APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Diane M. Watta-Roy
Author

Approved, March 1994

John Stanfield II

R. Wayne Kernodle

Virginia Kerns

Edwin Rhyne
Archives
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Author

Approved: March 1994

[Signatures]

W. K. K. O'Brien

[Signature]

E. W. Brown
This thesis is dedicated to my parents who have always encouraged me to follow my dreams.

to my grandfather for his innumerable letters of encouragement;

to my dear friends who are constant sources of inspiration;

to my new family, Mamaw, Rita-Mom, and Tricia for their love;

and to Jeffrey, who is my mentor, chief-editor, and best friend.
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ABSTRACT

This research project utilizes oral history techniques to explore the lives of ten females who attended the College of William and Mary during the first twelve years of coeducation (1918-1930). Using a grounded theory methodology, the oral histories of the ten William and Mary graduates reveal six social institutions which have had a significant impact on the lives of all ten of the women: (1) Education, (2) Work, (3) Family, (4) Marriage, (5) Religion, and (6) Politics. Though all six institutions played powerful roles in shaping each woman's self identity and life events, marital status proved to be the most influential determinant in the lives of the ten William and Mary graduates. While considering all six institutions and their effect on each of the women, special attention will be focused on the impact that marital status has had in shaping each woman's life experiences, values, career and educational history, hobbies, goals, and world view.
INTRODUCTION

Nurtured in the home of a deeply devoted mother and a scholarly father, I have always been aware of the great revolution in which all of us finds ourselves, women are going to find themselves forgotten if they forget to think for themselves. — Luise Otto

The issue of women's experience in higher education, historically and even today, has been one since I began studying women's history in 1977. At the time I was writing my dissertation on Seneca, New York, I was able to frequent the National Women's History Museum while imagining what life was like, one-hundred and fifty years prior, for Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a resident of Seneca and a leader of the nineteenth century Women's Movement.

Williamsburg, home of William and Mary, the second oldest school in the country, is a region equally rich with history. With this in mind I have often wondered what life was like for the women of the region in the past. While completing my course work for my master's degree in sociology at William and Mary, I took an American Studies class with Dr. John Stanfield. We were required to do a project which involved at least one of three sociological concepts: institutions, communities, and urbanism. I decided to focus my research project on the institutional level and explore what life was like for the first women to attend the College of William and Mary.
INTRODUCTION

In the great revolution in which all of us finds ourselves, women are going to find themselves forgotten if they forget to think for themselves. *Lulise Otto*

The issue of woman's experience in higher education, historically and in present society, has captivated me since I began college six years ago. Attending school fifteen minutes from Seneca, New York, I was able to frequent the National Women's History Museum while imagining what life was like, one-hundred and fifty years prior, for Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a resident of Seneca and a leader of the nineteenth century Women's Movement.

Williamsburg, home of William and Mary, the second oldest school in the country, is a region equally rich with history. With this in mind I have often wondered what life was like for the women of the region in the past. While completing my course work for my master's degree in sociology at William and Mary, I took an American Studies class with Dr. John Stanfield. We were required to do a project which involved at least one of three sociological concepts: institutions, communities, and urbanism. I decided to focus my research project on the institutional level and explore what life was like for the first women to attend the College of William and Mary.
As the project began to grow, I decided that exploring the topic in one semester would not be adequate. I chose to do my thesis on the lives of ten of the first women to attend William and Mary [from 1918-1930]. This project is part of a much larger research project that will involve my life's work: understanding the experiences of women, past and present.

This study focuses on the life histories of ten women who attended the College of William and Mary during the first fifteen years of coeducation. Though a considerable amount has been written about the College of William and Mary, the work which explores student experiences primarily addresses the experiences of male students during their college years. All ten of the participants were subjected to lengthy interviews and they also filled out brief autobiographical questionnaires which can be located in Appendix A.

This paper begins with a chapter exploring the theories and methods involved in this study. Chapter II is a brief overview of the history of women's education during the late eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It focuses particularly on women's education in the South, and specifically in Virginia. Chapters III, IV, and V explore institutions which specifically affected the lives of the ten women.

All ten of the women involved in this study share several commonalities: (1) they are all White; (2) they were all born in Virginia during the early twentieth century; (3) they are all from upper-middle class families; and (4) they all attended the
College of William and Mary during the first twelve years of coeducation. Yet despite their similarities, the ten women have led very different lives primarily due to differences in marital status. There are marked differences between the lives of the four married women as compared to the lives of the six women who never married. Throughout my research, it is clear that marital status strongly affected the women's experiences in the world of education, work, family and friendships, religion, and political beliefs. The effect of marital status on the lives of the ten women will be explored in greater detail throughout chapters III, IV, and V.

Through this study I hope to add to the research on women's history and the history of education. Yet more specifically, I hope to share information about the lives of ten women who graduated from William and Mary during the first twelve years of coeducation. I want to acknowledge the help that I had in making this study. In particular, I want to thank the ten women who were generous enough to spend many hours sharing personal details of their lives with me. They have inspired me in innumerable ways.
CHAPTER I

METHODOLOGY AND THEORY: COMBINING IDEAS WITH PRAXIS

A. INTRODUCTION

This study is a description and analysis of the lives of ten women who attended the College of William and Mary during its first twelve years of coeducation, 1918-1930.\(^1\) The ten female alumni represent a range of years, from the first year that the College accepted women in 1918, to the class of 1930. To preserve the alumnae’s privacy, the names of the women who participated in my project will not be used in this paper.

In order to contact women alumnae from the first twelve years, I obtained a list from the William and Mary Alumni Office with approximately 150 names of women alumnae from the years (1918-1930)\(^2\) and mailed forty letters to local alumnae who attended the College during the 12-year time period on which I focus. I telephoned the women who responded to my

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\(^1\) It is important to note that the ten women in the study do not capture class differences nor do they capture racial differences. They are all Caucasian and each of them come from middle to upper middle class homes.

\(^2\) Only one of the alumna from (1918-1921) is still living.
letters and interviewed those willing and interested in discussing their experiences at William and Mary and, more generally, life experiences which they were willing to share.

All of the interviews were conducted from March 1993 through September 1993 and most of the women were met with two or more times. The interviews lasted from two to six hours, with an average length of four hours each. Eight of the ten women interviewed gave me permission to use a tape recorder which freed me from the pressure of memorizing and made it much easier to partake actively in the interview process. All of the tape recordings were transcribed verbatim, accumulating over 200 pages of notes.

In her book *The Woman in the Body*, Emily Martin (1992) recalls that when doing research about our own culture, it is easy to take many things for granted. Just as Martin (1992) struggled to understand the "obviousness" of her data, I also struggled. Martin (1992) notes that Marx claimed that people do not see the contradictions in their own society: "A complete contradiction offers not the least mystery to them. They feel as much at home as a fish in water among manifestations which are separated from their internal connections and absurd when isolated by themselves" (Martin, 1992:11; Marx, 1967b:779). It was easy for me to take the women's words for granted, yet by using a combination of ideas from grounded theory, feminist theory, symbolic interaction, and the sociology of knowledge perspective, I was able to work with themes and ideas that I otherwise would have ignored.
B. Methodological Approaches

LIFE HISTORY AND ORAL HISTORY

The primary research method utilized was life history, with a major focus on oral history. Oral history techniques are useful ways to record recollections of the past; oral history fills gaps in the written record. Oral history is an ancient method which integrates the memory with past and present experiences (Moss, 1974). Oral history data are dynamic and as transformative as the minds and memories of the narrators. As stated by Moss (1974) oral history captures "...a segment of human experience--the interaction of interviewers and interviewees--in the context of a remembered past, a dynamic present and an unknown, open-ended future. To presume to search for historical evidence in such a source is a special challenge and adventure with both opportunities and limitations" (9). Oral history is a method which gives "history back to people in their own words" (Thompson 1978:226).

Though critics and proponents of oral history question its validity (Moss, 1974; Henige, 1982; Denzin, 1989, as discussed by Willson, 1986), this same criticism can be made of all history: "The essence of history is people, and all people are bound by their cultural perceptions of the world. Documents, since they are written by people, share the same limitations. The words of people do not automatically become truth once they are transferred to the written page" (254). Henige (1982) claims
that it is important to be aware that informants often tend to embellish a great deal of information about their pasts.

Consider the words of Thomas and Znaniecki, in The Polish Peasant in Europe and America.

Whether we draw our materials for sociological analysis from detailed life records of concrete individuals or from the observation of mass phenomena, the problems of sociological analysis are the same. But even when we are searching for abstract laws, life records, as complete as possible, constitute the perfect type of sociological material, and that if social science has to use other materials at all it is only because of the practical difficulty of obtaining at the moment a sufficient number of such records to cover the totality of sociological problems, and of the enormous amount of work demanded for an adequate analysis of all the personal materials necessary to characterize the life of a social group. (294-295)

Oral history has the unique ability to make use of all five senses to explore the past. Faraday and Plummer (1979) assert that oral history often focuses on areas which are often ignored or neglected in other types of sociological research. According to Faraday and Plummer (1979), oral history involves three key factors: 1) the subjective reality of the individual; and 2) the process and ambiguity that we are inundated with daily yet often tend to overlook when striving towards order and rationality, typical goals of social science. Becker states that “the life history, more than any other technique except perhaps participant observation, can give meaning to the overworked notion of process. Sociologists like to speak of ongoing processes and the like, but their methods usually prevent them from seeing the processes they talk about so glibly (Faraday and
Plummer, 1979:777); and 3) focus on a totality rather than the “amputated” work, typical of social science.

The life history method strives to encompass the totality of the individual’s life experiences in the broader socio-historical framework rather than just one aspect of a person’s life. Highlighting the complexity of studying the whole person, Faraday and Plummer (1979) state “as one interviews a person in depth, one finds more and more anxieties about actually capturing the totality--the process and the meaning” (778).

**ORAL HISTORY AND THE STUDY OF WOMEN**

Oral history is a tool which can uncover previously ignored aspects of women’s lives. According to Anderson et al. (1990) “When women speak for themselves, they reveal hidden realities: new experiences and new perspectives emerge that challenge the ‘truths’ of official accounts and cast doubt upon established theories” (95). Along similar lines, Jensen (1983) suggests that “Women’s oral history begins to document certain consistent patterns which challenge previous generalizations about gender roles” (86). According to Gluck (1977), women are creating a new history by using their own voices and experiences. In doing so, women are able to challenge the traditional concepts of history and what is historically significant. Anderson et al. (1990) suggest that women’s experiences are systematically different from men’s in important ways and thus need to be analyzed to fill in big
knowledge gaps (96). Anderson et al. (1990) continue to say that women's experiences and perspectives have historically been "suppressed, trivialized, ignored, or reduced to the status of gossip and folk wisdom by dominant research traditions institutionalized in academic settings and in scientific disciplines" (96).

In Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History, Anderson and Jack (1991) suggest that oral historians studying women need to shift from a focus on the process of data gathering to a focus on the interactive process involved in the actual interviews. Kristina Minister (1991) warns that oral history flourished in the 1940s in an androcentric society and, today, androcentricism continues to flourish in its institutionalized forms; e.g., religion, media, sports, family, and government. Minister (1991) concludes that if oral historians are not sensitive to the androcentric bias in the interviewing process, women who do not participate in "male socio-communication" will remain silent and invisible (31). She makes a clear distinction between the women's and men's conversations: while men often talk about "task and power issues" or "what they do", women frequently discuss "personal and family issues and relationships with others" or "who they are" (31). Throughout my interviews I found this also to be the case. Women were consumed with issues revolving around self identity: personal and family matters. At least three fourths of every interview centered on personal and family issues; matters
of “what they do” or have done, (task and power issues), were almost non-existent.

Minister (1991) suggests that first and foremost, oral historians need to equalize the power between the interviewer and the respondent. Similarly, Oakley (1981) suggests that the interview process should be an interactional exchange. She believes that discussing issues with the interviewees and answering their questions makes the entire interview process more humanitarian. I attempted to do this by sharing some of my life with the women so that it wasn’t merely a one way exchange. During the interview process, it was not merely researcher and subject. Rather, I developed friendships with the women.

Minister (1991) and Lopata (1980) also emphasize the importance of avoiding overly-structured interview questions; noticing and interpreting a woman’s nonverbal communication; and, allowing for a leisurely interview pace rather than a rigid time frame. I worked on applying all three suggestions. Though I had particular questions that I asked every woman, I was not overly rigid about the interview structure. I brought particular topics up only when they seemed appropriate to discussion, and time and again, I let the women highlight to me the aspects of their lives they deemed important to share. I also watched nonverbal communication carefully, and was able to pick up a lot of different messages by non-verbal cues, including fatigue, pride, joy, sadness, embarrassment and loneliness. Finally, I always planned at least five free hours for each interview.
Whenever possible I arranged to begin an interview early in the day so that, if need be, we could talk for several hours. Oftentimes, it was not until the first hour or two had passed that we would get past the nervous small talk.

**A GROUNDED THEORY METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Also utilized was the qualitative research method called grounded theory, first developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) in their book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Grounded theory is an inductive method which requires researchers to generate theory from their data. The proponents of grounded theory are not so much concerned with the verification of hypotheses and replication of past studies as they are with generating new theory from their research. Grounded theory is based on data that can usually not be completely refuted by more data or replaced by a new theory since it is so closely tied to existing data; it is likely to last despite modifications (4).

Highlighting the strengths of grounded theory, Scott (1970) claims that it encourages field work, accents qualitative sensitivity and implies more practical implications because it is tightly connected to the data. However, Brown (1973) warns that though researchers must take seriously what they are studying, they must be aware that they may be wrong while, at the same time, not allowing such a notion to paralyze research activity. Furthermore, Faraday and Plummer (1978) recognized
that though grounded theory could aid researchers in analyses of
different life histories on various theoretical themes (similar to
my study), they warn that researchers often gravitate too quickly
towards the extraction of theoretical themes which then
restricts further exploration. Instead, they propose that
researchers engage in *Ad Hoc Fumbling Around* which involves
focusing upon whole areas; e.g., women's education, women
during the early twentieth century, women in the South, and
thinking widely about a range of issues related to that area (785).
They conclude that though grounded theory is not very good at
validating or testing existing theories, it may be helpful in
discovering falsificatory cases.

In regards to my study, a grounded theory methodology
enabled me to let the data speak to me. By analyzing my notes
and transcribed interviews, I was able to uncover themes that
the women I interviewed found important, rather than themes
in which I happened to be specifically interested. Through a
grounded theory methodology, I sought to get beyond cultural
stereotypes and assumptions in the attempt to understand
better and explore the social realities of ten of the first female
William and Mary graduates.
C. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The primary theoretical perspectives that I chose to utilize in this paper were centered around a social constructionist view of reality and a phenomenological approach. I also utilized ideas from both symbolic interactionism and feminist theory. All of my theoretical orientations focus on issues of negotiation and ambiguity, with phenomenology and symbolic interactionism particularly concerned with the self and identity.

INTERPRETIVE PHENOMENOLOGY & THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

Interpretive phenomenology is primarily concerned with how humans socially conduct their reality and how humans use physical space, nonverbal and verbal language. Similarly, the sociology of knowledge is concerned with the relationship between human thought and the social situation in which it develops. Specifically, it is concerned with the social construction of reality. Using the social construction of reality perspective, I focused on the reality of everyday life for ten female William and Mary graduates. Yet, as Berger and Luckman (1966) note, the reality of everyday life involves phenomena that are not present in the "here and now". Berger and Luckman

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(1966) claim, "The reality of everyday life is taken for granted as reality. It does not require additional verification over and beyond its simple presence. It is simply there, as self-evident and compelling facticity" (23). Yet, warns Shutz (1967), only a minute portion of an individual's knowledge of the world originates from within their particular life experiences. Most knowledge is socially derived and passed down to individuals by friends, family, and teachers.

