



“Mother, Grandmother and My Life Through the Lens of Women's Equality”
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Mother, Grandmother and My Life Through the Lens of Women's Equality

Susan Catherine (Kate) Rhoades was born in 1878, the same year in which Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and a few members of Congress initiated an amendment that would give American women the right to vote. They re-introduced it almost yearly until 1918, when finally it passed in the House with only one vote more than the required two-thirds majority. Another year and a half later, it was approved by the Senate; the process of state ratification was not completed until 1920 when the Nineteenth Amendment was finally adopted.



1 [Billie \(Allen\) Underwood](#) circa 1944

I was born in 1924. The fight for women's suffrage took place in the years between my grandmother's birth and my own. This book will present the personal histories of my grandmother, my mother, and myself in our American family against the background of the history of women in the United States in their struggle to achieve equality.

Kate's birth took place on a small farm in Fall River, Kansas, seventeen years after Kansas became a state. Fifty years before her birth, wagon trains had begun to use the Santa Fe Trail, five hundred miles of which lay within what is now Kansas. Thousands of travelers went over the Trail, many on their way to the Far West with its call to riches, but some of the Trail seekers decided to settle in that prairie land. In the 1850s the non-Indian population consisted of eight hundred settlers and seven hundred soldiers, stationed there to

provide protection from Indian raids.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act

In 1854 Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act that established each area as a separate territory. Kansas was now opened to large-scale settlement. A large number of the settlers who responded to the opening of the Kansas Territory came from the neighboring state of Missouri. Their migration was, in part, an attempt to establish Kansas as another slave state. Fearing this possibility, antislavery societies in the northern states encouraged groups to stake claims in the new land. Control of the territorial legislature became the goal of the opposing forces, resulting in fierce battles, both verbal and physical. The Free Staters won in 1861 when Kansas became the thirty-fourth state in the nation--a free state. By this time there were over a hundred thousand people in Kansas.

Women and the Temperance Movement

Although it was a new state, many of the people of Kansas took active interest in problems which were of national importance. The 1870s were a particularly dramatic decade, and especially so for Kansas women, for it was the one in which the temperance movement reached its greatest momentum. Kansas had enthusiastically joined what was termed the "women's crusade", and by 1878 an official state organization and twenty-six local chapters had been established. They held rallies and picnics in every county to recruit members. They sponsored essay contests, with prohibition as the assigned theme. Ministers exhorted their parishioners to join in the fight against Demon Rum; orators raised their voices to recruit members to the cause. The driving forces behind many of these temperance activities were the women of the communities.

Kansas legislators passed a constitutional amendment prohibiting the sale or manufacture of intoxicants and submitted it to the voters in 1880. Intensifying their efforts, Kansas women organized a campaign, capped by the presence of thousands of women at the polls on election day who were there to distribute literature and to make last-minute appeals. They were not allowed to vote, of course, but their hard work resulted in success. Kansas became the first state in the nation to adopt a prohibition amendment.

The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) had been a very effective organization in its fight for prohibition. Under the direction of its leader, Frances Willard, the WCTU branched out into other areas of reform, primarily movements which would help women and children. She encouraged the members to campaign for kindergartens, child labor laws and women's suffrage since she believed that all these matters related to the traditional roles of wife and mother. The WCTU was the first organization to attract women from all socioeconomic levels and its respectability encouraged women to consider women's suffrage a legitimate issue.

Women and the Abolitionist Movement

Another force leading to the struggle for suffrage had been the abolitionist movement. As women became involved in the activities of the anti-slavery societies, they had found that many halls and churches across the country were closed to women when they took part in speaking tours. Their desire for equality became as important to them as their message about slavery and many feminist groups were founded by female abolitionists.

Women's suffrage became an issue in Kansas in 1859 when three feminists from Shawnee and Douglas Counties tried to attend the constitutional convention in an attempt to have equal voting rights included in the state constitution. They were refused admittance but their efforts may have been instrumental in the granting of the right of women to acquire and possess property and to maintain equal custody of their children. In 1861 women were given the right to vote in school elections, making Kansas one of the most progressive states in the union.

Two constitutional amendments were submitted to the voters in 1867, the first one giving full voting rights to black men and the second granting voting rights to women as well. This was one of the first attempts in the nation to confront the issue of women's suffrage and noted feminists went to Kansas to take an active part in the campaign for passage. Their efforts failed.

Kansas women organized the state's first women's suffrage group in Lincoln, Kansas in 1879. Its three members were often ridiculed as they persisted in talking about suffrage to friends and neighbors but, soon, similar clubs sprang up in other cities. In 1884, a statewide group delivered petitions with over seven thousand signatures to the state legislature where a bill was introduced allowing women to vote in municipal elections. The first attempt failed in 1885 but in 1887 Kansas women did win the right to vote and to run for office in all city elections. Later that same year Argonia, Kansas elected the first woman mayor in the United States.

Life in Fall River

An exciting time and an exciting state in which to be born but it is very unlikely that much of that excitement reached Fall River and even more unlikely that it would have affected Kate's family. These political events would have had no meaning for John Earl as he plodded behind the plow, sometimes stopping to study the sky. The brim of his sweat-stained hat would be shielding his leathery face, his brown eyes squinted above the bushy mustache. His heavy work boots would be powdered with the dirt flying up as the plow cut its way through the hard-packed ground. The rhetoric of the female activists would not be understood by Sarah as she plunged her reddened hands into the tub of water, wringing out a pair of John Earl's overalls, then straightened, pressing her hand to the small of her back. The front of her long calico dress would be covered with an apron and long ties would be dangling from her wide-brimmed sunbonnet. She may have been listening to her daughters, Kate and Em, as they did the breakfast dishes in the cabin, occasionally scolding their little siblings--in unconscious rehearsal of their life roles.

Like the other farmers in that harsh prairie environment, Kate's parents devoted their full energies to raising the crops that would be critical for survival. Kansas soil was rich and fruitful but cycles of natural and man-made disasters made very difficult the farmers' efforts to bring their crops to maturity and to get them to market. Periods of wet weather alternated with dry spells on the prairie. Grasses spread during the wet cycles, but those grasses quickly died when the dry periods began, leaving large areas of parched soil to be caught up in the wind, creating vast dust storms. This climate also encouraged the growth of the eggs of grasshoppers and other insects, and when those eggs hatched, the insects fanned out across the land in great hordes, chewing crops and gardens to stubble. Severe droughts were a recurring problem, and in many years Kansas farmers saw their crops die in the fields when the dry cycles occurred. This area would become part of the Dust Bowl of the 1920s.

Other calamities included prairie fires which spread from farm to farm, burning everything in their paths. There were also threats from Indian raids, the last one occurring in 1878 when the Cheyennes raided throughout Kansas on their return to their former home in the Dakotas.

These were the issues that concerned the farmers and their wives in that part of Kansas. Making a living was an all-consuming activity and the concerns of middle-class urban women about voting rights would have seemed very minor in comparison to their daily struggle to survive.

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Susan Catherine (Kate) and Rhoads Family History

Susan Catherine--Kate--was the third of the six surviving children born to John Earl Rhoades and his wife, Sarah. Sarah Hardwick Rhoads was also descended from a branch of the Rhoads family, one begun by a German immigrant. Heinrich Roth emigrated to the colonies with two of his brothers in 1757, settling first in Pennsylvania. He Anglicized his name to Henry Rhoads and served in the Revolutionary Army under the leadership of General Muhlenberg who had been his peacetime pastor. After the war he moved to Kentucky, became a member of the legislature, and when a new county was created there, proposed the name of his former leader. Henry Rhoads became the owner of a 2500 acre tract of land in Muhlenberg County upon which he built a large home, with a nearby family graveyard. At least six generations of Rhoads are buried there, including Henry who died at the age of 75 in 1814.

Family migration from Kentucky to Missouri led to representation on both sides during the Civil War. Sarah's brother, William Daniel Hardwick, enlisted in the 23rd Missouri infantry of the Union Army. He fought in many battles, was with General Sherman on his historic March to the Sea, and later became a prisoner of war in a notorious Confederate prison.

We don't know if the two Rhoads families were related (the spelling varies during the years) but they do seem to be very different. John Earl's ancestors were less well educated and were more apt to be owners of small farms. His father, Thomas Rhoads, is mentioned in a Kansas history book:

In 1866 Thomas Rhodes, among others, laid foundations along Fall River in Wilson County, Kansas. Some of these early settlers also built cabins. There were villages of various bands of the Little Osage tribe in the vicinity and Thomas served as interpreter to the Osage in behalf of the settlers.

John Earl's mother, Susan Watts Rhoades, was the daughter of Holland and Sabatha Watts. Family legend asserts that Sabatha was a Cherokee whom Holland had married while she and other members of her tribe were still in Georgia. The Cherokees had established themselves there as plantation owners before the Indian Removal Act of 1830 forced them to give up their lands to white settlement and to relocate in what is now Oklahoma. Holland Watts served in the War of 1812, and after his death Sabatha received a government pension for her minor children.

Apparently, both of John Earl's parents, Thomas and Susan, had links to Indian tribes--the Cherokee and the Osage. As an old woman, Kate could still enthrall her grandchildren with the "Indian words" which her father had taught her.

John Earl had ten brothers and sisters and we have descriptions by one of Kate's distant cousins of three of them as they appeared late in their lives:

John Earl Rhodes was a tall man, dark-skinned and had a big nose (I would note that this family trait has been very faithfully handed down through the generations).

Elizabeth (Lizzie) Norris was tall, dark-skinned and smoked a pipe.

Susan Rhodes Spear slept with a hatchet under her bed and a butcher knife under her pillow. She smoked a pipe after meals and kept her tobacco in her apron pocket.

Those verbal sketches paint pictures of strong earthy frontiersmen and women who spent more time in labor than in reading. We know that John Earl could neither read nor write.

Kate's father tried farming corn and cotton on a series of farms in Kansas, usually on leased land. He evidently was not successful, due either to some deficiency in his farming skills or to the plagues and droughts that besieged all Kansas farmers--or perhaps to combinations of these factors. We know that a particularly long and severe drought struck the area in 1873 and did not end until 1881. The years 1886 and 1887 brought both blizzards and long, dry spells. For whatever reason, John Earl moved his family in a covered wagon to the Indian Territory in 1889. Kate was ten years old.

Indian Territory, comprising most of present-day Oklahoma, was land set aside primarily for the [Five Civilized Tribes](#)--the Cherokees, Chickasaw, Seminoles, and Creeks. These were tribes who, for seventy years, had been forced out of Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and the Carolinas, and had been sent to this little-known land. The federal government believed that the region was too far west to be desired by white settlers, and the Indians had become reasonably content with their new home. Eventually, however, white settlers began to clamor for this block of undeveloped land to be opened up for them. This clamor arose at the same time that Kansas and Missouri were pleading for more settlers.

Some of the members of the Five Civilized Tribes had served in the Confederate Army, and at the end of the Civil War, government officials seized the opportunity to declare the tribes themselves to be traitors, providing justification for the cancellation of existing treaties. An agreement was forced upon the Indians, the first of which took one-half of their original holdings to make room for the relocation of minor tribes from other areas which stood in the way of western migration.

Demand for land in the Indian Territory grew, and as early as 1883, Boomer groups crossed over from Kansas into the territory, often to be ushered back under military escort. In the 1880s the term Boomer

was generally given to anyone who demanded that the Indian Territory be opened to white settlement. Eventually the term was applied to almost anyone who traveled in a covered wagon.

To Skiatook, Kansas as Boomer or Sooner

Arkansas City, Kansas, across the border, was one of the towns that had had Boomer camps since the late 1870s as the Boomers waited along the border each year, hopeful that some part of the Territory would be opened. Early in 1889, the center of the Indian Territory was opened for settlement in April 22. Eleven thousand quarter-sections of land were to be given to those who reached them first, nothing to the losers. Six to ten contenders vied for each plot. Four days before the opening, the Boomers took positions around the lands to be opened and Arkansas City became a deserted town as many of its permanent residents joined the Boomers in the quest for land. Adding to the confusion were thousands of Sooners--settlers who had stolen in before the opening and had occupied choice land before the race officially began.

We don't know whether John Earl Rhoades was a Boomer or a Sooner. We do know that he settled in 1889 near what would become the town of Skiatook, named for Skiatooka, a prominent Osage tribal member.

The settlers had not developed plans for the new towns--neither for their location nor for their governance. Robert E. Cunningham in *From Indian Territory* describes the development of Guthrie, Oklahoma:

...a disorganized mass created an unparalleled example of how democracy solves its problems. In rapid sequence, almost as if they were working from a prepared plan well-rehearsed, Guthrie settlers held an election, appointed officials, surveyed the town, laid out streets, and fined gamblers for public funds until a tax base could be established. A similar pattern was followed at Oklahoma City, Kingfisher, and other territorial towns located at the time.

John Earl and Sarah began their new life in the Indian Territory, not by helping to establish a town but by building a family farm. They had brought with them from their efforts in Kansas a few tools, some supplies, and an understanding of the prairie soil. That land demanded great efforts in clearing it but even greater exertion in breaking up the brick-like sod with a plow, oxen (if the farmers had them) and weeks and weeks of backbreaking labor. When the soil was finally turned over and ready for planting, the farmers placed each seed by hand into the prepared holes. Then the waiting and hoping began. Would the rich green crops last until harvesting or would any of the many possible calamities be visited upon them? Drought? Hot winds? Scourges of cinch bugs or grasshoppers? Prairie fires?

Only after the crops were in could attention be turned toward housing. Many of the families lived in wagons until planting was over and they could begin to build wood cabins or sod huts. Chickens and dairy cows had to be cared for because they provided the family with an additional source of income. Fruit and nut trees were set out and vegetable gardens planted to feed the family. Sarah, Kate, and her older sister, Em, probably worked along with John Earl in many of these labors. If all the essential chores could not be handled solely by husbands and sons, then wives and daughters were expected to take part in any of the work on the farm. Their contributions included planting and harvesting, taking care of the garden, and helping with the livestock.

Life of Pioneer Prairie Women

Drawing from journals and letters written by women of that place and time, Joanne L. Stratton in her book, *Pioneer Women*, describes one of the chores which frequently fell to the wives:

For the pioneer woman, procuring the family's daily water supply was a regular part of the household chores. To many women this meant ladling rainwater from an outdoor cistern or drawing bucket after bucket from the nearby well. On more arid lands, a housewife had to trudge a mile or more to the nearest running stream. Filling huge wooden buckets or barrels, she then made the long haul home again.

In addition to the traditionally male chores they performed, pioneer women prepared all the meals on stoves for which they had gathered the fuel; often open fires served as stoves. Fruits and vegetables for future use were preserved quickly from ripe produce. They baked rolls and bread daily and churned butter after daily milking. On hot summer days these women prepared enormous meals for their families and for the extra hands brought in for harvesting.

Clothing for the family was an ongoing concern. Washing was done by hand on scrub boards with homemade soap and tubs of hot water heated over the fire. Few articles of clothing were purchased so all new garments were sewn by the same method used in the continual mending and darning--by hand. Scraps of leftover material were pieced together to make quilts for warding off the bitter winter cold in the unheated rooms.

Mothers cared for their children while they worked at household chores. Keeping them safe and healthy and--as soon as possible--useful were the only important childrearing practices. The emotional development of childhood personality was not a major issue at the end of the 19th century and it certainly would have attracted little attention from these struggling farm families. Much of the child care was the responsibility of the older girls, with the mother serving as the overseer of moral education..

The series of books by Laura Ingalls Wilder, including the one titled *Little House on the Prairie*, portray these family farms as independent units bound together into a community by common fears and joys. Indeed, Wilder's family lived at one time in the Indian Territory. Her verbal portraits of the wives and daughters in their floor-length cotton dresses and wide-brimmed sunbonnets are accurate replicas of our own faded-brown family pictures.

Kate spent her first twenty-five years in this rural American milieu, interrupted by only five years of school. She continued to serve as her mother's helper with all the farm chores and with the care of her younger siblings. She also began to hire out as a domestic helper, or as they were more commonly called, a house girl, in the homes of other farm families. Like most young women of the time, she lived at home and gave her earnings to her father, except for the one major purchase of a horse which she rode to and from her jobs.

Polarization of Gender Roles

A change in the way in which men and women were viewed occurred during the 19th century. Family roles had become increasingly polarized, with men seen both as family providers and as buffers protecting families from the contaminating influences of the outside world. Women had always had major responsibility for the household and the children, but they were becoming increasingly more restricted to three main functions: home maintenance, child care, and nurturance of the husband. In her book, *Man's World; Woman's Place*, Elizabeth Janeway maintains that this was a middle-class phenomenon. Through the centuries working-class wives have always worked. In mid-nineteenth century England, one out of every four married women worked at some job with a professional classification other than "housewife." This did not include the uncounted number of wives who worked in their husbands' businesses and shops. Associated with the increased polarization and specialization was the assumption that women were more moral and more spiritual than men, and this assumption broadened to include the notion that women were very fragile and delicate. Western families would not have accepted this tender view of female fragility and delicacy in its entirety, but they were receptive to the notion that the man's world was not a fit and proper place for a wife. An adequate husband was one whose wife had not been forced out into that other world; a stay-at-home wife had become the symbol of a husband's success.

Nevertheless, a dramatic increase had occurred in the number of women who worked outside the home during the century. In 1860, women constituted about 10 percent of the paid labor force; by 1900, there were five million female wage earners, representing 20 per cent of the total number of workers. Two million of these women were in household service, like Kate. It was the largest category of employed women, as it would remain well into the 20th century. The three other major occupational categories were: teachers; clerks and salespeople; and dressmakers, milliners, and seamstresses.

Few of these female workers were married women leaving the protected environment of the women's sphere. The large majority of women in all the categories listed were single, whether they were from middle-class or working-class families. They worked until they married, planning then to remain in their new homes--in the woman's world.

A companion concept to the notion of women's fragility and delicacy was the idea that they should be educated to prepare them for their roles as transmitters of cultural mores to the nation's children and as moral advisers to their husbands. Before the 18th century, communities considered literacy to be much more important for boys than for girls. At the end of the 17th century only one out of three women in Virginia, for example, could sign their names as compared with three out of five men. Between 1705 and 1760 the literacy rate for men rose to almost 80 percent; a decrease in literacy occurred at the same time among rural women. However, by 1870 over 87 percent of all white women over twenty years of age were able to read and write.

Public schooling became coeducational as it expanded. By 1860 boys and girls were almost equally likely to be attending schools, even in farming areas. Carl Degler ranks this social decision to educate women as one of the most fateful ones in the history of women and the family in our United States. Secondary education for either sex was not widespread until after the Civil War. In 1870 there were only 160 high schools in the country, but by 1880 there were almost 800. By the end of the century, the number had reached over 6000, many of them coeducational. In the census of 1880 the proportion of literate young white women was actually higher than that of young white men.

The notion that the future guardians of the home and family required some education was accepted but not the notion that they should receive education beyond the high school level. Higher education belonged solely to the man's sphere because its primary purpose was the training of men for professional careers. Such a curriculum would have been of little value for a woman's life work. The change to recognition of a woman's right to receive a college education did not come easily. Oberlin College permitted women to enroll with men when it opened in 1837, but the purpose behind their admittance was their function as a civilizing influence upon the male students. The primary mission of Oberlin College was still to educate males.

Arguments raised against providing higher education to females focused mostly upon the threat to their delicate and sensitive natures. Indeed, it was strongly doubted that their minds or bodies would be able to deal with the strain of learning at such a high intellectual level. Degler cites a text published by a faculty member of the Harvard Medical School in 1873, who declared that even if women possessed the mental facility to perform at the college level, their feminine physiques would be seriously threatened. He described cases of brilliant young women who had been incapacitated as a result of striving as college students. Fortunately, these dire consequences were belied by the actual successes of female students, unaccompanied by an increase in mortality or morbidity. The end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century saw a sizable increase in the number of women in the colleges and universities.

Education for women was still closely linked to their star roles in the women's arena; concern arose whether higher education really contributed to the enhancement of women's place in the family. A writer in the Ladies Home Journal referred to the college graduate's "wild craving for what girls call a career...The result is a neglect of duty, ungratified ambitions, discontent; and so what was meant to make life fuller ends in lessening the sum of happiness." Perhaps his concern was validated by statistics collected toward the end of the 19th century that showed that many college-educated women were choosing not to marry. At least a fourth of female college graduates never married, a figure almost double that of non-college women. If they did marry, it was much later in their lives and they produced

fewer children. The fear was expressed that a college education was subverting the traditional expectation of a woman's role in the family.

Degler suggests that this fear was justified; a college education might prepare women for more activities than the ones designated solely for women. A curriculum which encouraged the development of logical and critical thinking might also inculcate in the students a recognition of their own abilities. This recognition might lead to the consideration of other purposes in life than that of wife and mother. He quotes the historian Keith Melder as saying "Not every educated woman was a rebel, but nearly every rebel had been educated."

By the beginning of the 19th century, a revolution begun in the 1820s had been almost completed, one which saw a dramatic increase in women's participation in the economy of the United States. William O'Neill has termed it "the most significant event in the modern history of women." Their wages did not equal those of men, nor were as many opportunities open to them, especially those providing power or prestige. However, by the new century, some women were in virtually all professions and in the great majority of occupations. In 1910, women comprised almost one-fourth of all non-agricultural workers and in 1920 women were in all but 35 of the 572 occupational classifications used in the census.

Education was not the only influential factor behind the increasing tendency of women to test the separation of spheres. Church and church activities had been considered to be logical extensions of women's work, and if women were to be the spiritual partners in the home, then the church and its affairs were appropriately things of the spirit. As women formed such a large part of each congregation, church authorities began to rely upon them to take part in the work of the churches and religious societies being formed in all regions. These societies were organized to carry out the spiritual and benevolent functions of the church and they achieved many of their goals. They did more than this, however, for many women. The women were out of the house; they were meeting other people; they were planning, organizing, and educating. They were finding themselves successful in activities that were really quite unrelated to the home itself. They were discovering talents and skills that might have been buried forever and they were changing their views of themselves.

The nature of these societies led quite naturally to concerns that were not restricted to church affairs but widened to include areas that dealt with society's problems. Women began to take on causes such as temperance and antislavery, seeing them as belonging to the province of moral reform. These activities aroused little disapproval because they were still seen as part of the restricted sphere. Yet, the earlier discussion of the activities of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union demonstrated that similar activities had broadened to include women's suffrage.

Adding impetus to these forces which were propelling women to endeavors outside their sphere was urban growth and its concentration of women with access to factory-produced goods. These goods relieved the women of many of the tasks involved in feeding and clothing their families. Some middle-class homes were equipped with indoor plumbing; hot and cold running water, and gas or coal stoves.

The birth rate among native-born middle-class women had decreased, lessening their responsibilities. An increasing number of immigrant girls had become a source of domestic help, further providing their female employers with several free hours a week to spend as they chose. Time and energy were available for women who wanted to take part in the outside activities, now open to them.

One such group of women is mentioned in the History of Jones County, Iowa:

The ladies of Wyoming, Iowa met November 20, 1861 for the purpose of organizing a society auxiliary to the [Army Sanitary Commission of the state of Iowa](#), having for its object the relief of the sick and wounded in hospitals. Heading the [Committee to Solicit Contributions](#) was Mrs. James B. Richards.

Mrs. James B. Richards was the grandmother of Kate's future husband.

Kate, like her mother before her, would have had little contact with these ambitious women nor would she have had much understanding of their goals. She had not been a member of the female population which received a secondary education; she had been allowed only five years of schooling. Since her father was an illiterate farmer he probably saw more value in his children's labors on the farm than in their education, particularly that of his daughters.

Family photographs of Kate at this time are of a young woman with a medium build, an olive complexion; long, thick, black hair; and dark brown eyes. The latter characteristics may have been indicative of the legendary Indian inheritance. Throughout her life, her eyes were described as sparkling or snapping, never as dreamy nor soft. This farm girl attended a barn dance one night in 1903 and met a fair-haired, blue-eyed man. Milo James Richards had grown up in Kansas (MAU Ed: B. Wyoming, Iowa?) but had left to work in Chicago for the International Harvester Company. He was visiting relatives at a nearby farm when he attended the dance that night. Family stories record his dancing ability and it is possible that the visitor may have shown off a little that night, perhaps performing the latest cakewalk from the big city.

