e American, and he continually and openly opposed what to him was the rable idea of secession and predicted the consequences that would / such a foolhardy act. Although a slave-owner, Houston was not a rabid ' man like Calhoun. To him, the nation came first, not an institution or n.

uston is a veritable god in the pantheon of Texas immortals. But he is n oddity; a Southerner but not quite a Southerner because he refused)port the Confederacy and remained "mostly" loyal to his beloved ı. Although he owned slaves, he seemed to be rather indifferent about stitution and clearly allowed his bondspeople a great deal of latitude. He :ted Native Americans and made efforts to protect their rights and rty. His attitude toward Mexico was not so benevolent, as he envisioned nerican protectorate over that beleaguered country. In the end, his n for his beloved nation failed to keep Texas in the Union, but his valiant allant try established his place in American history.

From the Parlor to the Public: New Roles for Women in Houston, 1885-1918

Betty T. Chapman

During the latter decades of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, the lives of middle-class Southern women changed significantly. Before then they had existed in a separate sphere, described by historian Barbara Welter as the "cult of true womanhood," which had kept them confined mostly to the home. Piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity were considered the most desirable feminine attributes. Events outside the home were, however, sowing seeds of change.[1]

Exigencies of the Civil War had moved women beyond the domestic realm and had exposed them to new experiences, which in turn had made them eager for more knowledge and a broader education. Increased industrialization eased the burden of homemaking and resulted in more leisure time for middle-class women. A rapidly urbanizing society raised new concerns and caused unrest among citizens of growing cities and towns. Women were confronted with the new challenge of escaping from their separate sphere into a broad new world. These trends were evident not only nationally, but also in Houston.

How did these women move from their Victorian parlors into the public arena where they would become full-fledged instruments of change and civic

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[1]Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860" in Welter, *Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976), 21-41. A more positive view of "woman's separate sphere" can be found in Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977). See Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 269-306 for more on the conditions which fueled this "rise of the new woman," as Woloch terms the movement.

reform? One channel through which this extraordinary journey occurred was provided by female organizations that offered women opportunities to shape their ideas within the safe confines of a sisterhood and to expand them into the broader framework of the community.

In February 1885, nine women concerned about their need for greater knowledge and for female companionship met in Houston and announced that "the name of this Association shall be The Ladies' History Class and its object shall be intellectual and social culture."[2] Two months later, their membership having grown to 24, they drafted a constitution, changed their name to the Ladies' Reading Club, and adopted a plan for study.[3]

Before that time, Houston had offered few forums for women to collectively voice their opinions and to act on their convictions. Organized female activity was almost entirely within the churches. Most noticeably, two groups—the Ladies' Parish Association of Christ Episcopal Church and the Ladies' Association of First Presbyterian Church—had recognized the needs of their congregations and had acted to meet those needs. Records of Christ Episcopal Church show that in 1875 the Ladies' Parish Association succeeded in raising enough money to purchase an organ and to initiate a fund to erect a larger church building.[4] Similarly, the Presbyterian ladies decided in 1880 that a dwelling was needed for their minister and his family. After securing a charter enabling them to hold property, they bought three lots and erected a manse at a cost of approximately $8,000. This is not to imply that women had any official voice in the transactions of the church body. Indeed, Presbyterians had been cautioned by their General Assembly that "It is not proper for girls and young women to preside over a meeting of a society or to make an address or to lead in prayer." However, it is apparent that these women, acting within their own organizations, had achieved a marked degree of independence and were making significant contributions to the entire congregation.[5]

[2]*Annual Report of The Ladies' Reading Club, 1885-86*, Ladies' Reading Club Collection, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

[3]Mrs. Roland Ring, "Highlights of the History of The Ladies' Reading Club" (typescript, 1960).