The sociology of knowledge and the phenomenological perspective recognize that everyday life is organized spatially and temporally. The spatial structure includes how one organizes the material world in which they live. The temporal structure is based around time. Berger and Luckman (1966) state, "only within this temporal structure does everyday life retain...its accent of reality" (27). Celebrating a birthday, looking at the clock or a calendar, people are able to re-integrate themselves through the use of time, into reality.

In the words of Shutz (1967), through sharing a community of time, "...each partner participates in the on-rolling life of the other, can grasp in a vivid present the other's thoughts as they are built up step by step" (16). Shutz (1967) refers to this type of relationship as a "We-relation" (18). He recognizes that most human relations are anonymous and therefore superficial. Yet he believes that with the exception of the "We-relation", it is impossible to grasp the uniqueness of each individual in his or her unique life situation. This was recognized as a stumbling block for my project and efforts were
made to establish a "We-relation" with the women in my study. I acknowledge the limitations of my efforts to create an entirely accurate and well-rounded depiction of the personal life history for each individual. Shutz (1967) believes that we constantly order and classify our experiences through the use of interpretive schemes. He suggests that researchers need to "bracket" or temporarily set aside the issues that they must confront in their daily lives--while taking on the attitude of a disinterested observer. Simply stated: by acknowledging their subjectivity, researchers can, to some degree, transcend their subjectivity and become more objective.\(^4\)

Another important component of the social construction of reality approach, central to my oral history project, is language. Language enables human beings to communicate meaning. Berger and Luckman (1966) write:

> Because of its capacity to transcend the "here and now", language bridges different zones within the reality of everyday life and integrates them into a meaningful whole. The transcendences have spatial, temporal and social dimensions. Through language I can transcend the gap between my manipulatory zone and that of the other; I can synchronize my biographical time sequence with his; and I can converse with him about individuals and collectivities with whom we are not at present in face-to-face interaction. As a result of these transcendences language is capable of 'making present' a variety of

\(^4\) It is important to note that Shutz's notion that researchers can "bracket" and become objective is in direct contrast to feminist researchers' belief that objectivity is impossible. Throughout this paper I have attempted to maintain a middle ground. Recognizing that it is important to let the women speak for themselves, I have attempted to bracket and acknowledge my subjectivity as a researcher in hopes of analyzing my data more thoroughly. Yet, in respect to feminist research, I do not believe that complete objectivity is possible. So recognizing what I believe to be the inevitable subjectivity of my project, I have attempted to remain as objective as possible.
objects that are spatially, temporally, and socially absent from the "here and now." (37)

Throughout the ten oral histories that conducted, language was our primary tool (photographs being secondary) to "make present" that which is now bygone. Shutz (1967) also recognizes the importance of non-verbal language like gestures and facial expressions in communicating knowledge. I was also very attuned to non-verbal gestures and, throughout the interviews and afterwards, I made notes about each women’s non-verbal language.

Recognizing that society exists as both an objective and subjective reality, each member of society simultaneously externalizes his or her own self into the social world and, at the same time, internalizes it as an objective reality. Berger and Luckman (1966) state, "When the generalized other has been crystallized in consciousness, a symmetrical relationship is established between objective and subjective reality. What is real 'outside' corresponds to what is real 'within'. Objective reality can be "translated" into subjective reality and vice versa.

Language, of course, is the principal vehicle of this ongoing translating process in both directions" (123). When analyzing historical information about women’s education and women’s lives I have been aware of the masculinist biases that hide "beneath the claims of social science and history to objectivity, universal relevance, and truth" (Anderson et al, 1990: 96).

While utilizing a social construction of reality perspective I attempted to reconstruct knowledge that not only recognizes
women but attempts to uncover what Anderson et al. (1990) refer to as the "submerged consciousness of the practical knowledge of everyday life and linking it to the dominant reality" (97). With this in mind, I considered very carefully both the spatial and also the temporal organization of the lives of the women that I interviewed by studying the language that each woman used to express her self identify and by observing their current living situations while at their homes or apartments during interviews.

This paper focuses on three themes that I gathered by using a grounded theory methodology. The three themes directly involve the concepts of community and institution: (1) the family, (2) education and work, and (3) religious and political involvement. All three topics center around the larger theme of self identity.

Both institutions and communities were viewed from a sociology of knowledge perspective. As defined by Benmayor (1991), "community consists of collective formations of individuals tied together through common bonds of interests and solidarity. What they lay claim to will vary according to the specific community, but includes such things as land, homes, beliefs, language(s), artistic expression, traditional or newly emerging practices, or anything else which is seen by them as defining qualities of who they are, what they want, and what they seek to be as a community" (165). When considering community, it is important to concentrate on the dynamics of struggle, conflict and compromise, rather than just on stability.
and homeostasis. The present and future goals, actions, beliefs and values of communities are constantly being negotiated, re-negotiated, and re-defined. Furthermore, people in the same community can get many different things out of their involvement. They have different experiences in the same communities, and, over time, their attitudes can change towards their community, depending on what they choose to remember and forget. This becomes keenly evident when considering the ten William and Mary graduates in this study.

Though many scholars refer to words like structure, framework, and hierarchy when defining and discussing institutions, throughout this paper, I hold the notion that institutions are not some looming "structure" imposed upon us by forces unknown to humankind. On the contrary, institutions represent the consensus of human beings. They are created by and for humans--thus they can be modified and/or destroyed by and for humans. Institutions are one of the many ways that humans organize and they are often considered a conservative form of social organization.

Veblen (1934) points out that new technology threatens old institutions and evokes their resistance. He states, "Institutions are products of the past process, are adapted to past circumstances, and are therefore never in full accord with the requirements of the present" (1934: 191). Institutions are wrought with a continual process of conflict and negotiation. They harbor a complicated array of manifest and latent
functions, both of which must be considered when attempting to understand thoroughly any given institutions.

Institutions affect individuals in very personal ways often having a powerful psychological influence over people. Peter Berger (1963) hypothesizes that institutions create certain types of personalities which best uphold and perpetuate a given institution. John Dewey is credited with suggesting that instincts do not produce institutions but rather that institutions produce instincts (Coser, 1977). Simmel (1950) also explored the dialectical relationship between the individual and society. Simmel believed that society is an invisible world with its own laws: the laws of society are embedded within the social institutions and the social institutions mold individuals. Yet Simmel (1950) also suggests that humans express individuality which is separate from society. For Simmel, humankind is a continuous struggle between individuals and society—both entities existing within every human being.

In the words of Berger and Luckman (1966), "This reality in turn has power to shape the individual" (63). In actuality, it will create a certain type of person whose identity and biography have meaning only in a universe upholding the entire institutional body of knowledge. Berger and Luckman (1966) state, "Institutions also, by the very fact of their existence, control human conduct by setting up pre-defined patterns of conduct, which channel it in one direction as against the many other directions that would theoretically be possible. The knowledge that institutions uphold and perpetuate is
transmitted from generation to generation and is learned as objective truth and is thereby internalized as subjective reality."

As explored by Durkheim ([1912] 1965), "...before the middle of the nineteenth century, everybody was convinced that the father was the essential element of the family; no one had dreamed that there could be a family organization of which the paternal authority was not the keystone" (18).

As suggested by Anderson et al. (1990), by considering the dialectical relationship between the construction of identities and the construction of institutions, researchers are able to observe a process called "structuration" by moving between personal accounts and institutional histories (109). Certainly, it is important to recognize that structural forces (macro) and interactional experiences (micro) are central factors in the perpetuation of the social construction of reality.

Looking at three institutions and how our cultural ideology shapes these institutions, I explored what Dorothy Smith (1986) refers to as "institutional ethnography". I considered each woman's daily life in an attempt to work towards an understanding of how their activities fit into organizational processes. I considered how the institution of family and marriage, education, work, religion, and politics shaped and influenced each woman as individuals. I considered their subjective internalization of the objective institutional knowledge in which they were socialized. Using a grounded theory methodology, the three themes that were most prevalent in the
oral histories were: 1) education and work, 2) family, and 3) politics.

As stated by Shutz (1967), the subjective interpretation of meaning is possible only by uncovering the motives which underlie a particular course of action. By studying the woman’s motives for living their lives the way that they did, I hoped to get closer to an accurate history of events in each woman’s life. Yet, Shutz (1967) warns that actions have different meanings for the actor, the partner involved in the interaction, and for the observer not involved in the situation. With this in mind, I stayed as close to my data as possible, using direct quotations whenever appropriate.

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

Symbolic interactionism developed between (1880-1935) with the ideas of prominent thinkers in America and Europe for example, George Herbert Mead, William James, and Charles Horton Cooley. Symbolic interactionists focus on the notion of "self", and how the "self" affects the way individuals interact in the world. Symbolic interactionists believe that one’s self concept develops from interaction with others. William James states, “a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him” (quoted in Turner, 1991:370). According to Cooley ([1909] 1962), symbolic interactionism is a mediating bond between the social environments and individuals and it is
this role that must be analyzed to grasp an understanding of the mutual interdependence of these two entities in human society.

In 1937 Herbert Blumer outlined three premises of symbolic interactionism: 1) Humans behave towards things on the basis of the meaning that they have for them; 2) each individual derives meanings for things from social interaction\(^5\); 3) meanings evolve through an interpretive process used by the individual during social encounters. For example, actions are interpreted, and this interpretation is part of what defines meaning. Due to the process of interpretation, meanings of things change as the interpretations change. Social interaction rests upon taking oneself (self-objectification) and others (taking the role of the other) into account. The individual and society are inseparable units—society is understood in terms of the individuals which make it up.

Aspects of the self become associated with dimensions of social structure when an individual identifies her self with others in similar positions and contrasts her self with those in different situations. Her mind enables her to take on the role of others with whom she interacts and in turn she can view her self as an “object” through their eyes (Singelmann 1972).\(^6\)

Singelmann states, “the self becomes a motivating force in its own right and it dialectically acts back on and changes the social environment from which it derived.” (1972:415)

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\(^5\) This challenges the belief that meanings of things are biological and/or a part of objective reality

\(^6\) Charles Horton Cooley’s looking-glass self idea is a social creation and it fluctuates with differing involvement in various aspects of the social structure (Singelmann, 1972).
With the symbolic interactionist perspective in mind, I attempted to capture each woman’s life, not as a static truth, but rather, as a continually evolving and changing reality. Through symbolic interactionist theory, I also recognized that on any given day, particular circumstances can greatly affect individual’s behavior and perspective. Finally, using symbolic interactionist theory, I attempted to understand better the influence that particular social institutions have had on the William and Mary women alumni, and how that influence may have affected their lives.

**Feminist Theory**

Defining feminist theory is complex. Nielson (1990) states that feminist research has been described as “contextual, inclusive, experiential, involved, socially relevant, multi-methodological, complete but not necessarily replicable, open to the environment, and inclusive of emotions and events as experienced” (6). The Feminist Movement is composed of an amorphous array of concepts, methods and ideals, yet its fundamental goal is to analyze gender relations. Like all other types of theory, feminist theory reflects a certain set of social experiences. As Flax states (1987), gender relations have been relations of domination, controlled by one of their interrelated aspects, the man. Concealed in a variety of ways, women have been defined as an enigma, the question, the sex, or the other, while men are considered the universal. Feminist theory
recognizes the exploitation, devaluation and oppression of women and it is committed to changing women's subordination.

Benhabib (1989) criticizes the misogynist origins of western tradition and the gender bias in Enlightenment thought; she states that women and areas of concern to them have been trivialized--linguistically White-washed. Though feminist theory still must confront hostility towards its revolutionary ideas, it has made notable progress. Most importantly, feminist theory has problematized the existence of gender. No longer can we regard gender as a simple, natural fact. According to Bordo (1990), feminism exposes the gendered nature of history, culture and society. Recognizing this, feminist theorists continually confront the challenge of seeing what tradition has trained them to see, while at the same time, searching for what tradition has told them to ignore.

Modern feminist theory tends to avoid both grand social theory and attempts to find the sole causes of sexism. Rather, feminist theory has turned to a more concrete inquiry with more limited aims. Bordo (1990) claims that this shift is due to the growing legitimacy of feminist scholarship. In the 1980s women of more diverse backgrounds have won wider recognition for their objections to feminist theory which fail to acknowledge their lives and problems. They have exposed a bias in feminist theory which includes its overemphasis on women who are Caucasian, middle class and heterosexual. Today, many feminist writers reject the notion that anyone can speak for woman and that all women share the same oppressions. Barbara
Christian, Adrienne Rich, bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Charlotte Bunch, and Marilyn Frye emphasize the diversity of the feminist movement. They criticize much of the previous feminist theory for its ethnocentric, White, middle class bias and they reject any attempts at meta-narratives. They claim that such an approach hampers, rather than promotes sisterhood. Instead, they propose a theorizing which is attentive to diversity.

Audre Lorde (1984) provides four steps to a feminist theory that is sensitive to differences: 1) articulate feminist views from within the social worlds that we live; 2) think about how we are affected by these worlds; 3) consider ways in which how we think about the worlds in which we live may be implicated in existing power knowledge relationships; 4) imagine ways in which these worlds can and should be transformed. Lorde (1984) states that we need to recover aspects of our social relations that have been suppressed, unarticulated or denied within the dominant (male) views yet she warns that we should not consider ourselves as innocent bystanders, and goes on to state that we can and do exert power over others through social categories like race, class, sexual preference, and age. Lorde (1984) concludes that none of us can speak for Woman because no such person exists.

Patricia Hill Collins (1990) engages in a deconstructionist mode of feminist theory. Deconstructionism questions the very logic of dualism and the creation of closures and enclosures at the center of the text. She discusses two characteristics of our patriarchal society. First, persons, things, and ideas are
conceptualized in terms of being opposite: for example men/women, Black/White, stupid/smart. Secondly, such approaches create a mythical norm to assess which side of the dichotomy is deemed normal and desirable and which is labeled abnormal or undesirable. Collins (1990) suggests that we need to listen to many radical and socialist feminist theories which place emphasis on diversity.

Dorothy Smith (1990) proposes an interpretive feminist theory and she emphasizes the importance of experience. She (1990) states that the natural science model assumes an objectivity that is inapplicable to humans' attempt to understand other humans. She claims that one must begin with the subject as they experience the real world—not how an observer sees the world of women. Similar to the French feminists emphasis on writing through the body, in her article “Methods of Writing Patriarchy” Smith (1989) states that we must learn to write from “...the distinctive site of women's consciousness in the place of our bodies and in the actualities of our lives, the text is not disembodied meaning as it is in the theorizing of contemporary literary and philosophical theorists of the text. The text is an actual material presence” (41).

I have utilized principles of feminist theory and methodology throughout my study. Those which have been central to my research include: 1) The recognition of the diversity among women. I have been careful to regard each of the women that I have studied as an individual, with a personal history. 2) The recognition of my own gendered being. As
stated by Cook and Fonow (1990), "Understanding the common experiences of women researchers and women subjects in a society characterized by a marked degree of gender asymmetry enables the feminist researcher to bring women's realities into sharper focus" (73). 3) The dissolution of the object/subject dichotomy so common in research. I did not allow the interviews to become one-sided, rather, as the women shared stories with me about their lives, I also shared stories with them about my life. 4) The centrality of women in my study. This is not a paper about the College of William and Mary or families during the turn of the century, it is a paper which explores the individual life experiences of ten women--one of their commonalties being that they were among the first to attend the College of William and Mary.7

7 I designed a simple information sheet and asked each women to fill it out and send it to me. All of the women responded. I hope to give the reader a general knowledge of my participants through these brief overviews of each woman [refer to Appendix A].
CHAPTER II

WOMEN'S EDUCATION: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Throughout the past three centuries women in the United States have engaged in a tumultuous struggle for equal educational opportunities. Historically, college education was primarily education for the professions; hence, there was no apparent need to allow women to be part of these privileged student bodies (Newcomber, 1959: 5). During the eighteenth century women's fortitude was tested by unstable conditions. As stated by Solomon (1985), during colonial times, women were able to make unusual contributions to their families and their communities. As the American Revolution drew near, women attained greater responsibility and self-confidence as some were disguised as soldiers, spies and camp followers while others organized protests and raised money (Solomon, 1985:7). Solomon (1985) notes that those women who were able to identify with the patriots discovered that the political ideology about the "rights of man" also had importance for women (7).