We don't know whether the courtship was carried on by mail when he returned to Chicago or whether he simply never went back. We do know that Kate and Milo were married December 29, 1903, in a double wedding ceremony with her brother, George. The bride and groom were both twenty-five years old.

The history of Milo's family is intertwined with the history of the United States. One set of ancestors has been traced to the arrival in 1620 of Benjamin Nye from Bilenden, England. His son, David, was born in 1649 in Sandwich, Massachusetts. Thomas Hartshorn, another immigrant from England, began another family line in the colonies when his son, David, was born in 1647 in Reading, Massachusetts. Unlike Kate's ancestors who went south and then west across the country to Kansas, Milo's people went from

New England to New York, then to Iowa and Ohio before they arrived in Kansas. Both groups were early pioneers pushing the frontiers of the new country ever westward.

Essie in Indian Territory

Kate and Milo lived in both Kansas and the Indian Territory in the first years of their marriage. Their first child was born November 5, 1904, in the home of her maternal grandparents, John Earl and Sarah. The nearby town would later be known as Hominy, Oklahoma when statehood arrived for the Indian Territory three years later. The little girl, named Essie, had her father's coloring--very fair skin, blue-green eyes and light brown hair. Essie is my mother.

Frequent moves marked those early married years as Milo worked for farmers in different parts of Kansas-- and with occasional railroading jobs--in his role as the family provider. Two of these years were spent in western Kansas where the family lived in railroad cars set aside for the crews who kept the railway bridges in repair. Milo was in charge of the repair work and Kate did the cooking for the men. One car was designated as the dining car in which everything had to be anchored securely before the engine returned to move them on to the next site.

Essie had two memories from these early years, one of being lost while pushing her little doll buggy in a field of what appeared to be impossibly tall corn, as she heard Kate calling for her. The second was of a tornado-alert sounding when her aunt and cousins were visiting. Everybody rushed for the cellar, emerging the next morning to find that the wind had blown away the door to the back porch.

In those first years of marriage Kate had no permanent home. The family moved frequently, and Kate was often left behind with the children. Three sons were born, including a set of twins. Still, marriage represented a new life for Kate--and a better one: she no longer worked in other women's homes and she believed in Milo's ability to establish her in the woman's world.

Milo decided to end their nomadic life and to settle in Arkansas City, Kansas, where he found work as a carpenter. The former Boomer town was experiencing a growth period bringing about an increase in construction jobs. Over the years he worked steadily, with only the endemic layoffs characteristic of the construction industry. Milo and Kate were able to put down roots.

Within Kansas is the geodetic center of the forty-eight conterminous United States; every calculation of latitude or longitude uses this point as its base. Geographically, Kansas is the heart of the nation. Its

people, to maintain the anatomical metaphor, have been characterized as its backbone. They are described as the descendants of hard-working, God-fearing pioneer stock who maintained a tight clasp on American values, and by their adherence to these values and the Puritan work ethic, kept the American dream alive for all of us. In free association, the terms that come to mind are conservative, solid, patriotic, all the virtues and traits associated with our view of America-as-it-used-to-be.

These characterizations are not always extended to dwellers in the large cities, often being limited to farmers and the inhabitants of small towns. We have seen its likeness in literary works which reflect the nostalgia of the past; one representative evocation is the drama, *Our Town*, by Thornton Wilder. Wilder did not intend Grover's Corner to be one particular town but rather the commemoration of daily life in all the small towns across the country. The accuracy of his portrayal is pointed up by Willa Cather who wrote Wilder:

(it was) the loveliest thing that has been produced in this country in a long, long time--and the truest. Exiled Americans, living abroad, to whom I have sent the book of the play, write me that it has made them weep with homesickness.

When Milo, Kate and the children moved there, Arkansas City was a thriving community situated at the confluence of the Arkansas and Walnut Rivers. The town's name is pronounced as Kansas preceded by "Ar"; the river's name is pronounced like the state of Arkansas. Surrounded by rich farmland, with many large fields and orchards, it served as the shopping center for farmers and their families. Most of the famed Kansas wheat grew in the western part of Kansas, but some large wheat farms lay near the town. Another economic base was the growth of oil refineries built to handle the products of the oil wells beginning to spew out their "black gold" in neighboring Oklahoma. Four railroads met in Arkansas City, with an additional interurban line to Winfield, the county seat, all these lines meeting at a solid stone depot a short distance from the center of the town.

A brick-lined street, Summit, ran the length of the town, informally dividing the north and south districts, connected by streetcars. In one of the two big, verdant parks was a large rotunda where Chautauqua speakers addressed the crowds. Another feature was a recumbent, concrete lion which is poised there still. The other park's special attraction was its role as an ice-skating rink when the large lake froze each winter. It was also the site for the grandest event of the year--the Fourth of July's festivities--complete with fireworks, bands, and orators. This was an occasion for which each girl hoped to have a new dress. Essie remembered a rose, linen middie dress made by Kate when Essie was sixteen. A matching ribbon tied her hair back in a long braid.

Other entertainment needs were met by a large roller-skating rink under a canvas tent, and the weekly dance upstairs over the International Order of Odd Fellows Hall. Two pool halls located downtown were never frequented by Milo, but he and his cronies stood outside one of them each Saturday evening in an ongoing discussion. Kate and the children sat in the car, watching groups of people strolling up and down Summit Street. Stores stayed open late on that night to attract farmers' families.

Disasters did strike at the little Kansas town. In 1923, the Arkansas River, flowing down from a flood in Pueblo, Colorado, became swollen as it joined the Walnut River at the southern edge of town. Both rivers flooded and caused widespread damage to homes and businesses. Milo and Kate were living in an elevated part of the northern section of town so they escaped the effects of the flood but Essie recalled watching a mattress on which a dog, a cat and a chicken sat while being swept away.

The Influenza Epidemic

Another disaster was the 1918 influenza epidemic which hit hard at many families in Kansas, just as it did across the nation. Essie contracted the disease first, and, within a few days, Kate and the three boys were very ill. Milo, recalling it in later years, would declare that "I never had my shoes off for thirteen days and night." Everyone in the family survived. Milo had nursed his family without outside help. Professional resources had been stretched thin and neighbors were afraid to enter a home in which anyone was down with the dreaded illness. They would call across a fence to say that they had prepared a pot of stew or beans and then place it half-way between the two houses.

Milo and Kate lived in a series of rented houses and at each one Milo prepared a garden bed for Kate's vegetables. Near the garden he fenced off an area for the baby chicks which Kate raised to a good frying size. Although there were no indoor bathrooms and baths were a weekly event in a large washtub, Kate usually had running water for her kitchen sink. During Essie's early years, coal-oil lamps were used for lighting, replaced first by gas mantles, and in the 1920s by electricity.

The houses usually had a screened and canvassed back porch, on which Kate placed her washing machine, powered by human energy as one of the children pushed a long handle back and forth. Space heaters were used in the winter; one which Essie remembered was a long unit with what looked like glowing coals behind an isinglass screen. Kansas summers are known for their heat and humidity, and Essie and her brothers fought for the stray breeze from an open door or window on hot summer nights.

The family prospered as Milo did well in his man's world and in 1916 he bought his first automobile--a Ford touring car, green with red spokes and a brass radiator. Milo bought this second-hand car in Wichita, sixty miles from Arkansas City, driving the entire distance in low gear because he had not yet mastered the art of shifting. The car was Milo's prized possession and if the weather were clear, the family went for a ride each Sunday afternoon. On those days, he arose early to listen for the particular sound of a crow which he declared to be a "rain cry" and to look for any cloud which might indicate a rainstorm brewing. If either of these harbingers were present, the proposed outing would be abandoned. No roads were yet paved, and if it rained during the excursion the car would become bogged down in mud up to the axles. Milo probably enjoyed the trips somewhat less than the rest of the family because he was always listening, always alert to the sound of a suspicious engine noise.

A few years later Milo had accumulated enough cash to buy a new Ford, for which he took extra precautions--locks on the car wheels and doors installed on the garage. However, there was no

insurance and when the car disappeared mysteriously from the garage, so did the \$850 he had paid for the car.

While Milo was achieving in the outside world, Kate made her contributions in the woman's sphere. She tended to her children without help or assistance from an extended family since neither she nor Milo had family members nearby. Kate did all the cooking, of course, and a fried chicken was not preceded by a trip to a supermarket for a cut-up chicken lying on a Styrofoam pad. The first step was to her chicken yard to select a nice, plump fryer, then to chase, kill, pluck and clean it. Breads, rolls, cakes, pies--all were baked by Kate; a practice not always appreciated by her children who were delighted with the occasional store-bought loaf. Vegetables came from her garden each day and those not prepared for that day's meals were canned, as were fruits and relishes. Jars lined the shelves which Milo built in the cellar.

On ironing day, an all-day affair, a pot of beans simmered on the stove from early morning so that she could iron without stopping to prepare dinner. She took great pride in her performance in her world. Essie recalled a night when, on the way to town, Kate noticed that one of the boys was wearing a shirt with one un-ironed sleeve. She insisted that the family had to return home so that shirt could be exchanged for a perfect one.

Part of Kate's contribution to the family's welfare was the money she brought in from various small endeavors. Each summer she took the children to commercial farms where they all picked tomatoes or cherries or berries and were paid for each basket of produce. Sauerkraut and hominy were made in large crocks, then ladled into containers for the boys to peddle to the neighbors. In the winter, she regularly mounted the streetcar with a large basket with buttons and cards obtained from a factory. Sewing those buttons on the cards provided a quiet winter diversion for the children--and a little extra money for the family.

By all standards, Kate's place in the woman's sphere had changed for the better: no more work in the fields, a sheltered life within her own home, a growing number of labor-saving appliances. Milo had been able to provide her with a home in which she could carry out the roles expected of wives: housekeeping, child care, and a peaceful environment created for Milo when he returned home at the end of a day spent in that harsh and somewhat unclean outside world.

"True" Women

True Woman was the complimentary title given to a wife who gracefully exemplified the expected role and who made no attempt to intrude into the man's sphere. Women had begun to infiltrate some of the male professions but they were primarily single women. Twenty-five years before the Civil War most teachers in American schools were male, but by the time the war was over the typical teacher was female, and by the end of the century three-quarters of all the nation's teachers were women. One explanation for this shift was the salary differential. Male teachers, even those teaching the same grades, received more money than their female peers, enabling school districts to save money by hiring

women. Teaching could also be seen as fitting under the umbrella of providing child care, a female function.

The field of nursing, especially after the Civil War, was open to women, although nurses were tainted by the recognition of an association with bodies and bodily functions. It was an arduous profession since nurses not only gave bedside care to the ill but performed all the housekeeping duties as well. Medicine could also be seen as a nurturing career and in 1880, over 2500 female physicians and surgeons had begun to practice in the United States, although few medical schools were open to women. Law, however, was a field which definitely belonged to the man's world, and female lawyers met with consistent opposition. Only 200 women were practicing law in 1891.

Forays into the man's world were made by pioneering middle-class women, predominantly never-married, divorced, or widowed. The weight of society's disapproval fell upon wives who "worked"--that is, worked outside the home.

Young women continued the practice of quitting their jobs upon marriage. In 1890 almost 88 percent of the women working in nonagricultural jobs were unmarried; that percentage dropped only to 75 by 1920. According to the census of 1900, less than 4 percent of married women worked outside the home. In 1920, the number had risen only to 8 percent. Even as late as 1940, the proportion of women working outside the home was only 12 percent of the total. If a wife needed money for her family, the only acceptable avenues open to her were doing piecework; taking in washing and ironing, and admitting roomers and boarders into her home.

The world of work held few attractions to tempt women to continue working after marriage. Had they continued with an outside job, their responsibilities would have been doubled with the continuance of their household chores. Furthermore, the bulk of jobs available to women were difficult or boring and always low-paid. At the end of the 19th century an experienced female factory worker earned six dollars for a sixty-hour week. An unskilled male worker earned eight dollars. Women worked ten-to-twelve-hour days in factories, sweatshops, mills and laundries. Many of them were paid by the piece rather than by the hour; often, the women pushed themselves to turn out more work only to find that the supervisor had arbitrarily reduced the rate per piece. Women were not always given the less-demanding jobs. In *History of Women in America* by Carol Hymowitz and Michaele Weissman, an early labor organizer, Rose Schneiderman, is quoted in a 1912 speech responding to the assertion that in winning the vote, women would lose their beauty and purity:

We have women working in the foundries, stripped to the waist. They stand for thirteen or fourteen hours in the terrible steam and heat with their hands in hot starch. Surely these women won't lose any more of their beauty and charm by putting a ballot in a ballot box once a year than they are likely to lose standing in foundries or laundries all year round.

Women workers received little attention from unions. They were considered to be temporary workers and they were located primarily in the ranks of unskilled laborers at a time when unionization was concentrating on craft unions. Another source of the neglect lay in the bigotry which surrounded immigrants; many of these workers were new arrivals from Europe.

The garment industry employed many female workers. In one firm, the Triangle Shirtwaist Company, a few women had tried forming a branch of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU). When the employers fired some of the workers suspected of union activities, a number of them walked off the job. After two months of abuse from the employers as the women walked a picket line, the ILGWU and a coalition of Jewish socialist unions called a meeting. Unexpectedly, thousands of working women came and after emotional appeals from the workers, a general strike was called. Organizers hoped for three thousand strikers; almost thirty thousand women participated. The strike lasted for thirteen weeks, thirteen weeks of abuse from hired thugs. It elicited the attention and sympathy of women from all over the country, including that of many middle-class women. Settlement of the strike brought some increase in wages but the greatest benefit was the public exposure of the disgraceful conditions in which many women worked.

The strikers had asked for changes in health and safety conditions and the need for improvement was tragically highlighted when a fire broke out two years later in the same factory, the Triangle Shirtwaist Company. Most of the five hundred women workers were trapped, either dying in the burning building or leaping to their deaths. Rose Schneiderman spoke at a memorial meeting:

...this is not the first time girls have been burned alive in the city. Every week I must learn of the untimely death of one of my sister workers. Every year thousands of us are maimed...there are so many of us for one job it matters little if a hundred forty-three of us are burned to death.

Some industries, including the needle trades, farmed work out for women to complete in their own homes, with payment dependent upon the amount of work accomplished. Mothers could alternate this piecework with household chores, while keeping an eye on the children. Women were thus able to keep families together while remaining within the shelter of the woman's world. Unfortunately, the work was usually seasonal and no contracts existed to ensure that assignments would continue. The rate paid for the piecework was kept so low that the women had to work far into the night to finish enough material to receive payment. The contractors also used the threat of farming out work to intimidate laborers in the factories and sweatshops who might try to organize for higher pay and better conditions. When farming out was abolished by legislation in the 1900s, improvements occurred in the work settings.

These were working women, both inside and outside the home--working not to establish themselves in a career nor to express their independence but to earn a living for their families; finding occupations for their leisure time was not a problem for these working-class women.

Although some women's clubs, such as the General Federation of Women's Clubs, had been founded as early as 1890, their membership had increased dramatically in the first decades of the new century. Joining by the thousands, women joined clubs in which they formed committees to bring about civic reform in their communities. They even founded organizations for their daughters: Girl Scouts and Campfire Girls. The outbreak of a war in Europe frightened many women and antiwar activities spread across the country. Jane Addams organized a Woman's Peace Party and twenty-five thousand women joined it, although there were equally determined groups of women who believed the pacifists were unpatriotic. When the United States did enter the war, both groups engaged in activities to support the troops. They collected millions for war bonds, the Red Cross, and the YMCA. The National American Woman's Suffrage Association bought and equipped ambulance units, staffed by women doctors, nurses, aides, drivers, and mechanics. These units were rejected by the United States Army but were gratefully accepted by the French Army.

Middle-class women were able to pursue these outlets with the free time which was now theirs, due either to their ability to hire domestic workers or to their use of labor-saving devices such as prepared foods, ready-made clothes and indoor plumbing. These married women would, of course, not seek outside employment but many of them chose to spend free time outside the home in women's clubs, societies, or reform associations. They received no reproaches if they contributed their talents and efforts to such organizations because the argument was still made that their activities were simply an extension of the woman's sphere. The belief had spread that True Women were so much more moral, so much more spiritual than men, that their morality and spirituality were actually needed occasionally in the man's world to protect the sanctity of the home. These occasional forays were considered legitimate and appropriate for women because their purpose was the amelioration of life for families whether the activity involved education, housing, or similar concerns. All these matters needed the compassionate and nurturing qualities possessed by women. Women could seek civic reforms such as improvement of the city water supply, for example, since unclean water was a threat to family health. Reform efforts of these clubs extended to education, orphanages, libraries, and prohibition and the efforts were sometimes directed to the whole nation.

These activities conducted outside the women's sphere were generally accepted but some concerns were rising about a perceived weakening of the nation's moral fiber. One indication of this moral weakness was the divorce rate which was accelerating from its base of one in eighteen in 1890. Obtaining a divorce was still considerably more difficult for wives than for husbands because a woman had fewer grounds on which she could sue and she needed money of her own to hire an attorney. Even if she were granted the divorce, society directed its opprobrium heavily and solely towards her. Still, the divorce rate rose and one of the causes attributed to that increase was the changing role of women and especially the turmoil over their rights.

Rise of "Social Feminism"

The struggle to win the right to vote was limited mostly to middle-class women and it was not accepted by all of them. Many of these women recognized their own skills and abilities as they organized and

directed campaigns for civic betterment, but this recognition did not extend to consideration of themselves as equal to men. Instead, they believed themselves to be morally superior. They did not want to lose the protection afforded them by the services of a husband who enabled them to maintain their positions in their own homes. Degler refers to William O'Neill who described this group of activists as social feminists whose primary concern was service to others and to society, as contrasted with the early feminists like Stanton and Anthony, whose primary object had been the achievement of individual opportunities for women.

The early position had been put forth by Stanton in a speech in 1892 in which she stated that there are four rights to be considered for a woman. The first was what belonged to her as an individual, as an "arbiter of her own destiny." The second and third were the same rights as all citizens and her duty, like all citizens, was to achieve "individual happiness and development." Those that dealt with her relationship to her family were the last rights to be considered.

These early feminists had met in 1848 in a conference which resulted in the first organization which had as its major goal the granting of the right to vote to women in the United States. Their demands were for equality with men and for consideration of women's rights as individuals to be deemed as important as their life roles as wives and mothers. Their hopes were dealt severe blows at the end of the Civil War with the ratification of both the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. The former amendment specifically gave the right to vote to "male citizens" and "male inhabitants." The Fifteenth Amendment stipulated that suffrage could not be denied on the basis of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Sex was excluded as a basis for the right to vote. Before the Civil War, women were excluded from voting by state law alone, but as a result of these two amendments, women now needed a constitutional amendment to enable them to vote in federal elections.

The social feminists saw the emphasis upon individual rights of women as a threat to family unity; the wife and mother, in line with her other superior qualities, should put the needs of other family members first. Her self-effacement was a necessary element in enabling them to achieve their potential. Women's rights, including suffrage, was not an item on the agenda of these groups since participation in the political arena was a giant step into the man's world, one which threatened the separation of the two spheres. Therefore, the proliferation of women's organizations from 1880 on had not led to concentration in attempts to achieve women's suffrage. In keeping with their belief in female superiority, these women felt that moral reform should be their primary focus. Women had to use their special virtues to "clean up" the world.

At the end of the 19th century, the suffrage movement was a feeble one. Millions of women were taking active part in organizational reforms; only thousands were active in suffrage movements. Hoping to revitalize the movement, suffrage groups merged to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in 1890. A new generation of suffragists was instrumental in this merger; they were less radical, less removed from the mainstream of women. Unlike the early leaders who had stressed women's right to equality, these women adopted the prevailing view that women were not equal to men; they were better, were superior. They deserved the right to vote because of their superior virtuousness.

This change in tactics led to acceptance of the suffrage movement by more and more women--and some men. Still, the movement languished for years. In spite of the fusion of the two strands of feminism, only four states had enfranchised women by 1896: Wyoming, Colorado, Utah and Idaho. Among the foes of suffrage were southern women who feared losing their protection, and the liquor industry which worried that female voting blocs would introduce prohibition legislation, either state or federal. Two other groups which opposed giving women the right to vote were urban political groups which had doubts about their ability to control women voters, and large business organizations which had similar worries about the threat to their interests posed by women reformers.

The fight for women's suffrage, however, was revitalized in 1910 when women in the state of Washington were given the right to vote. By this time, women had been voting in four states and their voting records had not been significantly different from those of male voters, mollifying fears of drastic social changes. Some of these fears had been behind the liquor industry's anti-suffrage campaigns, but prohibition had not been a major drive of female voters. Nor had gambling and prostitution been the objects of significant electoral reform by women voters. The victory in Washington was quickly followed by the passage of women's suffrage in California, Oregon, Arizona, Montana, Nevada and Illinois.

Significant male opposition to women's suffrage had been a factor during this period but many positive changes in the overall status of women had been made in the same decades in which suffrage had been delayed. Married women's property rights had been improved in many states. Women were able to own and control property in three-fourths of them, and in most states they could keep their own earnings. Much of this improvement in the legal rights of women had been instigated and executed by male legislators.

Kate at Home in the Women's Suffrage Era

Kate demonstrated little interest in suffrage or even in clubs or groups other than church activities. Her life revolved totally around her husband, her home, and her children. She and Milo exemplified the vaunted upward mobility of America: their lives were very different from the rural background of their families of origin. They were urban residents recognized as representatives of their respective worlds. In addition to his job as a carpenter, Milo had begun undertaking projects as a contractor. Kate was known in her neighborhood for the care of her home--a home much richer than any she had ever known. By many current sociological standards, the family might have been classified as middle-class or at least lower middle-class: Milo's income; Milo's occupation; their type of housing, and the number and nature of their possessions. However, Kate and Milo would probably not have identified with many of the interests and concerns of middle-class Kansans.

Child-rearing practices and home maintenance had become major topics in women's magazines, primarily directed at middle-class women. At least one hundred magazines were founded from 1784 to 1860. After 1830 many magazines were born, due to improvements in printing which allowed cheaper and more frequent publications--and, of course, due to the large population of readers created by women with increased leisure time.

Kate probably differed from those middle-class women in her view of parenting techniques, which had become the theme of many articles and books of the day. Writing those articles and books had become an occupation for both men and women journalists. They promoted those practices which contributed not only to children's moral development, but also to their emotional and personality growth. It is doubtful that Kate ever read any of this material.

Unlike mothers today who are bombarded with advice and with dire predictions about the consequences of inadequate mothering, many women in Kate's era viewed parenting differently. Mothering was very important to them, but it was not expected to consume the major portion of the daily activities. Mothers did not worry about providing intellectual and creative stimulation for their children; their concern centered more around contributing to their family's resources. In all but the wealthiest of homes, mothers cooked, cleaned, sewed and gardened, both to fulfill their responsibilities and to bring in extra money. These were working mothers. Child-rearing activities took place in the context of the mother's work; there was not the separation of a woman's roles into worker and mother. Both were integral parts of their lives and both were valued. Children were expected to behave properly and to begin early to become contributing members of the family. Therefore, parental concern focused primarily upon moral behavior. When an adult son asked Kate if perhaps she and Milo might have been a little harsh in their parental practices, Kate's immediate response was "None of you went to prison, did you?"

Town Girl

One major indication of their adoption of some middle-class values was Milo and Kate's desire for their children to have the education neither of them had received. Essie was marched off to school each morning; Kate accepted few excuses for absences. The little girl was always in a freshly starched dress, with long stockings, and on the cold Kansas winter mornings, in long underwear. Her hair was either plaited into two braids or combed straight back and caught up with a large bow. Essie was a good student with few unpleasant experiences. One was a spanking administered because she had permitted a pencil to roll off her desk for the second time. The spanking was particularly humiliating because her colorful bloomers were on view during the administration.

Although they usually lived at least a mile from school, the children came home for lunch where they were greeted by Kate, pausing from one of her many chores. An aroma which Essie always associated with lunch was that of peanut butter purchased in large tubs which Kate thinned with milk, both to make it more palatable and to increase the quantity. When they returned from school in the afternoon, the children began their own chores. The boys had paper routes and all the children worked either in the garden, or, in season, in the strawberry patch. Trips to nearby woods brought home black walnuts which had to be cracked for Kate's baking.

