity by limiting or restricting memberships. Pre-1900 women's associations in this southern city were exclusive rather than democratic, were represented in greater numbers by women of the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches, and were small in comparison to Progressive era organizations. Many Galveston women belonged to more than one group, which encouraged friendships, even sisterhood, yet there seemed to be only a latent sense of community among women at this time. The catalyst that would bring about a spirit of community was the great storm of 1900, a catastrophe so immense that the energies of all survivors were necessary for the city's recovery.
The storm marked the beginning in Galveston of civic work for white women of all classes and heralded the advent of a Progressive women's community made up primarily of three organizations: the Women's Health Protective Association, the Galveston Equal Suffrage Association, and the Young Women's Christian Association. Other women's organizations that emerged in the Progressive period — the WCTU, Council of Jewish Women, Mothers' Clubs connected to the public schools, and the Juvenile Protective Association, for example — also brought progressive-minded women into civic activism and their aims into public view. But these organizations were peripheral to the core of the women's community, which resided with the three largest organizations.

The WHPA represented the first of the three women's groups to receive approval of the Galveston Tribune in their 1915 special edition. Noting that theirs was a progressive town, Tribune editors praised the women who "labored earnestly, and successfully, for the improvement of sanitary conditions and beautification of the city." Tending to the proper burial of storm victims constituted a direct connection to women's cultural imperatives, as southern women had traditionally devoted themselves to the maintenance of loved ones' graves. A more beautiful environment and health for urban citizens were extensions of earlier women's goals of protection for the city's dependents. No longer content only to look after the indigent, the orphan, the widow, or the children of factory workers, the city and its problems became their mission field. But charitable sensibilities do not entirely explain the surge of women's activism in the post-storm period. The immediate and pressing needs of the community; the example set by such organizations as the Red Cross and the Central Relief Committee, which
included women volunteers; the inspiration by one former Galveston resident, a conductor of the progressive ideals of northeastern women's clubs; all combined to convince Galveston women leaders of the potential for united action.

As the city's first reform association open to white women, the WHPA represented a more democratic constituency and a broadening of women's outlook toward public policy making, combining amelioration with reform. The creation of a city commission government, which placed city hall in the hands of upper- and middle-class white men, allowed WHPA members greater access to city officials. Because the WHPA leaders and city commissioners were of the same class, the new government presented the women with better opportunities for shaping public policy—at least toward city beautification and revegetation of the island. But as the grade raising ended and issues of sanitation, particularly with the city's milk and food supply, came to the fore, WHPA members sought reforms in the enforcement of pure food and milk ordinances through confrontation and exposure. Marshaling citizen support and the endorsement of the medical, laboring, and commercial interests on the island, WHPA members finally won their case. Ordinances to inspect, grade, and pasteurize milk and ensure clean markets came five years after the women began their protests. Politicizing their goals had the positive effect of creating a core of determined reformers, some of whom became feminists after realizing that the implementation of a women's agenda had to be accompanied by the right to vote. Others, saw the need for a cross-class institution, especially for young women within the city.

The Galveston Equal Suffrage Association and the Young Women's Christian Association were two organizations that concentrated solely on
women’s issues. In the process of spiriting passage of a progressive agenda through official channels, women found themselves seeking political rights. In dealing with city problems women realized the need for an institution that would protect and nurture young women and give them accessibility to the social mores of a middle-class women’s world. On the one hand, suffragists, composed of professional women as well as civically trained white-gloved ladies, favored the advancement of the ideal of equality. On the other, officers of the YWCA moved concretely toward the practical application of equality of opportunity for white women. The fact that these Progressive era women’s organizations discriminated against black women was, unfortunately a harsh fact of southern life.