Forerunners of the feminist movement, like Abigail Smith Adams, who reminded her husband to "remember the ladies" in the new code of laws and asserted that married women should have protection from abusive husbands, aided in bringing the
issue of education for women into public discourse. Adams also recognized the educational deficiencies for women and asked that the new constitution support the importance of having learned women. Similarly, Judith Sargent Murray, author of the essay *Equality of the Sexes* (1779), argued that women needed to gain self respect and that education could provide essential independence and empowerment for women (Solomon, 1985: 9).

Though females were rarely able to attain formal education prior to the nineteenth century, some girls were able to attend “dame schools” but the educational training was not rigorous; the lessons usually excluded reading and writing (Newcomber, 1959; Deem, 1978). As mentioned by Newcomber, (1959:8) occasionally girls were able to attain education through the assistance of their fathers and brothers. Sometimes, girls were able to attend classes at a local school without receiving credit. Yet, these were the exceptions.⁸

As the number of colleges increased, the institutional objectives broadened and the justification for excluding women became less obvious. In fact, there even appeared to be some good reasons to educate females. Because women were in charge of the domestic sphere and often performed the role of teaching the children, in order to have educated and informed male voters, those instructing them had to be educated

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⁸ I fear that when compared to today’s educational opportunities for women, it is easy to overlook or trivialize the importance of dame schools and normal schools. As discussed by Schwager (1987) and Kerber (1980), the development of female academies was a significant advance for women’s education.
(Newcomber, 1959; Gordon, 1990; Solomon, 1985). According to Schwager (1987), this highlights a central paradox in women’s educational history: women were educated in order to preserve the traditional cultural values of domesticity and subservience. They were educated to uphold the values of Republican Motherhood and, as discussed by Kerber (1980) and Schwager (1987), were supposed to teach their sons to become active, informed, and moral citizens. Yet, while receiving the education to become better mothers, women simultaneously were provided with valuable skills, leadership opportunities, and the chance to work towards nontraditional values, and at times, radical social transformation (Schwager, 1987: 343).

There was also a demand for teachers; Catherine Beecher estimated that in 1853 the country was in need of as many as 60,000 teachers (Astin and Hirsch, 1978: 17). Literate women also were needed to provide religious instruction to children (Lasser, 1987). Female teachers were “cost-cutting” as their salaries were half to a quarter of those of male teachers (Perun, 1982:17). Deem (1978) and Perun (1982) noted that the expansion of education in the nineteenth century is due partly to the industrialists’ need for a semi-educated work force. As Deem (1978:5) notes, the church and charitable institutions, and the industrialists saw the beneficial influence that the education of girls would have on their families, for example, through the higher moral standards and higher standards of domestic skills.
During the early nineteenth century, girls' schools became more popular, although the curriculum was oriented toward teaching about the social graces: painting, music, elocution, manners, and occasionally French. The first public high school for girls opened in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1824 and the second in New York two years later (Flexner, 1975:28). In other regions, girls began to be accepted with boys, especially in regions where the number of students was small.

In 1838, Oberlin College was the first college to accept women. Likewise, prominent women educators like Mary Lyon, Catherine Beecher, and Emma Willard claimed that women's secondary education complemented domestic life and Christianity (Gordon, 1990). Seminary schools of varying quality began to open up to women with Mary Lyons' Mt. Holyoke being among the best. According to Perun, (1982) women had access to about fifty colleges that were established between 1825 and 1875, including Mt. Holyoke, Vassar, Smith and Wellesley. The majority were church or community sponsored, thus they suffered from a lack of financial and organizational resources when compared to male institutions (16). In the following fifty years, more colleges and universities began accepting women. Yet, as emphasized by Lasser (1987), Gordon (1990) and Astin and Hirsch (1978), they did so for economic and demographic reasons, not for ideological ones. It is important also to note that the colleges and universities opening to women were concentrated primarily in the North and the Midwest.
WOMEN’S EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH

Women’s education in the South advanced more slowly than it did in other regions of the country. According to Solomon (1985), this is partly because the South suffered more devastation during the revolutionary war. The public school systems that became quite popular in the North by the 1830s were less developed in the South. Around 1815 Virginia witnessed the growth of schools for young women; some professors at the College of William and Mary moonlighted at the Williamsburg Female Academy “conducting the young ladies through certain mathematical, astronomical, and philosophical branches” (Lebsock, 1987:62). Yet as Lebsock notes, the education that women received at the female academies was not comparable to the education that young men received.

Solomon (1985) states that the Southern public schooling system was less organized and often times only privileged Southerners attained any type of education. As the interest in public schools slowly increased in the South, so did the issue of education for females. Yet, well-bred Southern women were supposed to be trained to be ladies, rather than taught lessons in reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Gordon (1990) explains that during the early nineteenth century, some Southerners felt that women’s education would help their slave-holding, patriarchal culture but the expense of seminary schools limited such opportunities to the wealthy few.
Furthermore, graduates of the seminary schools often returned home to get married, have a family, and to assume domestic duties (Gordon, 1990). Southern women were suffering from a lack of quality education. As Kerber (1988) mentions, Southern women's literacy rates were considerably lower than those for the rest of the country. In 1850, one in five White Southern women was illiterate (Faragher and Howe, 1988: 26).

Until the 1880s Southern women had minimal access to higher education, which, as mentioned by Gordon (1991), is almost a generation later than their Northern counterparts. Because the Civil War devastated the Southern economy, it did not inspire new colleges and universities to form (Lebsock, 1987). Like the majority of Southern colleges, William and Mary had suffered considerably during and after the Civil War. Closed during the War, William and Mary opened in 1865 only to close again in 1881, due primarily to a dearth of funding which in turn led to the deterioration of many facilities. As Lebsock (1987) states, this economic devastation probably intensified the sharply divided gender roles. According to Mendenhall (1993), the post civil war period highlighted four definite trends in regard to education: 1) seminaries and academies were revived and temporary private schools were established; 2) women displaced men as teachers in the elementary grades of the public schools; 3) movement for the establishment of women's colleges began; 4) coeducation was introduced into several state universities (100).
Gordon (1991) states “ante-bellum Southern women were exposed to new forms of knowledge yet they were confined to the same domestic duties as their uneducated mothers” (16). The first public Southern college for women, Mississippi State College, did not open its doors until 1885. White, Southern women of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were the first generation of college educated females. Gordon (1990) discusses how they had to struggle to achieve some independence from their families. A majority of Southern families upheld conservative ideas about Southern womanhood. Southern women were confronted by the notion that women of the South should be ladies.9

In the twenty years after the Civil War, the South concentrated on economic survival, rather than transforming the future. Parrish (1988) notes, “William and Mary President Benjamin S. Ewell never gave up hope for the College, and in 1888 he convinced the state legislature to provide financial support for the College’s teacher training program” (3). Soon, teacher training became a central goal for the College. The teacher training program, which aimed to prepare men for supervisory positions in education, was such a success that in 1906, during the administration of Governor Claude Swanson (1906-1910), the Commonwealth of Virginia agreed to fully support William and Mary (Parrish, 1988). By 1912, William and Mary graduated more teachers than the other four-year state

9 This meant that they should abide by social codes and always adhere to a double standard of conduct: one for males and one for females—“and should be protected by all that equality might bring” (Stringer and Thompson, 1982: 2). This idea will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 3.
schools (Virginia Polytechnic Institute, University of Virginia, and Virginia Military Institute) combined (Rogers, 1975).

The 1890s and early twentieth century was considered a time of reform. In 1910, Virginia's Mary-Cook Branch Munford founded the Cooperative Education Association which was an alliance of women and men who wanted to reform education all over Virginia. During this time, Virginia financially supported four degree-granting colleges for males but none for females. There were four normal schools for females--Farmville, Harrisonburg, Fredericksburg, and Radford. However, they did not give regular diplomas and they were not accredited (Lebsock, 1987:115). Lebsock (1987) states "for a young White woman of the genteel classes, college was an unconventional act and it took special circumstances to get her there" (116).

Though women in turn-of-the-century Virginia were the primary teachers at schools, most of them had not attended college. Stringer and Thompson (1982) assert that the opportunities for a Virginian female to finish high school in 1910 were minimal. In order to pursue a quality higher education that was comparable to that of men, women had almost no choice but to leave the region entirely. This did not please everyone; a campaign to establish an in-state college program for Virginian women began to gain considerable momentum around 1910 when Mary Munford founded the Coordinate College League. At this time, the state of Virginia funded four degree-granting colleges for men, but none for women. Women could attend one of four normal schools; yet the
normal schools did not give regular diplomas nor were they accredited.

The President of William and Mary, Lyon G. Tyler, belonged to the Coordinate College League's campaign for coeducation. However, in so doing, he was an exception. Many powerful alumni opposed coeducation because they were concerned that women would not be a positive influence on the intellectual goals of the collegiate environment. With its long history of entertaining some of the most famous male historical figures in United States, including Thomas Jefferson and John Tyler, the traditional, patriarchal roots of the College did not necessarily coincide with coeducation.

Between 1888 and 1917, William and Mary remained a relatively small college, the highest enrollment was 244 in the year 1905-06. Enrollment in 1916-17 was 196, plus the 38 students in the teacher training academy. In the fall of 1917, student enrollment had dropped to 131, with the addition of 96 students who belonged to a detachment of the Students' Army Training Corps.\(^{10}\) Clearly, the Army Training Corps aided College finances considerably, yet the President of the College, Lyon G. Tyler, wanted a more efficient and dependable way to expand enrollment and qualify for more state funding (Parrish, 1988).\(^{11}\)

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\(^{10}\) Enrollment figures can be obtained in the college bulletins. The figures varied as to whether they included the students in the teacher's training academy, which was discontinued in 1918.

\(^{11}\) During the late nineteenth century, men's colleges were suffering from economic hardships. Many colleges, in order to overcome debt, decided to establish coeducation. The early leaders of the women's movement viewed coeducation as a right, yet, as emphasized by Astin and Hirsch (1978) and Faragher and Howe (1988), the purpose of coeducation was not to heighten the
President Tyler, an advocate for women's rights, supported coeducation. He joined the Cooperative Education Commission in 1904, the first year of its existence. Tyler also supported a woman's right to vote through his membership in the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia. Tyler's interests in women's rights were not merely pecuniary in nature. He was sympathetic towards and exposed to the women's movement in a personal way since his wife and daughter were suffragettes. Yet Tyler, like other advocates of coeducation, had to be cautious. The issue of coeducation was controversial. According to a recent article in the Williamsburg Gazette, "students and community members similarly were pessimistic about admitting women" (May 26, 1993). An article in the February 27, 1918 issue of the Flat Hat, William and Mary's student newspaper cautioned, "Why should the tradition of our school, the noblest tradition of any institution, be sacrificed when such a principle could be tried elsewhere?"

The state legislators agreed to the compromise partly because of the adverse effect World War I was having on the number of male students attending college (Parrish 1988). Also, the suffrage movement influenced some people to consider the moral aspects of allowing women equal opportunity to higher education. Stringer and Thompson (1982) state, "in a move to probably preserve the undergraduate experience at the University of Virginia for White males only, in March 1918 the

status of women, but rather, to aid the institutions financially (58). In 1870 only 30.7 percent of colleges for men were coed and by 1898 seventy percent accepted both women and men (Perun, 1982: 19).
General Assembly passed a bill admitting women to the College of William and Mary" (37). Parrish (1988) suggests that in comparison to the University of Virginia, William and Mary's alumni and students were fewer in number and politically weaker, so their protests against coeducation were not as powerful and therefore were ignored more readily. Furthermore, Godson et al (1993) note that the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 which promoted vocational education and teacher training prompted the College to accept women. The College of William and Mary utilized federal funds to begin a successful teacher training program in home economics.

In 1918, after an aborted effort to make the University of Virginia coeducational, Senator Aubrey Strode introduced the Strode Bill to make William and Mary coeducational. On 17 February 1918, the William and Mary Board of Visitors adopted a resolution in favor of the Strode Bill, the legislation which would enable women to attend the College.12 On 15 March 1918 the bill was passed and William and Mary officially became the first state-supported, four-year college in Virginia to accept women and men equally.13 Virginia also became the last state in the Union to ban females from its four-year public universities.

In the fall of 1918, 24 women arrived at the college, making up 17% of the student body. Most were from Virginia, and several were from Williamsburg. The College prepared for

12 Board of Visitors Minutes, 17 February 1918, p.359; College Archives, Swem Library, College of William and Mary.
13 I want to emphasize the fact that the College only admitted Caucasian men and women. Racially, education in the south was segregated during this time period.
the arrival of women on campus by hiring a dean of women and a supervisor for Tyler Hall, the newly built women’s dormitory. After enduring a two week quarantine for Spanish influenza, the men and women students were able to meet. A nightly “social hour” in the Tyler Hall lobby enabled men and women to get to know one another and to develop friendships.

The first class of women students was confronted with strict social regulations, especially after Julian Chandler became president in 1919. Women walking off campus could only utilize certain streets. No male visitors were allowed in the women’s dormitory lobby after 8 p. m. Furthermore, the women had a 10 p. m. curfew with mandatory lights out by 10:30. Because student government, literary organizations and publication staffs did not allow women to participate, women formed their own literary and dramatic society, student government, and they even organized intramural sports teams.

Martha Barksdale and Janet Coleman Kimbrough are two of the most well known women from the first class of female students. While a student at the college, Martha Barksdale was elected to be the first president for the women’s student council. Ms. Barksdale became an associate professor of physical education at William and Mary; she taught at the College from 1921-1966. The Phi Beta Kappa playing fields were renamed in her honor after her death in 1974. Janet Coleman Kimbrough, a life-long resident of Williamsburg, became a physician and lived a

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14 It was not until the 1970s that male students were allowed to visit female student’s rooms.
productive life in the Tucker house, situated in the heart of Colonial Williamsburg.

The enrollment of women escalated quickly from the first class of 24 women in 1918-1919. By 1922-1923 there were 341 women students. By 1925 women made up 40% of the student body. Their numbers rose sharply again in the late 1920s and early 1930s as the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg brought national acclaim to the College and to Williamsburg.
CHAPTER III
EXPERIENCES IN EDUCATION AND WORK

A. EXPERIENCES IN EDUCATION

Historically, our culture has been very skeptical of scholarly women. Learned women were often the object of tremendous criticism and the "butt of bad jokes" (Lasser, 1987:41). Some critics of coeducation believed that women's inferiority would impair the quality of the education offered to men as they thought that women were mentally inferior to men (Faragher and Howe, 1988; Gordon, 1990). Yet in an article published in a 1927 issue of the Journal of the American Association of University Women Lois Rosenberry bluntly states, "They [women] have not raised the standards of intellectual life in these institutions, nor have they alone lowered them" (38). In supporting her belief that women have not hindered educational institutions, Rosenberry (1927) continues on to assert that women ordinarily outnumber men in their admittance to Phi Beta Kappa, one of the most prestigious honor societies in the nation (38).

Interestingly, eight out of the ten women that I interviewed considered themselves to be average students, at best. This could be an example of how the women internalized
the pervasive, discouraging words of the opponents of coeducation. One woman responded, "I was one of those people who didn't believe in being a bookworm. I never flunked a course and I was average in some courses, in others above average. But the bottom line is, I had a good time." Another women explained, "I didn't work as hard as I should have. My biology teacher told me, 'You have a good mind but you don't choose to use it' and I studied, you know, but unfortunately I just never really applied myself." One of the respondents who attended William and Mary for two years stated, "After two years, I wasn't anxious to return to the College. I look back and I realize that I wasn't very smart. I guess I never even bothered to consider the future. It's really a shame that I didn't take more advantage of my education."