Essie helped Kate in all the housewifely tasks, but, as an adult, she admitted that as much as she complained at the time, Kate had not expected her to perform many of the tasks which Kate performed both then and when Kate had been a child. Kate and Essie seemed to believe that Essie had a "more

delicate nature” and seemed to be especially sensitive to the sun, limiting her outdoor activities. Her brothers’ frequent complaints about her escapes from these chores indicated that they not have accepted this explanation as readily as Kate did. Another verification of Essie’s sensitive nature was Kate’s failed attempt at teaching her how to kill a chicken; violent protestations rescued her from further instruction. Essie’s childhood was very unlike Kate’s rural upbringing. Essie was a town girl.

When Kate permitted the children time to play, Essie could sometimes persuade one of her brothers to play dolls but if he was too fearful of being caught in that activity, she used the Sears or Wards Catalogs to cut out paper dolls and their wardrobes. Occasionally she would venture into the boys’ domain to play marbles, winning only if she played with her twin brothers, five years younger than she. She longed to have a bicycle like her brothers but since this was never permitted, she frequently waited for one of her brothers to leave his bicycle behind when he left. As she took it, she carefully studied the tracks so that she could replace it in exactly the same position. Her stealth was rarely successful and the two would be embroiled in a sibling argument.

Relatives visited occasionally. Kate’s father, John Earl, came for a short stay after their Grandmother Rhoades died. He was a taciturn man--Essie remembered him sitting for hours without speaking. However he once related to the fascinated children a story of an Indian arrow being shot at him while he was riding his horse in the tall grass of Missouri. She also recalled that on one of their infrequent visits to Oklahoma he made ice cream for them by twisting a gallon syrup bucket, filled with the ice cream mixture, in a round wash tub of ice and salt.

From elementary through high school, Essie had two girl friends with whom she could share confidences. She spent long, happy hours with each of them, although jealousy and competition sometimes marred their times together as a trio. As pairs, they took long walks, went to the movies, skated at the rink, and on Sunday afternoons met at the library. Nothing else was open.

While life in Arkansas City continued its placid ways in the years in which Essie was growing up, seismic changes were occurring for women in the nation.

Women at Work

Women’s participation in the labor force had increased steadily throughout the 19th century. William O’Neill, reflecting upon the increase in women’s employment, termed that increase “one of the most significant events in the modern history of women.” Women were still concentrated in low-paying and non-prestigious jobs but by the first decade of the 20th century some women had moved into virtually all the professions. In 1910 women constituted almost a quarter of all workers in non-agricultural jobs, and in 1920 women were represented in all but 35 of the 572 occupational classifications listed by the census. By 1910, 7,640,000 women were employed, comprising 20 per cent of the total labor force. Nearly two million of these women were serving as clerks, librarians, secretaries and teachers.

Employment opportunities had increased for women during World War I. As they had during the Civil War, women replaced men in factories and mills, in foundries and workshops and their presence in these jobs brought about an increase in recognition of women's abilities. It also brought regulation of the conditions under which they worked. A Women's Division of the Ordnance Department was established during the war to ensure safe environments for women working in munitions and ordnance plants. At the end of the war, efforts were made to develop similar regulations for peacetime working conditions. The Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor was established in 1920.

After the war, when soldiers returned to their jobs, female workers were fired, sending them back to females-only occupations. Those who worked in factories and mills returned to ten-to-twelve hour days spent in dirty, crowded, unsafe environments. For their efforts they received one-third to one-half the wages of working men, even when they performed the same jobs. Their attempts at obtaining union protection continued but for the most part women did not achieve equality in labor unions, whose leaders still considered them to be temporary, unskilled workers and not worthwhile candidates for organization. Women trying to make inroads into the American labor movement faced both these attitudes and the apathy of other female workers who feared the consequences of organizing. Despite the lesson of the tragic Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire and the fact that 1910 to 1920 was a decade of increased labor activity for women, most working women were not organized and were in the lowest-paying jobs.

The majority of these workers, as in previous generations, were single women, marking time until they married and could remain at home, protected by their husbands. A 1900 census study revealed that less than 4 percent of married white women worked outside their homes. By 1920, the proportion had doubled, but the overall number remained low. Even as late as 1940 the proportion was never greater than 12 percent of the total.

Working-class wives and mothers continued to help support their families by the socially acceptable practices of taking in boarders and roomers or by doing sewing and laundry at home. There were always some who had to manage the double burden of an outside, low-paying job and the maintenance of home and children.

The difference between Kate's educational attainment and that of Essie was characteristic of the changes in educational aspirations for women. With universal public education, girls were entering school in equal numbers with boys, and many were staying in school longer. In high schools, girls outnumbered boys. In 1870 only 1 percent of the college-age population went to college and only 21 percent of them were women. But by 1910, when about 5 percent of the overall population were attending college, 40 percent were women. By the end of 1920, 40 percent of all masters' degrees went to women; women received 15 percent of the doctorates.

Few middle-class, educated women tried to establish themselves in professional careers. Most of them directed their energies after marriage into the women's clubs which had flourished since their beginnings at the end of the 19th century. By 1910, the largest of them, the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), had one million members. Continuing to assert women's natural moral

superiority, their concerns focused upon using that superiority to improve the world outside their homes. They were extending their housekeeping skills into the soiled men's sphere, while remaining safely inside the women's world.

Reformers of this era were successful in raising public interest and support in the rights of women and children to have safe working conditions and adequate health care services. The GFWC, in particular, served as the coordinating center for women's activities on behalf of children. Years later, credit was accorded these groups by a director of the Children's Bureau when Katherine Lenroot observed that "the modern child welfare movement in the United States is due in part to the public interest and support secured by the great non-professional women's organizations."

Children's welfare had become a major part of women's reform movements. Children were working in northern and southern mills, factories and sweatshops. Reports were cited which described 120,000 children working in Pennsylvania mines and mills. In the same year--1900- New York reported 92,000 children under fifteen years of age to be working, and working the same long hours as adult workers and under the same dangerous conditions.

Reform efforts undertaken by the women's clubs were joined by the groups of professional social workers who, like Jane Addams and Florence Kelly, conducted their life's work among the poor. Official work began with the National Child Labor Committee, formed in 1904, when it introduced proposals aimed at abolishing child labor. Another goal was the establishment of a federal children's bureau. Protective legislation was passed in 1916 which prohibited the interstate shipment of goods from factories employing children under fourteen, or those permitting children to work more than eight hours a day. That law was declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court in 1918. A similar decision was made in 1922 about a law which had placed a tax on goods made in certain industries employing child labor. Child labor reformers determined that their goals could be realized only through the passage of a constitutional amendment.

Another goal was the creation of a federal children's bureau. Campaigners included the National Child Labor Committee, clergymen, women's clubs and consumers' leagues but proposed bills were defeated in committee year after year. In *Remember the Ladies*, Johnson relates a story in which the social worker, Lillian Wald, was reading in her morning paper one article about a trip by the Secretary of Agriculture to investigate a boll weevil infestation and another article about an increase in infant mortality during that summer. Wald and her fellow reformers felt that the plight of children in the United States should receive as much governmental concern as the plight of cotton.

The Federal Children's Bureau

In 1912 the Federal Children's Bureau was created by the House of Representatives and the legislation was signed by President Taft. The Bureau became the Department of Health, Education and Welfare in 1953. Julia Lathrop, its first head, immediately began a study of the demographic factors of infant mortality. Investigators found that nearly a quarter of a million babies were dying each year. In 1918

the United States was seventeenth in the world in maternal mortality and eleventh in infant mortality. Results of their research had shown a direct relationship between poverty and high infant and maternal mortality rates, including the evidence that many pregnant women received little or no prenatal care.

The Bureau designated 1919 as the "Children's Year" with the following goals: to save the lives of 100,000 babies, to abolish child labor and to find ways for women to stay at home with their children. Aiming for achievement of the first goal, the Bureau worked for the passage of the Sheppard-Towner Bill. Administration of the features of the Bill would be the responsibility of the Bureau which would set standards for federal grants to be given to local maternal and child health services. Recognizing that the same forces which had defeated other child reform efforts would be mounting similar protests, the Bureau enlisted supportive women's organizations. The League of Women Voters created the Women's Joint Congressional Committee to coordinate lobbying activities for almost twenty-four women's organizations. One successful tactic was to place pressure on Congressmen so that statements of their position could be publicized.

Opponents of the bill ascribed Bolshevik influences to the Bureau, to child labor laws and to the Sheppard-Towner Act. They also attacked the marital status of the Bureau employees. Remember the Ladies quotes a Senator Reed:

it seems to be the only established doctrine of this bureau is that the only people capable of caring for babies and mothers of babies are ladies who have never had babies.

In another attack:

We would better reverse the proposition and provide for a committee of mothers to take charge of the old maids and teach them how to acquire a husband and have babies of their own.

In spite of the emotional opposition, the Sheppard-Towner Act passed the Senate in August 1921 and the Children's Bureau began administering programs to improve health services for women and children.

Funds were a recurring problem for the Bureau and Wald pointed out that the same week in which the Appropriation Committee allowed \$25,000 for the Bureau, the lowest level allowed by law, \$165,000 was appropriated for free seeds and \$400,000 for hog cholera.

At the end of what is known in American history as the Progressive era, many societal goals had been accomplished: principles of protective legislation, an end to child labor and improvements in services for women and children. The primary forces behind the accomplishment of these goals had been

female reformers who had united for the first time in the country's history to bring them to fruition. There had been some dissension. In arguments which are prophetic of those which were to be heard in the 1970s and 1980s, some feminists declared that progressive legislation which favors only women might make it difficult for women to expect equal pay for equal work. They argued that special treatment and equality were contradictory aims.

A major influence in the political climate was the change in direction from early suffragists who insisted upon woman's freedom and equality to that of the social feminists who had already won acceptance for women's participation in reform efforts. If it was feminine to bring about reform in direct involvement in their communities, it should be considered equally feminine to vote in campaigns for even broader reforms.

In 1915, Carrie Chapman Catt was elected president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and began to implement a carefully planned nationwide strategy. Her goal was the ratification of a federal amendment by 1920 but she believed that pressure would be increased if women won the vote first in more states. Under her guidance, state suffrage associations worked to develop grass roots support and to put pressure on their legislators to support the federal amendment.

American and British Suffragette Strategies

Different tactics were adopted by American feminists who had participated in the demonstrations of British suffragettes. The British women had lost faith in the use of quiet diplomacy to gain the right to vote and had resorted to such tactics as chaining themselves to the gates of public buildings and hiding in the rafters above Parliament to spring out at dramatic moments to debate their cause. They burned buildings, blew up mailboxes, and organized mass marches--all activities designed to coerce the British government. They were arrested and imprisoned and went on hunger strikes to attract attention toward their cause. Upon her return to the United States, Harriet Stanton Blatch rejected the diplomatic techniques of the NAWSA and, beginning her own group, mounted women's suffrage parades in New York City, the first such outdoor demonstrations in this country. She also formed an alliance with the Women's Trade Union League, encouraging participation by working-class women.

Another veteran of the British struggles, Alice Paul, resolved to put life in the feeble suffrage movement. Her first step was a demonstration of ten thousand people in Washington D.C., the day before President Woodrow Wilson's inauguration in 1912. She formed an auxiliary to the NAWSA, the Congressional Union, and resolved to apply steady pressure on the political party in power, directing attention to their leaders who were denying the vote to women.

NAWSA leaders feared that these tactics would result in a backlash and Paul was expelled in 1915. While Catt and her two million members coordinated their methodical strategy, Paul and the fifty thousand members of her Women's Party adopted more flamboyant methods, including picketing the White House. The picketing continued for months, until the administration finally authorized the police to arrest the picketers. They were first released without sentencing, but when they returned to the

picket lines, they were subsequently charged with obstructing traffic. When they were found guilty and sentenced to a workhouse in Virginia, Alice Paul and a few others went on a hunger strike and were force-fed. Federal courts later invalidated the arrests and after their release, the protesters returned to the picket line. Some sympathy for the women and their cause had been aroused by the heavy-handed overreaction of the government.

In January 1918, President Wilson asked Congress to approve a constitutional amendment enfranchising women. In the same month, Jeannette Rankin of Montana introduced the suffrage amendment in the House of Representatives and it passed with 136 opposing votes, 274 in favor, one more than the necessary two-thirds majority vote. Southern Democrats stalled it in the Senate for sixteen months, but Republican senators won a majority vote in 1919. Two-thirds of the state legislatures had to ratify the amendment and the anti-suffragists directed a campaign which linked suffrage to anarchism and the Russian revolution. Their efforts were matched by both the NAWSA and the Women's Party. The tide had turned, due either to the careful organizational skill of Catt and her supporters, or to the dramatic tactics of Paul and her group--or perhaps by both. Now a majority of Americans were supportive.

On August 26, 1920, Tennessee became the thirty-sixth state to ratify the amendment and women's suffrage became law, enfranchising 26,000,000 women. Forty-two years had passed between the introduction of the amendment and its ratification. The campaign for women's right to vote had lasted for over seventy years.

Following ratification, Carrie Catt created the League of Women Voters to replace NAWSA and to further the goals of reform. Alice Paul's Women's Party directed its efforts toward the adoption of another amendment, the Equal Rights Amendment, with its purpose to be the return to the earlier principles of feminism--the right due to women as individuals. Leaders such as Catt and Jane Addams feared that its adoption would threaten women's role in society, and more specifically, the protective legislation which had been passed.

Feminist activities began to decrease after suffrage had been achieved; apparently, many women felt that all the goals had been obtained with the right to vote. Some damage may have been done to the movement with the open, acrimonious dispute between the two branches of feminism: one demanding equality, the other stressing protectiveness. These differences may have been highlighted after the common fight for suffrage had been won. Young women may have taken for granted their right to vote, and therefore, seemed to show little interest in the feminist movement which had gained it for them. For whatever reason, feminism declined as a national force.

Young women were responding to other cultural influences. Disciples of Sigmund Freud had brought to the United States his beliefs that sexuality plays a large role in the life of all humans, including women, and that sexual repression leads to the development of emotional problems. Sexual freedom for women became a symbol of healthy emancipation. The "flapper" was born. The number of women who actually sought sexual freedom by engaging in premarital sex was probably smaller than rumored. It is likely that discussions in magazines and books magnified the actual number.

The growth of the birth control movement, spearheaded by Emma Goldman and Margaret Sanger, centered upon women's right to use contraception. Publicity arose with the establishment of clinics to dispense contraceptive devices and subsequent governmental attempts to close them. Such publicity contributed to the prevalent belief that sexual mores had undergone a radical change.

Dress reform symbolized some of the changing attitudes. At the end of the 19th century, women were wearing long, dark, high-collared dresses, worn over restricting corsets. In 1910, Paris fashion led the way to the abolition of the corset and the introduction of brighter colors. One designer, Gabriele "Coco" Chanel had produced clothes for women who rode, played golf or simply walked with a firm stride. The slim, straight dress, without a defined waistline, became the Flapper's uniform. As clothing became less confining, women began to cut their long hair into the fashionable "bob." Cosmetics were no longer viewed as the symbol of an immoral woman and one researcher reports the increase in cosmetic firms from two in 1920 to 18,000 in 1927.

Not all young women were modeling themselves after Zelda Fitzgerald or Clara Bow. Most young women were living at home, waiting for their entry into married life and expecting to live the same type of life that their parents led. However, an atmosphere of immorality was perceived by many who pointed to the increased divorce rate which was 50 percent higher in the 1920s than in the preceding decade. Two-thirds of the decrees were granted to women.

Essie and Hilery

During this time, Essie and her brothers were growing up in a family which represented the doctrine of the two spheres. Milo worked hard and successfully in the man's world, coming home each night to the nurturing environment which Kate provided. The affection present in their relationship was evident in their pleasure in each other's company. Milo returned to her as soon as his day's work was done and if he had a work-related errand in the evening, he would plead, "Oh, Katie, come with me. We won't be gone long." Katie always went. Milo was the more demonstrative of the two, embracing and teasing Kate, while she often playfully shooed him away.

They created a close, loving family in which each member was expected to conform to his or her social role in the family and in the culture. The socialization processes used to bring about this conformity were true affection and unhesitant discipline. Part of the socialization agenda was the preparation of the sons for the man's sphere and the daughter for the woman's world. These roles were modeled by Milo and Kate; he was the head of the household as the provider and shielder of the family from the outside world. She created the haven for him and the children. In conformity with her removal from the outside world, Kate never wrote a check and never learned to drive a car. Milo always voted a straight Republican ticket and aired frequently and firmly his opinions about the country and its politics; Kate listened quietly. She never voted.

Both parents were stern disciplinarians, Milo perhaps a little more emotional in his administration. His was always the last word in any decisions about the family, including the children's behavior. Kate rarely questioned his authority, although occasionally she would try to soften a decision regarding one of the children.

One source of contention between Milo and Essie was her request to attend extracurricular school events. Never having gone to high school, Milo viewed school as the site for learning, not for socializing. He saw no need for his hard-earned money to be spent on class pins or prom dresses. Being the first child, Essie bore the brunt of this clash between Milo's background and the demands of her peers and the school setting. Like many first-borns, she would, much later in life, point to the differences between his reaction to her requests and to those of the siblings who followed. She received a small bunch of bananas following a tonsillectomy; a younger brother was given a bicycle.

The high school curriculum had begun to reflect some of the changes occurring in the business world and Essie had taken clerical courses in addition to the traditional classes. This had led to an offer for part-time summer employment writing advertising circulars for a local furniture store Milo permitted her to take the temporary job, with her salary, of course, being turned over to him. Her employer was pleased with her work and she was offered a full-time job when she graduated. Essie was gratified with the compliment to her competency and was overjoyed at the thought of her own spending money. Milo's reaction reflected neither of these emotions. His immediate response was a flat "No. Your place is at home with your mother." The vehemence of his reaction made clear his belief that she was violating a family code, if not a societal one. Essie was caught quite directly in the transitional period between the old acceptance of the strict separation between the two spheres and the new trend toward women's intrusion into the man's world. Milo was afraid that Essie would not mature into the True Woman, as she was still idealized in the beginning of the 20th century.

Milo was adamantly opposed to any relationships between Essie and any male classmates--dating, as we would call it now. Perhaps radio and newspapers had bombarded Arkansas City with reports of the tumultuous societal changes. Essie was not going to be a Flapper. If a boy walked her home from school, they would be confronted by a very angry father. Returning home from a movie where she had sat--and been seen--with a fellow student, Essie received from Milo the flat statement that she "would end up in a reform school." The fears of her parents, like those of many parents in that era, were of the lures of the dangerous freedom exhibited by young women in the country.

During the latter part of her junior year in high school, Essie and her girlfriends learned that a stranger was in town and would be at the library one Sunday afternoon. Developing a sudden, strong interest in literature, they arranged to be there when he arrived. Hilery Allen, the nephew of family friends, was visiting from his home in Arkansas and was introduced to Essie. Tall and handsome, with black curly hair, he impressed her immediately and they managed to meet surreptitiously several times before Hilery (Hy, as his family called him) left for Arizona where he was to stay with a brother and look for work. They wrote to each other for a year, with the letters from him addressed to her girlfriend. It seemed as romantic to her as the products Hollywood was sending to the local movie house.

The relationship between father and daughter became increasingly strained and Essie's senior year was an ongoing heated dispute when more requests were made as the class approached graduation. After she was met with repeated refusals, she quit school. When she told Kate, she was sent to the farm of family friends until Milo could be calmed down. Returning home, she wrote Hy, accepting his marriage proposal. His next letter contained her train fare. She stole away early one morning, taking the train to Lordsburg, New Mexico. They were married there by a justice of the peace in February 1924 before they continued their journey on to Arizona. Although he had told her he was older, the bride and groom were both nineteen years old.

Milo replied to Essie's telegraphed announcement with the unoriginal but sincere statement: "You made your bed; now lie in it."

Essie's husband was born in the little town of Lockesburg, Arkansas to Elonzo Johnson Allen and Minnie Russell Allen. His father was a farmer who sometimes owned several businesses in town, the family's fortunes having gone up and down with Elonzo's bouts of drinking. Hy had three sisters, including a twin, and five surviving brothers.

Attempts to trace genealogical roots of both Elonzo's and Minnie's families have been successful only through four previous generations and all the branches discovered so far have been in the South--Tennessee, Louisiana, North Carolina and South Carolina. Most of the family heads were farmers.

Life in the Arizona Territory

After the wedding, Essie and Hy continued by train to Miami, a small town in the central mountains of Arizona. Miami was a part of a copper mining center which included the nearby towns of Globe, Ray, and Superior. Copper had supplanted gold and silver as the most important mineral in Arizona, with the increased need for large quantities by the flourishing telegraph, telephone, and electric light industries. The first mine in the area had been located in Globe and, by 1884, was yielding three thousand tons of ore a month, while its smelter produced 7.4 million pounds of copper that year. Globe's sister town, Miami, was primarily the product of real estate speculation at the turn of the century, but the establishment of the Inspiration Mine Company there lent permanence to the new little town. When the price of copper soared during World War I, a large smelter was constructed, providing more employment.

Copper played a major role in Arizona's struggle for statehood. The demand for copper was high and eastern investors wanted to insure their future investments by obtaining protection under national statutes, and in the 1900s they joined local authorities in requesting admission as a state. However, the movement became embroiled in internecine warfare between two senators battling for control and no progress was made. Still another political trick stalled efforts as the suggestion was put forth that the best procedure would be a process known as jointure. Jointure would have involved the admission of Oklahoma and the Indian Territory as one state and Arizona and New Mexico as the other. This procedure met opposition from both Arizona advocates and their eastern supporters. The latter feared

that their control of the legislature would be undermined by the influence of the rural representatives from New Mexico. The Arizonans were unhappy at the prospect of the capital located in Santa Fe rather than in Phoenix. Congress decided that the issue could be placed before the voters in Arizona and New Mexico. New Mexico voted for it, Arizona against it and the matter was dropped.

Eastern investors renewed their efforts, hoping to gain more security for their investments when a pending national election had taken place. In the meantime, a new power base had arisen in Arizona and this organization of labor groups and the Democratic party wrote a state constitution which included three controversial clauses: the initiative, the referendum, and the recall of judges. The constitution was ratified by the voters, but the Congressional resolution was vetoed by President Taft. A week later, Congress passed a second joint resolution, without the recall clause, and it was signed. Arizona officially became a state February 14, 1912, twelve years before I was born.

Mining continued to be an economic force in Arizona in those early years of statehood, especially for mining communities like Miami. A small branch line railroad, the Arizona Eastern, had been built to bring mine products down from Miami and Globe to a junction with a major railroad. By 1900 both the Southern Pacific (SP) and the Santa Fe railroads crossed Arizona, the SP to the south, the Santa Fe to the north. Their systems provided a network which facilitated freight and passenger transportation for the Arizona Territory, soon to be the forty-eighth state in the nation.

When Hy had visited his brother, who was a druggist in Miami, he had been hired as a clerk for the Arizona Eastern Railroad. He was bringing his bride to a little town which clung to the side of a mountain, and their first home was to be a former mining camp mess hall, complete with giant-sized scorpions and centipedes. These strange creatures, like the desert shrubs, even the mountains themselves, were alien to the young Kansas native who had grown up in Arkansas City, which exhibited the green trees and grasses of a river town in the flat Kansas prairie land. Essie adjusted to these changes, content to be establishing herself in her own home. It was irrelevant that the home was rough and inelegant; she knew that it was a beginning and that the future would bring homes more like the ones she visualized. That first year was marred by severe bouts of nausea accompanying the pregnancy which ended with the birth of a little girl in December 1924. My birth was greeted with joy by Essie but with less enthusiasm by Hy who expressed his bitter disappointment at the birth of a girl by going on a three-day drinking binge. When he returned home, he chose the name Billie; Essie added Jeanne as the middle name, in an attempt to soften the masculine sound. When I was an adult, Essie revealed that Hy's resentment of the baby continued and that his brother intervened more than once when Hy slapped the infant.

That drinking bout was not Hy's first. Ten days after their arrival in Miami, Essie had a clear demonstration of the new life into which she had been propelled, or into which she had propelled herself. Expecting her new husband home after work, she answered a knock on the door; Hy staggered through and fell to the floor. Unable to rouse him, the frightened young bride ran to the neighbors for help. When they came, they laughingly assured her that he was not ill; he had passed out. Essie, coming from an abstemious family and a dry state, had never seen a drunk. She could only hope that Hy's drinking would be an infrequent activity, infrequent enough not to disturb the normal life she wanted them to build together.