[4]*Fourth Annual Report of the Ladies' Parish Association of Christ Church, Houston, 1875*, Christ Church Collection, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

[5]Judy King, *Except the Lord Build . . . The Sesquicentennial History of First Presbyterian Church 1839-1989* (Houston: First Presbyterian Church, 1989), 44, 48. For a discussion of the role church societies played in developing female leadership, see Anne Firor Scott, *Making the Invisible Woman Visible* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 190-208. It appears that the communality of and participation in religious institutions was a strong ingredient in the formation of literary

Interestingly, over half of the charter members of the Ladies' Reading Club were from these two congregations. Soon after their organization, however it was apparent that their bond was more than just religious. Several had brought daughters and sisters into the group, most had husbands prominent within the business community, and many were descendants of Houston's first families. Though most were matrons, they welcomed unmarried women declaring that "the new thoughts, strong sympathies, wider views, and the expression of mind and character . . . would be a gain for all women."[6] While little is known of their schooling, it appears that most had had the advantage of a more extensive and formal education than many of their contemporaries. Several were employed as teachers.[7]

The Ladies' Reading Club uniformly and firmly believed—as stated by their first president, Adele Briscoe Looscan—that a woman should be "one whose mind shall be trained to form her own opinions, to organize her own household and, if need be, to make her own living."[8] At one of the meetings the topic for debate was "Resolved: That the education of our daughters fo

clubs in Houston. With the assistance of their priest, eight communicants of Annunciation Catholic Church organized the Woman's Club in 1893. "A History of the Woman's Club Houston 1893-1936," in possession of the Woman's Club of Houston.

[6]*Annual Report of The Ladies' Reading Club, 1887-88*, 29, Ladies' Reading Club Collection

[7]An analysis of Ladies' Reading Club membership was made by compiling information fro the Ladies' Reading Club Yearbooks 1885-88, Ladies' Reading Club Collection; *Houston C Directory, 1888-89* (Galveston: Morrison and Fourmy Directory Co., 1889); Mabelle Purcell, *T Female Seminaries* (Wichita Falls: The University Press, 1951), 228-234; *Annual Report of the Pub Schools of Houston 1888-89* (Houston: A. C. Gray Printer, 1889), 29-30; Communicants' Re Christ Episcopal Church, Christ Church Collection; and Registry of First Presbyterian Chur (microfilm), First Presbyterian Church Collection, Houston Metropolitan Research Cent Houston Public Library. These findings affirm the conclusion of Anne Firor Scott in *The South Lady: From Pedestal to Politics 1830-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 134-1 in which she states that women reformers in the Progressive period tended to occupy sec family positions, claim impeccable antecedents, and assume leadership roles in religi organizations. However, the experience in Houston does not follow Scott's conclusions t involvement in the missionary societies of the evangelical Protestant congregations and Women's Christian Temperance Union initiated female participation in civic reform in South. Preliminary studies indicate that the Houston W.C.T.U., which did draw more memb from the evangelical denominations, never deviated greatly from temperance-related issues that its members were not generally involved in the women's club movement and t subsequent reform activities. For an in-depth analysis of the relationship between religion reform in a Texas city see Elizabeth Hayes Turner, "Women, Religion, and Reform in Galves 1880-1920," in Char Miller and Heywood T. Sanders, eds., *Urban Texas* (College Station: T A & M University Press, 1990), 75-95.

[8]*Annual Report of The Ladies' Reading Club 1885-86.*

an independent career will unfit them for the duties of wife and mother." Club minutes show that this view was soundly defeated.[9]

Chroniclers of the nineteenth-century women's club movement have stated that one of its more far-reaching results was that it stimulated women to think and gave them the opportunity to articulate their views.[10] The substance of this statement can be seen in the Ladies' Reading Club, which pursued in-depth studies of subjects such as "The Progress of Art During the Reign of the Four Georges" and "The Cause of Spain's Low Rank in the Fields of Science and Philosophy."[11] All members were required to participate; they presented carefully researched papers, engaged in lively debates, and prepared informative statements on assigned topics with which to answer roll call. It was an opportunity to teach and to be taught. This mutual exchange gave every woman in the club equal consideration and respect. While the meetings may not have produced avid scholars, careerists, or social critics, they did provide a means for the members to view themselves as something more than moral guardians of their homes. This club attracted intelligent women for whom turning from the realm of abstract thought to the arena of practical action was a natural progression.

In March 1887, four members of this club—Adele Briscoe Looscan, Harriet Fitzgerald, Eva McIlhenny, and Julia Huston—helped establish the Woman's Exchange, which advertised that it was the only organization in Houston assisting females. The Exchange secured employment for women who were forced to earn their own livings and served as a commission house selling goods produced by women. Though it frequently suffered financial problems, it managed to stay open with funds derived from the 25-cent monthly dues paid by its members, the commissions on sales of goods, periodic entertainments, and donations from local businessmen. It stated in its first annual report that it had 161 members, 14 honorary members—males who had made donations—and 37 persons with goods for sale. Records for the next year indicated that the number of consignors had doubled, 23 women had been placed in jobs, and a sewing class for young girls was being successfully conducted. In spite of criticism, which they felt was unjustified, the Woman's

[9]Minutes, Ladies' Reading Club, May 30, 1893, Ladies' Reading Club Collection.