Other women felt that the poor quality of their high school education left them unprepared for the William and Mary curriculum. In the words of one woman, "During my high school years, teachers would find out that they could make more money working with ammunitions so the turnover was very high. I never received any proper education in math. So when I enrolled at the College, I knew that if I took math, I'd just be a goner. I really wanted to take botany or biology but you had to draw all of these things--and I had never had any sort of drawing experience. So, I ended up taking chemistry, and that was almost my waterloo. I never had enough math in high school to understand all the sucrose and fructose business."
Another woman recalled, "I could tell that I was not nearly as prepared academically as some of the students from bigger schools. They had learned a great deal about how to study. They had been more prepared than me for virtually everything related to academic life. At my high school, we had such small classes that you could talk yourself out of almost anything. Well that wasn't very good once I got into college. It didn't prepare me for what I had to face. I felt like I was sort of out of it for the time I was there [at William and Mary]."

Students were not the only ones who felt that secondary school teachers were at times inadequate. According to Scott (1970), teachers themselves often felt dissatisfied by their preparation for instruction. One of the women transferred to William and Mary from another school in Virginia. She explained, "I came here [to William and Mary] because I wanted to go to a school where I could get more substance and my transfer meant all the difference in the world. It was so much more educational at William and Mary. I never regretted my transfer. It was also nice to go to a college that people have heard of. Everyone knew where William and Mary was."

Historically, many critics of coeducation questioned whether women could hold up physically under the demands of higher education. Women were looked upon as fragile creatures; people were concerned that too much study would cause brainfever (Newcomber, 1959, Gordon, 1990; Perun, 1982; Astin and Hirsch, 1982), uterine disease, hysteria, or neuralgia (Lasser, 1987:85). Those women who did attain a college
education often had to confront negative stereotypes that suggested that they were asexual and physically grotesque (Frankfort, 1977:86). Yet, by the time William and Mary opened its doors to women, such arguments were slowly being disproved. Women were successful college students and were not suffering from "brainfever" nor were they impairing the quality of education offered by colleges and universities.

When asked whether they thought that women were as capable as men academically, all of the women said "yes" with confidence. One woman replied, "You ask, are woman as capable academically as men? Oh my dear, I feel that they are more capable as men. Men's egos get in the way of their abilities". Rosenberry (1927), who was writing about women college students during the 1920s, believed that though women were as capable as men, women's focus in education should be somewhat different. According to Rosenberry (1927) women should use their college education to learn how to balance a career with marriage or to find compensation when marriage does not "come one's way" (40).

When asked why they went to college, all ten women had similar answers. Their families were a primary source of encouragement.15 The woman responded as follows:

My family was very college oriented so it just made sense that I would attend William and Mary.

I always knew I was going to William and Mary. My parents stressed the value of education with me at a very early age. From the time I knew that

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there was a movement on foot to make it coed. I thought that I would go to William and Mary.

I always knew that I was going to college. My family expected me to go.

It never occurred to me that I would do anything else but go to college. My family were educated people. That was just what you did when you finished high school.

I just knew that I was going to William and Mary before I finished high school. Though my family supported me they didn’t have to encourage me because I was already planning on it.

I had an older sister that went to William and Mary the year before I did. And the College was right across the road from my house. It was so convenient that I guess it was an opportunity that I couldn’t pass up.

Another woman recalled that she was depressed after having been rejected from a job that she wanted. Her father came to her and said, “You get on that bus and head to William and Mary. The education will be good for you.” Interestingly, all ten women mentioned family encouragement as a primary reason why they attended William and Mary.

According to Faragher and Howe (1988), women students were often hurt by coeducation because they had to try to attain acceptance in an already well-established domain. Men often filled the campus dormitories, thereby forcing women to live in off-campus boardinghouses (Faragher and Howe, 1988). Yet, the women’s recollections of their experiences at the College were far from negative. During the first year that women were accepted at William and Mary, the female boarding students were permitted to live in the recently built Tyler dormitory. This was a privilege that angered some of the men who were made to live in the older dormitories.

The issue of housing was central to the six women who boarded at the College. Referring to her dorm experience, one
of the women exclaimed, “It didn’t matter where I lived. Just the freedom of boarding on campus and living away from home was nice.” Another recalled, “I loved dorm life. I had two brothers and there was quite a difference in our ages. The oldest brother was five years younger than me and the next one was twelve years younger, so you know, I didn’t grow up in a big family so I especially appreciated the ‘big family’ atmosphere of dorm life.”

Especially memorable was a building referred to as Tyler Annex. Time and again the women described the thin walls of the Annex (one woman poked her arm through the wall while having a bad dream), the insects and mice, and frigid temperatures, yet the women repeated that they had some of the best times of their lives in the Annex. The Annex was, in the words of one alumnae, “a temporary, tar-paper building leftover from WWI—though rustic, we thoroughly enjoyed each other in this building.” Another woman recalled, “The Social Director, Miss Annie Powell, lived in a house right next to the Annex. One day she came over and she said, ‘I just had to come. I couldn’t stand to sit at home and wonder what all the laughter is always about over here.’”

When asked why they enjoyed dorm life so much, the women recalled the close friendships that they developed. One woman stated, “We all spent so much time together in the dorm. Practical jokes were popular fun. One time we tied one gal’s longjohns under her bed and set her alarm off to ring in the middle of the night. Another time, I woke up in the morning to
find that someone had put a shoe box of water on my back. Those simple things kept us all laughing.” Another said, “I had so much fun chatting with my friends that I could never finish my work. Finally I started getting up before dawn to study in the bathroom when everyone else was still asleep.”

Coeducation has also been criticized because campus facilities for example, student centers and gymnasiums, and campus organizations are often restricted for male use only (Faragher and Howe, 1988). When women at the College were not allowed into the male clubs and organizations, they simply started their own. In the first year of coeducation, women began drama clubs, basketball teams, a student council, and the Alpha Club with the motto, “The First but looking to the Future”. During the second year of coeducation, a field hockey team and the Whitehall Literary Society were established. And by the fall of 1921, women students could select from a variety of clubs and organizations including: YWCA, debate team, tennis, folk dancing, baseball, and the Edith M. Baer Home Economics Club. Interestingly, Rosenberry (1927) goes so far as to suggest that women’s participation in “extra-curricular” activities has had a tremendous effect on college life. She concludes that with dances and sports, fraternities and sororities, christian associations and college government, students find it impossible to perform up to par in their classes since their time and thoughts are too preoccupied by events outside of the classroom (38).
The alumnae fondly reflect back on a variety of college activities in which they partook. None of them mentioned that their extra-curricular activities interfered with their work. Yet, three of the women referred to themselves as “social rather than academic”. The ten women involved in my study were active in a wide range of activities including: basketball, field hockey, the Edith M. Baer Home Economics Club, the Literary Society, the German Club, Tyhoe Hiking Club, the Colonial Echo Club, and the Alpha Club. Many of the women also remember getting a snack and chatting with friends at the Kandy Kitchen, one of the most popular student hangouts. One alumnae recalled, “The best thing we enjoyed, I think in my group, was going to the Kandy Kitchen and getting toast and hot chocolate.” Another stated, “The drug store on the corner was in full bloom and we used to go there all the time to get coca colas for five cents.”

Sports events were also the center of many fond memories for the alumnae. Referring to athletic events, one woman recalled, “The games were very important; we always went to the games, everybody would go. I even continued to go after I had finished College”. Another women stated, “I went to all the ball games and yelled and screamed just like everyone else and of course, everyone went to the games back then.”

Women were not participants in the sports events that united the campus. In reference to women’s sports, one

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16 Not surprisingly, the women who lived on campus for a year or more were able to actively participate in sports, clubs and social activities much more than the women who lived at home.
respondent replied, "Women did not play sports nearly as much as they do now. There was a basketball team and some girls played tennis, but there was no real tennis team for women, it was all just intramural." Another woman who played field hockey responded, "We never competed with anybody. It was non-competitive and just for fun."

The Greek life was another primary source of campus social activity. However, only one of the ten women in my study belonged to a sorority. When asked how they felt about sororities, the women had a variety of interesting responses:

Sororities were not a big thing when I was in college. I just didn't hear much about them.

You know, I wasn't even aware of sororities then. Can you believe that? I think they became much more popular later.

Sororities were for socialites; I was not a socialite then and I'm not now.

I was asked to join a sorority but I didn't. Maybe if I'd come back another year I would have joined it but I just didn't come from a wealthy family and I just didn't feel that I could add the expense of a sorority to my already tight budget.

The one woman who was in a sorority reflected fondly upon her Chi Omega days. She stated, "My sister was a graduate of University of Michigan and she was a Chi Omega and though I was rushed by other sororities, it just didn't occur to me to be anything but Chi Omega. My sister came with me to get me registered at the College and she wore her Chi Omega pin. The Chi O's spotted her and they happened to turn out to be two of my best friends in the sorority. The sorority played a big part in my social life at the college."
None of the women felt that the male students were hostile about coeducation while they were students at the College. When asked how male students reacted towards coeducation, the women responded as follows:

My sister was at William and Mary in 1920 and at first I think the women faced more resentment there, but through time, the guys and gals became just like brothers and sisters. The men really looked out for you. Yet when I was decided which college to go to, I went to VPI to investigate. That was during the very beginning of coeducation. Oh, I met so much resentment, even when I was just going to visit the school. One fellow had lunch with me and he said, 'don't come here. If you do, your life will be absolutely ruined. Needless to say, I had no desire to go there!

The men I knew felt fine about coeducation. They didn't tease; I could have majored in anything that I wanted to; I had some good friends that were men and good friends that were women and I didn't feel resentment from the men at all.

I don't think that the men ever minded us coming. The way I remember it, coeducation didn't make any difference to them.

You know, I'm not even sure that when I attended I realized that the college had not always been coed. I really didn't think about it and neither did the men. It just wasn't an issue.

Though many male students were accepting of coeducation, for some, the transition was not as easy. The late Dr. Janet Kimbrough stated, "The alumni were the source of the only hostility, the men students were not sure whether they liked the idea or not" (Alumni Gazette, 1974:8). The historian of the class of 1918 bluntly states, "We deeply regret to imprint upon the pages of our history the melancholy fact that we are the last class to graduate from this old college before it is defiled by coeducation" (Alumni Gazette, 1974). Along similar lines, in the 1921 Colonial Echo a statement about coeducation reads:

This was an event which changed the whole complexion of the College. From the day the first woman put her dainty foot within our venerable precincts, from that day the William and
Mary of tradition ceases and new forces were let loose, which, when judged from a final balancing of the books, will show a record of many gains and many losses. It is then, as a prophet and not a historian, that I fear the gains will never compensate for the losses (49).

A few vociferous individuals expressed disapproval in regards to the coeducation of William and Mary yet the women suggested that the majority of people supported coeducation. As stated by Godson et al (1993), "Generally, men considered the women's presence an attraction. They enjoyed socializing in the reception room of Tyler Hall after dinner, and there were more partners for dances and cotillions" (511). Though some historians discuss the heated debates which the issue of coeducation frequently raised, ten of the women who lived through the early years of coeducation at the College felt welcomed, comfortable, and happy at William and Mary.

Gordon (1990), Perun (1982) and Fass (1977) suggest that by the 1920s women began to go to college for different reasons. Many went to have fun, participate in the student life and meet eligible bachelors. In fact, three of the four women that married did so during their college years. This hindered all three of them from finishing their degrees; one of the three had enough credits to receive a teaching certificate. The fourth women said that she never thought that she was the marrying type. She did not marry until she was into her thirties.

The vocational orientation towards service and social reform characteristic of the Progressive Era shifted more towards individual achievement. As described by Fass (1977),
campus peer life during the 1920s gave birth to the first modern American youth culture; peer life at college was isolated, middle class and homogeneous. College students were an expanding elite "who would graduate to work and play, marry and vote" (Fass, 1977: 122). According to Fass (1977), college students of the 1920s often did what they had to "to get by" in their studies and they rigorously participated in social and extra-curricular activities. Most college students during this time period were average students and scholarship, on the whole, was devalued (Fass, 1977:175).

Women frequently recalled the many restrictions that they had to adhere to during their college days. One woman stated, "The restrictions were hard. You had to dress up. I am sure they wouldn't have allowed students to wear anything like the clothes they allow now. But I don't think even my mother would have allowed what they wear now! But the restrictions weren't hard for me. I had grown up with restrictions. I was not foot loose and fancy free as the young people are today. We weren't allowed to have automobiles, and besides, few could afford them. I think that alone made a big difference. Though we had many restrictions, I never felt restricted in any way. This was what everybody was doing, you know?"

Another replied, "I vividly remember that we weren't allowed to go off campus very much and we were only allowed to go to certain areas in town. We were very restricted. In order to have a date with a boy that wasn't on campus you had to have permission from the social director, Miss Bessie Porter Taylor,"
and of course you weren't allowed to drive an automobile, and there weren't many here at that time anyway. Everybody stayed on campus and on Saturday night, we would all attend dances in Blow gym. It was also against the rules to smoke because women smoking was absolutely taboo at that time.” In reference to smoking, another woman said, “Smoking was absolutely against the rules, so everyone wanted to try it. I remember Petimas, they were an imported cigarette and if you could smoke them then you were with the gang. I smoked occasionally then, just for the thrill of it.”

The women were not exaggerating when they said that there were many rigid rules that they were required to follow. Women recalled that they could not leave campus without submitting a detailed sign-out which included the name of their escort, destination, and time of return. Men were not allowed to visit Tyler Hall without the proper attire, a coat. The women remembered wearing sweaters, skirts and saddle shoes to class and heels and hose to dinner. Also, they recalled their 10:30 curfew as compared to the midnight curfew which the men had. Finally, one of the women stated that the doors of Tyler were specially made to be hard to enter and exit--possibly to discourage any after hour visitors.

When asked what subjects the women enjoyed studying, even in my small sample of ten alumnae, a broad range of subjects was listed. One woman replied, “Oh, I was very interested in math. My father was very gifted at remembering dates and figures and I think his gift in math was partially given
to me. I remember in high school, me and one other student didn’t have to take the final exam in geometry because we both had an “A” average. Nobody could understand how we did it but I find it quite easy.” Similarly, another replied, “Math has always been something that I enjoy; I also think that it is important. I worked as a bookkeeper my entire life, not because I had to, but because I enjoyed working with numbers.” Another woman replied, “Biology was my primary interest and it was my major. The biology department was wonderful. I prefer the natural sciences. I always stayed away from social science classes like the plague.” Another woman exclaimed, “I could not have studied math. I just never understood it. I was terrible in mathematics. I flunked it. I enjoyed philosophy, English, and history but I guess I just don’t have a mathematical mind.” Another woman stated, “Well, you know, through my college days and throughout my life, I have been discouraged by our society’s worship of science. Science was pushed on male students in my day and I believe that it still is today. I have always loved and deeply appreciated the arts and literature and yet I felt that somehow, those things were never as valued in societal terms. I think that we need to encourage our students to explore more human oriented subjects--I can only hope that the glorification of science is coming to an end.”

Schwager (1987) suggests that historically women scientists, as a result of discrimination, have become invisible and are kept in marginal positions in labs or outside major research centers. Furthermore, they have not been properly
encouraged to achieve excellence in their chosen field. I asked one woman who majored in chemistry at William and Mary why she did not pursue her masters while taking a year away from her teaching position to study at Johns Hopkins. She replied, "I was a very stubborn little girl. I went to Johns Hopkins while I was on a sabbatical. My supervisor said that I could work on my thesis yet I just didn't feel like I really could afford the time. I just had to write a thesis because I had all the necessary course credits from William and Mary--yet I never completed it. Yet I felt that because my field was going so fast, I should learn the newest things in chemistry and I'd be a much better teacher than if I'd written a thesis. Because of that I never got very high up on the pay scale. The masters pay scale was higher than mine, and then the Ph.D. pay scale was higher than the master's. Yet I feel that I was a much better teacher than many who pursued advanced degrees."