In 1926 Hy transferred from the Arizona Eastern Railroad to the Southern Pacific in Bowie, another small town which lay near the famous Fort Bowie which had been active from 1862 to 1894 in the war against the Apaches. Bowie was surrounded by rangeland, with large ranches whose people bought their supplies in the town, for which the railroad was the major employer. The move made little change in the pattern of life for Essie as she maintained the nurturing nest. That pattern had intensified with the birth of their first son in 1927. She saw herself as still following in the footsteps of Kate, even to the series of small rental homes. Owning your own home was expected to be far in the future so that renting did not mar the contentment of the present. She was in her own home, caring for two babies and welcoming Hy home from his place in the man's world.

Some of that contentment was diminished, however, soon after the move to Bowie and while Essie was expecting the new baby. Hy's drinking binges had not been as infrequent as Essie had hoped, despite the fact that the federal prohibition amendment had been passed. Hy began to brew beer for himself and had even been rash enough to offer it to others at a dance. He was arrested and Hy and a pregnant Essie went to Tucson for a judicial hearing. He was sentenced to a year in Leavenworth Federal Prison but through the intercession of an influential person in Bowie, the sentence was waived. Essie, with no savings, no immediate family nearby and soon to have two small children would have been precipitously ushered out of her sheltered world.

Hy followed the cautionary words of the judge and brewed no more. However, he continued to drink what others had brewed. One evening, months later, he agreed to an evening at the skating rink with Essie and her visiting brother. Unlike them, he was not an adept skater so he fortified himself often during the evening. Unfortunately, he was working the midnight shift and while climbing the slippery bars of a railroad car, slipped, and fell on his back. He was taken to the nearest hospital in Lordsburg, New Mexico. This time there was no last-minute reprieve for Essie. The family provider was gone; sick leave pay was far in the future for America's workmen.

The frightened young mother applied for work at the restaurant in the railroad depot in Bowie. Dining cars were not a regular feature on the trains of that time so the railroads placed dining facilities at strategic places along their routes. Although the restaurant in Bowie was a large one, no positions were available when Essie met the manager that day. Then passion took a role in the life of the little family; that is, somebody else's passion did. The waitress on the midnight shift ran away with a married man that night and Essie was called to come to work. One of her first tasks that first early morning was to prepare the grapefruit for breakfast. Never having seen a grapefruit, she halved them vertically rather than horizontally. She must have gone home tired and depressed after her first night as a working woman, with the manager's censure.

While Essie learned how to be a waitress, temporary sitters had to be found until Hy came home for what was to be a period of recuperation. He assumed the care of the children during the night and while Essie tried to sleep in the daytime. The arrangement worked until one morning when he was unable to pull himself erect. He was sent immediately to the Southern Pacific hospital in San Francisco. No one in the little town could care for the children permanently so they were sent back to live with

Kate and Milo. Several visits back to Kansas to introduce their grandchildren had restored a loving relationship. All these trips, incidentally, were possible because one of the benefits of working for the Southern Pacific was the use of passes which entitled employees to free travel.

From Bowie to Tucson

Essie was now a quasi-member of the man's world--quasi because, although she was working in the man's sphere, waitressing was considered woman's work. She worked and lived alone in Bowie until Hy was released after back surgery and a nine-month's recuperation and her children could come home. She worked two more years until Hy was employed regularly again. I can remember bits and pieces of those early years of my life in Bowie. It seems to me that the railroad tracks cut the town in half with the business district on one side. This district included a drugstore which sold cones filled with rich, creamy vanilla ice cream, bearing little similarity to its pale, vapid modern relation. Close to the tracks was an imposing water tank which serviced the trains; it loomed as the only tall structure in that flat land. For reasons I cannot understand a family friend told me that the tank was the home of the Boogie Man. Each time we crossed the tracks to go to town, I looked up to its top, dreading what I might see. As children often do, I kept the friend's information to myself, never sharing it with Essie who could have relieved my mind. I am certain that I did not confide my fears to Hy; even at that age I never viewed him as a source of comfort.

In 1930, a clerical job in Tucson became available and Hy bid on the position, bidding rights being determined by seniority. He won the bid and the family moved from the isolated little town of Bowie to Tucson, the second-largest city in Arizona.

Tucson sits in a desert valley surrounded by the commanding peaks of the Santa Catalina, Rincon, and Santa Rita Mountains; the fourth side is formed by the lower, less dramatic Tucson Mountains. The Spanish names of those mountain ranges reflect Tucson's Spanish and Mexican history, as does the name of the Santa Cruz River which flows through the town--when it rains. Situated at the head of the Santa Cruz Valley, Tucson has been the home of Indian tribes for many centuries; some archaeological findings have been dated back at least 11,000 years. When the Spaniards colonized Mexico, they heard

reports of these pagan tribes with their riches of gold and decided to extend their colonization efforts northward with troops of explorers, soldiers, and missionaries. The Jesuits came first to the Santa Cruz Valley, establishing missions along the way. The first and most famous of these Jesuit padres was Eusebio Francisco Kino who founded twenty-five missions, one of which is the beautiful San Francisco Xavier del Bac, erected in 1700. San Xavier Mission, locally called the White Dove of the Desert, lies southwest of present-day Tucson. The mission was rebuilt in 1751 after a revolt by the Pima Indians in which missions and ranches were attacked in an area extending from the Santa Cruz Valley down into Mexico. The Jesuits were replaced by the Franciscan fathers and for a century the Spaniards worked to Europeanize the Indian peoples, a period interrupted by occasional uprisings.

The town of Tucson itself traces its European origins back to 1776 when Spanish troops were ordered to establish a stronghold at the site of the old Indian settlement of Tuquison. This site afforded the Spaniards the means of extending their settlements farther north and also provided a strategic location for combating Apache marauders. The military fort grew to become a village, a pueblo--the derivation of Tucson's sobriquet of the Old Pueblo. As a Spanish pueblo, Tucson is the same age as the American Republic. After Mexico ousted the Spaniards in 1821, the Presidio de Tucson was maintained by Mexican forces.

Situated less than seventy miles from the present border with Mexico, Tucson's history became linked with the history of the relations between Mexico and the United States. During the period of "Manifest Destiny" in the 1840s, the United States pushed to acquire lands west of the Rockies, much of which belonged to Mexico. Early attempts to negotiate the purchase of California--and the lands that lay between California and Texas--were rejected with outrage by Mexico, which even demanded the return of Texas. The United States government responded with a declaration of war. The Mexican-American War began in 1846 and ended two years later with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo which ceded to the United States most of modern Arizona north of the Gila River; most of New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah; portions of modern Colorado and Wyoming, and all of California. Surveying problems arose which were resolved and ended with the Gadsden Purchase, ratified in 1854. This new agreement, with a reduced price tag, resulted in the acquisition of additional land south of the Gila. It also resulted in a charge of treason against Mexico's President Santa Anna and his consequent exile from his country. The Gadsden Purchase was the last contiguous addition to the United States and can probably be considered as the last step in the program of "Manifest Destiny."

The American flag has been flying over Tucson since December 1846 when an arm of the Mormon Battalion, on its way to California, ousted the Mexican commander. In the decades that followed, traffic increased through Tucson which had become a major stop on the east-west route. The Butterfield Overland Mail Company ran its stage coaches through the Old Pueblo, which served as a transportation hub for the southern part of the Territory. The little pioneer town grew with the increase in mining and cattle ranching. Its importance as a source of critical supplies was enhanced with the arrival of the railroad which reached Tucson in 1880, making it a link in the transportation chain across the transcontinental United States.

When Hy moved his family to Tucson in 1930, the railroad was still a major force in the town. The SP and the University of Arizona were the largest employers in those pre-World War II days. Other

economic factors were said to be the four Cs: cattle, copper, cotton, and climate. Summer temperatures often soar above the 100 degree mark on the desert floor, but, as if in compensation, winters have many weeks in which daily temperatures remain above 65 degrees. In those days, miles of desert trails radiated out from dude ranches where eastern visitors donned boots and cowboy hats, pretending to be cowboys. The less ambitious lolled around on the colorful patios, enjoying the clear air. The clarity of the air leads to the often-told but probably apocryphal story of the dude who left for a short stroll to the apparently nearby mountains and returned exhausted hours later, with bitter recognition of the many miles separating him from those mountains.

Less affluent winter visitors settled into the cheap motels (or tourist courts, as they were termed then) which lined the two roads leading into town, one of which was colorfully named Miracle Mile. Many of these tourist court residents were health-seekers. Persons suffering from arthritis and asthma were often directed to the Old Pueblo by their hometown physicians who suggested that their symptoms might be alleviated in the desert air. Tucson also became a magnet for people suffering from tuberculosis, a disease which used to be a major killer in the United States. Many of the tubercular individuals were housed in special sanitariums or in tents on the outskirts of the city. Health authorities even utilized a group of barracks-like buildings in the desert as a "preventorium" in which they institutionalized non-infected children considered to be at risk in families with an individual suffering from tuberculosis.

Hy was working regularly so Essie was able to remain at home. She was again reigning in her woman's world, albeit in a series of less-than-desirable homes since Hy's drinking bills cut sharply into the wages he earned. Essie became suspicious in one of the apartment complexes that the frequent male visitors to the apartment next door might have had something else in mind beyond mere friendliness

Two episodes stand out in my memory from this period. I lost my way to school and was late on my first day in school. Fearing the consequences, I tried to crawl into the classroom. I realized that had not been a wise decision when my eyes met a pair of sensible brogans, then traveled up and up and up to an unsmiling face. Another memory is of a visit to our apartment by an uncle and his son who was diagnosed days later with poliomyelitis. Essie resorted immediately to her all-encompassing therapy--castor oil mixed with orange juice, with a dollop of baking soda to give it effervescence. I have no idea why she thought that combination made it more palatable; more importantly, I have no idea why she thought that castor oil would cure anything at all. I do have a very good idea why she was willing to try anything. Only those of us who lived through those years can know the fear we all had of polio. We all knew somebody who had either died or been crippled, and neither prevention nor cure had been developed.

Our home life was calm in those early days in Tucson, with Essie at home with my brother and me. I remember it as a relatively happy time, although there was an undercurrent of dread when I heard the word "garnishee" because I knew that there would be heated discussions, sometimes followed by Essie's tears. But, overall, it was relatively tranquil and Hy and Essie began building a frame home in the desert, doing most of the labor themselves.

Health Setbacks for Kate and Milo

Kate and Milo had also built a home in Arkansas City. Milo's fortunes had continued to improve and he designed their dream home--a brick house high on a large lot in the northern part of town. He did most of the work himself, erecting the garage first into which he moved the family while he continued construction on the house itself. He had to borrow some money but the project was primarily a monument to his principles of independence and self-help.

The other major event in their lives had been the birth of a son in January 1923, the year before Essie left home. With this addition, they had five children, ranging in age from the newborn to Essie. Milo and Kate were forty-four and both parents were very happy with their new son, although Kate experienced gynecological problems which troubled her for the rest of her life. Both Kate and Milo must have expected their life to proceed as smoothly as it had; both of them had continued to be exemplars in their respective worlds.

1930

Their hopes were realized for seven more years, but in November 1930 Essie received a telegram stating that Milo had been injured on the job. While working at the Chiloco Indian School, teaching carpentry to Indian boys, two fingers of his left hand, the dominant one, had been severed. She went home to help in what she thought would be a temporary situation but following a severe infection, Milo's arm was amputated to the shoulder. He contracted tuberculosis in the hospital and remained there until April when the doctors advised Kate that he must be taken to a warmer, drier climate. Tucson seemed to be the ideal location in which he might recover. He was fifty-two years old.

My memories of this extended stay in Arkansas City center around school. While on my way to school, a German Shepherd leaped upon me from the tall, stone, retaining wall which bordered the sidewalk on one side. I remember the smell of pippin apples in the cellar of my grandparents' friends who cared for me after school. They were the relatives with whom Hy was staying when he met Essie. I remember the day in [Frances Willard School](#) when my teacher fell, breaking her leg. She selected me, out of all the children in the room, to go for help. Realistically, my selection may have been on the basis of proximity--I was probably the closest one to her--but through the years I have chosen to believe that my outstanding qualities of competency and responsibility, even at the tender age of five, led her to single me out. I also wonder if my pride in that selection laid a foundation for my later career choices in the helping professions.

Kate did not drive so Essie drove the group to Tucson in Milo's car, with Milo, Kate, my young uncle and me as passengers. My brother was with Hy in Tucson. Milo hemorrhaged severely three times on the nine-day trip from Arkansas City to Tucson and it was a weary and frightened group which arrived in Arizona.

After months of bedrest, Milo was finally pronounced free of infection but he never fully regained his health. With the loss of his arm he could not return to work nor to Kansas and the dream home which

he had built for his family. Instead of being the stalwart provider, which had always been his role, he was now dependent upon what little savings he had accumulated. These were supplemented when his Tucson doctor discovered that Milo was eligible for a small monthly stipend as compensation for an injury incurred while an employee in a federal institution. This stipend became an important part of their financial support. He never discussed the house in Arkansas City, even with his adult sons who lived there and who might have wanted to take over the house and payments. His family never knew whether he sold the house or, driven by pride, simply turned the house over to a lending agency when he was unable to keep up the payments.

Both Milo and Kate experienced drastic changes; she was still working in her world but without Milo's participation in the man's world, their financial security had been jeopardized. Added to her duties as wife and mother were the responsibilities of nursing. She not only had to care for Milo but to do it under strict conditions so that neither she nor any others would contract tuberculosis. No consideration was given to Kate going out to work; she had neither the skills nor the strength. She was handicapped by her gynecological problems and, over time, had also developed a humped back which bent her over severely. Appearing in public became so difficult that she limited her time outside the home to meetings of the Women's Society at the Methodist Church a few blocks from home. A definitive diagnosis was never made; one doctor suggested arthritis. Today's medical information would suggest the possibility of osteoporosis. Kate herself always attributed it to a fall when she was thrown from her horse as a child.

I remember Milo as a very cheerful grandfather so I can only guess now at how painful it must have been for him to have undergone such dramatic changes in status. He had been a strongly independent man who took pride in the quality of his craftsmanship and in his ability to provide for his family with the results of that craftsmanship. Like most Kansans of the time, he was bitter in his condemnation of all the New Deal policies which he felt encouraged men to lean on the government for assistance. He had a firm conviction that each man should be able to provide for himself, his family, and his future through his own labor and wise planning. Because he believed that the New Deal undermined those principles, he spoke of Franklin D. Roosevelt as "that man in the White House" always and only through clenched teeth. Now a portion of his income was from The Government.

Yet Milo and Kate's home was not a bitter one. I regarded his hatred of Roosevelt and the New Deal as an aberration in an otherwise cheerful personality. More characteristic of their daily life was their mutual love and affection. She was very protective, especially alert to his need for a quiet, restful environment. He was equally protective of her. He wrote all the checks, paid all the bills, and made all the decisions. It was his duty to protect her from these intrusions from the man's world. Essie gave them both the additional help they needed; she drove them to their many appointments and bought groceries and supplies not available at the little neighborhood stores. She and Hy had given up the little house in the desert and rented a series of houses near Milo and Kate's little one.

Life in Essie's immediate family had changed with the birth of another child, a little girl. I remember the event vividly because my aunt, a registered nurse, had come to Tucson to aid in the home delivery and her preparations included a surgical scrubbing of each inch of the house, topped with the painting of the bedroom--the future birth room--a pristine white. Not long after my sister was born, Hy disappeared.

His drinking had not abated in the intervening years and the frequent garnishment of his checks for drinking bills had precipitated our many moves to still cheaper rentals. Essie now recognized that his drinking was a serious problem but that knowledge she kept to herself as much as possible. I am sure that Milo and Kate were aware but it was never discussed with me. With his disappearance, the secrecy could not be maintained. No one in the family was able to provide the financial assistance that Essie and her three children needed; we “went on welfare.” I can still summon up the feeling of shame as I remember the beans and the prunes which were regular items in the bags of food we received. Why were prunes cheap enough then for inclusion in the bags of food given to welfare recipients and so expensive now?

Gila Bend

When he returned after a two month’s absence, Hy had to meet the disapproval of his employer--his disappearance, his failure to show up for work, almost resulted in his dismissal. Instead, he was sent to Gila Bend, Arizona as both a punishment for his drinking, and as an opportunity to get his drinking under control. Gila Bend, then, was a very small town, its economy derived from the railroad and the surrounding ranches. We moved there in 1934 and stayed for a year. The railroad provided housing and we lived in two boxcars which had been placed one on each side of a large tree and then joined. Certainly a living tree in the middle of a house serves as a focal point in any interior decorating scheme. Additional decorative touches were the couches, made of horsehair and covered with leather; they had seen previous service as bunks in a caboose.

Gila Bend has the dubious distinction of being one of the hottest towns in Arizona and Hy’s family was to live there before the advent of air conditioning. I remember the little church which tried to meet the problem by placing a large block of ice between the congregation and the minister, with a large electric fan directing the breeze over the ice toward the assembled church members. The minister was evidently displaying his ability to sacrifice his needs to those of his congregation. Despite the heat, our stay in Gila Bend was a happy time for the family. Hy was sober and we had become the owners of a large used car which Essie had won in a newspaper contest. Because of the car and his sobriety, the family even went on picnics--the kind of family activities in which I had begun to believe all the other families in the world participated regularly and from which we were the only ones excluded.

Family Economics in Depression-era Tucson

The improvement in Hy’s performance prompted the SP to offer him another chance and in 1935 we moved back to Tucson where a second son was born. Within months, Hy began to drink again and Essie decided to build a little security for the family by renting the back bedroom of our two-bedroom house which was across the street from the headquarters of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The CCC had been created by President Roosevelt in 1933 to provide work for young men during the Depression and our house’s location also enabled Essie to provide lunch for fifteen boarders five days a week. Essie had become a part-provider for the family’s needs, yet she was able to remain in the woman’s world while meeting those needs. Months went by in this relatively smooth vein until one morning when Hy did not come home after his midnight shift. Nor did he appear in the following week or weeks. Very

soon, there was no money to pay the rent since the money from the boarders and roomers would not cover all the expenses for the family of five which he had left behind.

Since his departure occurred during the depths of the Great Depression, jobs were scarce, particularly for a woman with no job experience. A brother-in-law found Essie a job as a waitress in a tiny cafe, with ten-hour shifts at \$1 a day. The youngest children were still babies, the youngest just beginning to walk. There was almost no commercial day care in those days and Essie's wages would not have covered the cost if there had been. No relatives were able to provide assistance for an extended period; Kate's physical condition prevented her from taking care of them on a daily basis. In desperation, Essie wrote to a childless couple whom she and Hy had known in Bowie who agreed immediately to take the little boy and girl into their home in Texas. For the second time as a mother she saw two of her children sent away to be cared for by others.

The two older children and Essie moved into one bedroom of a woman's home where we lived until Essie was hired at a slightly larger restaurant. She received no higher wages but more in tips so that she could move what was left of her family into a little one-room house with dirt floors and an outdoor bathroom. That job was succeeded by employment in the newsstand and soda fountain operated in the Southern Pacific depot. Essie walked the miles to town before dawn each morning and returned home after dark each day of the week. My brother and I were "latchkey kids" decades before the term was coined. I remember my main culinary accomplishment in preparing the evening meal was a fried baloney sandwich. (I was an adult before I learned to call that form of lunch meat bologna.) My meals may not have been nutritious but I do not remember any complaints from my clientele.

A year after he left, Hy returned and both the Southern Pacific Railroad and Essie took him back. When he began working night shifts, they would be able to share the care of the two little ones so my brother and sister were brought home. My sister remembered her mother and went immediately to her arms. My three-year-old brother refused embraces from anyone but the woman whom he now called Mama and for whom he cried for days after she left. I will always remember the pain on my mother's face.

Essie never again relied solely on support from Hy; she continued to work at the newsstand after his return. Their double income paid off their bills and provided the down payment for the only home we ever owned. With three bedrooms, it was also the largest, so that both its size and its location near schools and railroads made it a dream come true. There had been no car since Gila Bend. Essie was in the ideal setting of the woman's sphere, one in which she lived in a home they owned, but her position there depended upon Hy's sobriety and upon her employment in the man's world.

Retrenchment

The progressive reforms of the 1920s came under attack in the decade of the Thirties. The Federal Children's Bureau and other reform groups had combined efforts to promote a constitutional amendment for the abolition of child labor but by 1932, only six states had ratified the amendment. The hysterical anti-Communist opposition was characterized by the statements of one group, the Woman

Patriot Publishing Company, which targeted Mrs. Florence Kelley, a reformer who had been married to an eastern European man and who had translated some treatises of Karl Marx.

This benign looking amendment, drawn and promoted chiefly by an American Socialist leader (Mrs. Florence Kelley, translator of Karl Marx and friend of Fredrick Engels, who instructed her how to introduce Socialism into the flesh and blood of America) is a straight Socialist measure. It is also promoted under the direct orders from Moscow.

One legislator, fearful of parental control being usurped by the federal government declared:

They have taken our women away from us by Constitutional amendment; they have taken our liquor away from us; and now they want to take out children.

Although some of its provisions were included in the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, the amendment to abolish child labor was never ratified.

The first federally financed health care program for mothers had been passed by Congress in 1921 but a strong counterattack by organized medicine and the same Women Patriot group mentioned above led to the defeat of the Sheppard-Towner Act and its programs.

The women who ran the Children's Bureau continued their efforts to convince state officials that the state had a stake in protecting the family since a stable family and home situation led to a decrease in the need for custodial care and institutionalization of children. These efforts prepared the way for passage of the Social Security Act in 1935; Titles V and VI provided federal programs to oversee the granting of federal appropriations to the states for the provision of services to mothers and children.

Women had been the prime movers in securing the enactment of these measures designed to protect the interest of women and children. The large, non-professional female organizations, the clubs, had worked with the group of professional women who served in Washington. These career women had joined women in other professions as role models for the generation of college graduates in the late 20s and early 30s. Unlike their predecessors, however, more of these graduates were marrying--over 80 percent as compared to 50 percent thirty years previously. As they combined career and home responsibilities, women found these dual demands overwhelming. Chores in the homes consumed a major expenditure of time and energy; there were no dishwashers; no automatic washers and dryers; no freezers and only 30 percent of the population had refrigerators. There was no longer a large pool of young women who were available for domestic employment and only 5 percent of the households had such paid help.

The problem was delineated in an article published in the Smith College Weekly:

We cannot believe that it is fixed in the nature of things that a woman must choose between a home and her work, when a man may have both. There must be a way out and it is the problem of our generation to find the way.

Smith College set up the [Institute to Coordinate Women's Interests](#) in 1925 to establish cooperative nurseries, communal laundries, shopping groups and central kitchens. Barnard College attempted another solution when it adopted a policy which provided a six-month maternal leave with full pay to any woman faculty or staff member.

However, the need for solutions to the problems of career women was overwhelmed by other events occurring in the Thirties. From the boom period of peace and prosperity enjoyed by the country when Herbert Hoover assumed office in 1929, the United States had experienced a dizzying spiral downward. The situation is described succinctly by Walter Lippman in his September 8, 1931 column for the *New York Tribune*:

Industrial production had fallen by nearly 50 percent from predepression levels, seven million Americans were unemployed, a million jobless roamed the country in search of work. Hooverville shacks sprang up on empty lots. The market crash which wiped out forty billion dollars in stock prices during the last four months of 1929 weakened financial institutions and undermined the confidence of Americans in the businessmen who had so recently been their heroes. Hunger marches and riots erupted in the cities. Farmers banded together with rifles to prevent banks from foreclosing their mortgages.

During the Depression years, women were fired first, although many of these women were primary breadwinners for their families. In ten studies conducted by the Women's Bureau, over 13 percent of 370,000 women studied were the sole support of two or more individuals. Married women became targets of discrimination. Although it was later repealed, one law was passed which restricted families to one job and one paycheck: this law reflected the sentiment that the national crisis would be over sooner if women went back to homemaking.