[10]For a discussion of nineteenth-century literary clubs see Karen Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined 1868-1914* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1980); Theodora Penny Martin, *The Sound of Our Own Voices* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987); and Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 111-140. See also Megan Seaholm, "Earnest Women: A White Woman's Club Movement in Progressive Era Texas 1880-1920" (Ph.D. diss., Rice University, 1988).

[11]*Annual Report of The Ladies' Reading Club 1887-88*, 12-18.

Exchange continued to offer a dignified means of support to women need.[12]

The Woman's Exchange and other female-related groups were suppor by *The Ladies' Messenger*, a local publication begun in 1887. It proclaimed its to be "the exponent of woman's thought and woman's work." While publication did contain the usual amount of domestic advice, it also ad cated equal educational opportunities for females and touted the advanta of calisthenics for young women in defiance of those who insisted that female brain was smaller than the male and the female physique was frail encouraged the formation of women's literary clubs and offered to public and promote their causes. The Ladies' Reading Club accepted the offer a published its President's Annual Report in *The Ladies' Messenger*.[13]

This support became less visible in 1890 when the name of *The Lad Messenger* was changed to *The Gulf Messenger*. The female editor explained change by saying that the publication would be "no less devoted to women the name change will give us a wider field and more readers, for many n still have a silly prejudice that a journal devoted to women has nothing i pertaining to 'the grand thoughts that shape mankind.'"[14] Despite the edit stated intent, the paper became an organ divided between sentimental liter

[12]*The Ladies' Messenger* (March 1888): 3; *ibid.* (March 1889): 3. While no records exi document the specific jobs in which the Woman's Exchange placed women, it advertised th would place them in jobs such as housekeeper, laundress, governess, and private instructre is likely that the Exchange focused on nonindustrial positions which utilized domestic skills were considered more appropriate for the middle class. It is questionable whether the Exch worked with lower-class women in spite of acknowledging the increasing necessity of wo having to provide income. Historians have suggested that official records underreporte number of employed women in the late nineteenth century and that the female work forc always larger than standard accounts have indicated. The 1889-90 *Houston City Directory* re that 520 white women were engaged in 30 different occupations. These figures (with the black working women) reflect eight percent of the total female population in Houston a time. In comparison 12 percent of all females nationally were recorded as working outsid home. Sheila Rothman in *Woman's Proper Place: A History of Changing Ideals and Practices, to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, 1978), 89, states that it is more likel 20 percent of all females were employed in 1890. This discrepancy in figures can be attrit to the fact that the lingering attitudes on woman's "separate sphere" placed a social stign working women, especially married ones, and employment was not reported. For mo female employment nationally and locally, see Alice Kessler-Harris, *Women Have Always W* (New York: The Feminist Press, 1981), and Nancy Hadley, "The Hello Girls of Houston, *Houston Review* 9 (no. 2, 1987): 82-94. A discussion of the merits and criticisms of the Wo Exchange movement in the United States can be found in Rothman, 88-89.

[13]*The Ladies' Messenger* (March 1888): 6; *ibid.* (May 1888): 7; *ibid.* (August 1888): 4-5 (January 1889): 4.

[14]*Ibid.* (June 1890): 1.

offerings and promotional information for males in the business community. Though the women of Houston had lost a strong voice in the public arena, they did not become invisible.

In an address to the Ladies' Reading Club on its tenth anniversary in 1895, Adele Looscan admonished its members, "Do we exercise . . . influence as largely as we might? Are we not inclined to be too conservative? . . . Ladies, failing to recognize a responsibility does not lessen the reality of a duty, which, from the very nature of our organization, becomes ours."[15]