When I asked the women if they were discouraged from taking particular courses and encouraged to take others or if men and women were allowed and encouraged to take the same classes. Most of the women stated that they could take any course that they wanted to and that men and women were encouraged to take the same classes. Yet when I asked them if males took home economics as frequently as females, all of the women laughed and said "no". One woman responded, "Oh of course not! Home economics was a women's subject!"

Furthermore, when I asked a biology major whether many
women majored in biology, she said, "Certainly not. I was one of very few women who majored in biology."

Pre-requisites were another interesting phenomenon that may have affected women students' course selection. Certainly it affected one of the women when she registered for classes her first year at the College. She states, "One thing that was bad for me was that there weren't counselors in my high school. I didn't have any guidance at home and I didn't have any guidance at high school in regards to what sorts of classes I should take to prepare for college. Well, I took French in high school--I took three years of French. But when I went to William and Mary and began signing up for classes, there were so many things that I couldn't sign up for because I hadn't had Latin. You see, that was very bad for me because I had to sign up for courses which I really didn't want. If I'd only known to take Latin instead of French, I would have. I didn't realize that it would hurt my opportunities like that."

I asked the women whether they had any female role models while at the College. Interestingly, all of the women recalled male professors, but none of them referred to a female professor and/or staff member who served as a role model. Gordon (1990) states, "women professors were, by definition, not Southern ladies; as such, their students could not identify with them" (40). In the words of one woman, "I had some women teachers but they weren't role models, let me tell you. I know one I will never forget. She was not a role model, rather,
she was what you don't want to be, as far as I am concerned. She was quite a little martinet, at least to me."

College enrollments peaked for women in the 1920s; during this time women were between a third and a half of all students. According to Solomon (1988), differences between educated and uneducated women were clear; educated women did not have as many children and they had greater access to professional work and paid employment. Yet many women did not receive degrees and only fourteen percent of Ph.D.'s were awarded to women (Newcomber, 1959). Of the ten women that I interviewed, one received her Ph.D. in home economics; two received their B.S. degrees, one in biology and the other in chemistry; and two received their B.A. degrees, one in sociology, the other in English. Two of the women received their teaching certificates after two years at the College, and three of the women left the College before they earned a degree or certificate. Five of the six women who never married received degrees and/or teaching certificates. One of the women who married received a B.S. degree, one received a teaching certificate, and the other two left the College before they had earned either.

When asked if they thought that a college education improved a person's character, some respondents felt that education had little or no effect on one's character:

I don't think that going to college affected me much or made me any smarter; I sure don't feel like it did.

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17 Of the ten women interviewed, the four married women had children, the six single women did not.
Well, one of my best friends finished high school but her family couldn’t send her to college. She worked as a clerk in a store in the city a good many years and she is incredibly intelligent. She is unusually capable of remembering dates and people. She pushed herself to learn more than many people who went to college. Two of the smartest people that I ever met were at Lynchburg College. One was in charge of the grounds and probably didn’t even finish high school. The other was the mother of a roommate that I had. She couldn’t read but she was one of the very smartest women that I ever knew. I realize that during college, the things that you like are the things that you know most about. As far as college affecting me and my character, I don’t guess that it did much.

I don’t think that having an education affects one’s character much. My oldest sister got married at sixteen. She realized that her two younger sisters were getting an education and she read everything that she could get her hands on. She absolutely read everything. She was also a wonderful poet. She could write a poem about anything. When my middle sister and I left for college, my eldest sister wrote us a poem and dedicated it to us, to everything that we did. And she wrote beautifully and her grammatical errors were nil. She was so determined. She was self educated and I always told her that she was the best educated woman in the family, and she was. She was remarkable!

In contrast, some women saw education as directly related to a person’s character:

Oh, education greatly influenced my life character. I think that it gave me an appreciation for music and plays and good books. It also afforded me with encounters with other people different from myself.

Education affected my life dramatically. I think that education is number one in anybody’s bringing up of family. It was in my childhood. It opened up a world to me that I would have never known existed. I think it does to everybody. If you put any work at all into it it will build you into a different kind of person.

EDUCATION AND CONTACT WITH THE COLLEGE DURING LATER YEARS

The women have had varying degrees of contact with William and Mary over the last seven decades. Several of them have attended plays, concerts, and related functions in recent years. Two women have gone so far as to take courses many years after they had finished their undergraduate studies at the
College. The two women who were able to take classes later in life both emphasized how much nicer it was to attend classes during a time when they had the time to enjoy and appreciate the education. One woman exclaimed, “I always liked school, especially when I was able to go in my later years. I took three courses from the college about 25 years ago. The classes were in short story writing. I suppose it was called creative writing. We had to write some poetry and short stories and I really enjoyed it. I went at night with some other ladies my age from Yorktown.”

The women have had varying degrees of contact with the College since they graduated. Two of the women have never gone back for any homecoming events, while others have been class representatives for events at the College. When asked if she stayed in touch with the school after she left, one woman responded, “Oh yes! I have been in touch with William and Mary ever since I graduated. I have lived right here, practically on campus. I represented my class at a recent College function and I got to sit in a front row seat. It was a lot of fun.” Another stated, “You probably know that each class has a representative, well, I was my class representative for the tercentenary events and I enjoyed it. I really did.”

In response to the same question, another woman replied, “No I don’t stay in touch with the College. Isn’t that awful. I don’t see any point in emphasizing the fact that I am this ancient. I really don’t. After having been out of state for so long,

18 Both of the women that took class later in life were never married.
I lost contacts in Virginia. And because I don’t write letters I’ve lost contacts with many people. But, there’s nobody at the alumnae gatherings that I know. Why should I go and try to rekindle acquaintances with people who don’t mean a thing to me? I read about people I know, but who wants to try to re-establish friendships at this point in your life? I lived in walking distance from the college for 31 years and yet I didn’t go down to things once."

B. EXPERIENCES WITH WORK

Work was a central issue in the lives of all ten women. All of the women, at some time or another, worked outside of their homes. The six never-married women held jobs until retirement. The four married women had interrupted work careers. All four women who married worked before they married, one worked when her children became school age, and two worked outside of the home only after their children had grown-up. The married women clearly viewed their employment as auxiliary to their lives as wives and mothers whereas five of the six never-married women placed their careers at the center of their lives. The one never-married women that did not consider her career to be at the center of her life spent many of her working years taking care of her father’s business and household, and later, caring for her aging family members. Yet throughout the interview she expressed
regret that she was unable to explore her life long career dream
to become a physician.

Lebsock (1987) notes that for women in Virginia, the
1920s and 1930s were marked by a decelerating involvement in
public life. After the stock market crash of 1929, businesses
and government agencies supported measures that discouraged
the employment of women (Lebsock, 1987).

Women who prepared for careers were encouraged to go
into particular lines of work, mainly, teaching and social work,
and beginning in the 1920s, home economics (Astin and Hirsch,
(1982) suggests that women often were encouraged to teach so
that they would not become the “de-feminized creatures
featured in popular imagination” (20). Faragher and Howe
that teaching was an especially popular career choice for women
in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, especially
never-married women. Yet there is disagreement over the
status teaching held in the world of work. Faragher and Howe
(1988) note that teaching was a low-status job often defined as a
semi-professional rather than a professional occupation.
Teaching afforded women minimal authority or power as women
were kept in subordinate roles in educational institutions
(Faragher and Howe, 1988). But Scott (1970) and Schwager
(1987) assert that teaching was a respectable thing for women of
all classes to do. Through teaching, women were able to develop
and kindle friendships, collegial support, and bonds of sisterhood with other female teachers (Clifford, 1978).

Home economics was another popular career choice for women. Powers (1992) questions whether home economics was an instrument of social and economic control; she notes that many people believed that the principles of home economics would rejuvenate homemaking as a profession and encourage daughters to deny the "unnatural craving for careers" which was distracting women from their "essential responsibilities" (15).

So-called "hard" sciences were considered to be masculine subjects that were unnecessary and inappropriate for girls to study since science and technology were used in the production of goods and profits—an arena in which females were often excluded (Deem, 1978: 18; Astin and Hirsch, 1978). Furthermore, Emily Martin (1992) asserts that the production of science requires objectivity, something our culture associates with masculinity. According to Jaggar (1983), "We find that the attributes of science are the attributes of males; the objectivity said to be characteristic of the production of scientific knowledge is specifically identified as a male way of relating to the world. Science is cold, hard, impersonal, 'objective'; women, by contrast, are warm, fragile, emotional, 'subjective' and therefore encouraged to pursue Arts and Literature, and 'soft' sciences" (316).

Discussing ways that women sought community in the world of work, Gordon (1990) states, "struggling for intellectual acceptance and social survival, the female pioneers of
coeducation formed literary societies and other clubs but existed only on the social margins of college life” (21). The American Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA), was founded in 1881. The ACA meetings encouraged women to think of possible careers for college women. The meetings also addressed issues regarding necessary curriculum changes for achieving important occupational goals. The ACA served as an organization in which educated women could network in an environment where many college educated women felt very isolated and lonely. Yet, as Gordon (1990) mentions, women’s campus organizations were often elitist as they consciously excluded women from less fortunate backgrounds.

Though the women were often supportive of networks and clubs which addressed issues related to women’s occupational opportunities, many of the women striving for equal opportunities in employment did not identify with feminism or the women’s movement (Newcomber, 1959; Gordon, 1990). Though women at the forefront of the first wave of the women’s movement, for example, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, identified with feminism, a majority of the women who supported women’s right to education avoided controversial political issues like slavery and suffrage (Solomon, 1985).

It is also important to recognize that, as mentioned by Newcomber (1959), women were less encouraged, and much less likely to use their education towards scholarly advancement.

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19 The American Association of Collegiate Women (ACA) is now known as the American Association of University Women.
As discussed by Scott (1993) Southern culture made it hard for women to consider their own work as paramount—it was always secondary to family duties and/or their husband's work. Scott (1993) noted that even never-married women or widows often had to put the care of their aging family members ahead of their work. Women did not receive the same types of research opportunities that men were offered. Likewise, men often had the pressure of supporting a family so that they would have more pressure to get further ahead and institutions could justify paying them higher salaries.

Newcomber (1959) notes that women often felt that research and publication would not bring them the same recognition that it brought men. Similarly, women in college teaching or research positions were often required to take on heavier teaching loads and more tasks that were not related to research. When asked whether she ever published anything after a long career as a college teacher, one of the women replied, "No. I never published an article or presented a paper at a scholarly meeting. I was into teaching and that took up all of my time. I didn’t have time to publish". Another replied, "Yes. I’ve published articles, but that certainly wasn’t the primary focus of my career. I loved teaching; publishing was secondary".

The ten women that I interviewed were involved in a range of work, yet the most common profession, by far, was teaching. Six of the women that I interviewed became teachers; two taught at the college level, one taught high school, one
taught middle school, and two taught at the elementary level. The six women who pursued teaching had many different feelings about it. One woman stated that “she enjoyed teaching because it afforded her the time to pursue traveling, a lifelong hobby.”

Another woman responded, “I always knew that I wanted to teach. My mother had been a teacher before me and I had a close aunt that was a teacher and they said that they knew that I would enjoy teaching. I was so eager to teach that I accepted a job at a local high school two years into my education at William and Mary. With my parents’ encouragement, in the end, I turned down the job and continued at the College to pursue my B.S. degree. But through teaching I have made some good friends. I really enjoyed teaching so much that it annoys me greatly when I see people that are teaching just because it is a job to do.”

One woman changed her career to teaching after she married. She stated, “Before I married I worked with the public utility as a home savings girl. But that is something that you can’t do very well and be married because it’s, well, teaching worked with the hours of my children, the public utility did not-so I guess that is why I ended up teaching. Yet I haven’t buried myself in teaching and school. I have other interests. I had my own children and quite frankly I haven’t tried to follow too much what my students have done. I have a friend who still lives in her teaching. It gets tiresome for everybody. She talks about it all the time and as she has gotten older it’s become a fantasy.
No, I haven’t wanted to follow my students too much. Teaching has just been one small part of my life.”

Another expressed her dissatisfaction with teaching. She replied, “Getting my teaching certificate was a big mistake. I do not think that I ever would have taught if I’d stayed at William and Mary longer. You just never knew about things like that when you are young and I guess so many of my friends were going into teaching that I felt kind of pressured.”

The four women who were not teachers worked in office settings. One of the women was a bookkeeper. She said that she did not really aspire to be a bookkeeper, rather, the job was convenient, and she enjoyed working with numbers. The job was located in her hometown so that, in her own words, “it was possible to continue living in my community close to friends and family”. When asked if she made many friends at her work, she said, “No I wouldn’t say that I made a lot of friends there. I never have been one to attend company parties and get-togethers so that may have hindered my ability to make close contacts at work. My friends were not really associated with my job. I just did my job the best I could. Work was work.”

Another one of the women helped her husband with his electrical business. When asked if she helped her husband much with the business she stated, “Oh yes. I worked in the office all the time. The business was an important part of our lives. We were able to make closer connections to the community and I like that. When the business became too
much, we just closed it up. We didn't try to sell it. It was a small business, but locally, we had a lot of customers."

Another woman helped her father with his business. She said that her career goals just never worked out. "When I was 15 I just knew that I wanted to be a doctor but by the time I was 18 I knew that I didn't have sense enough to be a doctor. I wasn't an 'A' student at all. I was a very average student--a lot of 'Bs' but not many 'As' and of course, girls weren't being doctors back then like they are now. Anyhow, I decided to be a medical technician. I wrote away to different places with medical technician programs; this was during the Depression. Anyhow, I got turned down, and I don't know why. I was really in the dumps but then my mother was sick so I had to take care of the house which was a very big house and the nurses and my brother lived there and all the other children came and went so, needless to say, I was pretty hung up. I ended up doing clerical work for my father's business. I was also in charge of the money. I did that for five years, then I just took over the house entirely for about 10 years. I took care of my father for three years and my father left me enough income so that I have never had to work."

One of the women worked as a secretary before she married; after marriage she became a homemaker. In her words, "My husband's business was a big part of my life. He started out very small. You see, we were married during the Depression so it was really hard for us. But slowly, he built one service station, and then another, finally to reach a total of
seven.” When asked if she had outside help with the household, she humorously said, “Help! Oh my dear, I didn’t know what help was. I did all of the cooking and all of the cleaning and at times, it was really difficult.”

When discussing their work, the four married women all emphasized that they held their family responsibilities above all else. Though two engaged in work outside of the home, all four of the women took time off to raise their children. During the 1920s and 1930s it was not uncommon for schools and companies to discharge women once they married. Yet when asked whether they felt that their family responsibilities held them back in their desired career fields, all four of the women said “no”. They all strongly emphasized that they considered their family responsibilities as a choice and not as a restraint. Not one of them mentioned any institutional restraints that may have impeded their ability, as married women, to attain jobs. It is possible that the married women identified so strongly with their roles as both wife and mother that they did not recognize institutional restraints which may have hindered their career options. It is also possible that the women were very satisfied with the years they spent raising children and homemaking. During the interviews, two of the married women emphasized that a primary problem with the modern family revolves around the fact that more mothers work outside of the home than ever before. Because the married women viewed (and continue to view) their homemaker status as socially correct and desirable,
the obstacles which confronted married women in the work force were of little concern to them.

In 1931 the National Education Association conducted a survey of ninety-three cities listed in the 1930 census as having over 100,000 in population. Of these ninety-three cities, forty-six did not hire married women as new teachers. Norfolk is included in this group (Woodhouse, 1932). In Virginia in 1936 only one-fifth of the school districts would even accept an application for a teaching position from a married woman. Furthermore, half of Virginia's school districts automatically fired teachers who married after they were employed (Lebsock, 1987). Woodhouse (1932) notes that married females who were able to teach often earned less than their never-married counterparts or married women in other professions. The three most popular reasons for barring married women from teaching include: 1) the welfare of the schools, 2) surplus of teachers and Depression, and 3) political pressure (Woodhouse, 1932:142). A considerable segment of the population thought married women were unfit for teaching since they had the responsibility of caring for their husbands, households, and many times their own children. School districts that allowed married women to teach were often times convinced otherwise with political pressure that was often directly connected to funding. Not surprisingly, five of the six women who taught never married.