Laws prohibiting employment of wives were enacted in twenty-six states. The National Education Association reported that in 1930 to 1931, 77 percent of 1500 school systems refused to hire married women and 63 percent fired women teachers when they married. Hymowitz and Weissman state that the majority of the nation's schools, 43 percent of the public utilities and 13 percent of all department stores refused to hire wives.

Despite this discrimination and the difficulty of finding employment, the number of working wives increased from 11.7 percent to 15.2 percent during the Depression. These wives sought and found work because of the desperate plights into which their families had been plunged with their husbands' unemployment or underemployment. Most of the wives who worked in 1930 were married to men whose incomes were below the poverty line. A Women's Bureau study described their situation:

A vicious circle is set up. Unemployment or low wages of men make it necessary for their wives, mothers, and daughters to go to work...women who have jobs feel they must keep them at any wage...largely unorganized, practically unskilled and victims of a tradition that places less value on women's work than men's, women workers haven't been able to do much toward removing unfair differentials that exist to their disadvantage and to men's advantage.

The aridity of statistics and declarative sentences in describing the unemployment picture of the Depression contrasts with the excerpts from a book about women in the Thirties. The following quotations are from [*Making Do: How Women Survived the '30s*](#) by Jeane Westin:

He couldn't find work anywhere but he didn't want me to work either...He was too proud..His pride causes us to have to do without when it wasn't really necessary.

Those hard years caused a lot of arguing. I remember we would argue like mad. It was money, always money.

I lost my home in 1933...I wanted to try to hold on to the house by just paying interest like so many people were doing. But my husband said, "No, if we can't pay all we'll just give up. Which we did..

I think hard times is harder on a man...It's just a worry for him, and he feels so terrible when he can't take care of his family.

Many of the wives did find employment in offices which had been female domains since the turn of the century. With the advent of typewriters and telephones, considered "female machines," women had displaced men in the clerical occupations. Women were usually paid less than the men whom they replaced. Women became file clerks, stenographers, typists, and receptionists; men migrated into managerial and executive positions. The largest increase in the number of female office workers

occurred during the Depression years. In 1900 women constituted less than 30 percent of office workers; in 1940 they made up 54 percent.

When New Deal legislation was passed to ameliorate Depression conditions, 450,000 women found work through the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and by June 1939 almost 173,000 or one-fifth of all federal workers were women. The United States Civil Service Commission had declared that all examinations and positions were to be open to both men and women, and at the same wages. The National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 also helped women workers with improved working conditions and higher wages, but it was declared unconstitutional in 1935. Several New Deal laws regulated wages and hours for both men and women, including the Walsh Healy Act of 1933 which abolished child labor and set standards for workers in industries with federal contracts. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 applied the same principles to workers in jobs with companies engaged in interstate commerce.

However, some of the codes established in New Deal legislation had set lower minimum wages for women, even within the same industry. One out of every four industry codes made such a differentiation and these were in the industries which employed the most women workers. Many states had established minimum wage laws that protected only women so women in some occupations-- laundry workers, seamstresses, and textile operatives-- did receive a small increase in wages. Female workers in other careers who might have benefited from such protective legislation were handicapped by poor enforcement and resistance by state governments. Even the existence of protective legislation was still opposed by some feminists, such as Alice Paul's National Women's Party, which argued that women could not be protected by special legislation and still expect equal pay for equal work. Objections were also raised which cited the history of employers who refused to hire women, falsely claiming that the particular job, for example, might involve night work or heavy lifting.

Labor laws enacted during the Thirties furthered the cause of unions in the United States but this rise in union activity meant very little to working women who received little attention from those unions. Most women were not working in the industries in which unions brought about the greatest gains, and in those unions in which they were the majority, they were rarely in leadership positions and often received less attention from the male leaders.

Toward the end of the decade, major events were occurring in the world which were portents of changes to come in the United States. Hitler's rise to power in Germany and his country's military raids on other European powers heralded the beginning of World War II. The jet engine was tested in a laboratory in England, making possible the era of jet airplanes. Aviation had also seen the first commercial flight across the Pacific when a Pan American Clipper reached Hong Kong. Automobiles, movies, prepared foods, and electric home appliances were becoming part of the way of life for middle-class Americans. Iceboxes were being replaced by refrigerators and supermarkets were spreading across the country, both bringing with them changes in food shopping and preparation for American women.

Changes in laundry routines would be affected in 1937 by a team of Du Pont scientists, who invented nylon, a fiber which would revolutionize the clothing industry. Two other inventions, lastex (Ed.: latex?)

elastic and the zipper, were used by Thirties designers to create tight bodices and bathing suits. The androgynous look of the Twenties with its straight-lined dresses and bobbed hair was supplanted by the Thirties look with long, soft pageboys or up-dos, and by clothing which emphasized curves. The emphasis upon femininity became stronger until, toward the end of the decade, full skirts were again fashionable. Skirts billowed out over crinolines topped by tight bodices, ornamented with flowers, ruffles and lace. Suits were softened with ruffled blouses and worn with high-heeled pumps or sandals strapped above the ankle.

Daydreams in Conflict

By my junior year in high school, the family fortunes had suffered another predictable reversal; during a simultaneous siege of diphtheria and chickenpox, Hy had been obliged to assume more family responsibilities. His reaction was an increase in drinking and although he did not leave town, the bills mounted. Essie feared that they would be unable to make mortgage payments; the house was sold and we moved to a cheap rental near the depot. Both Hy and Essie were working but he "called in sick" much too frequently.

If Kate's childhood was depicted in *Little House on the Prairie* and Essie's in *Our Town*, which book or play would portray mine? It would have to reflect the series of dark, little rentals, each uglier than the others, as we moved every year or two. It would have to mirror my feelings about the number of classrooms I entered as the new kid trying to break into the circle of established friendships. And the trips I made to neighborhood grocery stores whose owners, sometimes reluctantly, gave me the message to relay to Essie that our credit was no good. Whatever dramatic device is used, it would also have to focus upon my frequent attempts to secure Hy's approval and upon my consistent failures. Chapters or acts would include scenes of my father passed out in the front yard. These depressing elements would have to be balanced by Essie's constant struggle to keep her family together with the wages she could earn from the long hours she spent in low-paying jobs. With any free time she battled the dreary squalor of the houses and the constant depression of a home with an alcoholic husband and father. Until her young brother was able to drive, she continued her support of Milo and Kate.

I understood why Essie had to work and I did not view as a burden my responsibility of caring for my younger brother and sister but I did look with envy at what I thought to be the "normal" lives of other girls. I fantasized that all the other girls lived in spacious homes with tended gardens, and that within those traditional houses were traditional mothers who stayed home every day to care for their families.

I found in books my refuge from the kind of family life which alcoholism fosters. Each trip to the public library, or Carnegie Library as it was termed then, was a trip to another world. Something wonderful was always waiting for me. All the Oz books, Louisa May Alcott, Dr. Doolittle--these are the happy memories of my childhood and they help to minimize the unpleasant ones. As I entered my teens, I began to read many of the classics with an enjoyment I have not been able to duplicate entirely as an adult. School was another haven in which the good grades I earned were signs of approval and each hour spent there was predictable, with no omnipresent feelings of impending disaster.

When I reached my teens, I saw myself as a good student and began to plan a future. Having a working mother led me to accept a future in some kind of job but it was a mixed acceptance. Essie was not happy working outside her home; she felt that her life had been arranged badly somehow. Her view of the rightness of things was still much closer to the life which Kate had led--cherished, protected, dependent. Some of that was in my idealization of my future--a wife and mother in the woman's sphere.

Still, there were conflicting daydreams. My first choice of books from the library began to be those written by or about doctors, especially those with titles like the Stormy Petrel of Surgery or Doctor on Horseback. I began to try to picture myself as one of these individuals who used technical skills to serve mankind. I must have noticed that only one of these individuals was a woman--Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell--but I must have tacitly agreed that medicine was not really a woman's field. If I ever thought about it at all, I must have accepted that assumption just as I had accepted as right and normal the restrictions against married teachers in the schools I attended.

I did want to go to college, but although the state university was located in Tucson, I believed that the costs of tuition and books were insurmountable handicaps. I know now that there were women who do not view such barriers as ineradicable and who did fight their way through to their goals. I was not a fighter. I was a dreamer who felt that somehow, some way, on graduation night, some totally unknown and unsought university scholarship was going to be presented to me. The fairy godmother of university scholarships did not appear that May night in 1941.

Since my thoughts of a university education and a professional career had never been much more than daydreams, they were easily relinquished and I settled for enrollment in a school of nursing. My decision to become a nurse met with little resistance, although Hy intimated that nurses, though heroic, might not be the ladies they should be. I would encounter this ambivalent attitude later; men often saw nurses as devoted Nightingales simultaneously with a view of them as women eager to experiment with human physiology since they studied human anatomy.

I rejected the school of nursing in Tucson because I wanted to "go away to school" as a gesture of independence and as a means of leaving my home life behind. Essie supported my decision, even borrowing the necessary \$200 for my initial fees. I was accepted at the Good [Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing in Phoenix](#) and entered the training program in September 1941. The diary which I kept during that summer and fall reveals no regret about the choice of career goals.

Wartime

What the entries do reveal is my enthusiastic participation into the dating game, an activity which had been conspicuously absent during my high school days so that my ability to attract young men was untested. After my graduation at sixteen, some needed pounds were added to my skinny, childlike frame, but probably more relevant to my opportunities was the construction of several pilot training centers for United States Army Air Force cadets. I had been in training for three months when Pearl

Harbor signaled the entrance of the United States into the Second World War. The first few months after December 7 were dramatized for us with stories that California hospitals would be evacuated and we would take their patients. With the occasional fearful sighting of Japanese planes and submarines on the West Coast, our proximity led to the appearance of sandbags in our halls. These would disappear without notice later.

Dating continued to be a major activity during my three years in nurses' training, but it had to be worked into a very tight schedule. The life of a student nurse in wartime was very demanding because, although we were students, we also worked regular shifts in the hospital. We were the nursing staff. The wartime shortage of both registered nurses and interns increased the importance of the services we provided to the hospital. By the time we were senior nurses we were in charge of many departments, with R.N.s providing minimal overall supervision. We worked six days a week and often drew long assignments on call, when extra surgery or delivery room service might last twenty-four hours or more. These long hours, without sleep, were not allowed to interfere with our attendance in classes, receiving instruction in such subjects as anatomy and physiology or history of nursing. My academic record was spoiled when I went to sleep during an examination on gynecology, a test I took after more than twenty-four hours in surgery, serving as the scrub nurse for gynecological operations.

Our lives were very tightly ordered; permission to stay overnight, even in our parents' homes, was not easily granted. An early curfew was maintained every night, including those nights before our days off. This strict supervision provided us with the protection thought to be needed while we were out of the woman's world. The separation of the two spheres was strictly enforced by the hospital authorities who denied admission to any married woman and who expelled any student who married while in training. Expulsion was absurd with the critical shortage of nurses and became especially so in the wartime atmosphere of love and romance. The rule against marriage was not changed but it was flouted. Students did get married as their husbands left for overseas service; the rest of us kept the secret with the brides.

A contradiction to the view of women as creatures in need of protection was the relationship which existed between doctors and nurses. In contrast to the placement of women on pedestals, with male chivalry still expected, nurses and doctors formed an atypical dyad. A nurse of any age, and of course, we were of only one sex, stood when a doctor neared, gave him her chair, and always allowed him to precede her through a door. We were taught many behaviors which bordered upon obsequiousness. This reversal of the usual social pattern was probably related to the differences in status of doctors and nurses.

In spite, or perhaps because of, the demands of wartime nursing, I acquired the requisite nursing skills, but the lesson most strongly impressed upon me was the realization that I was a competent individual. Furthermore, since I often conquered my fatigue and unhappiness at our treatment, I learned that determination had become one of my personality characteristics. The development of my personality was made clear to me during my second year evaluation when my supervisor expressed dismay that my former shy and quiet demeanor had been replaced by a more skeptical attitude. This skepticism became more evident during our senior year when we learned that a nationwide program for senior nurses would be implemented by the American Red Cross. If we joined the program as cadet nurses we

would receive stylish uniforms and \$30 a month--\$25 more than we were receiving from the hospital. In return, we would promise to enter the Army or Navy Nurse Corps after our graduation. It seemed like a fair exchange since most of us would probably be volunteering anyway. However, our director of nurses refused to consider the program, despite our reasoned appeals. A few of us more determined students called a strike, a walkout. More accurately, it was a walk off all the departments. The hospital capitulated quickly; we were virtually running the hospital by that time. Victory was ours--well, theirs. The director had learned that I had lied about my age upon entry and was now only nineteen. I was excluded from the program.

I had also acquired some other skills. Dating is a prerequisite to marriage which is a prerequisite to membership in the woman's sphere and I dated frequently during those three years of training. The odds were greatly in my favor. By 1943, four air fields were located around Phoenix and the town was flooded with airmen or cadets in training. Tea dances were held in downtown hotels for these servicemen and the attendance of young women was encouraged. This was the era of the big bands and the jitterbug was the most popular dance. I had been able to cover up my lack of dancing experience during the slow dances, but dissembling was more difficult during a jitterbug number. An impolite cadet became so disgusted with my stumbling ineptness that he left me on the dance floor. His rudeness inspired me to learn and I acquired, as one of my skills, doing the Lindy.

Dating during the war years was intense with the compressed time in which to develop a relationship. Cadets, who formed our most-utilized dating pool, were in Phoenix less than a year and both partners in a relationship knew that the cadet would become a pilot flying missions over Germany or in the South Pacific. In case the young woman might have forgotten, the cadet would remind her with poignant statements like "Baby, I might not come back. This may be the only time we have together and we have to make the most of it." The atmosphere was charged with this sense of time speeding by; love had to be captured quickly. So I fell in love several times--falling is probably an accurate term for the plunge down into a jangle of emotions. I learned to know the thrill of the phone that rang for me and the despair of the phone that never rang at all or rang for my roommates. I even received the feminine version of the Dear John letter. Mine went something like this:

Dear Billie

I meant everything I said to you. However, there is this girl back home.

Love, John

September, 1944. The war was almost three years old, and we were graduating. We were abandoning our blue uniforms with stiff white cuffs and collar, a long black scarf tied under the collar. Now we would wear the prized all-white uniform and the starched white cap with its horizontal black velvet ribbon, the symbol of our profession. Sixteen women had completed the full three years, entitling us to be registered nurses after we had taken the required State Board examinations. Most of my classmates had taken the examination in the previous spring and would begin their civilian or military careers

immediately after graduation. Because of my age, I had not been allowed to take the examination and went home to wait for the fall scheduling. Since I was not permitted to work as a nurse, I took a job as a clerk/typist at one of the airbases near Tucson. My feelings about my "punishment" were mixed because my salary in a wartime job was considerably higher than what I would have earned as a nurse. Also, there was an increased opportunity in that setting to meet Mr. Right. The search for this mythical character was beginning to concern me.

I returned to nursing in January 1945 at a hospital newly-opened after years of being a sanitarium for wealthy convalescent patients. Before I settled completely into my role of Billie Allen, R.N., the newspaper stories of the war casualties and the need for nurses reminded me of my obligation to serve. That reminder had been strengthened by the introduction of a bill in Congress designed to get more nurses into the Army Nurse Corps. Instead of being inducted as second lieutenants, nurses would be drafted as privates. Like many other nurses, I volunteered before the bill reached the other branch of Congress and entered the [Army Nurse Corps](#) in May 1945, becoming one of the 350,000 women who saw active duty in World War II, 65,000 of them overseas. In 1944, nurses had been granted regular status in the services; other service women served as temporary personnel until Congress gave them equal status with men in 1948.

Before Billie Allen, R.N. became Billie Allen, 2d Lt. USANC, the battles in Europe ended. VE Day (Victory in Europe) was celebrated the day before Essie took me to the train station to send me on my way to Ft. Lewis, Washington. My war record began and continued inauspiciously in basic training. My memories of the beginning of my Army service are of pain from the many inoculations and exhaustion from the marches and physical training conducted by two sergeants who appeared to be somewhat embarrassed at their assigned duty--getting a team of nurses into shape. I remember my ineptness at digging trenches and putting up tents; even the sleeping bag defied me as I struggled to get out of one before the imitation gas was released in a simulated attack. I was the only nurse in our group to cut myself with the key used to open our canned rations.

Following basic training, I was sent to Van Nuys, California, in the San Fernando Valley. [Birmingham General](#) was a very large hospital, with medical, surgical, and neuropsychiatric patients. I soon realized that Army nursing was very different from civilian nursing in that most of the actual bedside nursing was performed by corpsmen, with nurses serving more as supervisors and record-keepers. Other hospital activities included occupational therapy, physical therapy, a small golf course, and a very large gymnasium. The post theater showed first-run movies sent out by Hollywood and the stars themselves made regular visits to see "the boys."

We began to receive more patients from the South Pacific campaigns. I remember working a 3 to 11 shift on a ward composed completely of patients who had been released from Japanese prisoner of war camps. My memory is of prematurely aged men who were very ill. While I was working on this ward, the back pay for many of these men was awarded--a very large amount since many of them had been stationed in the Philippine Islands before the war and their capture. They were to be reimbursed not only for four years' pay but also for the possessions which they had lost. The money was given to them in lump sums and many of those who were physically able, and some who were not, got twenty-four leaves and went into Los Angeles. Many of them came back much sicker and much poorer.

I was listening with these men to the first, and premature, announcement of V-J Day (Victory over Japan) and later to the true one. The ward was very quiet. There was none of the exuberant celebrating which seized the rest of the hospital--and indeed the rest of the nation.

In the months following VJ Day we were receiving fewer patients and by January we were told that Birmingham General was going to become a veterans' hospital for paraplegic patients and that the present staff would stay during a transition period. This transition was accomplished quickly and by February nurses were being sent to other hospitals. My new assignment, in Pasadena, California, was in a hospital which had been converted from a resort hotel and cottages. They were termed cottages but were really elegant two-story homes, some with elevators, situated among rolling grassy acres. When I describe the geographical settings of those two hospitals, both so near to the delights of Hollywood night life and the beaches of the Pacific Ocean, I rarely elicit sympathy for my war experiences.

“I Was Not a Good Soldier”

I have never been extremely eager to relate my war stories, anyway, because I found that I did not like being in the Army very much. My egalitarian philosophy had developed sufficiently to make it difficult for me to accept the Army belief that my dating an enlisted man was somehow damaging to the war effort. Nor could I see how my occasionally slipping out in a dress under my olive-drab coat was going to lend any aid and comfort to the enemy, especially in this period, months after the end of the war. The regimentation of three years in nurses' training followed by fourteen months in Army had left me with a questioning attitude toward rules and regulations. I was not a good soldier.

The proportion of women in the United States labor force increased from 18 percent to 25 percent in 1940 but 80 percent of the women were single and working only until marriage. Few wives were employed, less than 15 percent. The Women's Bureau conducted ten studies of these women during the Depression and found that 13 percent of the women studied were the sole support of two or more persons.

With the outbreak of World War II, only ten years after women had been discouraged from taking jobs “away from men,” efforts began to get them into the work force, and particularly into areas previously denied them. The Second World War had brought this change about because, even more than in the First World War, millions of men had been drafted, creating a real shortage of manpower. The length of the war and the resulting need for full production made necessary the introduction of women into factories and plants.

Six million women took jobs during the war, increasing women's proportion in the labor force from 25 to 36 percent. In the period before World War II most of the women who worked had been grouped in a few occupations: factory, clerical and sales work. Eighty percent of them were young, single, and working only until they married. Few wives were employed, less than 15 percent. Indicative of the changes brought about by the war, a survey conducted by the Women's Bureau found 143 women

workers in airplane factories in 1941; over 65,000 women were found working there eighteen months after the first survey.

If women did not go directly into defense work, they replaced men in previously all-male occupations. When they responded to the call for their services, women found that they were being offered jobs previously denied to them because they had supposedly lacked the strength, the skill, or the ability to perform them. Furthermore, they earned wages far higher than they had ever received in traditional women's work. The Woman's Bureau study found that two-thirds of the women who had been employed at low-level, low-pay jobs in eating and drinking establishments left for higher-paying jobs in defense industries. Over 600 laundries were forced to close down in 1942 when they could no longer find women to work in them. The women were taking home higher wages but they rarely received the same pay as their male co-workers. The federal government had espoused the principle of equal pay for equal work, yet even in eight government-owned shipyards men could earn \$22 a day while women's top pay was \$6.95 a day.

A Gallup poll taken just before the war had reported that three-quarters of the female respondents disapproved of married women working and even as late as 1945, a Fortune poll found that 62 percent of the people who responded said that if a husband could support her, a wife should not work. The war emergency, however, enabled wives to find a place in the job market and even mothers were encouraged to work, for the first time. In 1940, 17 percent of all married women worked for pay; in 1950, 24 percent were working outside the home.

These wives and mothers who worked outside the home were also holding down a full-time job at home. Few industries provided child care for their children while they worked; only one-tenth of the factories had child-care programs. The federal government did not provide funding for child care until 1945. Hymowitz and Weissman estimate that only 10 percent of the children of war workers were cared for in settings other than with relatives, friends, or neighbors. This neglect contrasts with the services provided to women war workers in Britain where the government sponsored day care centers and even additional services such as central kitchens where food was prepared each week for three million women to take home to their families. American women had to make their own arrangements for their families while they performed their patriotic duties.

For the first time in the nation's history, the female work force was not comprised mainly of young and single women. During the war, three-quarters of the workers were over thirty-five; 60 percent were married, and the majority had children of preschool or school age.

If women were not working at home or in the workplace during the war, they were traveling; many young wives followed their military husbands in their transfers from base to base. For all these pursuits women were dressed similarly. If they were teenagers, they wore saddle oxfords, thick bobby socks, skirts and tailored blouses. Informally, they wore rolled-up blue jeans and a man's shirt. If they were older, the women wore dark-colored dresses with broad shoulders, tapered waists and short skirts. All material which could be used in the war effort was rationed; therefore the amount of fabric for a dress or suit was restricted. Nylon stockings were scarce and coveted. Leather was also rationed, and shoes

could only be made in black, navy, white, or one of three shades of brown. Fashion magazines published articles describing ways of making women's suits out of the old suits left at home by the absent husband.

The GI Bill

When I went into training in 1941, Essie was still working in the soda fountain at the Southern Pacific depot, but, with the wartime shortage of men, positions in the railroad were opened to women. Essie applied for and received a job as a railway clerk, the same position which Hy had occupied. She worked in the yard office where information about trains was collected and maintained. Her duties included counting railroad cars on the tracks, often at night, sometimes in the rain. Any discomfort was made bearable, however, by the significant increase in salary. She began to receive a man's wages and all the benefits which had been won by the union, the [Brotherhood of Railway Clerks](#). Hy had left again and this income was badly needed to pay the liquor bills which he had left behind--and to support her family. My older brother (Navy) and I both joined the service but my younger brother and sister were still in school. In 1944, after more than a year with no contact, Essie filed for divorce, which was granted on the grounds of desertion.

Life also changed dramatically for Kate. One afternoon in 1945, Milo collapsed into a coma and I accompanied him to the veterans' hospital in Tucson. His government pension entitled him to service there. Delusional, he sometimes cried out to President Roosevelt during the night, but his imaginary dialogues did not contain the bitterness he had always expressed toward "that man." Milo died that night. Of course, his little governmental stipend ceased and Kate had no income until a small monthly sum from [Arizona's Old Age Assistance Program](#) began. In both her physical and financial states, Kate had no choice but to become totally dependent upon her children and she spent the rest of her life with either Essie or her youngest son. She clung to shreds of independence by determinedly keeping her groceries separate and cooking her own little meals.

Essie and Kate, like all Arizonans, had become familiar with rationing; gasoline, meat, sugar, coffee, shoes, automobile parts and tires could be purchased only with stamps. Kate had her little "victory garden" in which she grew lettuce and Swiss chard.

I received my discharge from the Army while I was stationed at the Pasadena hospital and I also received that much-delayed but still very welcome visit from the fairy godmother in charge of scholarships. She had disguised herself as the United States Congress and the scholarship was called the G.I. Bill. As soon as verification of the bills's passage came through, I sent my application to the University of Arizona.