One of the greatest concerns of Mrs. Looscan and her fellow club members was that Houston had no public library. In 1894, they had requested that the books of the Houston Lyceum, a private, predominantly male literary organization, be made available to nonmembers and that its library be moved from the Market House to a location more accessible to the women of the community. Though the first request was granted, and a woman was hired as librarian, the Lyceum library remained where it had been. The ladies continued their campaign for new quarters, and finally in September 1897--almost three years after the initial request--the Lyceum allowed its library to be relocated. The Ladies' Reading Club paid for the move. To build a treasury for the new facility, each member of the club became a monthly subscriber, the club donated its magazine files and its own collection of 150 books, and they voted to give the library five dollars worth of new books each month.[16] This provided the nucleus of the library, but it soon became apparent--at least to the women of the city--that a more substantial base was essential. When the city council reneged on its promise to include in its 1899 budget a provision for stocking and maintaining the library, the women used the strategy of both appeasing and chiding the male officials of the city. They invited them to an entertainment where they served refreshments, politely reminded them of their pledge, and then pointed to the empty bookshelves. The following week Mamie Ewing, one of the two club members who had personally invited the officials, recorded in the club minutes that she "believed the embarrassment of meeting an army of women resolved itself into a pleasure to all of them . . . because the Mayor admitted he would deem it an honor to be the first mayor to recommend an appropriation for the library."[17] Whether he felt

[15]"Excerpt from Address of Mrs. M. Looscan to Ladies' Reading Club of Houston, Texas on its Tenth Anniversary, April 1895," Adele Briscoe Looscan Papers, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

[16]Orin Walker Hatch, *Lyceum to Library: A Chapter in the Cultural History of Houston* (Houston: Texas Gulf Coast Historical Association, 1965), 40-43.

[17]Minutes, Ladies' Reading Club, 24 January 1899, Ladies' Reading Club Collection.

it an honor or an obligation may never be known; one alderman was heard to comment that women would not have time to read books if they took care of their homes and families.[18] Nevertheless, a monthly appropriation of $200 was made,[19] and a free public reading room became a reality.

Encouraged by this victory but still dissatisfied with what they considered an inadequate facility, the ladies deluged the mayor with letters. Perseverance, though, seemed to accomplish little until two members of the Woman's Club, Belle Kendall and Mamie Gearing, wrote to Andrew Carnegie. In response to their solicitation, he agreed to furnish money for a building if the city would provide a site.[20] To support the city in this undertaking and "to give aid to the material welfare of the community," representatives of five women's clubs--the Ladies' Reading Club, the Woman's Club, the Current Literature Club, the Ladies' Shakespeare Club, and the Mansfield Dramatic Club--met in January 1900 to form the City Federation of Women's Clubs.[21] The new federation joined with the Lyceum to coordinate their efforts to raise funds for the library site. Lectures, ice cream socials, musicales, bazaars, and a "home circus" produced funds that were applied to the $7,880 cost of the proposed site on Travis and McKinney streets.[22] On May 1, 1902, the women of Houston could feel a real sense of accomplishment when the first brick was laid;[23] the Houston Lyceum and Carnegie Library would soon be available to

[18]Mrs. Bates M. Allen, "Mrs. H. F. Ring, A Noble Lady" (unpublished manuscript, 1960 Ladies' Reading Club Collection.

[19]Hatch, *Lyceum to Library*, 44.

[20]*Ibid.*

[21]*Houston Daily Post*, January 9, 1900; *History Through the Years: City Federation of Women's Clu 1900-61*, 1-2, Texas and Local History Department, Houston Public Library. The Ladie Shakespeare Club was organized in 1892, and while individual members became involved community reform activities, the club itself seems to have pursued purely literary efforts. T Woman's Club was begun in 1893 for the purpose of promoting literary culture, art, educatic and philanthropy; the departmentalization of their club led to broader pursuits. The Curre Literature Club, established in 1899, began as a group dedicated to the study of contempor novels; however, they soon became more diversified in their interests and broadened th studies to contemporary issues. The Mansfield Dramatic Club, composed of both men a women, studied dramatic works and gave public performances of those works. The degree which individual clubs moved beyond solely self-education seems to have depended on the c leadership at any given time. Slightly more than 100 women belonged to these five clubs at time the City Federation was organized. Though it is beyond the scope of this article to disc the black women's club movement, it should be noted that clubs were being organized by bl women concerned with the same personal needs and community problems. These Hous clubs affiliated with the State Association of Colored Women's Clubs.

[22]*Houston Post*, January 7, 1940; Hatch, *Lyceum to Library*, 46.

[23]Hatch, *Lyceum to Library*, 46. Belle Kendall placed the first brick, signifying the efforts of

residents of the city.