When asked if they were treated equally to the men in their work place, six of the ten women said that they did not think that they were treated any differently as women. Four of
the women expressed objections to "unequal treatment" in the work place. One stated, "Well, throughout my career, I knew that my salary was less than my male colleagues'. I'll tell you, the work force was one of my first real experiences with inequality but I didn't stand up for my rights the way that I should have. I had a year's leave of absence and during that time, it was school policy to pay teachers half of their salary for that year. The principal's son and I both had a leave of absence that year and the son got that money and I didn't. I never raised a ruckus about it but I should have. Now I would, but then I didn't."

Another woman replied, "Well you know, I have attained the highest level of education and I know that I have never been paid equitably in comparison to male professors with their Ph.D. in something like Math or Physics. Because I studied home economics I feel as though I have, at times, been penalized. Our society puts so much emphasis on science and mathematics that subjects like mine, which are stereotypically associated with women, get looked down upon." Along similar lines, another woman exclaimed, "I worked hard my entire life and nothing was handed to me. Being a woman, I think, has made me have to work twice as hard as a man. For some reason, I believe that women are often stronger and more capable because they have to take more flack from society."

During WWII one of the women worked for the military in a crystal department. She referred to many of her male co-workers as "lazy" stating, "They [male employees] did not have
the same principles that I had. There was a guy there that would do anything imaginable to lighten his own load, even if it meant swamping someone else with work. One day I said to him, 'Jim, what if you and all the other guys were up in an airplane, how would you all like to have that crystal you are going to send over' and he said 'Oh, we will never be over there anyhow.' You see, they were draft dodgers and if they could get by with a sloppy job they did. They took advantage of the system in a way women could never get away with."

Though all of the women attended William and Mary during the early years of coeducation, their individual experiences at the College varied considerably. Not surprisingly, the women who lived on campus were more involved in the total college experience as compared to those who lived at home. Boarders had much more active social lives, were more aware of school events, and personally knew greater numbers of students and faculty. During their first year of college, eight of the women lived on campus and two lived at home. Yet by their second year, only five women lived on campus, two women did not return to college, and three women lived at home. Also, not all ten of the women approached their studies in the same manner. Seven of the women considered themselves to be average students with three of the women claiming that they were very dedicated students.

After their experience at William and Mary one woman continued her education to attain a Ph.D, while two others did graduate work, one at the London School of Economics, the
other at Johns Hopkins. All three women who pursued graduate studies were never-married. Five of the six never-married women established careers for themselves; the one never-married woman who did not establish a career for herself was intricately connected to her family--she assisted her father in running the family business. The four women who perceived differential treatment towards men in the work place were all never-married. Furthermore, the never-married women were much more interested in discussing their experiences traveling and all but one of them had spent considerable time abroad.

Only one of the four married women had a career apart from being a parent and homemaker. Likewise, only one expressed an interest in continuing her education yet decided against it due to her family responsibilities. All four of the married women had children and they each considered child-rearing to be their most important responsibility. They often seemed to enjoy talking more about the accomplishments of their own children then they liked discussing their own achievements. Certainly, marital status was intricately linked to the ten women's completion of their college education. pursuit of higher education, and experiences and desires in the world of work. This leads us to explore in greater detail, a primary institution which deeply affects women's lives: the family.
CHAPTER IV
FAMILY, MARRIAGE, CHILDREN--PAST AND PRESENT

A. FAMILY LIFE: WHERE THEY CAME FROM

PARENTS AND SIBLINGS

Family was a central issue in the lives of all ten of the women that I interviewed. According to Bertram Wyatt-Brown (1975), historically, Southerners have placed greater emphasis on the family than did other regions of the United States. The South regarded family connections to be more important than education or work since the social hierarchy was dependent upon family connections (Bertram Wyatt-Brown, 1975). Exploring Southern families, Friedman (1983) asserts that, "Family and property defined power; therefore family loyalty buttressed the social system and in turn, provided the most powerful basis of self identity" (7).

Family was the impetus for each of the women to attend William and Mary. And throughout their lives, all ten of the women kept in close contact with members of their families. Only one of the women was an only child; two came from families with five or more children; the rest came from families with four or fewer children. Each of the nine women with siblings discussed the relationships that they had with their
sisters and brothers. Time and again, the women described their close sibling bonds. One woman explained that she was devastated when her sister died young in life, yet, she "took in her sister's children as her own and has taken care of them ever since."

Another woman stated that when she decided to have her own home built, she bought land right next door to her sister, who was, in her words, "a best friend". She continues, "I was close to my parents, and my brothers and sisters. They were nice people. There are only two of us left, me and one of the boys. And we are still very close. I guess we all got along because we never told each other what to do. When we grew up there was never any fussin'. I guess you'd say that we were good friends as well as sisters and brothers. Oh, there will be spats every once in a while, like all children do, but after we grew up, none of them ever told me what to do. They respected me and I respected them."

Describing her relationship to her two sisters, one woman stated, "My sisters, they were wonderful. I loved them a whole lot." Another said, "Though I never had any children of my own, in a way, my youngest sister was my child. There was a fourteen year difference in our ages and I played a central role in her development. My sister followed in my shoes and went to William and Mary. My parents more or less left it up to me to advise her about things."

Discussing their relationships with their parents, the women relay nothing but the fondest memories. According to
Mendenhall (1993) “children were brought up in the admonition to honor their parents, and, since the mother particularly assumed the duty of training the young, the father received especial reverence and respect” (96). This point became particularly clear throughout my interviews. All ten of the women had mothers who were “housewives”, and nine of the women had fathers who worked outside of the home. Being a housewife was not an easy job. Mendenhall (1993) explains that housewives often planned the meals and cooked them, cleaned the house, kept the garden, raised the chickens, and made, mended, washed and ironed the family clothes, canned foods, admonished and instructed children… and “a thousand other things” (96).

Speaking about their parents, the women had a range of responses. Yet similar themes of respect and attachment arose throughout each of the interviews.

My mother was a housewife; before she got sick she ran our entire house, and we lived on a very large farm. I remember that she had a wonderful sense of humor; I guess she had to with seven children. My father was the president of a company in Newport News. He was very well known in the community and he was such a good moral man. I respected him and loved him very much. Both of my parents were dear to me.

My mother was very bright and very ahead of her time. Everything that she did, she did well. She was very clever and delightful and she had so many talents—besides the fact that she ran the entire household. My father was a good businessman because he loved people. He was gentle and kind and he worshipped my mother so much.

My parents were both very good to me. My mother was an excellent homemaker and she was also trained as a teacher so I think she taught me and my sister and brothers a lot. I remember that she was a great cook and hostess. She was also the disciplinarian. I remember that she gave me the one spanking that I ever received. My father said that anyone who whipped a child is a coward. He believed that you should sit down and reason with

20 One of the woman’s fathers died before the woman could get to know him well enough to discuss him.
children. He was such a noble man. I admired him so much. He had his own business and I remember one of my favorite things to do was to go to his store and help him wrap the bread. I am very indebted to my parents and the way that they brought me up.

My father was the city sergeant in Newport News. He was very well known in this area and he was such a respectable person. I was the only child and I guess I was the apple of my father's eye. He did everything for me; I guess he spoiled me. I remember how he gave me a cadillac as soon as I was able to drive; that was such a thrill. My mother and I were not as close but I still loved and respected her. She spent a lot of time keeping up the house and garden.

My father was a self-educated man. I remember him as being a loving and intelligent man; he was also very liberal. He always treated me like an equal and I think he had a great impact on my life-long love of learning. My mother wasn't political minded at all but she was a gracious and loving person. She spent most of her time doing domestic things like cooking and cleaning.

I am so grateful to my family all of the time because of our upbringing. With only three girls, it is just wonderful that they had the vision that they did about so many things. I was very close to my parents. I think I was very indulged. I was the last girl and I had my own car and everything when I came to William and Mary. And we weren't wealthy. My mother gave us a lot of strength. She was more rigid than my dad. She ran the house, made the rules, and had a stern manner. She wasn't soft like my dad who did a lot of hugging and a lot of caring. Yet she loved us just as much. Let me tell you this little story to let you understand my bond with my parents. When it was time for me to leave home and go to school, my daddy began to worry about it. My mother was more conservative in her thinking but she didn't want it to hurt me. But my daddy didn't mind me knowing just how he felt. But anyway, he, the day before I was to leave on a train for Williamsburg...I had everything packed in one trunk and one suitcase. And he got up that morning and said, I want to tell you something. If you won't go away to school, and will stay here, I will write you a check write now for a thousand dollars! Well, that was like $50,000 today, easily, or maybe more. My daddy said, I want you to have an education but we are going to miss you so very much. Of course, being a little soft hearted girl, it about broke me up to make a decision. And my mother said to me, honey, you know we will miss you very very much but you have to make your own decision. She didn't let him know that she told me that though. I finally made my decision to come to the College.

This experience ties in to Gordon's (1990) notion that Southern parents, different from their Northern counterparts, had the tendency to cling to their daughters and to enforce more conservative notions of Southern womanhood. Gordon (1990) states that short stories written by Southern women, time and again, explore themes of separation.
B. MARRIAGE: TO MARRY OR NOT TO MARRY

Kitch (1993) states that though many in the nineteenth century respected women who remained never-married, by the twentieth century never-married women were regarded less positively. Unlike the nineteenth century feminists who used their education as a path towards professional careers, the great majority of college women in the 1920s and 1930s considered marriage to be one of the central goals of their lives (Ware, 1982). In fact, as stated by Scott (1970) “for most Southern women, the domestic circle was the world” (42).

According to Fass (1977) and Perun (1982) marriage was becoming a more attractive option because it was more financially feasible since men often earned much higher salaries than women, and the dynamics between husband and wife were changing; intimacy and companionship were becoming important factors. In fact, during the 1920s more than two-thirds of college students married, usually immediately after graduation (Perun, 1982). Marriage was considered a path towards a fuller life and an opportunity for intimacy; most women married and a majority married young (Scott, 1970). Scott (1970) further suggests that some women married in order to secure land and family connections, while others were fearful of being old maids.

Fass (1977) notes that the mind set of the 1920s perpetrated a belief that women should receive equality in the
home but not outside of it. Fass (1977) suggests that this restricted the majority of women to family life since they were defined by society as mothers and wives (81). In fact, many believed that God created woman to be wife and mother so that marriage and motherhood were more than just choices, they were divine callings.21

Fass (1977), Astin and Hirsch (1978), and Perun (1982) suggest that many women appeared to accept this family role because they regarded their careers as a filler between school and marriage. Exploring what she refers to as the "glorification of motherhood" Scott (1970), suggests that this myth only concentrates on the positive side of maternity, never once exploring the pain of pregnancy and childbirth, and the economic and social strains of children (37). Scott (1970) states that the myth silenced women, making them hesitant to express their real experiences with motherhood. Furthermore, Scott (1970) notes that the everyday reality of marriage and family was different than the image with which many women were presented. The transition from the life of carefree

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21 As stated in an ancient description of Roman law, "a woman joined to her husband by a holy marriage, should share in all his possessions and sacred rites....This law obliged both the married women, as having no other refuge, to conform themselves entirely to the temper of their husbands and the husbands to rule their wives as necessary and inseparable possessions. Accordingly, if a wife was virtuous and in all things obedient to her husband, she was mistress of the house to the same degree as her husband was master of it, and after the death of her husband she was heir to his property in the same manner as a daughter....But if she did any wrong, the injured party was her judge, and determined the degree of her punishment...." (As found in Kelly-Gadol, Joan. 1976. "Social Relation of the Sexes" Signs 1 (4): 821. Cited from Dionysius of Halicarnassus, The Roman Antiquities, trans. E. Cary (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), 1:381-382.)
girlhood into matronly responsibilities, was, for some women, a tremendous shock (Scott, 1970:27).

Along similar lines, Elizabeth Fee (1976) explores a phenomenon associated with middle and upper class White women called the *cult of domesticity*. In the words of Fee (1976):

A cult of domesticity demanded that the bourgeois female cultivate the gentle arts of femininity. The leading characteristics of femininity were abstinence—both abstinence from labor and abstinence from sexuality—and reproductivity, that is, the production of children. The functions of the wife, went one formulation, except among the poorest class, are or ought to be exclusively domestic. That meant she should ‘bear children, regulate the social affairs of the household, and be an aid and companion to her husband.’ Her social importance lay in her very idleness. Nonproductivity was a major indicator of class standing, a working wife a sign of social and economic disaster (176).²²

As one woman who chose to remain never-married stated, “back in the 20s and 30s it seemed that more girls got married. I don’t think that they had a lot of choices. There were not the career opportunities for women back then. Teaching and nursing seemed to be the two big things that women could do—maybe a secretarial job of some sort—all of which were hardly enough to live on.” Kitch (1993) noted that most women did not earn enough money to really gain a comfortable state of economic freedom and independence; marriage was a woman’s best route out of poverty (12). Furthermore, as suggested by one of the women in my study, “In the old times, women got married because there wasn’t anything else for them to do. They had many babies because they didn’t know how not to have

them. Besides, many couldn't survive economically without a man."

One of the women, who married in her mid-thirties, never expected to get married. She stated, "I didn't want to marry. I never loved anybody but my husband. I had lots of dates and lots of attention. I really did. I could have married a number of times. As this person I knew from college said to me, 'Mary, why were you so late getting married' and I said to her, 'Because I never loved anybody but my husband' and that is the absolute truth."

The other three women who married, did so soon after they finished one or two years at William and Mary. Discussing her marriage, one woman stated, "I was a student in '25 and '26, I married in '27. We got married in my hometown by my family yet eventually we settled in Williamsburg, where my husband is from. People didn't put any pressure on me to continue school and postpone marriage. Most of my friends married. I guess I can think of three out of a large handful that chose to remain never-married." Another woman replied, "I got married in 1928, the year after I left William and Mary."

None of the married women had any household help while they were caring for their families. According to McGovern (1973), "married women, especially those in the upper and middle classes, enjoyed commensurate opportunities. Experts

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23 This is similar to findings that David Allmendinger discovered in his study of the young women who prepared for careers in teaching at Mary Lyon's Mount Holyoke Female Seminary. Allmendinger asserted that even the women who finally did get married never knew when or if they would marry.
in household management advised women to rid themselves of the maid and turn to appliances as the 'maid of all service'" (241). The four married women in my study were responsible for all of the household domestic chores, their children, and two of them even worked outside of the home. This is supported by Scott's (1970) notion that the exact meaning of work varied depending upon one's position in society; economically and geographically, women of leisure were very difficult to find. Leonardo (1987) emphasizes the importance of elevating the visibility of women's nonmarket responsibilities, including housework, childcare, the servicing of men, and the care of elderly (441). Though all of the women interviewed came from financially secure families, all four of the married women worked hard in their respective households.

The four married women expressed great satisfaction with their husbands and their family life. One woman even tried to convince me that I better not miss the boat: "Don't wait too long, honey. Age wise, where will you be when you're done with school, about 28? Girls are doing just what you are doing more and more these days--they all want a career and a family. Well, you should make children your priority because you are that kind of person. Children are just such a wonderful thing."

The women fondly recalled many family events and, as suggested by Scott (1970), Boles and Atkinson (1988) and di Leonardo (1987), visiting and corresponding with family members were central activities for women. The women discussed visits to and from both their own families, their
husband's family and, the homes of their children, when they were of age. And, as stated by di Leonardo (1987), "maintaining these contacts, this sense of family, takes time, intention, and skill" (443). One woman recalled, "We had a hard year the last year of my husband's business. My father had been sick that year. He was bedridden. Then my mother got sick. We would leave directly from work here and drive all the way to my parents' house and then come back late that night and go to work the next morning. The traveling was tiresome but visiting family was nothing new. Sadly, both of my parents died that year." Another woman stated, "My husband's family was really at the center of our life together. He came from a big family and we spent a lot of time visiting them and they would visit us too. It was great fun. I miss that a whole lot."