My dream had come true and was a better dream for having been delayed five years. Not only were tuition and books going to be paid for, I would also receive \$75 a month for living that dream. I would not have to narrow my educational studies to shape them toward a vocational goal. I had my vocation as a registered nurse, and although my other dream of meeting Mr. Right had not been realized, I still had confidence that my future would be that of stay-at-home wife and mother. Therefore, I could take

any courses that interested me, and my deep pleasure in taking a variety of subjects, from botany to philosophy endured even through the inevitable test-taking.

I started classes at the state university in Tucson, delighting in being out of uniform and in buying and wearing clothes of the New Look. War's end had brought fashion changes to a nation hungry for those changes. Extreme femininity had become the focus for women who had waited for their men to come home. This New Look featured pastel colors and full-skirted evening dresses in silk, taffeta or lace. For daytime wear a dress or suit was always worn with a hat, jewelry, scarf, pocketbook, and neat pumps. These accessories always matched: purse, belt and shoes had to be in the same color. Of course, as a student my dress standards were much more casual than these.

While I was enjoying life as a student, I was becoming a little more concerned about the non-appearance of the man who was to establish me in the woman's sphere. Certainly, the Army had given me many opportunities to locate him with its ratio of males to females but I had not met the one with whom I wanted to start a new life. I had not succeeded in finding the perfect mate. Success is the concept I would have had in mind; not getting married would have been an indication of failure. I was still hopeful. I was only in my early twenties and what better way to spend my time before his appearance than in learning about plants and Plato?

In my freshman year, my confidence was rewarded. Mr. Right appeared as an Arizonan whom I had met in the officers' club at Birmingham General Hospital where he had been a patient. We were married in June 1948, and I returned to the university under my married name, a condition which brought about two changes. My classroom seating assignment changed from the front to the back of the room and my student status had been altered by my marriage. University tuition charges were based upon a classification as an Arizona resident for at least one year and, as a native Arizonan, I had met that criterion. Now my long residency in Arizona was no longer relevant; my status was dependent upon that of my husband. Had he not also been an Arizonan, I would have had to pay out-of-state tuition.

I continued taking a variety of courses, with no specific focus, but when it was suggested that I should declare a major in order to get a degree, I chose psychology as my field of specialization and completed the required series of classes. The number of units which I had to complete was reduced by a semester's credit given for my three years of hospital training, and twelve units for my position as a second lieutenant, most of which were awarded as upper-division credit. These credits and my great enthusiasm for learning had enabled me to graduate summa cum laude and because of that class standing, I was offered a scholarship to pursue a graduate degree. I rapidly expressed my appreciation of the offer and just as rapidly my rejection of it. The decision was not a difficult one; I did not need a master's degree since such a degree indicated sincere consideration of dedication to a field of study. How could I demonstrate such dedication? My future was waiting for me in October of 1950 when I was going to become a mother.

Fifties Mother

My pregnancy was pleasant and uneventful and I was told that the delivery was equally so. Typical of deliveries of that time, I was given injections during labor and so much anesthesia during delivery that I did not awaken for hours after the birth and had to be told about my new son. At least my period of unconsciousness was not as lengthy as my patients in the Forties had experienced. They were given "twilight sleep," a mixture of morphine and scopolamine. The mothers were not the only ones who were anesthetized; their babies were so lethargic that we were instructed to thump the soles of their feet to try to arouse them. We did a lot of thumping.

Another difference between my delivery and that of those patients was the length of the postpartum hospital stay which had shrunk from fourteen days to three or four. This change had come about primarily because of the recognized medical problems associated with prolonged inactivity, but during some of my first sleepless nights with a new baby, I remembered the woman who was admitted to our obstetric ward each year for still another birth. When we questioned her about her pregnancies, she informed us that those two weeks a year were her only vacations.

One factor which my obstetrical experience had in common with those of the decade before was the barring of husbands from both labor and delivery rooms. Several reasons were proffered for their exclusion: Doctors and hospitals had rules against their presence in the sterile rooms; the possibility of their interfering with the surgical procedures by fainting; and they did not really want to be there anyway.

The last two reasons did not apply to my husband; he wanted very much to participate in the experience and he was not subject to fainting spells. Our appeals were stonewalled by the first reason. My husband first met his little dark-haired son behind the glass wall of the nursery.

We took our little boy home to a thirty-year-old house with two bedrooms which we had just bought, primarily for its location close to the downtown area of Tucson where my husband worked. Unlike most veterans, we had not taken advantage of our veterans' loan opportunity for its purchase, financing instead with a conventional mortgage. Nor had we bought a home in the subdivisions which were beginning to encircle Tucson. My husband's salary and future were so encouraging that we had decided that I would not work outside the home. I was to be a stay-at-home mother. My one financial contribution was our joint exemption from the payment of property taxes which Arizona granted to all veterans, a privilege withdrawn a few years later.

Arizona's economy mirrored that of the nation in the fifties. Paul Johnson in his book, *Modern Times*, described it as the most prosperous decade in American history, the start of the longest cycle of capitalist expansion. To depict the decade, he quotes a contemporary issue of Fortune magazine:

...there is a powerful consuming demand for everything that one can eat, wear, enjoy, read, repair, paint, drink, see, ride, taste, and rest in...

In Arizona, significant increases had occurred in transportation and public utilities; in trade; in service; and in finance, insurance, and real estate. These increases accompanied the phenomenal population growth: the population had increased by almost 200 percent since 1940. Tucson had grown from a town of 45,000 in 1950 to 210,000 in 1960. Employment for these newcomers was still supplied, at least in part, by the four Cs of cattle, cotton, copper and climate. Tourism alone brought in \$280 million to the state.

However, manufacturing was beginning to rival the traditional bases as Arizona diversified its economic structure. In 1945, only 11,000 persons were in manufacturing; by 1959, 45,000 were so employed. Some of the increase in manufacturing was in defense industries as Arizona became a major recipient in the allocation of air bases and aircraft-related plants. The Cold War fears had prompted massive federal expenditures to build up the nation's defenses against the threat of Soviet expansion.

Since the growth in the nations' economy had resulted in a corresponding increase in the railroad business, Essie had not been laid off when male clerks returned from the service, escaping the fate of one out of four women who were released at war's end. She no longer had to check the railroad cars in the yards, working instead in the office, usually on the four-to-midnight shift. She often spent her days off baby-sitting for me or chauffeuring me. I had never learned to drive. She was an always-welcome part of my family, always careful about intruding or criticizing, although she did express some dismay at the number of pregnancies. But with the birth of each new child, she gave to them a full measure of her love.

Kate lived with Essie until her worsening physical condition required more time and attention than Essie could give as a working woman. Kate's youngest son and his wife cared for her, giving her one of the three bedrooms in their house. This became her headquarters for visits from children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Some of my daughters remember with pleasure the sewing lessons she gave them.

The nature of peacetime America had been planned in the letters that traveled back and forth across the oceans between the servicemen and their girlfriends as they wrote about their dreams for a little house with a picket fence. Each night the ex-GIs would return home to their aproned wives and smiling children. These young women were grateful to have their sweethearts home and well and looked forward eagerly to these futures.

This female return to domesticity took place primarily in the suburbs which came into prominence in the Fifties. Subdivisions had arisen in which multiple copies of a few models had brought construction costs down for the builders. Over 1.4 million houses were started in the United States in 1950 and by 1960 there were 32.8 million American homeowners. Most of these homes were in subdivisions which had been erected where land was plentiful and cheap, that is, in outlying areas, and thus suburbs were born. Thousands of veterans moved into these homes, propelled by the federal enactment of the GI bill which enabled veterans to buy houses with low down payments and mortgages with low interest. By the third decade after the war, 40 percent of the American population was living in twenty thousand suburban communities.

These homes with their appliances and conveniences created a different America. In the early Forties, according to William Manchester's book, *The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America 1932-1972*, consumer credit was scarcely known; there was only one telephone for every seven American homes and one car for every five. One-fourth of all the homes lacked running water and one-third were without flush toilets. The Fifties ushered in an era of American homeowners with automatic washers, dryers, dishwashers, and gasoline mowers. Electric clothes dryers appeared in appliance stores less than a year after VJ Day and during each year in the late 1940s stores were selling 225,000 automatic dishwashers and 750,000 garbage disposal units. Frozen orange juice could be found in grocery stores in 1947, as well as margarine, although it was still necessary to work the contents of a little plastic bag of yellow coloring into the white block. The first detergent, Tide, appeared in 1948 and some of the dresses and shirts in the shops were made of synthetic fabrics.

By 1955 television retailers were selling five million sets a year and these sales continued until 88 percent of American homes had at least one set, 13 percent owning two or more. In 1954 TV dinners appeared.

Naturally, the marriage rate soared in this post war period. By the mid-1950s, 60 percent of all college women were dropping out to marry before they had earned a degree. These marriages were followed by a dramatic baby boom. The war years had seen an increase in births, with the annual birth rate at just below three million. In 1946, the year after the boys came home from the war, a half-million more infants were born than in the year before. The next year exceeded that number by over 400,000. The number of families with three children doubled; the number with four tripled. Not until 1957 did the baby boom ease.

For middle-class families, the financial future was bright; the inflation rate was low and the husband's salary was sufficient to meet the family's needs. Wives did not have to work outside the home to ensure security; they could live up to the dominant cultural expectation of them as nest-builders. Hundreds of magazine articles exhorted them to create homes of peace and beauty to which husbands could return after an arduous day in the man's world. They were to sew draperies and upholster furniture; they were to paper walls and to scrub floors. They were encouraged to bring healthy meals to the table (healthy in those days was equated with meat, cheese, butter and eggs). They were taught to create breathtaking desserts. Personal grooming was the keynote of many articles: makeup, dieting, and dress. These wives also were warned repeatedly that their responsibility lay in mental activity as well. A wife who did not keep abreast of current events ran the very real risk of boring her husband.

All these activities were to culminate daily in the haven to which men returned--a haven in which wives' skills as designer, seamstress, gardener, chef, courtesan and partner were the major features. The effort required to produce these havens is illustrated in studies which found that despite labor-saving devices, wives of the Fifties actually spent more time on household chores than had their mothers. They were averaging a 99.6 hour workweek. Some of these hours were spent behind the wheel, driving to and from all the activities which were considered essential to children's development. During the

Fifties, Little Leagues expanded from 776 to 5,700; Girl Scouts and Brownies grew from 800,000 to 4,000,000.

The separation of men and women's spheres was sharply demarcated by geographical distance. Mothers and children were isolated in these suburban communities with full responsibility for children's health, behavior, and emotions delegated to mothers. Relatives were seldom available as surrogate parents and fathers were usually viewed as the final arbiter of family affairs, not as an ongoing participant.

This migration into the suburbs affected women's fashions. Since much of the entertaining was informal and conducted in the neighborhood, t-reador pants, Bermuda shorts and sundresses were designed for backyard barbecues and pool parties. For their daily activities, suburban wives wore shirtwaist dresses, aprons, and car coats. The emphasis on casual clothes and separates is illustrated by the increase in the production of women's skirts from 24 million in 1947 to 75 million in 1953. When a baby-sitter could be found so that husband and wife could get away for an evening, she usually wore the ubiquitous cocktail dress, usually black. According to the dictates of the magazine articles, these were wise choices because they could be "dressed up or down." Today's Baby Boomers may have fond memories of mothers bending over to kiss them goodnight, these dresses rustling softly.

Mothering had become the major function of wives, unlike the expectations of previous eras in which they were viewed as having two roles. Those wives had been mothers and contributors to the family's income and although their contributions may have been small, they were considered to be an important part of wives' roles. Full-time mothering was not expected of them, nor was children's emotional health considered to be completely dependent upon the nature of the maternal attention given them. Now the mothers of the Fifties were told that they were solely responsible for providing the optimal early childhood environment essential for later adult fulfillment. Women were told, probably as never before in history, that mothering was a full-time activity and its importance reached into their children's adult lives.

This message was imbedded in Freudian philosophy which was revealed in popular literature as well as in books and articles about childrearing practices. According to Freud's theory of personality development, each individual progresses through stages in which a child's special needs must be met before a healthy adolescence can be reached. In the first stage, gratification centers on a baby's oral needs so mothers were warned of the dangers which might result from bottle feeding and abrupt weaning. The second stage dwells upon anal gratification with its attendant perils of aversive toilet training, and the focus of the third stage centers around genital pleasure and was related to maternal acceptance of child masturbation. If these hierarchical needs are not met, individuals cannot develop normally and personality traits will reflect either a fixation at one of the stages or regression back to these infantile stages during adulthood.

According to the Freudian messages of the Fifties, these three stages of early childhood laid the foundation for later stages and they were involved in the interactions which occurred daily between mother and child--only rarely between father and child. To Freud, the only paternal involvement in the

child's emotional growth was the identification of boys with their fathers during the third stage and this identification occurred because the boy feared the results of his competition for the mother's love might result in his becoming like an anatomically inferior woman. Because they did not have penises, little girls could identify only with their mothers. This Freudian concept of identification goes beyond the notion of a child trying to resemble the parent. Only through identification could a child develop the superego, the Freudian conscience. Freud concluded that because girls could never identify with males; they naturally have weaker superegos and their aspirations to achieve outside the women's sphere would be based upon their penis-envy.

Women were told that the treatment of infants and young children by their mothers was absolutely critical to their later adult emotional health. Maltreatment or mistreatment might not be evident at the time but the damage would be driven deep into the unconscious to surface later. The unconscious, of course, is another Freudian concept. Since the adolescent period was seen as the end of personality development, any harmful effects of early childhood could not be ameliorated by adult experiences, but only through professional therapy. Following this line of thought, excessive drinking or eating could be attributed to maternal failure to meet infant needs for oral gratification. An adult who was unable to enter easily into relationships could be said to have an anal-retentive personality, the result of aversive toilet training. Frigidity or impotence or any dysfunctional sexual problems could be the result of a mother's harsh reaction to incidents of child masturbation.

These Freudian messages were expressed not only in childrearing advice and women's magazines but also formed the theme of literary works by authors and playwrights. In addition to the warnings about the importance of mothering, women were also given dire interpretations about career women who exhibited covert psychological problems, symptoms of hidden darkness which had to be exorcised by psychoanalysis. One of Freud's students, Helene Deutsch wrote *The Psychology of Women* in 1944 in which she said:

...the woman who is intellectual and ambitious is the most miserable feminine type in America. All forms and kinds of human cultural aspiration that require a strictly objective approach are, with few exceptions, the domain of the masculine intellect, or of man's spiritual power, against which women can rarely compete. Only the truly feminine woman can be popular.

Presumably, Dr. Deutsch was one of those exceptions.

Not all American women read Deutsch's book, but many would have seen the 1957 issue of *Life* magazine in which a psychiatrist is quoted as saying:

In New York City the "career woman" can be seen in fullest bloom, and it is not irrelevant that New York City has the greatest concentration of psychiatrists.

The author went on to describe female ambition as a form of mental illness that produced alcoholism and other forms of emotional disturbance in husbands and homosexuality in children.

These sentiments were expressed less virulently by a leading sociologist, Talcott Parsons, who declared in 1949 that "the woman's fundamental status is that of her husband's wife, the mother of his children." Women who sought careers were regularly depicted as emotionally cold and frustrated. They were told repeatedly that the only appropriate role for a wife was in the home, maintaining a nest for her husband and children. Outside work was acceptable only if the family's financial straits demanded it; it was not acceptable if the work was undertaken for the woman's self-satisfaction or financial independence. Those women who pursued careers were warned that such pursuits engendered risks to their marriages, and even to the stability of American society.

Ironically, full-time mothers were being blamed in the same period for many of society's ills. In a best-selling book, *Generation of Vipers*, Philip Wylie attributed many masculine weaknesses to "Momism", the obsessive attention lavished by mothers upon their male children. He declared that this "smother love" impeded the boys' psychological growth, resulting in American men who had become flaccid and pathetic creatures. Possessive and conniving mothers were the root of human destructiveness.

I had settled into my new life in the woman's sphere with confidence and assurance. My preparation for the role was appropriate. My nursing skills were available for bodily ills and my psychological studies would enable me to understand any emotional problems which might arise. I wanted that role. I had married a kind and generous man with a future of steady employment so that I would be able to stay at home with my child. I was an avid reader of the women's magazines whose articles struck positive notes about the role I had chosen.

A daughter born two years after our son brought even more joy into our family. I learned the truth in the cliché about love's ability to multiply rather than to divide and my love multiplied four more times as we had three more daughters and a son in the next eight years. The way I felt about my children is difficult to express; love for children has been described so many times, both well and mawkishly. Let me try to describe some of my feelings.

My own pain when a child was hurt. The mind-numbing fear when I nursed a child with an undiagnosed fever. The gut-wrenching feeling when a tiny body was wheeled into an operating room. My helplessness when a child sobbed about ridicule at school. My free-floating anxiety which led me to check their breathing at night--long past their infancy. My heavy sense of responsibility as I reviewed each temper tantrum--normal behavior or manifestation of some serious failure in my mothering?

The physical thrill of beholding their beauty--the clear, bright eyes, the spectacular smiles that brightened the space around them. The almost sensual pleasure when soft, plump arms wrapped around my neck and a little body curved itself to fit mine. The shared sense of achievement when a test

score was high, when a concert was well played or an athletic event won. The sense of serving them when a secret was confided. My astonishment when a teenager paid me a compliment. My gratification at an incident of pure selflessness.

Later the tentative loosening of tension as the children matured and I could look at them and listen to them and feel easy in my mind at what I saw and what I heard. I still didn't know how much I contributed to the individuals they became but some of those back-of-the-mind fears were eased.

I don't want to draw an idyllic curtain over those years. Sleepless nights often left me irritable and the constant battle for orderly triumph over floors strewn with Lego pieces, puzzles and crayons frequently turned me into a virago. Children's quarrels more often elicited punishing behaviors than mediating ones. I spent hours regretting my anger, my unfairness and my punishment procedures.

Suburban Life with Six

I did not learn to drive until I was thirty-seven and, like many American families in the Fifties, we had moved to the suburbs of Tucson. Using my husband's GI loan, we bought a four-bedroom home to accommodate our family of six, which would eventually become eight. With no bus service to our subdivision, I was totally dependent upon my husband or Essie to keep necessary appointments and to escape my responsibilities for a short time. Like many husbands, mine was not always eager to go back out again so Friday nights were often accented with my pleas to go somewhere--anywhere. Those scenes did contrast with my overall contentment.

Even the diagnosis of a serious congenital defect in one of the children, resulting in two serious operations and long periods of convalescence, failed to dampen my enthusiasm for my presence in the woman's world. Society's implied approval was important to me and the physical stability for which I had always longed was represented by our moving only twice in the first fourteen years of our marriage.

I did wonder how other women managed to follow all the prescriptions and proscriptions which dictated our lives. How did they scrub those tiled floors into shining perfection, vacuum those carpets into smooth luxuriousness, cover those walls with carefully chosen artistic colors? How did they garden, sew, cook, shop, chauffeur--and above all, mother--and still straighten the house, bathe and groom themselves (what were their kids doing while they were in the shower?) **How did they** present a full-skirted, well-groomed and sweetly scented appearance for their husbands as they walked in the door at six? While I worked at achieving this miracle each day, I remember thinking that as we wives were prepared to meet them in all our splendor, the husbands were usually stripping off their ties and jackets, heading for the jeans in the closet. A question also surfaced occasionally--why weren't husbands getting similar warnings that they would lose their wives to better-groomed men if they relaxed their sartorial guards? *Esquire* and *Field and Stream*, typical of man's magazines of the time, were devoid of any messages to men about husbanding or fathering.

My house was not immaculate at all times as it was supposed to be. Too often I prepared to attend to all my chores by getting out the vacuum cleaner, ironing board and sewing machine simultaneously, only to realize later that this early preparation contributed to the disordered look of the house. Another area in which I felt inadequate was in the arts and crafts department. Despite carefully following directions, my macaroni collages never had the professional look of the models in *Family Circle* or *Woman's Day*.

I did feel my inadequacy as measured by the standards put forth in the magazines but their emphases were lightened by some of the women who wrote humorously about their failures to achieve perfection. Some of my more ambitious friends were more persuaded that household cleanliness was a major virtue. I can remember visiting a neighbor who continued her conversation with me while perched on top of a ladder scrubbing a kitchen cabinet, informing me that it was a weekly procedure and she was a day late in its execution.

The fact that I did not drive prevented me from indulging in some of the activities prominent in the lives of the Fifties mothers who spent large portions of their time in their cars. They took their children to ballet or music lessons, to athletic competitions, to school events and to play groups. I did help the neighborhood organize to build a swimming pool and soon had the children participating on the swim teams. I was a room mother at school, regularly attended PTA meetings, helped the children with Scouting activities and never missed concerts in which the children were playing.

I did regret not being able to read as much as I would have liked, and I snatched every moment to indulge myself. As often as I could make the time and could get a ride to the library, I immersed myself in books. Reading occurred in snatched intervals--when the children napped, as I fed a baby during the night, or while I stirred the soup. I tried to read each night but either I felt guilty diverting my attention from my husband or I fell asleep over the book.

Still, these concerns did not mar my pleasure at being firmly ensconced in my sphere. I was very happy there; it was hard work with no time off, but I felt that I had security and I loved mothering. I did not regret my rejection of the graduate school scholarship and messages from the American society reassured me that in selecting full-time mothering, I had demonstrated my emotional normalcy. A popular maxim justified my college education:

Educate a man and you educate a man. Educate a woman and you educate a family.

Status of Women in the Fifties

Not all the women in America had retreated from the labor force after the war. In the first year of peace, 2.25 million female workers voluntarily gave up their jobs; many others were laid off. Hymowitz and Weissman describe massive layoffs of women in aircraft, automobile and electrical industries and

they state that by the end of 1946, two million women had been fired from heavy industry. Yet, 2.75 million women joined the labor force at about the same time the factory workers were leaving.

The largest number of those keeping their jobs were women over forty-five and for the first time in the history of the United States, that age group represented a larger percentage in the labor force than the percentage of women between twenty and twenty-four. The number of employed women between forty-five and fifty-four almost doubled, as did that of women in the age group between fifty-five and sixty-five. The median age of women workers had risen to forty-one.

There had been a corresponding increase in the percentage of married women who were employed. In 1940, 17 percent of all married women worked for pay; in 1950, 24 percent were working outside the home, 30 percent in 1960. By 1960, both husband and wife worked in over 10 million homes, an increase of 333 percent, and the number of mothers at work went from 1.5 to 6.6 million, a leap of 400 percent. Thirty-nine percent of women with children aged six to seventeen had jobs.

In *Women on the Move*, Kaledin describes a survey of manpower needs conducted at the end of the decade in which the results apparently surprised the National Manpower Commission which authorized the study. The term "revolution" was used more than once in the conclusions of the report. The findings which elicited that reaction demonstrated a steady rise in the percentage of women in the labor force--from 20 percent in 1920, 24 percent in 1940 and 32 percent in 1960.

In 1960, twice as many women were at work as in 1940 and 40 percent of all women over sixteen held a job. Female employment was increasing at a rate four times faster than that of men, although many of the women were part-time workers.

Many of those working women were middle-class wives; by 1962, over 53 percent of female college graduates held jobs, but only 36 percent of those with a high school diploma were working. Most of those college graduates were found in the traditional female occupations: teaching, nursing and library work. They were not found in medicine, law, architecture, nor the natural sciences. Medical schools limited the number of female students to 5 percent of the applicants; only 3 percent of all law school students were women. Harvard Business School refused admittance to female students.

These findings were similar to those in a report titled *Century of Higher Education*, published in 1959, revealing that in 1956, three out of five women in coeducational colleges were taking secretarial, nursing, home economics or education courses. A decrease in the percentage of doctorates granted to women had occurred over the years--from a high of 16 percent in 1920 to less than 10 percent at the time of the study.

As the country became aware that the modern extension of women's life span meant that they would have forty years after their children began school, some changes did occur in the educational system. Revisions were made in adult education programs so that these programs began to be more focused

toward credit courses and were offered at hours compatible with those of women with children in school. Facilitating the growth of these courses was the increase in the number of the nation's community colleges, which were growing at the rate of a new one every other week.

Although by 1955 women were working in every one of the 445 occupations designated by the federal census, they were clustered in lower-level positions. Despite studies which demonstrated women workers' reliability and lower absenteeism rate (especially older women workers), they were not found in managerial positions and they earned a third less than men in the same jobs. Most women were found in clerical jobs, where salaries were uniformly low.