The organization of the City Federation led to the formation of other groups. In March 1900, Emma Richardson Cherry was instrumental in founding the Public School Art League. Drawing its membership primarily from clubwomen and public school teachers, the group endeavored to encourage art education in the schools. Still working within the accepted realm of home and family, they took as their inspiration these lines from the poem "Mother to a Child":

> For the sake of my child I must hasten to save
> All children on earth from the jail and the grave.

Convinced that one way to accomplish this was by introducing the children to great works of art, they began to acquire reproductions of art masterpieces, which they presented to the public schools. They were instrumental in having art courses added to the curriculum, and they brought noted artists to the city to lecture. While the children were receptive–five thousand students attended one lecture at the City Auditorium–the adult citizens, from whom the League had hoped to receive funding, showed little interest. To combat this indifference, the women of the Public School Art League resorted to creative means of raising money. They first solicited the help of a prominent businessman who provided a building where they could hold art exhibits to which they would charge admission. Then each school was allotted certain days on which it would sponsor attendance and sell artwork created by its own students. Thus, by creating a friendly rivalry within a coalition of students, parents, and teachers, they were soon able to raise the needed funds.[24]

Not every attempt to promote art was so favorably received. When the Public School Art League ordered a replica of the Venus de Milo to place in one of the schools, it was rejected by the school administration for fear that it might adversely affect the morals of the children. Not to be deterred, the League gave the statue to the public library where its presence 89 years later attests to the determination of these women.[25] Houston's Museum of Fine

women of the city. Two women, Elizabeth Ring and Mrs. Kendall, were named to the first Board of Trustees for the Houston Lyceum and Carnegie Library. Today the Ring, Kendall, and Looscan branch libraries are named for these early library advocates.

[24]Mrs. Henry Fall, ed., *Key to the City of Houston* (Houston: State Publishing Co., 1908), 72-75; "Art League Growth Outlined; Was Founded by Mrs. Cherry; School Teachers Co-operated," undated newspaper clipping in Mrs. H. F. Ring, *Personal Reminiscences of Old Houstonians*, 197, Texas and Local History Department, Houston Public Library, hereafter cited as Ring Scrapbook.

[25]"Houston Professional Women," *Houston Dispatch*, March 2, 1924, in Emma Richardson Cherry Papers, Harris County Heritage Society Archives, Houston, Texas.

Arts, which evolved from the Public School Art League, further attests to their vision.[26]

Affirming the values of art and literature led to more aggressive female-inspired programs. By 1900, Houston's population was approaching 45,000 and the city was experiencing rapid growth. This growth brought problems that would only intensify during the next two decades. Public health, education, and city services continued to be addressed only sporadically by the city government. In 1901, Margaret Hadley Foster published a call for action imploring clubwomen throughout the city to put aside their petty rivalries and to join forces in an effort aimed toward "improving and advancing the city." Realizing that men would still be essential to their efforts, she invited their participation. "Men," she declared, "are very useful–at times–and if they could only be stirred up to do something for the beauty and cleanliness of the city, what a world of good they could do!"[27] Though they still realized that males made policy and controlled purse strings, women were becoming bolder about prodding men into action. Mrs. Foster then appealed to a broader segment of the female population. The strategy for implementing improvements was to organize a civic club in each of Houston's six wards. Each ward club would, in turn, determine the needs of its own neighborhood.[28]

One of the first concerns of the Houston Civic Club was the scarcity of parks and playgrounds in Houston. The city's first park had been established in 1899 after a group of women, led by Elizabeth Ring, had flouted convention and appeared in a body at City Hall to request that land be purchased for a park.[29] Using this as a precedent, the women in the ward clubs succeeded in placing parks in several neighborhoods. Then they purchased playground equipment, sponsored free concerts, and beautified the grounds of public buildings throughout the city.[30] Operating in essence as a city recreation department, the women assumed the responsibility for establishing and

[26]Celeste Marie Adams, ed., *The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston - A Permanent Legacy* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1989), 12.

[27]Undated newspaper clipping, *Houston Daily Post*, Ring Scrapbook, 173.

[28]*Constitution and By-Laws*, Houston Civic Club Vertical File, Texas and Local History Department, Houston Public Library.

[29]*Houston Daily Post*, June 25, 1899.