Leadership in the WHPA and GESA resided primarily with the more elite women of the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches. Because of the open nature of these organizations, women from the evangelical churches were no longer underrepresented on account of class and status, yet they did not comprise a majority of the officers of the secular progressive women’s groups. Evangelical women and Episcopal and Presbyterian women continued to divide not only on issues of class, which however subtly still persisted, but on type of organization. No Episcopal women, for example, entered the officer ranks of the WCTU, which was composed almost entirely of Methodist, Baptist, and a few Presbyterian women. And evangelical women preferred primarily to join Christian associations. The one women’s organization where Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist women met in nearly equal numbers as members of the board of directors was within the YWCA. The obvious Christian emphasis of the organization attracted members of evangelical churches to the board, but the YWCA’s cross-class potential for
bringing into the women's community young women of laboring backgrounds appealed to the women of the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches whose interest in relief for the unprotected stretched back thirty years.

It is clear that the collective actions of Galveston women differs from the model formerly provided by historians to explain the advance of southern women from church societies to civic activism. The women's foreign mission society-WCTU-suffrage formula did not fit Galveston. Mainstream Protestant women responded first to the problems engendered by a port city by caring for the city's truly disadvantaged. Thus they extended women's domestic and moral authority beyond the doors of their homes and church parlors and established a precedence for community poor relief. This led to forty years of civic benevolence. Leaders from the benevolent institutions and women's clubs who received pre-1900 "training" were prime candidates for officership in the post-storm progressive women's associations, which opened the way to the emergence of a progressive women's community. Reform was engendered for the most part, not by evangelical women, but by organized elite Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Jewish women who responded to urban problems that accompanied the city's growth in the 1880s and 1890s and especially in the wake of the 1900 hurricane.

In the same vein, historians of woman suffrage in the South have long tended to view the movement from the lofty altitudes of state and regional politics and have assumed that suffrage support stemmed from frustrated evangelical church and WCTU members determined to impose temperance reform and a women's agenda upon an unredeemed South. The Galveston case suggests that the movement for the vote among women in the South at
the local level was an urban-based phenomenon and that southern or Texas women, who may have been slow to respond to national entreaties for a feminist revolution, were, nonetheless, stirred to action on behalf of their own communities and their equal political and economic involvement in them. Galveston was a city that inspired great devotion from its women activists; some of them in return asked for the right to full electoral equality.

In many ways the first two decades of the twentieth century became women's decades, as they organized to protect the health, physical well-being, and equal rights and opportunities of women. But women reformers had long held a tradition of civic benevolence stemming from an era when the women's church societies served as proto-welfare agencies. Thus the origins and advance of women's reform should be viewed as a continuum of female social activism -- from the care of individuals to the care and restoration of the city and finally to the enhancement of the community of women -- in ever-widening circles of domestic concern.

Narrower than the separate sphere but broader than the city's individual clubs, a progressive women's community evolved out of the urban environment, out of ameliorative and reforming sentiments, out of ideals that hoped to bring middle-class values to the poor, and out of a women's culture. It was an informal alliance comprised of women who were active in the Women's Health Protective Association, the Galveston Equal Suffrage Association, and the Young Women's Christian Association. The older, elite WHPA was followed by the GESA, which advanced newcomers to positions of leadership. With the emergence of the more pluralistic YWCA, a far broader coalition of women -- professional women,
upper- and middle-class matrons, as well as working young women — was
harnessed for progressive work, and it was this broader community of
politically and socially active women that began to create what may be
described as a "movement culture" of women, not unlike that ascribed to the
Populists by Lawrence Goodwyn. Women within the women's community
of Galveston exhibited a solidarity of purpose that empowered them to do
that which they would have been unable to singly or in exclusive or sectarian
groups. This "movement culture" was manifested not in a single political
party, as with the Populist party, but in several Progressive era nationally
affiliated associations that were open to all white women and whose officers
were democratically elected by the members. By aggregating resources,
talents, and civic ambitions, a progressive women's community was made
possible in Galveston, and the result was a "women's movement," working
for a healthier, safer urban environment with a focus on greater political and
economic benefits for women.
Membership lists for the WCTU are scanty, but city directories, articles, and general histories show no Episcopal women among them.