Labor unions were not sources of encouragement for female employees; only one-eighth of them were union members. Women were not represented in union management; the last time a woman held a position on a union executive council had been in 1881.

In the concluding chapter of her book, *Women on the Move*, the author, Eugenia Kaledin, depicts laws and practices which violated many rights of women. Social Security payments for couples were based upon the wages of the "primary breadwinner", always the husband. Benefits for widows were less than that which their husbands would have received. Until 1957, women could not serve on federal juries and in three southern states were refused jury duty even in state trials. Until 1963, twenty-six states had sex-based standards for exemption from jury duty, resulting in trials for women in which they would not be judged by their peers. There were few women judges and those primarily in the lower courts.

She also cites the Internal Revenue Act of 1954 which did not allow full-time working mothers any tax deductions for child care. They were unable to get credit, buy houses or insurance. They could not initiate contracts and, in some places, they were unable to keep their own earnings.

The Equal Rights Amendment, which had been debated since the 1920s, was endorsed by both the Republican and Democratic parties in 1952 and 1956. The ERA Rights Bill was introduced in Congress in 1950 and 1953, passing the Senate. A rider had been added which stated that it would not "impair any rights, benefits, or exemptions now or hereafter conferred by law on the female sex," language designed to please those who were fearful of losing protective legislation. These were the "reformers," as they were called in the 1920s argument with the "feminists," who feared that such legislation held women back in the world of work. That disagreement had continued over thirty years.

Initially opposed, Eleanor Roosevelt had changed her mind in favor of the Bill, believing that women had proved during their work experiences of World War II that equality provided them more work opportunities. The National Federation of Business and Professional Women joined her in support. Opposed to it were the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor; the National Consumers League; the League of Women Voters, the YWCA; the American Association of University Women and representatives of the AFL and the CIO.

Press consideration of the Bill can be illustrated by the coverage given by the *New York Times* to its introduction in 1953 by Katherine St. George of New York. The story was relegated to the woman's page.

Stay-at-home wives became the targets of articles urging them to reach out beyond their homes to volunteer in their communities, using the decades-old argument that such activities were simply an extension of a woman's sphere of influence. Kaledin (*Mothers on the Move*) cites contemporary topics in the announcements for meetings of women's clubs: Managing Money; Fluoridation; Plastic for the Household; Strengthening Family Ties; Our Responsibility for a Peaceful World; Home Decoration and Life in China.

The League of Women Voters received the largest number of responses to the call for volunteers; membership grew by 44 percent between 1950 and 1958. Women began to become involved and active in other movements in the nation, including the growing struggle for civil rights for minority citizens. Other women joined in the anti-nuclear activities, as well as in those which focused upon consumer protection.

Women's Health

All these women of the Fifties, those working inside and those working outside the home, were subjected to the obstetrical and gynecological practices of the era which were dominated by males, who comprised 95 percent of the profession. Many of these male doctors held two related beliefs: the first being that menstruation, childbirth and menopause were illnesses, not natural functions, and the second being that the women themselves need not be included in any consideration of the procedures adopted in their care.

Kaledin quotes a gynecologist who spoke in the early Sixties at a symposium on "The Potential of Women":

When you come right down to it, perhaps women just live too long!
Maybe when they get through having babies they have outlived their
usefulness. Is a woman's postmenopausal state a normal physiologic
condition, or is it a pathologic disease state?

American women of that era rarely questioned medical or surgical procedures. In discussing the number of hysterectomies of that period, Kaledin cites a 1953 *JAMA* article which reported on over 6000 operations. Thirty percent of the patients were found to have no disease; 39 percent had diagnoses which were not clear-cut and 12 percent had no indications that the hysterectomy was necessary. A similar conclusion was reached in a study of operations performed for the removal of ovaries. The study's authors concluded that almost 8 percent of those operations had not been justified.

Two more issues involving women's lives which were dictated by agencies or institutions were contraception and abortion. Although some birth control methods had been available for years, birth control was not officially sanctioned by the American Medical Association until 1959, one year before the contraceptive pill went on the market. Medical students were not routinely taught to discuss birth control nor sexuality itself. Massachusetts and Connecticut had laws forbidding the distribution of birth control materials. Most of the states had laws which made the performance of abortions a criminal offense, thereby contributing to these procedures being executed in unsupervised, often unsterile, settings. Kaledin states that ten million such abortions were performed each year, with 5000 to 100,000 deaths of women. She also cites 1958 statistics which demonstrated that most of those who had resorted to such abortions were married women.

Childbirth was tightly controlled by the obstetricians and the hospitals who decided that it was a procedure to be performed only in hospital delivery rooms and that no outsiders were to be allowed in those settings. Prospective fathers were outsiders and therefore forbidden entry into labor and delivery rooms. The expectant mothers were strapped into stirrups, hands tied to the delivery table, and were given large doses of anodynes and anesthetics.

Kaledin describes a letter published in *Ladies Home Journal* written by an obstetrical nurse describing aversive practices and the unexpected response to the letter from Journal readers. An uneasy undercurrent must have been present among women which began to find an outlet in the concept of natural childbirth. Two books on this topic became best sellers, one written by Dr. Grantly Dick-Read of England. The second, written by Marjorie Karmel, was entitled *Thank You, Dr. LaMaze*. Interestingly, neither physician was an American.

Mental health was another area in which women were treated in a discriminatory fashion. Career women were castigated as frigid and castrating individuals; over-attentive mothers were accused of sapping their sons of masculinity. Both groups of women were therefore considered to be emotionally disturbed persons.

Current research has studied the personality tests and therapies of that period and concluded that the standard by which all women were to be measured was based upon the notion that a dependent woman was a normal woman. Mental health was based upon a double standard--the male norm was based upon strength and individualism, the female norm upon dependency and adaptation to woman's role in society. Any woman who deviated from this female standard was considered to be in need of treatment.

The Sphere

I was at home in the woman's sphere. Just as Kate had been. Just as Essie had wanted to be.

My circle of female friends came from two groups--neighbors and wives of my husband's fellow workers. Conversation in both groups always centered around two topics: our children and our husbands' work. A common issue discussed in both groups was the husband's refusal to talk about his job. We had not yet begun to use the phrase "lack of communication" but that was the essence of many of the complaints. "He never tells me what is going on...I feel so left out of things." I was reminded of this years later when one of those couples sought me out for marital counseling. When the wife described her strong interest in his work, the husband turned abruptly toward her, "Yes, you were interested. Too much I dreaded coming home to tell you of a promotion in the office because I knew how disappointed you would be that it wasn't mine." I realized then that the husbands of those years were responsible for the entire family--not just in financial terms, but also in terms of prestige and recognition. The family's status was dependent upon the father's attainments.

I remember other characteristics of many of those families. Homes were obvious symbols of the feminine domain--white Priscilla curtains draped across the omnipresent picture windows; the connubial bed swathed in a ruffled bedspread, with matching pillow shams. The presence of a man in the household was marked only by a recliner chair in the living room and tools in the storage room. The house was firmly placed within the woman's sphere.

Other indications of female dominance were the amusement with which wives talked about their husbands' helpless ways in child care or housekeeping. Conversation was often sprinkled with anecdotes in which wives rescued hapless males from situations beyond their abilities. These situations included dealing with soiled diapers, preparing sandwiches, even picking up their own clothes. These were always recited with good-natured humor, disparaging common male deficiencies. They were also very similar to the stories they related about their children.

Many hours of my life were spent in this feminine domain and they were mostly happy hours, but underneath the surface content, a seam of uneasiness was widening. My sober, secure husband had succumbed to the same problem which had plagued my father. The pattern was different; there were no prolonged alcoholic bouts nor extended absences. Instead, it began with occasional drinks at home after work and grew to the devotion of most of the hours at home to drinking. No days of work were missed but participation in family activities became minimal. Family life became more and more depressing; not the least of my concern was the fear that, like Essie, I might have to leave my protected world.

I was angry. This was not fair. Alcohol was an enemy of the past, not of the present and the future. I was lonely. Partners in marriages like this know the feeling of having no one to talk to, no one to caress, no one to laugh with even while the partner is in the home and sometimes in the bed. They know the tears that well up at a child's concert, play or athletic contest, tears not only for your loneliness but for what the absent partner is missing. Al-Anon was not as well known then but I did call for meeting times. I never went. Of course, the drinking was never discussed with family nor friends. It was my shameful secret, never to be aired publicly.

In an attempt to change the drinking pattern, I encouraged a move in 1962 from our typical suburban home to two aged, small houses on three acres in town. The intent was to provide my husband with an environment in which he could devote his creative energies to developing a home and garden--and to decrease the time and inclination for drinking. Of course, this tactic, and my litany of wifely appeals, were failures.

Even a life-threatening illness and surgery did not bring about a diminution in his solitary drinking and family life became more discouraging. Abusive scenes should have led to a decision to make changes sooner but the vision of a family dies hard, coupled with my fears about being able to support six children. In 1965 I did take some steps toward a future in which I might have to become a single parent. My husband had taught me to drive so that more options were open to me than if I had still been homebound.

From Nursing to Psychology

One of the positive aspects ascribed to nursing as a career was the assurance of employment; nursing was always there to fall back upon. It was to be true for me too, when I had met licensing requirements.

The previous year had been the twentieth anniversary of my graduation from nurses' training and I had not worked for the past sixteen years. A refresher course would be a necessary prerequisite to my re-entering my profession. Two courses were available: a somewhat lengthy one for hospital nursing and a shorter one for employment in nursing homes. Fearing that the need for employment might arise soon, I chose the one for nursing homes and upon completion of the course I was asked to work at an institution less than a mile from our home.

I chose to work the 7 to 3 shift on weekends so that the older children could monitor the younger ones, and two 3 to 11 shifts during the week when Essie came on her nights off to prepare supper and get the children ready for bed. The arrangement lasted for four months but I could see from the salary I was receiving that it would be difficult to maintain a home for six children on that amount. In the anxious hours of the night I ran through a list of things I could do and during the daylight hours checked into those possibilities. Welfare worker? I applied but learned the salary was not much higher than in nursing. A day care center? I needed money for starting and operating it. Back to school for psychology? Perhaps.

I applied to the same university department from which I had graduated fifteen years earlier "with highest honors." My recollection of the length of the interview is that it took about fifteen minutes. Part of that time was spent with my interviewer excusing himself to check with the department head about the possibility of my returning to do graduate work. He returned with, "Sorry, but no." At that stage of my life, it never occurred to me to ask for the reason. Later events indicated that there were two reasons: I was female and I was forty-one.

When I had made inquiries about starting a day care center, a state official had suggested that the School of Home Economics had courses in preschool education and I met with a professor in the department of Child Development and Family Relations. He was helpful and optimistic about my prospects in graduate school. Since the field of Home Economics was seen as an extension of the woman's sphere, women constituted the majority of its students, although in 1965 few middle-aged persons attended college. The professor's reassurance about my age helped immeasurably in giving me confidence about my prolonged absence from the academic world. A significant benefit was his offer of a graduate assistantship which would give me both a small salary and experience in the department's demonstration nursery school.

My master's program allowed me to take some courses in psychology, particularly in the field of behavior modification which had become a dominant force since my undergraduate years. Those were my favorite courses. I had never felt comfortable with the Freudian viewpoint of childhood. I recognize the contribution Freud made toward our understanding of the role of the unconscious mind and of the part played by childhood experiences in adult personality. However, I had problems with believing that every male child between the ages of four and six who gets in bed with his parents is manifesting an Oedipus Complex. I think it is possible that he might be frightened, or cold, or, unfortunately, wet. Now I was studying a field of psychology which focused upon environmental determinants of behavior. **W**hat might be precipitating the behavior? What had been its consequences?

I remained interested in the field and finished the master's program. When I began work as the director and teacher of a preschool, I received several emotionally disturbed children to be integrated into my group of four-to-five year old children. The child whom I remember most vividly was a little boy who had been labeled as "emotionally disturbed/aggressive" when he was only two years old and had spent most of his five years trying to live up to this billing. He gave us an early demonstration of that aggressiveness when he belted a child on the playground. I went to the aggrieved child, ignoring the aggressor, who stood watching us. He swaggered up to me, "Hey, I was the one that hit him, you know." He had always received a lot of attention for this behavior.

Removal of this adult attention would become part of our plan to change this child's behavior but the second part would be equally important. There was a second source of satisfaction when he hit a child--his sense of power over the other child. In implementing our plan, he was removed from the scene immediately and placed where he could only observe but not participate in the interesting classroom activities. Simultaneously we undertook the third aspect of the program. With gradually increasing intervals of appropriate behavior, he was praised and held, thus receiving attention contingent upon his "good" behavior. His behavior changed. He no longer represented a threat to the class during the rest of the school year and became an eager, bright participant in all the class experiences. That does not mean that if he felt that an injustice had been done to him he would not respond. He demonstrated as much or as little restraint as the other children in the class.

I learned that year that children with problems live in diverse families--some which are intact, other in which the parents are living apart. One little boy from a traditional family exhibited behaviors in marked contrast to those of the little boy described above but equally troubling. He spoke rarely, initiated no contacts with the other children and made no self-selection of activities. He would simply wait until an adult made a suggestion which he immediately and obediently followed. Upon admission, his mother had proudly related that her son often sat quietly during an entire afternoon of adult conversation. This behavior continued at school.

He had never ridden a tricycle and became white with fear when he approached the climbing frame. The aggressive child had possessed these physical skills so that when he used them in positive interaction with other children we could reinforce his acquisition of social skills. Without this basis upon which to build, we had to develop for this fearful child a behavioral modification procedure termed shaping, in which reinforcement is given for the small steps which lead to a final determined behavior. The first step in this shaping plan was his mastery of walking across a board one foot off the ground. From this, we progressed towards the final goal of climbing to the top of the frame--which, of course, was where most of the other kids played and with whom he could interact. We used the same procedure to teach him to ride the tricycle and he began to develop a tentative friendship with another little fellow when the two of them rode together.

We were elated at the success of our plan but we had omitted the vital precaution of informing his mother about these goals. She was irate on the morning when she found him at the top of the climbing, frame, declaring that she did not want her son to become a Tarzan and demanding that we suspend the project immediately. Her little boy's behavior became quieter and more passive as the year progressed. I reflected upon the variety of parent-child relationships.

In 1967, I was invited to direct a new experimental preschool in the university psychology department. I agreed--in exchange for admission to their graduate program. I became both a student of developmental psychology and a director of the laboratory school.

Our first group of children had been selected by their teachers in Headstart centers. As part of the War on Poverty, the Headstart program had been initiated in 1966 to provide preschool experiences for low-income children. A significant difference in pre-academic skills had long been noted between middle-class and poor children entering school. Headstart had been developed to provide children from low-income families with opportunities for acquiring those skills. We had asked several teacher-teacher aide teams to select ten children who would benefit from a special short-term preschool program, and, as we had expected, they had chosen "problem" students. As the children began their participation in preschool learning experiences, we seated the teacher and aide of each team in an adjoining room and began by asking them to write five behavioral characteristics of each child. As the teachers began to write, we quickly added the qualifying phrase--"good" behaviors. They stopped writing, looking at us in puzzlement. They had, of course, begun to write about "bad" behavior, the focus of their attention. It took time for them to identify appropriate behaviors and yet those were the ones which would have to supplant the inappropriate ones. They were the ones which should have been receiving attention. These behavioral modification procedures were developed during a two-week session for each team and were transplanted back into their ongoing programs.

Our staff members were able to evaluate the knowledge base of these children and of later students and found profound differences in language abilities between these youngsters and the middle-class groups upon whom most intelligence test standards are based. They knew the meaning of fewer words; they understood and used fewer prepositions; they understood fewer concepts. They asked fewer questions which caused us to associate their absence of question-asking with a section in intelligence tests in which the child is asked such questions as, "Why are houses made of bricks?" Middle-class children responded correctly much more often than did low-income ones and yet we could not envision a scenario in which a parent of either socioeconomic class would sit down with a child and begin a lecture on the virtues of brick houses. We could, however, envision a middle-class mother, with an awareness of the need for a child to receive answers, responding to the persistent "Why?" questions. It is possible to picture a poor mother overburdened with cares and pressed for time, postponing her answers to a child's questions--until the child no longer asks. The "middle-class curriculum" is the term preschool educators use to describe the body of information acquired in this way by children who come from advantaged homes.

It is not possible to overstate the importance of providing preschool experiences to poor children--an environment that facilitates the acquisition of basic concepts and language with which to express them. Repeated studies have demonstrated that our nation offers few good preschool programs, ones which have low teacher-student ratios and whose teachers are trained in early childhood education. The children in these inadequate programs, or in homes in which they are immured in a non-responsive situation, will have a very difficult time in school. Conceptual understandings and command of a language are essential to the acquisition of academic skills.

I continued as a graduate student in psychology but transferred to a position as a research assistant in a Follow-Through program in the College of Education. Following an initial negative evaluation of Headstart students who had entered elementary school, federal officials decided that their low performance was due to the disparity between Headstart practices and those in public school systems. A program, termed Follow-Through, was begun in which grants were awarded to different groups to tailor and implement plans for facilitating poor children's progress in school. In an attempt to separate out the factors which contribute to academic success or failure, the programs were to be developed along differing educational lines. The one with which I was associated decried rote learning and featured children's active involvement in their own learning. Small-groupings and teacher-guided lessons were based upon activities close to the children's real world. Natural language lessons, for example, began with cooking experiences and reading instruction began with the children's own stories, dictated to the teacher. The physical arrangement of the room itself offered a contrast to conventional ones: tables and grouped chairs instead of rigid rows of desks.

One of my first tasks was working in training sessions with migrant workers who were employed in ten day care centers under the auspices of the Migrant Opportunity Program. The term "stationary migrants" was used to describe those agricultural workers who returned to the same large farms year after year, supporting themselves and their families in any way they could during the agricultural off-season. Few of them followed the trail of harvest from state to state.

Children of migrant workers were at great risk in the fields which were crisscrossed with irrigation ditches and saturated with pesticides. They were sometimes left alone in ramshackle cabins while mothers found work to supplement the below-minimum wages their fathers received. The day care centers provided a safe haven for these children who were given nutritious meals, adequate for the demands of growing children. Medical problems were identified; many were found to be seriously anemic; crippling defects were found in others. These basic health and nutritional needs were the first service provided, while the addition of a preschool program would ameliorate the conceptual and language deficits which doomed these children, whose parents were the poorest of the working poor. Confronted with the academic demands of elementary school, most of these youngsters were ill-prepared to compete with those children who had the advantage of a middle-class curriculum.

Coming from this same population of "stationary migrants," our trainees were women with large families and little education so our presentations were stripped of polysyllabic words and elaborate psychological descriptions. Using few lectures and many demonstrations, we presented them with practical techniques in guidance and discipline and in creating an environment which would stimulate the children's intellectual curiosity and language development. Their absorption of these techniques would be demonstrated by the nature of their classrooms and we were to make regular visits to the centers to provide additional assistance.

However, not long after the trainees' return to their centers, the Nixon administration decided to eliminate all the centers. Protests were made to federal officials and to Arizona congressmen by many professionals and the migrants themselves. I met with one group of worker-parents who came in from the fields after a long, hard day to write (or dictate) letters to be sent to Washington. As I helped them write the letters, I heard over and over, "I want a better life for my child. I want him to learn to read and

write so that he won't have to work in the fields as I do." All these efforts were wasted; the centers were closed.

In our attempts to involve the farm owners in our futile attempt to prevent the closures, I met with the manager of one large farm whose absentee owner was a major Hollywood star. The manager peremptorily rejected my request for assistance, asserting "Those mothers belong at home and you do-gooders are just teaching those people to try to get something for nothing." Two months later that farm received \$1,000,000 in governmental subsidies in return for an agreement to leave some of the farm's land unplanted.

My university association provided me with many new experiences, some bordering upon the political as well as educational. My research skills were sharpened with studies undertaken in many classrooms across the city, in both Follow Through classrooms and in more traditional ones. The results of these studies revealed the model classrooms to be active educational settings with self-motivated youngsters and stimulating, nurturing teachers. Most of the traditional classrooms were characterized by rows of passive children with rare instances of zest for learning.

However, the children in the model classrooms were not acquiring the basic skills needed for reading and mathematics. Fellow researchers and I assessed all the primary classrooms in the demonstration school and found few readers and many students who not only did not know the alphabet, but could not recognize their own names. In spite of the emphasis upon their dictated stories, attractively displayed for them during a free-choice activity period, they did not choose to read. At a staff meeting in which we presented our findings as indicative of a need to take a fresh look at the program's methods, we were met with a storm of protest. We were accused of trying to subvert the program and we were admonished that the program's goals could not be accomplished if any part of it were changed. At the end of the meeting, the director declared that the program might take one hundred years to work. Hearing that statement, my co-workers and I decided that we would not wait that long.

I left the program with two strong beliefs. One, that educational administrators (although not teachers, usually) tend to take extreme positions and to cling to them so tenaciously that they will not admit the possibility of other approaches or the possibility of an eclectic blending of techniques. Recognition of different learning styles should lead to recognition of the validity of different teaching methods. What we have seen instead are the wild pendulum swings in education--from rigid, teacher-dominated classes to student-oriented ones. Couldn't the first approach facilitate the acquisition of basic skills and the second foster thoughtful, independent learners? Couldn't both be valid and appropriate? Could they be blended?

My other belief was based upon the poverty of the population of students I met. As I learned about their backgrounds, I became convinced that schools were expected to overcome serious medical and nutritional problems which the children brought to school. Hungry, sick children do not make good learners.

Recent brain research has shown very clearly that children's brains develop in response to the conditions to which the children are exposed. The message to all of us in this country is that good prenatal care is a preventive technique that will yield cost-saving benefits later in the lives of those children. A similarly essential technique is the provision of an early environment which responds to the child and provides learning experiences. Preschool programs like Headstart do provide such an environment, but many authorities now believe that the need exists much earlier in a child's life. Four years old may be too late for too many children.

A Pot of Tea

Leaving the university each afternoon, I would often stop at a little cafe and slowly drink a pot of tea, willing myself to make the transition to the home life that awaited me. Although the children had regular chores which they performed well, I still had the major responsibility for feeding my family and keeping their home clean and attractive. I was determined to continue supporting their activities as I had done before I started graduate school. I tried to attend all concerts, plays, athletic events and PTA meetings, and to be available to them each evening. This schedule made it necessary for me to do all my studying after the last child had gone to bed so that sleep for me usually came about two in the morning, with the whole routine beginning again at six. I did not carry out this routine with equanimity. Particularly stressful were the mornings in which I gathered up some of the kids to deposit at school on my way to the university. If they were late, I became so irate that my anger once so intimidated them that they didn't remind me that I had forgotten one child until they were safely out of the car.

My husband continued to drink and the drinking, coupled with the mounting resentment he felt toward my work, created a depressing environment for the whole family. I recognize now how difficult for him must have been the change from having a docile at-home wife who did not even drive to a wife who was becoming more confident and self-assured. He probably was correct in his assertion that the root of the problem was his mistake in teaching me to drive; certainly it gave me mobility and freedom.

Home life became more and more turbulent, yet I clung to my status as a wife--clung out of hope that things would somehow change and because of my fear of the loss of support.

Essie had continued to work in the Southern Pacific yard office, competently making the switch from manual data entry to computerization. Always conscientious and punctual, she was well thought of by her fellow clerks, but she expressed little pleasure in her job. Her salary was the important element, and with that salary, she had been able to purchase a small home. She viewed that little house and the trees she planted around it in their contrast to the rented, squalid homes of her marriage. That home also became my refuge when she entertained the children and me each Wednesday evening. The wonderful meal she prepared allowed me to physically relax and her constant assurance that I was pretty and able and good, though not totally objective, contributed toward some emotional relief. Not that I had confided to her my worries about what was happening at home.

Each week two grandchildren spent a night and a day with Grandma Becky, as they called her, a night and day in which they received the unconditional love which only a devoted grandmother can bestow. She would later refer to this period as the happiest time of her life.

Essie retired in 1969 and never entered the yard office again. That part of her life was behind her and it had provided her with a retirement income based upon [Railroad Retirement](#) (the alternative to Social Security for railroad workers) and a supplementary pension from the railroad, a benefit won by the union. Had she remained in her pre-clerk job, she would have had no pension and a Social Security income based upon the low salary of a waitress.