[30]Fall, *Key to the City of Houston*, 30-31; *Houston Post*, September 2, 1907. The municipal parks still in existence today that resulted from these efforts are Settegast, Elizabeth Baldwin, Cleveland, Woodland, Eastwood, and Hennessey. City Park, acquired in 1899, is today named Sam Houston Park.

maintaining parks but continually reproached city officials for their failure to do so.

Sanitation was another grave concern of the Houston Civic Club. In a 1906 report, they credit their group with the successful passage of two city ordinances: the anti-expectoration ordinance and the uniform garbage can law. Clearing trash and debris from the streets became an ongoing project of these energetic women. Though they insisted that "they had carefully abstained from meddling in politics," it is obvious that they were constantly reminding city officials that public services were less than adequate and that action was needed.[31]

The increased population, which now included a growing number of immigrants, changed the demographics of many neighborhoods. This was especially true of the Second Ward where former residents had moved into the newly developed South End neighborhoods and had been replaced by immigrant families. Houses were divided into cramped apartments; poverty was readily apparent. Believing strongly that the expansion of educational opportunities was one of the keys to improving the lives of Second Ward citizens, the 26 members of the Woman's Club, under the leadership of Mamie Gearing, opened a free kindergarten in the neighborhood in 1902. The first quarters, a lean-to shed, were quickly outgrown. The club members rented land, solicited building materials from local businesses, and secured volunteer labor to erect a larger facility. With limited income at their disposal, the Woman's Club instituted an innovative system of securing the needed personnel to assist the one paid teacher. They opened a training school for volunteer teachers, thereby laying the foundation for future community volunteerism. Five years later, the program was expanded when the local school board gave the club permission to open a kindergarten in a newly constructed public school. These women steadfastly believed that a significant step in educating the city's young had been taken.[32]

In 1907, as the Second Ward became increasingly crowded and impoverished, 12 women, recognizing a critical need for health and education in that area, organized the Houston Settlement Association. Alice Baker was selected to head the Association and, as one account states, she brought to this

[31]*The Houston Civic Club Cookbook* (Houston: The Houston Civic Club, 1906), 9.

[32]"A History of the Woman's Club of Houston 1893-1936"; undated newspaper clipping, Ring Scrapbook, 179; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of the Independent School District of the City of Houston: 1908-09* (Houston: A. C. Gray Printing Co., 1909), 20-26. Kindergarten education was attempted periodically in Houston, but it did not become a lasting part of the Houston school system until 1922. However, kindergartens were to become the conduits through which idealized child-rearing practices were transmitted to women of all classes.

endeavor "intelligence, vision, and a tenacity of purpose."[33] The women's first task was the inevitable one of raising funds. Their bylaws stated that "Monthly dues shall not be stipulated, each member subscribing as her pleasure dictates." This encouraged liberal giving from the more economically privileged members. It is also evident that these women tapped resources that were familiar to them. Their first outside donation was from the Ladies' Association of First Presbyterian Church, of which Mrs. Baker was a member.[34]

Feeling strongly that the neighborhood should work for its own improvement instead of merely accepting charity from others, the Houston Settlement Association established the Second Ward Women's Club.[35] This created a unique opportunity for cross-class cooperation, as members of the ward club, sustained by the experienced and affluent clubwomen, now provided volunteers and at least some financial support for its projects. These included assuming responsibility for the Woman's Club kindergarten and establishing a visiting nurses program. The Settlement Association focused its attention on the needs of children with a new intensity, but also broadened its horizons to include adult education classes, programs for the deaf and dumb, Houston's first branch library, community-sponsored manual training and domestic science programs, and a school for delinquent boys.[36]

By first establishing programs through its own initiatives and then keeping them before the public, the Settlement Association was able to realize the creation of permanent institutions by 1918. Its visiting nurses program had been integrated into the city's newly organized Public Health Department. The Association's work with delinquent boys had led to the Seabrook School for Boys in Clear Lake. The Association had lobbied successfully to establish a City Recreation Department to oversee parks and playgrounds across the entire city. The Settlement Association believed that a neighborhood approach that depended on "the philanthropic whim of the individual giver" was not the most efficient one and they continued to work for the development of permanent agencies.[37]

Clubwomen, who by now had become crusaders for their causes, realized that it was critical to their success to keep the public informed of what they viewed as the city's needs. Since the demise of *The Ladies' Messenger* in 1890,

[33]Corinne Tsanoff, *Neighborhood Doorways* (Houston: Neighborhood Centers Association, 1953), 2-3.