All four of the married women had to confront the deaths of their husbands. They all expressed deep sorrow when discussing their spouses' death. The interdependency of their marital relationships comes through as they openly speak about their husbands.

I had a very good marriage. My husband and I shared everything that we had. Everything had both of our names on it and my husband was so trustworthy. I feel very fortunate to have had a really wonderful marriage. My husband died thirteen years ago this month and I miss him a great deal.

I had such a strange experience when my husband died. The impact of his death really came later. At the time, there was so much happening. I had to change my whole life. I am speaking from a woman's viewpoint. My husband just took care of me--he sort of babied me I guess. He did so many things for me. It was such an adjustment to have him gone I just stayed busy all of the time. Busy doing this and busy doing that...and then you realize that it's over and that there is nothing that you can do about it. It's afterwards, after you are settled, that the hurt really sets in. I have missed him more than anything. Just somebody to love and someone to show consideration for.
I miss my husband so much. He was such a healthy, active man. He died thirteen years ago this month and I think I miss him more now than ever. I did something that wasn’t very smart. I never learned to drive, which was one of the stupidest things that I have ever done. Yet there was always someone to take me where I needed to go. I was very dependent on my husband and that made the transition after his death even more difficult.

The loss of my husband has been terribly painful. We had such a close relationship. We really were best friends. He was so special. He had such strength of character. When the doctor told him that he shouldn’t smoke he never took another cigarette. When the doctor told him he shouldn’t drink, he never had alcohol again. And I couldn’t do that. He was such a good man.

NEVER MARRIED WOMEN

As stated by Ann Scott (1970), “The belief that woman was created to be a wife and mother did not allow much room for spinsters, but of course there were some” (35). Six of the ten women that I interviewed remained never-married throughout their lives. Simon (1987) suggests that Anglo American culture has many negative images of never-married women. Simon (1987) writes, “from the eighteenth century poet to contemporary advertiser, a cultural stereotype remains constant—the notion that a woman who never marries misses out on much of life through prim and peevish parsimony” (3). During the early and mid-nineteenth century, American society supported what Simon (1987) refers to as the “cult of never-married blessedness” which offers a positive view of never-married grounded in the Protestant faith and the concepts of woman’s particular nature and unique sphere. Yet the “cult of never-married blessedness” rapidly dissipated.

In contrast to their mid-nineteenth century predecessors, never married women of the late nineteenth and twentieth
century were viewed by many as failures; they did not fulfill their "prescribed" roles as wives and mothers. Sociologist Erving Goffman (1963) notes that remaining never-married "spoils the identity" for women. In order to reduce stigmatization, Goffman (1963) suggests that women can do one of three things: 1) find a husband, 2) expend great amounts of energy on projects which she would not be considered capable of as a married woman; or 3) reject the cultural centrality of marriage and celebrate her chosen never-married life with pride and dignity. The six never-married women tended to concentrate on options two and three. Many of them spent a tremendous amount of time and money traveling the globe, something they would not have been considered capable of as married women. Furthermore, five of the six never-married women immersed themselves into their careers, something they would have been made to feel guilty for if they were married.

In her research on women born during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century who did not marry, Simon (1987) found that the great majority had made a conscious choice to remain never-married. Furthermore, Simon (1987) discovered that the fifty women she interviewed were very independent, and still dedicated to their work, communities, parents, siblings and friends. Admiring their courage, Simon (1987) concludes that never-married women of the early twentieth century were rebels in a society that trained them to marry and bear children- "they disobeyed patriarchal preference and have endured the social stigma that women without men face" (28).
Though Simon (1987) refers to never-married women of the early twentieth century as rebels, the six women that I interviewed did not consider themselves to be particularly rebellious. None of them expressed feeling any pressure to marry. Furthermore, they did not think that their never-married-status warranted a special or superior gender or category. Five of the six never-married women in my study emphasized the notion that their never-married marital status was their personal choice. Similar to the study done by Barbara Simon (1987) in which she interviewed fifty never-married women, the theme of independence arose time and again throughout the interviews. The women seem to be suggesting that by remaining never-married, they were able to maintain a degree of freedom and independence that they otherwise would not have had. Yet the six never-married women placed equal emphasis on family and friends and they all enjoyed well-developed, intricate friendship and family networks. Certainly, the women became adept at balancing their desires for independence with the requirements of dependence that maintaining such close ties to family and friends required.

Describing life as never-married women, their responses were as follows:

I didn’t need to get married. I had a career of my own, many close friends, parents who I loved. I was able to travel the world at my own speed. I have lived a very happy life. I don’t think that I was cut out for marriage. It just wasn’t something that ever concerned me.

I had plenty of offers to get married and I considered it several times, but it just never felt right. I don’t think that I could have lived my life the way that I wanted to while being married. I had a career and freedom; I could come and go as I pleased. That is what I wanted out of my life.
I would never have been able to live with a man. I am too particular. I didn’t want to have to spend my life trying to please and take care of someone else. If I want the radio on when I go to bed, I don’t want someone complaining about the noise. I have always been too stubborn and too independent for marriage.

I thought about marriage occasionally yet I always had the feeling that my father expected me to learn how to take care of myself and to be independent—and to know how to earn a living even if I didn’t need to. I grew up with that sort of feeling, so getting married was very secondary for me. But occasionally I thought about it and I felt tempted a few times yet marriage would have changed the way that I lived. I never would have been able to do all of that traveling. Traveling was a primary hobby of mine. And though many people think that a never-married woman must be lonely, I am rarely lonely, and when I am, a good friend or family member is just a phone call away.

Marriage was never a priority of mine. I guess most of the women in my field were never-married and I was the only woman in my department. In a way, chemistry was my love. My work and family always came first for me. I had offers to get married but I refused them all. You see, I am a very independent person. Maybe that’s the old maid in me.

Only one of the never-married women regretted never marrying. She said that though she never felt pressured by her friends or family to marry, she had always hoped to raise children. In her book about Southern women, Scott, (1970), suggested that “romantic expectations and the myth of the Southern gentleman” could hurt rather than help a woman reach “that all-important goal”—marriage (23). Two of the women reported this experience: One woman stated, “You know my mother told me when I was a young woman, we were talking about some boy and I said ‘Oh he gets his grammar mixed up’ and my mother looked at me and she said ‘You’ll never marry’ and I said, ‘Why Mama?’ and she said, ‘You’re too particular’. I never saw anybody that paid any attention to me that exactly measured up to what I would have wanted in a husband. I guess maybe I was too picky. I know I’ve missed a lot because I love children.” She continues, “I would advise you to get married
because you miss out on so much if you don’t”. Along similar lines, another woman responded, “I guess I always believed that marriage should be the result of a selfless love, which seems so rare. I just never met anyone that I felt I could marry because I wanted a person that I was in agreement with--that I was head over heels for...maybe that person doesn’t exist.”

Palmeiri, (Lasser, 1987) notes that the early twentieth century brought on a backlash against women’s colleges because they were seen as promoting celibacy and producing spinsters. Many accused educated never-married women of committing race suicide (Kitch, 1993; Perun, 1982; Astin and Hirsch, 1978). Gordon (1990) and Kitch (1993) state that many of the pioneers of women’s education lived non-traditional lives as they focused their attention on careers rather than marriage, family, and domestic duties. In fact, about half of the pioneers of women’s education lived never-married lives. Also notable, the fertility rate for White women declined by about fifty percent from 1800 to 1900 (Kitch, 1993).

Marriage often hindered women’s pursuit of scholarly careers; family obligations limited women’s opportunities. When asked if she ever considered going back to school to get her master’s degree, one of the women who had married replied, “Yes I did, when we moved back to Williamsburg I thought about it quite a bit. But I just couldn’t have a family and do that. Once I started working again it was just too much. It just wasn’t worth all the trouble and it wouldn’t have been financially worth
it to put myself through that. It would not have been fair to my family."

The six never-married women in my study were all remarkably independent--possibly too independent for the innumerable responsibilities of raising a family. Traveling was a primary hobby for five of the never-married women that I interviewed.\textsuperscript{24} Though the never-married women were often able to come and go as they pleased, a woman with a household of children would have had great difficulty exercising such freedom. Reflecting back upon their adventures traveling, five of the never-married women recall:

I was able to do a lot of traveling in my life. I went to Europe several times--I remember the first time I went to Europe vividly. It was right after high school and me and a group of friends journeyed on the White Start Line--that was a huge ship and what a grand time it was!

Though I was never able to travel abroad, I have traveled a lot in our own country and in Canada. I even made it to Nova Scotia one time and that was such a beautiful place to visit. When I was young I would travel and live in different places for set amounts of time. I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunities I had to live in Maryland, New York, and Massachussets.

Though I never earned a lot of money teaching, what little money I did earn I usually spent traveling. I really enjoy traveling internationally and I feel like I have been very lucky to have so many opportunities. That's one thing that I know my never-married life style has afforded me--the joys of travel.

I love to travel. I have traveled extensively throughout my life. The only place that I haven't made it to that I would really like to visit is the Orient. Maybe I'll still be able to go. I think that being a sociology major made me appreciate meeting people from other cultures and learning about their lives.

I have done a lot of traveling and honestly, that has been one of the biggest highlights of my life. I have been all around the globe to places like New Zealand, Bali, Italy, Spain, England, Canada, France--Oh just talking about it makes me yearn to go on another trip. In all truth, if I hadn't had the family

\textsuperscript{24} The one single woman that did not do a lot of traveling referred to herself as a "real homebody". She stated, "You know, most people really love to travel but I don't. I like to stay at home. I enjoy my house, and my lifestyle here. Yet don't get me wrong. I am a very independent person. I guess I just appreciate the comfort of surroundings that I know." Though this woman did not enjoy traveling, throughout her life she says that she has enjoyed, "...coming and going as I please."
responsibilities that I did, I would have traveled even more in my life. I probably would have spent several years or so living in a foreign country. Yet when my mother got sick, it was up to me to care for her so I was forced to take up more sedentary hobbies.

As highlighted in this last statement, even the never-married women do not escape the issue of family responsibility. Five of the six never-married women spoke extensively about caring for aged family members.

C. AGING FAMILY: NEW RESPONSIBILITY

Four of the women spoke extensively about caring for their aging and sickly parents and siblings during their later years of life. Interestingly, the four women who cared for their aging and sickly family members were never-married. As discussed by Davis and Strong (1977), never-married women are often considered “free-floating resources” by their families since they were not responsible for a husband or children.

The following are examples of the powerful influence that family had in the lives of the women:

I began a promising teaching career at Mt. Holyoke College. One year into my work I got news that my grandmother was ill. It was at that time that I realized that Massachusetts was too far away from my family. When my grandmother got ill I was distressed; I mean, I idolized my grandmother. My mother kept telling me that she thought that I should come home soon because she was sure that grandmother would not be alive at commencement time. You see I was the oldest grandchild and I wanted to see her again when she could still enjoy me. After speaking with an aunt who I also respected, I decided that I had to go home. I certainly didn’t need to be persuaded very much. No matter how poor I was, I always kept travelers checks enough to get home wherever I was. I ended up teaching at Lynchburg College in Virginia. One of the reasons that I taught here in Virginia is that it was close enough so that I could come home on the week-end. My parents were getting older and I wanted to be near them.
I couldn't do as much traveling in the later years of my mother's life. I couldn't leave her and it was very difficult for me to find some dependable help. During the last 2 years of her life, my mother needed help at all times—and I was her helper.

I guess I felt a responsibility towards my parents. All of my brothers and sisters married. I was the only one to remain never-married so I took care of the house early in life. My mother was an invalid for 11 years so I did most of the household responsibilities, with the aid of hired help. After mother died it was just my father and me and it was lonesome. I cared for my father until he passed away and then it was just me. So I decided to build a house right next to my sister's home here in Williamsburg.

My brothers married and moved away so it was kind of my responsibility to care for my parents as they aged. I didn't mind really. Mom and I cared for dad until he died and then it was just me and mom. We lived together in the same house that I live in now. When she died it was really difficult because taking care of her and my dad kind of gave me a sense of purpose.

**D. FAMILY AND FRIENDS TODAY**

All of the women currently live alone, yet they experience varying degrees of isolation—mostly depending upon how close family members or good friends live. Four of the women reside in retirement communities; one of the women lives in a nursing home, and five of the women live in their own homes.

Discussing their current living situations, the women have differing responses, yet they all seem satisfied with their environments.

I came here to visit my son and he wanted me to move into the house with him and his family. He said, "Mother, I think you'll enjoy being here and it won't cost very much" but I said that I wouldn't intrude on any of my children's families because I just don't think its right. I've had my life and I want them to have their independent life. I want to love them and visit them but I don't want to go and stay with them. Well, he suggested that we look at a nearby retirement home so we came here. This apartment was empty and available to rent. When I returned home I don't know what happened. I'm sure the good lord had a lot to do with it because somehow I just made up my mind that I was moving closer to my family and I just up and left.

I am very happy here. I don't have to go outside this building for anything—not even a doctor. There is a bus to take me to the store at different times. The buses go to the local churches too. They run old films here, have string
quartets, bible readings, exercise groups and much much more. There is always plenty for me to do.

I don't want to give up my home. Sure, I've thought of moving to a retirement home. It would be nice to have everything taken care of in some ways, yet, this is the town I have lived in my entire life. This is home to me and to move from here, from this house, would really be difficult. Besides, I have good friends here. I meet a friend for breakfast and lunch almost every nevermarried day, I am active in the church, and family is just a phone call away. I will probably stay here until I can no longer care for myself.

I am very grateful that my daughter lives so close by. We see each other every day. And my grandchildren are also very special. They remember me for every occasion, with phone calls mostly since we are not a gift-giving type of family. And would you believe that I live in the house that my father-in-law built? He cut the lumber for this mantle and put it here in the living room fire place. Building this house took so much time; it has a family history to it that I really cherish.

The women voiced varying degrees of loneliness, depending on how busy they are and how close family and friends reside. All of the women emphasized the need for independence, some more strongly than others.

Loneliness isn't really something that I have experienced much in my life. I don't have as many visitors as I used to. I used to have people come and stay with me two or three weeks in the summer, but they are middle aged people now, and the younger ones, they don't come like they used to. Yet I do have a nephew who usually comes to visit me once or twice a week. He has lunch with me. I am also very close to one of my nieces. Though she lives a few hours away, we still talk on the phone weekly and she visits me when she can. Yes, I'm very well taken care of by my family.

I don't feel very lonely. I have a really close relationship with my children and my grandchildren. Its almost an enviable thing. I feel fortunate that they all call me, write to me and visit. I just love all of them. You know, I don't ever harass them or scold them but I always inject little gems, I hope. Wouldn't that be wonderful if I could go feeling like I have done something for somebody else? I am just so interested to find out what their characters are like. It isn't that they give me attention, its the fact that they are that kind of people. Luckily, I am not stuck here all of the time. My son lives nearby and my daughter often comes and picks me up to spend time with her and her family.

Each morning from 9 to 11 they have a coffee table set up here in the lobby and you can go down and have a cup of coffee with your friends; I don't really like coffee but I go every morning because I love to meet my friends. Living here, I am able to be with people if I ever start to feel lonely.

I get lonely every once in a while. My son comes to see me at least once a month and my husband's nephew lives right across the James River bridge and he and his wife are like a son and a daughter to me. They come to see me every two weeks. She even buys my clothes for me. I know that I could live in
a retirement home but for now, I am just fine here. I can still drive around town and my neighbor, who also lives alone, comes over quite often to chat.