The findings show that of twenty-seven voluntary organizations studied between 1880 and 1920 two had percentages of women from evangelical Protestant churches of 50 percent or higher: the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Young Women's Christian Association. Prohibition legislation and the protection of young women, accompanied by a Christian message, drew more followers from among Baptists, Methodists, and by 1914, Disciples of Christ than from all other denominations combined.


2Ibid.

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An Essay on Methodology: Analysis of Activist Women in Galveston

A portion of this study purports to identify those white Galveston women who were active in organizations that worked toward the good of the community or the enhancement of women in terms of education, protection, or legal rights. The methodology for such a study required identifying those organizations (comprised entirely of women or that allowed women to join) between the 1870s and 1920.

The search began with the women's immigrant aid societies founded in the 1870s and ended with the Red Cross, founded in 1916. I included all of the church and synagogue laywomen's societies, the secular and semi-religious women's organizations, and several organizations to which both men and women belonged. The next step was to evaluate and categorize the secular organizations according to their stated goals and purposes found in club constitutions, charters, minutes, newspaper articles, and city directories. Those women's clubs that were purely social in nature were not considered for this study. But those societies that directed their energies toward community building, toward helping dependents regardless of religious affiliation, or toward promoting women's education or rights were seen to be advancing southern women into public life and were therefore considered activist organizations.

The selected organizations fell into seven classifications: church and synagogue benevolent societies; benevolent institutions; auxiliaries; ethnic and immigrant women's aid societies; patriotic-hereditary organizations; art, music, and literary clubs; and civic associations. Finally, forty-six church and synagogue societies and twenty-nine secular groups were chosen for study.
The next stage involved becoming acquainted with the women who served as officers of these organizations. City directories were the most useful in listing officers but at times were incomplete. Club records, when available, filled in as did newspaper articles and state histories of associations. I created a card for each woman officer and every time her name appeared on an officer roll, or in cases of exclusive groups where the entire membership constituted a board of directors, this information was added. Her officership and years of service and membership were recorded so as to determine the strength of commitment to the organization.

At first I compiled close to 500 names but eliminated those women from consideration who belonged only to church societies and not to the secular associations chosen for consideration. To qualify for inclusion in the total number of activist women, a woman must have belonged to at least one secular organization selected for this study. Her religious affiliation, and membership in a church or synagogue society, was then determined after her inclusion on the list. In other words, I worked from the secular to the religious, because the purpose is to establish the religious identity of women active in secular organizations. Eventually I was able to extract from the general population for the years 1870 to 1920 a discrete group of 370 women activists.

In order to establish their identities and possibly class and status position within the community, I added their husbands' names when appropriate and searched for biographical information such as birth and death dates, place of birth, arrival in and departure from Galveston, wedding date, number of children, number of servants, military service, education for the women, and community and political affiliations for the men. I collected
this information from community books, blue books, obituaries, and manuscript census records for 1880, 1900, and 1910. Church affiliation was gleaned from church directories, vestry and deacon minutes, and church histories. City directories provided the addresses and occupations for the years 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, and 1921. Including the men, the number of Galvestonians under consideration totals close to 700. Codified and entered into a computer, a database has been created from which numerical calculations have been extracted and analyzed by SAS, a database analysis system. Most of the tables pertaining to women in organizations were assembled from this database.

1 Although mention will be made of religious women in Roman Catholic orders, their organizations were not included for evaluation in this study. Analysis for this study includes only laywomen and their organizations.

2 Names are a problem in women’s history. A woman, if she marries once, will have three names; her name before marriage, ie. Miss Lucy Ballinger; her given married name, ie. Mrs. Lucy Mills; and her husband’s name, ie. Mrs. Andrew G. Mills. If she marries more than once the possibilities are unlimited.
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