[34]*Ibid.*, 4.

[35]*Ibid.*

[36]Fall, *Key to the City of Houston*, 62-63.

[37]Tsanoff, *Neighborhood Doorways*, 7-13.

women's activities, other than those of a purely social nature, had received little attention from the press. This lack of publicity had not at first displeased the organized women's groups. The Ladies' Reading Club had even declared in their minutes of October 13, 1896, that "the *Post* may contain the exercises of the Ladies' Reading Club but the names may not be given." Club members had been acutely sensitive to the ridicule which had resulted from the less-than-serious articles printed about them in their formative years. By 1906, however, they realized that they needed a public voice; and Stella Christian brought together 11 women with a dual interest in literary writing and community improvements. Thus was born the Houston Pen Women, who took it as their objective "to proclaim the glory and sublimity of righteousness." If righteousness can be defined as combating poverty, ignorance, disease, indifference, and exploitation, these female writers achieved their goal; they regularly submitted articles to Houston publications and sponsored a weekly column by Mrs. Christian in the *Houston Post*.[38] They were no longer reluctant to be mentioned in print.

Clubwomen realized that legislation was ultimately the key to ensuring permanent reforms in the community. Through the networking of the City Federation of Women's Clubs and its allied group, the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs, they kept issues before the appropriate legislative bodies.[39] As a result, local storekeepers were required to shorten working hours and to provide seats for their clerks during breaks,[40] a women's restroom was maintained in the Market House,[41] and matrons were placed in both the jail and the railroad station for the protection of women.[42] More kindergartens were opened and traveling libraries were sent into rural areas.[43] Additionally, the need for pure food and milk laws was publicized and a municipal livestock

[38]*History Through the Years*, 89; Fall, *Key to the City of Houston*, 28; "Houston Pen Women Club Has Well Known Writers as Members," undated newspaper clipping, Mrs. Adele Lubbock (Briscoe) Looscan, *Scrapbook*, v. 1, Texas and Local History Department, Houston Public Library.

[39]By 1915, the City Federation of Women's Clubs consisted of 12 clubs with 850 members. It should be noted that frequently individual women belonged to more than one club. Thus, the actual number of women involved in clubs in 1915 was considerably less than the stated 850.

[40]Mrs. Roland Ring, "Federation Highlights," 6-7, City Federation of Women's Clubs Collection, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

[41]*The Standard Blue Book of Texas* (Houston: State Printing Co., 1907), 81-82. A club, the Houston Improvement League, was organized to operate this facility.

[42]"What Women's Clubs Have Done to Uplift Houston," undated newspaper clipping, Ring Scrapbook, 126-127; Minutes, Current Literature Club, December 8, 1908, Current Literature Club Papers, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

[43]Fall, *Key to the City of Houston*, 21, 67-68.

fencing ordinance was enacted.[44] Between 1909 and 1917, women's groups across the state came together to form powerful coalitions. These determined women lobbied successfully for legislation including a state child welfare commission, child labor laws, a juvenile court system, public kindergartens, compulsory school attendance laws, pure food inspection, and a state library commission.[45] Always concerned about the quality of life, women broadened their role as guardians of the home to include being caretakers of the community.

What were the necessary components for the journey these women made in moving out of the narrow sphere of home and family into the real and troubled world around them? In order to succeed it was essential that they gain public acceptance, acquire financial support, and establish strong leadership. At the same time they had to operate within the bounds of propriety, never forgetting their roles as homemakers.

While they faced some opposition, not only from men but also from women who felt that too much public exposure would lead to a deterioration of home and family, it is apparent that many of the women were strongly supported by male family members, who contributed not only financially, but also through their influence within the business and political communities. Although most women's clubs avoided controversial issues that might overshadow their own more immediate goals, certainly some of their members individually supported the woman suffrage movement and strongly agreed with their fellow clubwoman, Elizabeth Ring, that "we could all do this work much better and quicker with less loss of time and dignity and self-respect by casting our vote as full-fledged citizens. It is not pleasant to have to wheedle and cajole or flatter men to give us these sensible and practical things. It takes too much of our time and energy and it makes us think less of ourselves and them."[46] Though they might deplore it, they understood the necessity of having the

[44]*Illustrated City Book of Houston Containing Mayor's Annual Message and Department Reports for 1914* (Houston: Rein & Sons Company, 1914), 285-87; *Houston Chronicle*, January 7, 1940.