Kate's health had worsened over the years, with several abdominal operations for repair of her twisted intestines, and as she became more and more feeble, she was confined to her bed in her son's home. The stress on the family was intense, with her daughter-in-law quietly attending to Kate's needs, in addition to caring for three children. Finally, Kate's medical problems became so acute that she was admitted to a nursing home where she died, weeks later. In 1964, the year of her death, the United States was firmly in the Space Age, with television coverage of rocket launches into outer space. Her life span began with the horse-drawn wagons of her childhood, passed through the age of the automobile, then the airplane, and ended with men in space.

The United States passed from the Fifties, an era of affluence, to a decade which promised the extension of peace and freedom to many other countries. The new President pledged in his inaugural address that the nation would pay any price to support democratic movements anywhere in the world. Patriotic fervor gripped the nation and enthusiasm mounted for the young president. His wife, his children and his associates were viewed as royal members of a new Camelot and were lauded for their class and elegance. Women followed Jackie Kennedy's dress style with a slim sheath, a string of pearls, low-heeled pumps and a pillbox hat.

However, attention did not stay centered upon the social activities of the Kennedy Camelot, but, rather, anxiously focused upon a confrontation with the Soviet Union after the discovery of Soviet missiles in Cuba. When the Russian premier, Khrushchev, acceded to Kennedy's demand for withdrawal, the nation's relief was tempered by the realization that war could at last come to American land--and that it would be nuclear war. Bomb shelters were built in backyards and discussions arose about admission to those shelters. Would they turn away a neighbor begging for refuge from the holocaust? The schools subjected the children to drills, teaching them to seek protection under their school desks. Civic leaders designated certain buildings as shelters in the event of an attack.

Unrest

When black resentment of discrimination erupted, the entire nation suffered shocks. Protest among black citizens had grown after 1954 as they saw little implementation of the Supreme Court decision that public schools must be integrated. Anger mounted with the continued refusal of admittance to soda fountains and cafes and with restriction to the backs of buses. Sit-in strikes, store boycotts, and

acts of civil disobedience spread across the South. Marches were held to demonstrate black citizens' will to claim the rights that belonged to them. White backlashes led to bombings and murders. Violence spread through the South and the North, lasting years after the passage of a Civil Rights Act in 1964 and a Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Additional shocks were delivered to the country with the assassination of John Kennedy in 1963, and of both Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy in 1968. A tumultuous summer followed their deaths, with riots in ghettos, and bloody melees with policemen battling student demonstrators at the Democratic convention in Chicago. By the end of the decade, antiwar sentiment against the increasing involvement of the United States in the Southeast Asian nation of Vietnam was fueling the flames across the nation and students were demonstrating on the campuses of major universities. They occupied administration office and disrupted classes. To combat one such student uprising at Kent State University in Ohio, the governor called out the National Guard and students were shot in the resultant confusion. Student activism accelerated into active student revolt as opposition to the Vietnam War grew in strength and vehemence.

Young people dominated these movements, including many women, but not all the movements were aimed at political change. Many were asserting their rights to a new lifestyle--a counterculture--characterized by drug use, sexual freedom, resentment of anyone over thirty, and opposition to the Establishment, as everyone else was dubbed. How many young people actively participated in this rebellion is uncertain, but those who did received a lot of attention, particularly from television, which by now was a major factor in the nation's culture.

Accompanying the youth movement was its own rock music, with four young men from Liverpool, England, serving as Pied Pipers. Their songs exhorted listeners to take themselves less seriously and to enjoy themselves more--to let their hair down. Both figuratively and literally. These four long-haired Britishers served as role models to the nation's youth and boys began letting their hair get "as long as girls," to the consternation of countless parents and school principals. The sight of a boy with hair drifting softly over his shoulders often elicited a response from a passing stranger who felt obligated to scream, "Cut your hair, you damned hippie!" Yet it was only a year or two before the hairstyles of middle-aged men began to creep over their ears and down their collars.

Sixties Feminism

Girls responded to the trend with long, very straight sweeps of hair--achieved with an iron if necessary to get the proper degree of straightness. As the hair grew longer, the skirts were going in the opposite direction. Often in synthetic fabrics and neon colors, the mini skirt became a uniform. Elaborate makeup accented the look with lips painted silver or white and heavily lined eyelids. The other acceptable outfit was the ubiquitous pair of denim jeans and an Indian gauze blouse.

Older women began to wear their dresses shorter, no longer fearing the exposure of garter belt straps, thanks to the era's most famous fashion invention, the pantyhose. Their dresses were made of

polyester, nylon, even shiny, stretchy Lurex. Jewelry was fashioned of lucite; hair was teased and sprayed to a brittle halo. Matching pants and shirt became the pantsuit which was enthusiastically adopted, a fashion spreading even to the grandmother set. Women who had never worn pants wore the pantsuit, eventually even to church.

Women had continued their migration into the workplace. In 1940, 17 percent of all married women worked for pay; 24 percent were working in 1950 and 33 percent in 1962. Even more must have at least considered the possibility, judged by the reaction to a book published in 1963.

Betty Friedan had written *The Feminine Mystique* in which she objected to the prevalent belief that marriage and motherhood were necessary and sufficient for a woman's happiness and that other lifestyles were abnormal. The title of the book is the label she gave to that belief. The book struck a responsive chord in the hearts of many American women and is often credited with the rebirth of the feminist movement. Its appeal was directed primarily toward well-to-do wives, and even some of them questioned whether the "problem without a name" (Friedan's term for the discontent which women felt) was solely women's desire for career achievement. Some of them suggested that feminine discontent might include a yearning for equal recognition of women's status as wife and mother. Friedan's message was not wholeheartedly received by working-class wives who had little longing to work in the types of jobs available to them.

However, other events took place in the Sixties that were to affect the lives of women of all socioeconomic levels. In 1961, Esther Peterson, later an assistant Secretary of Labor, suggested to President Kennedy that he appoint a [Presidential Commission on the Status of Women](#). He agreed, and with its creation, the Commission became the first official body ever established by the government to examine the position of American women. Under the direction of its chairwoman, Eleanor Roosevelt, the Commission published a report which supported equal pay acts and paid maternity leaves. The report did not question the primary importance of a woman's life in her home nor did it promote the Equal Rights Amendment. The dissension had continued regarding full equality for women versus protective legislation for them. By 1967, each state had a similar commission.

In 1963, the Commission developed the [Equal Pay Act](#) which was passed by Congress and was the first federal statute to require equal pay for equal work.

Through the attempt of a southern congressman to block passage of a Civil Rights Act, another piece of legislation affected women's lives. Representative Howard W. Smith, of Virginia, deliberately inserted "sex" into Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, expecting that its inclusion would prevent passage. To his surprise, and probably that of many others, the Act passed. Discrimination in employment and pay was banned on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin and sex. Now women were guaranteed access to any occupation, including those which had been solely in men's domain. In the first decade after passage, more women filed discrimination complaints than any other group.

At a meeting of the state commissions on the status of women, Betty Friedan spotlighted dissatisfaction with the government's enforcement of sex discrimination in the workplace. Following the meeting, Friedan and twenty-seven others formed the National Organization for Women (NOW), the first significant feminist organization since 1913. This group pressed President Lyndon B. Johnson to strengthen the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the agency created to enforce the Civil Rights Act. He responded in 1967 with Executive Order 11375, which included women with minority groups under federal affirmative action programs.

Initial items on NOW's agenda were maternity leave; tax deductions for child care; federal support for day care; equal education and job training opportunities for women, and shared responsibility for home and children by men and women. Later, after debate, two items were added: passage of the Equal Rights Amendment and repeal of state anti-abortion laws.

Some opposition to NOW's support of the Amendment or, simply, the ERA, as it was known, came from women who reactivated those old fears of the early feminists: passage of the amendment might wreck the bulwark of protective legislation achieved with so much effort in the past.

The violent reactions that erupted in response to NOW's espousal of abortion rights have continued for decades. The movement began to splinter with some elements organizing into radical groups who went far beyond the call for equality. These groups clamored, often in the media, for a radical restructuring of society and the total abolition of societal roles based upon gender. They placed strong emphasis upon sexual freedom for women and much of their rhetoric was anti-male.

The radical feminists adopted many of the protest tactics used by student activists. One such tactic was used at the 1968 Miss America beauty pageant when a small group of picketers marched with placards declaring, "Let's Judge Ourselves as People!" In another form of protest, they threw cosmetics, girdles, and bras into a trash can. Some newspapers reported this as a bonfire of brassieres. All feminist women thus acquired the label "bra burner."

A less confrontational procedure was the creation of small groups of women who met informally to discuss issues relating to women's cultural roles. This exchange of female experiences became known as consciousness-raising and was enhanced by the concurrent emphasis in the country of popular psychological practices such as group therapies and the human potential movement. The practices encourage people to become aware of the effect of their life histories in their present lives and of their ability to change and to develop to their highest potential. As articles in popular magazines took up the theme of self-analysis, many more women began to question their life roles, many for the first time.

Women were becoming an important force in the workplace. Although the number of women, over sixteen, in the general population had grown by 52 percent from 1950 to 1970, the number of women in the labor force had increased by 117 percent at the same time. The number of employed married women tripled from 1940 to 1970, with the largest growth in the age group 25 to 34, major childbearing ages.

This increased number of employed women may have contributed to the growing acceptance of some tenets of this new feminist movement. Two other contributing factors may have been the emphasis upon equality arising from the Civil Rights movement and the high percentage of single women. At the beginning of the decade, 28 percent of the women between 20 and 24 were single; that percentage had risen to 40 percent by the decade's end, the highest percentage of the century.

Ph.D. and Home Challenges

This new decade began for me with two events: one positive, one negative. I received my doctorate in psychology, with most of my coursework in developmental psychology and behavior management. I also received my divorce decree. After five troubled years in which we fruitlessly sought help from a series of counselors, the marriage of twenty-four years was ended. I was forty-eight.

We were still living on the three acres in the heart of Tucson. At home were three children, ages twelve, fourteen and fifteen; two were in college, and one had graduated from the university. Bitterly contested, child support in the amount of \$50 a month for each minor child was awarded to me and the property was to be divided with my ex-husband becoming owner of the west half. I would retain possession of the house and the east half. The bitterness continued, culminating in his refusal to send the support payments. After another unpleasant experience in the legal system and anxious to avoid further contact, I offered to drop support payments in exchange for possession of the whole property.

In addition to my eagerness to avoid ugly confrontations, I was optimistic that I could sell that half of the property and invest the proceeds to build a savings fund. This decision did not herald an era of sharp business judgments, and in the following years my attempts to divest myself of that one and a half acres were unsuccessful. Another testimony to my poor judgment was a notice from the county that an assessment of \$8000 was to be levied against the property. This additional housing expense forced me to refinance the property.

In 1972, I found myself to be a single parent and a researcher at the university, both on a full-time basis. During the first month after the divorce, I applied for credit at the local Sears store, which sent a denial in a letter. Because of recently-enacted legislation I was able to demand the reason for the denial. It was based on my lack of a credit history, a lack which made me a poor credit risk. I was stunned. I had lived my whole life in Tucson; I had an appointment as a researcher at the local university, and as a couple we had maintained an impeccable record. But that impeccable record belonged to my husband, not to me.

My divorce had left me with no savings for emergencies and it was then that I realized during my fifteen years at home and with part-time jobs I had not earned any Social Security credits, either for retirement or for disability insurance. By staying in the home and caring for my family, I had foregone those benefits. I was becoming aware of the hazards of life in the woman's sphere.

Had I misunderstood the message when I was growing up?--the one which implied that being a wife and mother was following the noblest traditions for women. The one which had been presented in books, magazines--in many forms. No, I was sure that I had absorbed and grasped the import of those messages. What I had not understood was that the appreciation and the security associated with those roles would be mine only if I were married. Without a husband all benefits were tenuous and could be removed when a single status was resumed. That was what I had not understood: the fifteen years I had spent devoted to being wife and mother received no real credit in the man's world, and indeed, those years had exposed me to great risk if I ever left the financial umbrella provided by a husband. My security had always been dependent upon the man whom I married.

My enlightenment came at the height of the women's movement and with passage of the Equal Credit Act of 1974 married women can establish a credit rating which will still accrue to them in the event of a divorce or a husband's death. The momentum of the women's movement had worked to ensure rights for women, including their right to credit.

When I left the university, I became a consultant with a private educational firm with contracts to evaluate projects undertaken by school districts across the country. These projects were funded by the Title I section of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which had as its purpose the improvement of reading and mathematical skills of disadvantaged students. In serving as an evaluator of these projects in several states, I visited many classrooms in many schools. I saw skilled, devoted teachers working with eager little learners who were acquiring those basic skills. But I also saw evidence of waste and mismanagement, often in the form of expensive equipment which gathered dust in storage rooms, evidently purchased without consultation with the teachers. In all too many schools I saw money diverted away from what I still consider the most effective means by which small children learn: a teacher who knows how children learn, and who knows the subject matter being taught, in interaction with a small group of children. That group must be small enough for the teacher to monitor progress and to provide feedback for correction. Any educational aids, including computers, should be introduced with those objectives in mind.

While still a consultant with that firm, I was assigned to evaluate a gerontology program in Tucson, a program conducted by the local Council on Aging. [Pima Council on Aging](#) had developed the Areawide Model Project with the purpose of preventing or delaying institutionalization of elderly persons. To achieve that goal, the Areawide Model subcontracted social workers from local social service agencies and these workers became the initial contact with the client or the client's family. They determined the patient's needs and arranged for the delivery of the appropriate services. These would include health-related assistance provided by visiting nurses and aides; transportation for medical appointments, and help with housekeeping and shopping. It had been determined that admission to a nursing home is often precipitated for the elderly as much by simple unmet problems in maintaining themselves in their homes as by serious medical problems. For those needing more nursing care or socialization, participation at adult day care facilities was available. The main thrust of this project, then, was the provision of whatever services were needed for these individuals to prevent or delay nursing home admission.

My role was to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and I did this by comparing the Project participants who entered the program in July with those patients who entered local nursing homes in that same month. When the two groups were compared using medical and psychological criteria, the findings indicated that one-third of each group were so similar in their overall characteristics that it is very possible that those who had become patients could have been cared for at home with adjunct services. Costs per patient were significantly higher for the nursing home residents, but as important as the financial savings was the opportunity for these elderly men and women to retain independence.

When my employers lost some contracts and layoffs were necessary, I became among the unemployed again, with the constant internal question "How will I support my family?" I was able to put together enough part-time jobs to get us through the year. But, of course, there was never enough coming in to build up a savings.

The Nursing Home Study

Auspiciously, 1975 began with a phone call on New Year's Day from the Pima Council on Aging, asking me to undertake a six month project in which I would help study the services available for the elderly and handicapped population in Pima County. A major focus of this Long Term Care Study was the determination of the need for another Pima County nursing home. One step in making that determination was a comparison of the quality of care received by patients in the existing Pima County nursing home and by those residing in other institutions under contracts from the county.

To determine those levels of care, I conducted interviews and assessments in all the nursing homes in Pima County. During one visit, a cook asked to talk to me about the situation at his previous place of employment. He related tales of skimpy meals, unsanitary conditions, even physical abuse of the elderly patients. He gave me a list of other people who were anxious to disclose information. I spoke to enough of them to believe a problem existed but fearing my participation in uncovering more information might compromise the ongoing study, I contacted county officials who initially seemed very interested but then declined to pursue the matter. Still disturbed, I tried again to interest officials and after several rebuffs and only after private contacts, a detective in the County Attorney's office undertook an investigation.

His findings revealed that the deplorable conditions were even worse than the original complainants had described and both the county and the state had been aware of them for a very long time. In the subsequent uproar, the county officials sought to correct the situation by setting up a monitoring system, with the assumption that the owners' awareness of the monitoring would lead them to improve the conditions.

By that time, I had finished the original study and was no longer involved. But I was not convinced that the disposition of the charges was correct and I was pleased when a deputy county attorney contacted me to describe a new investigation undertaken by him. His assigned investigator took scores of depositions from patients and former patients, families, and present and past employees. The picture

which emerged was far worse than the early one. This time the Pima County Board of Supervisors took the proper action and those two nursing homes were closed. My relief was profound, but I was disillusioned about politics and persons in political life. I will never know whether a cover-up existed, up and down the hierarchy, or whether apathy was the reason for the neglect of the welfare of those sick and feeble elderly patients.

During my year of part-time jobs, I had taught some classes for the local community college, and had another encounter with bureaucratic obstinacy while teaching an off-campus class at a school for hearing-and-visually impaired children. My students were "dormitory parents," adults who cared for the children after school. Often a husband and wife worked together. After a few class sessions, the female "parents" complained that they were paid \$50 a month less than their male counterparts, even when a married couple served together. They had asked for equal remuneration from administrators but were denied equal treatment because "it would be inconvenient to make changes now, but perhaps later." Frustrated, they asked me what other steps could be taken. I called the Wages and Hours Division of the Department of Labor and was very pleased to get a report from them within a month. An agreement had been reached with the school administrators in which men and women would receive equal pay for equal work--ten years after passage of the Equal Pay Act.

In 1977, I applied for a full-time position at Pima Community College and began teaching in the Early Childhood Education Department.

Life for Essie in the Seventies was full and satisfying. She owned her little house, tended to her trees and flowers, and spent time with her grandchildren. She reflected sometimes that her retirement income was much greater than it would have been had she not left waitressing behind to become a railway clerk. Her tenure in the higher-paying man's world had enabled her to receive a much larger monthly income. Had the wartime male shortage not afforded her the opportunity to leave her job as a waitress, her life in retirement would have been drastically different. Her income would have been at or below poverty level. She could not have bought a home and would have been partially dependent upon her children.

In the larger picture of the United States at that time, the feminist protest against the use of artifices like cosmetics led to a different dress style in the Seventies. The natural look was in. Synthetic fabrics were out as cotton, linen, wool and leather made comebacks. Even the popular colors reflected this emphasis: beige, white and earth tones. Teased hairstyles were replaced with long, naturally-styled hair, framing faces with little or no makeup.

The need for exercise became the message of the medical profession, and was further emphasized by women's magazines. Thousands of women took up jogging in response to these messages and to their desire to fit into the popular designer jeans.

Consciousness-raising had contributed to an increase in NOW membership from its 100 charter members to a total of 200,000 at the end of the Seventies. Female membership in the labor force grew

as women entered new fields. Women constituted 45 percent of the nation's 6.8 million college students and 50 percent of the graduate schools. Of the number of students in medical and law schools, 20 percent were women. Yale University agreed to admit female students in 1969. In 1970 the Episcopal church permitted women to become deacons and the Justice Department filed its first sex discrimination suit against private employers. A magazine devoted to feminist issues began publication in 1971, taking as its name, *Ms*, the new title for women. In two years, circulation of the magazine reached 200,000.

In the same year, Representative Martha Griffiths took the ERA Amendment out of the House Judiciary Committee where it had been languishing for nineteen years. It had first been proposed forty-nine years before. By 1972, the Amendment had been passed by both houses of Congress and efforts were begun to achieve ratification. In one half-hour, Hawaii became the first state to ratify it. Polls demonstrated an overwhelmingly majority of respondents were in support. Even the conservative Republican President Nixon endorsed the ERA amendment.

Joining NOW members in support of the ERA were the League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women, and the AFL-CIO. Despite these concerted efforts, ratification had not been accomplished by the deadline in 1978. Three more states were needed for ratification when the momentum stopped and although supporters succeeded in winning a deadline extension, no additional states ratified the amendment.

Many explanations have been offered for the failure to win confirmation. Probably the major one is as old as the Amendment itself: fears that equality for women would jeopardize protective legislation and customs.

Resentment had also begun to surface against the positions expressed by the radical feminists with their anti-male agenda who denounced the institution of marriage. Their attacks on marriage did not conform to the views held by many American women. In *At Odds*, the Harris poll of 1972 is cited in which a national sample of women was asked how often they felt that "having a loving husband who is able to take care of me is much more important to me than making it on my own." At least half replied, "frequently"; 20 percent replied "occasionally", and only 25 percent responded with "hardly ever."

Another explanation for the defeat of the ERA Amendment might lie in the feminists' attainment of another one of their goals when the U. S. Supreme Court struck down state laws which had restricted access to abortion. That decision on *Roe vs. Wade* was hailed by NOW as a victory for women. That victory, however, galvanized a grass roots Right-to-Life movement which sought not only to reverse that decision but also to defeat the ERA Amendment. A conservative political organizer named Phyllis Schlafly became the head of the STOP-ERA organization and this mother of six, with a law degree, a lady-like hairstyle and a soft, cultured voice symbolized the opposition to the radical "bra burners." Mrs. Schlafly warned about unisex bathrooms and female conscription, although the universal draft had ended in 1973.

A final explanation for ERA's defeat is based, paradoxically, upon the success of the feminist movement. Since federal legislation, executive orders and a series of judicial decisions favoring women's equality had dramatically removed most of the barriers to equality of opportunity, the nation may have decided that the Amendment would have added little to these successes. In addition to the Equal Pay Act; the Civil Rights Act; the Women's Educational Equity Act, and the Equal Credit Act had all been passed by 1974. Sixteen states had added equal rights amendments to their constitutions.

All these events were indicative of the transformation which had resulted from the increase in the number of women working outside the home and from the growth in the women's movement. A Redbook poll in 1973 revealed that 66 percent of its readers viewed the movement positively; 43 percent ascribed to the movement their awareness of their opportunities. Only 2 percent believed that being a wife and mother was the only way to realize their full potential.

However, women were also revealing in surveys that the great majority of housewives listed home and family activities as most important to them. By not recognizing how deeply that feeling ran in middle-class women, the feminists may have lost many supporters. Working-class women had not seen the movement's emphasis upon access to professional work as applicable to them for whom such opportunities were limited. Their concerns centered around the need for child care: Six million preschoolers had working mothers in 1973, only 640,000 spaces were available in public and private day care centers.

In 1971, Congress passed the [Comprehensive Child Development Act](#) providing for the development of child care facilities, free to some parents, on a sliding scale basis to others. It was vetoed by President Nixon who stated that:

for the federal government to plunge headlong financially into supporting child development would commit the vast moral authority of the national government to the side of communal approaches to childrearing over against the family-centered approach.

His sentiments were echoed by many who expressed fears that government-supported child care would result in parents "losing" control of their children. Reminiscent of the shibboleths used in the Thirties by opponents of legislation abolishing child labor, these opponents declared that such child care would be communistic and dangerous to American freedom. Some relief was given to working mothers in 1977 when a tax credit for child care was allowed.

Women in the Eighties

The Eighties saw the continued increase in women's participation in the labor force, including professions such as law and medicine and many fields exclusively male. Several sources predicted that by the year 2000 the participation of working women will be around 61 percent for the group of women

with children in the birth-to-fourteen ages. However, magazines frequently published articles describing the burdens which many women experienced in managing their lives in both the man's world and the woman's sphere. The overwhelming problem for most of the nation's working mothers was the dearth of good child care facilities. Standards for child care centers and homes vary considerably from state to state and in Arizona 1100 licensed centers have room for only 20 percent of the children who need placement. Many children are in child care homes which operate unlawfully and without any monitoring of their facilities or procedures. These conditions are typical of the need for child care in the United States.

Occasional suggestions arise for the rebirth of the Equal Rights Amendment but the bitter fight for women's reproductive choices occupied the nation's attention during the Eighties. One author, Susan Faludi, in her book, *Backlash*, described the fear that many women have expressed concerning the strong movements in the nation to reverse the advances made by the women's movement since the Sixties. In addition to the energy expended in the abortion debate, the backlash may spring from several other sources: a conservative mood in the nation and the placid acceptance by young women of the opportunities now open to them,

I retired from Pima Community College in 1987.

Essie--Grandma Becky--died in a nursing home in 1988, following a series of mentally and physically damaging strokes. Until the strokes, she had lived happily in her own little house, enjoying visits from all her beloved grandchildren.

Mother, Grandmother and My Life Through the Lens of Women's Equality by <a xmlns:cc="http://creativecommons.org/ns#" href="http://billieunderwood.com" property="cc:attributionName" rel="cc:attributionURL">Billie Jeanne Underwood is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.