[45]Stella L. Christian, *The History of the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs Vol. I* (Houston: Texas Federation of Women's Clubs, 1919), 91, 143, 162, 182, 187-88, 217-19, 246, 261, 301, 312, 317, 325, 362. For an account of the role the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs played in securing child labor legislation see Judith N. McArthur, "Saving the Children: The Women's Crusade Against Child Labor 1902-18" in Fane Downs and Nancy Baker Jones, eds., *Women and Texas History* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1993), 57-71.

[46]Mrs. W. M. Baines, *Houston's Part in the World War* (Houston, 1919), 69. By 1914, some of the clubs were discussing suffrage in their meetings. The Current Literature Club spent that entire year studying "The Vital Interests of the Day," which included suffrage. However, it was not until the presidency of Elizabeth Ring (1917-19) that the City Federation of Women's Clubs endorsed the proposed suffrage amendment. For more on the role of local women in the Texas

support and approval of the male population, and they became experts at the art of persuasion. In a broader sense they appealed to middle-class society by emphasizing their goals and their spirit of service to the community in an attractive and, perhaps more importantly, nonthreatening way.

While the Ladies' Reading Club had firmly declared in their minutes of November 8, 1895, that they did not wish to become ticket sellers, clubwomen soon realized that the need for funds would be a perpetual reality and they became persistent and innovative money raisers. They entertained, decorously of course. They begged, always appealing to the goodness and generosity of the hoped-for benefactor. And they taught, feeling that funds would more readily come from an educated citizenry. Eventually they realized that by reproaching those in authority, they could persuade government to assume financial responsibility for improving the quality of life within the city.

Leadership, of course, was the ultimate key to success. Women like Adele Looscan, Elizabeth Ring, Emma Cherry, Margaret Foster, Alice Baker, and Mamie Gearing, who began with the desire for self-improvement, came to the realization that community improvement could enhance the general welfare. Though they lacked power in the conventional sense, they combined perseverance, intelligence, and an astute sense of timing to effect coalitions that would actively work for the good of the entire population.

From our late-twentieth-century perspective, these clubwomen may have acted conservatively, addressed a narrow segment of the population, and failed to achieve true equality. Within the ideological and political framework of the time, however, they helped to lay the foundation for the feminist expression of the future. The club movement provided a socially acceptable way for many women to begin moving out of the domestic realm and gain a public voice, without taking on the public notoriety that was attached to the crusading feminists of the time. Through their clubs, women learned the importance of joining together to effect change. In them, women found the strength to become autonomous persons.

suffrage movement see Janelle D. Scott, "Local Leadership in the Woman Suffrage Movement: Houston's Campaign for the Vote 1917-1918," *The Houston Review* 12 (no. 1, 1990): 3-22; Larry J. Wygant, "'A Municipal Broom': The Woman Suffrage Campaign in Galveston, Texas," *The Houston Review* 6 (no. 3, 1984).

Images of an Industry: The Hughes Tool Company Collection

Charles R. Hamilton

Given our geographic location and the economic impact of the oil in on Houston, it's not surprising that the Houston Metropolitan Re Center has large numbers of oil industry related photographs sca throughout its collections. These numbers dramatically increased re with the acquisition of the Hughes Tool Collection (RG 1005). This coll contains more than 4,500 negatives and 5,000 prints, along with v information concerning the company and the flying exploits of H Hughes, Jr. Processing of the collection is under way and it should be for research use in 1994.

Howard R. Hughes, Sr., and his business partner Walter Sharp were a the many entrepreneurs who rushed to the new Spindletop oil field early years of this century. Hughes became interested in the probl designing an improved method of drilling through rock, and in 1909 I Sharp founded the Sharp-Hughes Tool Company to manufacture Hu revolutionary new rock bit. It was an immediate success and the cor began to expand rapidly. Hughes constructed a test rig at the plar continued to experiment with new bit designs, making tests on differen of rock. Walter Sharp died in 1912 and the company became Hughe Company in 1915. In the 1920s, the company also broadened its oil fiel and began making tool joints and valves.

Fortunately, photography was used extensively beginning in 190 today we have more than just another rhetorical look at the oil inc Judging from the large number of images, especially during the early y the company, Howard Hughes, Sr., must have seen the need to docum of the facets of his business. There are consistently large groups of

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