Interestingly I found that the six never-married women emphasized their desire for freedom and independence much more than the women who had married and were now widows. Furthermore, the six never-married women did not appear to be as lonely as the widowed women. The never-married women were less isolated due to their intricate friendship networks. The widowed women were much more dependent on their children than their friends. In fact, the widowed women did not mention friendships as being nearly as important to them as the never-married women did. Commenting on their lives, never-married women seemed more accustomed to and content with the degree of independence that they experienced:

I am a very independent person and I like it that way. I am getting up in the years so at times I consider moving into a retirement home. That would relieve me of the many responsibilities I have in running this house of mine. Yet I enjoy my daily routine. I can come and go as I please and with that in mind, I will wait a while before I give this all up.

I guess I am quite independent. I've lived alone for a large portion of my life. Though family has been nearby for most of the time, I have always had my privacy too. I like to live here alone. I can keep my house as messy as I want, sleep in late, and I don't have to cook if I don't feel like it. Sure I like visitors, but I also like to be on my own time.

I live here in this community basically because I am unable to care for myself entirely. I am nearly blind and that makes it difficult to do many of the little things that people often take for granted. But I have lived an independent life and I have enjoyed it. I have always had friends and family nearby but I never mind time alone either. I can honestly say that I rarely feel lonely. I guess that is part of being never-married; you just learn how to really enjoy your time alone.

I like living here in my home. I am surrounded by all of my junk and I have a lot of stuff, let me tell you. I don't really understand people who feel lonely and depressed all of the time. Sure, I get lonely every once in a while, but when I do, I just pick up the phone. I have many projects that I enjoy doing and I also love to read. As far as I'm concerned I've got too much to do to be lonely. Besides, I am a very independent person, in case you haven't noticed.
When discussing their present lives, the women who married (all of whom are widows) expressed greater dissatisfaction with their living situation and with the amount of independence that they have now.

My family is very important to me but I don’t hang on them. I have freed them to do as they may. I couldn’t do without my son at this point because he has been so great in standing by and helping with decisions. But I don’t lean on my children. I certainly don’t want to and I hope they don’t think that I do. It’s not that I like having my independence. Rather, it’s that I want them to have their independence. As far as I’m concerned I have too much independence. I must say, I don’t like it. I miss my husband very very much.

I lived with my son and his family for a while after I had back surgery. They decided that maybe I should go to a home in Richmond, a Baptist home. I just went along with things but I didn’t really know what to do. They took me for a tour and I was accepted. But then I came home and I got to thinking “why am I going there as long as I can stay here?” I don’t really want to be in a home yet. I enjoyed living with my son and family, you know, sometimes it gets lonely living in this big house by myself, but I think I would have been imposing if I’d stayed much longer. I certainly don’t want to burden anyone.

You see, I moved to this area so that I could be closer to my son. Though he wanted me to live with him and his family, I didn’t feel right imposing on them like that. Sure, I would have loved to live with them but in my opinion a family needs their space. You know what I mean. Luckily I get to see my family at least 3 or 4 times a week and those are the things that I look forward to. When you get to be my age, family really is at the center. I may live here but this isn’t “home”--do you know what I am saying? Home is where my children are.

My daughter lives next door and I must say I am very glad. Though I don’t mind living in this big house alone, but having my daughter so close makes me feel a lot safer and happier. We see each other almost every day and I feel really grateful that she is so close. Because I never learned how to drive I really need help doing some of the basics.

Speaking about their friends, many of the women discussed death, and the fact that few of their close friends are still alive. Time and again, the women would stress the significance of their age. Many emphasized how lucky they felt to be alive and healthy, something many of their friends are not.

The women had a variety of responses:

Well strange to say, all of these women that I was friends with and went to college with are dead. At least the girls that I kept in touch with.
Well, most of my friends have passed on. My best friend and my husband are both gone. I have one friend in a nursing home and I can’t get there and he can’t get here. Another has premature senility so she doesn’t even recognize me. That’s just the way it goes. Most of my friends have passed away, but me, I have lived so long sometimes it even surprises me!

You know, next month I am going to be 89. I feel like the woman in the book who lived in Shangri La. Remember her as she passed over the mountain. I’ve crossed over the mountain. I suddenly have gotten more wrinkled and I’m really not steady on my feet and that bothers me. That is extremely frustrating yet I am lucky to still be alive. Many of my close friends are dead.

At this stage in my life, very few of my friends are still alive. It really is an odd feeling when you outlive so many people. You know, I am an old woman.

My friends, a lot of them are dead, if you really want to know. I don’t see any point in emphasizing the fact that I am really ancient--but I am.

Some of the women discussed current and future friendships with optimism:

I gave up a lot of friends when I moved from my home to live closer to my son. I still write to them and they write to me too. I sure miss them all a great deal. Yet one thing I have learned is that you can have a friend anywhere if you want to. There are friends every place. You can get involved if you want to as much as you desire. You can just go off to yourself--that is something I try not to do. I want people to know that I am interested because I generally am. I do have a lot of life left inside of me.

I miss old friends but you always make new friends. With me being blind, I can’t write, I can’t read, I can’t see the television, but I can listen to it. A lot of the time I listen to a cassette. I probably wouldn’t think of the same people if I had my sight. I wouldn’t think of all the little details that I do now. I am a lucky person in that all my memories are good. I am a lucky girl with all the friends that I have.

Certainly, family was a primary part of the lives of all ten women. Though the centrality of the family is at the root of Americas reverence for “mom and apple pie”, as explored by Boles and Atkinson (1988) Southerners have a particularly special respect for family. Yet it is clear that the women who married had much different life experiences than the women who never-married. The married women were less tied to their
parents and more connected to the responsibilities within their own households. In contrast, the never-married women were often expected to care for aging family members. Yet the never-married women were much more independent and comfortable with being alone as compared to the widowed women. The interdependency of the marital dyad often allowed the married women to become dependent on their husbands so that when their husbands died, all four women experienced what one referred to as "severe depression which has lasted years."

The purpose of the final chapter will be to explore the sphere outside of the family: the world of community involvement.

When analyzing all ten of my interviews, four topics arose time and again: religion, politics, women's issues, and racial issues. I did not guide the interviews to those topics of discussion, rather, the interviews seemed to naturally flow towards these often controversial and highly subjective topics. These topics were addressed only after I had spent considerable time getting to know the women. I feel fortunate to have been able to discuss these issues with the ten women that I interviewed. Dillman (1986) notes that one of the major obstacles to doing research on Southerners is their often times distrust of outsiders. So it would be easier to gain in these women's trust, the researchers must show they are truly interested in them.
CHAPTER V
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:
RELIGION, POLITICS, WOMEN'S ISSUES, AND RACIAL ISSUES

This chapter was one of the most difficult to formulate because of the variety of topics that it involves. In fact, each of the four topics could have been a chapter onto itself. However, when connected by the overarching theme of community involvement, the connections between religion, politics, women's issues, and racial issues become apparent.

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A. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In a community people have a sense of belonging, or group identity and solidarity. Communities are often relatively small in number such as the family, village, or small town, so that each person can know a number of others as whole persons, not as functional fragments. When the group is so big that the people in it do not know one another, the community disappears. All ten of the women that I interviewed were born in Virginia and they all grew up in small communities scattered throughout the state. Six of the women currently reside in or within ten miles to the same region where they were raised. This was especially common for the women who remained never-married. In fact, five of the six never-married women live in or within ten miles to the same region where they were raised. Two of the women live in the same houses that their parents built and one of the women lives in the home that her father-in-law built. Though the women may not be consciously aware of the “community” atmosphere connected to their living environments, I feel that the familiar surroundings of the women’s living situations gives them a feeling of overall security, well-being, and community. The never-married women seem more apt to stay in the same community because it was solely up to them to decide where to settle. Furthermore, their responsibility towards aging family members often kept them close to their parents and siblings. The never-married women also established large friendship
networks that would most likely connect them to a particular area. Whereas the married women were often expected to relocate where their husbands could find employment. They also had much weaker friendship networks which would most likely make relocating easier for them.

All ten women also had the opportunity to experience the small community of Williamsburg in the 1920s, a town much different than the Williamsburg of today. When I asked the women whether they felt like their college community had changed much over the years, they all agreed that it had. Their passionate replies are as follows:

Williamsburg is my home. When I was growing up here everyone knew everybody else. Not only did they know everyone else but they knew everyone's business. If Mary Jones was sick, they knew it. If Tom Brown was getting married they knew it. We all knew everyone's business because it was such a small town. People used to ask my daddy what the residents thought of the restoration when it first began. Daddy said it this way: when we lived in Williamsburg and went to Richmond before the restoration and anyone asked us where we were from we would say very quietly 'Williamsburg' because we knew that the next remark that the person that asked us where we were from would make would be something about the insane asylum or the College. He said, 'Now we can go anywhere, even abroad, and put our hands in our vests and proudly say, I am from Williamsburg, and everyone knows where it is.' I don't like Williamsburg the way it is now. It has gotten far too big to suit me.

Williamsburg was a nice area to raise a family in. I enjoyed living in a college community very much. I have friends who fuss about the students and their yards messy and play loud music but that doesn't keep me away. That doesn't bother me. Yet it has changed so much. It has really grown over the years and I can't help feeling that now it is too big. I guess there still is a Williamsburg community. I am still surrounded by locals but I just don't feel that same sense of community that I used to. I'm not able to get out too often either.

Williamsburg is a different place. It was so small back then. Everyone knew everyone and life just seemed to be at a slower pace.

I would not want to live in Williamsburg now. There is too much traffic there. It is so busy. I do miss the community aspect. The reason I suppose I miss it is that I have not permitted myself to become a part of this community since I returned here after several years of living away.

Comparing Williamsburg today to the Williamsburg that I grew up in is like comparing apples and oranges. You can't because they are just too different.
Now it is so big and impersonal: I guess that is all part of living in a tourist town.

I asked the women if they would choose to go back to the Williamsburg of the past. One woman stated, "Not a hundred percent. Yet those who are truly natives here usually romanticize old Williamsburg and long for the past. I guess I do miss the times we lived here during the '30s. It was during the depression and people were very poor yet there were many perfectly charming and lovely people here--and I saw the end of that. The town has been overrun and I feel like it is going to the dogs. It's all just money--the nouveau riche. I find it really depressing." Another woman replied, "Well that is a very hard question to answer. I'd say 'yes' and 'no' because there are a lot of things I like about the city and a lot of things I don't like about it. I feel that Williamsburg has gotten far too busy. There is so much traffic and too many people for this little town. But it's nice to have all of the conveniences of a city environment."

Certainly the notions that Williamsburg has become "too impersonal", "too big" and "too busy" are not surprising. The women are simply articulating the shift from *gemeinschaft* to *gesellschaft* societies that sociologist Ferdinand Tonnies ([1887] 1963) explored. Tonnies ([1887] 1963) contrasted the social order of small, traditional communities to that of large industrialized cities. He used the term *gemeinschaft* to describe community environments in which people share norms and values, experience frequent social contact and warm personal relationships.
According to Tonnies ([1887] 1963), *gemeinschaft* social arrangements readily develop into urban centers, which Tonnies described as *geselleschaft*. *Geselleschaft* environments are exemplified in modern industrial societies. Change is constant and there is minimal consensus on values and norms. In *geselleschaft* environments, social contacts are often described as fleeting and impersonal; Values of individualism replace group loyalty and anonymity replaces familiarity. People often feel as if they do not belong; secondary relationships, in contrast to primary relationships associated with *gemeinschaft* societies, become commonplace.

**B. RELIGION**

According to Ann Scott (1983), along with work, racial issues, and childbearing, religion was a central factor in Southern women’s lives. Scott (1983) emphasizes the value that Southerners have historically placed on religiosity and piety, and she notes that more women than men were church members. Similarly, in his book *Religion in the Old South* (1977), Donald Mathews states that more women than men attended church and women’s morals and concerns were key forces affecting religious life. Though Mendenhall (1993) regarded the church as an institution in which Southern women were able to assert themselves, especially by the beginning of the twentieth century, Scott (1970) notes that the majority of Southern churches upheld a conservative view of women’s role.
During the progressive era, women often organized together to engage in church reorganization. The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), which officially organized at state level in Virginia in 1883, was one of the most successful organizations involved in the Southern women's reform activities. The WCTU was by no means radical; it was primarily dedicated to work towards preserving the institution of home and family. Yet, Scott (1970) states that the WCTU provided women with a respectable outlet to pursue social reform and leadership positions without jeopardizing their status as ladies. Discussing the conservative style of the Southern women's reform, Friedman (1983) emphasizes the racial segregation and resistance towards suffrage which can be connected to the high value placed on Southern kin and church focused communities (12). Furthermore, Scott (1970) highlights the church's animosity towards the feminist movement.

All ten of the women in my study were raised in religious households; three were raised Methodist, two Episcopal, four Baptist, and one Presbyterian. Only one of the ten women broke away from her traditional religious upbringing to consider herself agnostic. She stated, "I grew up very much religious. When I returned to my home town I think people expected me to come back to my church, you know. But I just can't do that because I can't stand to hear them say 'God says so and so', I just can't. Institutionalized religion is not for me. I think I'm religious but not in the traditional way. I think I am a spiritual person yet I feel like a hypocrite if I sit in church and repeat
things that I don't believe. I just can't manage it."

Interestingly, Scott (1970) suggests that for married women, the church was often a woman's first step towards freedom from their rigid notion of "woman's sphere". The four married women in the study all identified themselves as religious. Only one of them does not currently attend church but that is due to what she refers to as her "church politics" rather than lack of faith.

Scott (1970) notes that the church was a crucial path towards women's involvement in public life; through church involvement women learned valuable leadership skills. Interestingly, to this day the church is the one institution in which the majority of women I interviewed maintain contact. Eight of the women still attend church on a regular basis.

When asked about their religiosity and whether or not they attend church frequently, the women had a variety of responses. Though nine of the ten women considered themselves to be religious, there were differences between married and never-married women's perceptions of religion and church. Never-married women tended to be more casual about their church attendance and religious beliefs in general. The never married women responded:

Do I? I am a member of the Methodist Church but recently I haven't been because of my health. Before that I used to go to church yet when I was living in Lynchburg, many weekends I was traveling back and forth to Williamsburg, and I'd make it a practice to get into Richmond after people had gotten in to church and left after they got out to miss the traffic. I didn't go to church as much as I should have. [laughter]. I am religious. I attend bible studies every Monday. Though I was raised a Methodist I feel that it's more the inspiration that you get from the service and the feeling you get from entering into the place of worship. I attended Catholic church for two years when I lived in
Maryland and I thoroughly enjoyed the sermons and the church. I could be as good a Presbyterian or as good a Baptist.

I go to church every other Wednesday. I go one Wednesday and play bridge the next. [laughter]

To be honest, I am suspicious of organized religion and I have no interest in attending church services.

I am religious. I still go to church today. I am a member of the Baptist Church and religion has always been a very big part of my life...yet I don't take everything literally [from the bible]. I get from church a quiet time to pray amongst friends--I am not a religious radical like many Baptists.

I am very active in my church. I am a Methodist and I suppose going to church is one of the constants in my life. I go every Sunday, then I go out to eat afterwards. I enjoy church. I have made nice friends through the church and it is good for me to get out every once in a while. I have so many projects going on with my house that sometimes I can get kind of isolated. Church forces me to get out and see people when I get too focused on my own projects.

Responses from the married women:

Religion has been at the center of my life. I am a member of the Christian Women's Association and we also organized our own bible study. We studied for years by ourselves and we all learned so much. We met once or twice a month. Now I have my chair in the bedroom where I sit every morning and pray because we have so much to be thankful for and so much to be concerned about. Praying keeps my head on straight. I don't think that you have to be a member of a church to be a Christian but I think its kind of like life--if you go with the downtrodden then you will become that kind of a person. And I think that if you go with a group in the church that work for one end, whatever it is, all striving for one thing, you are bound to grow from the experience. I think that sense of religious community is so important in life and it is so unfortunate when children are deprived of it.

I go to church every single Sunday and the church is just down the street. I am Catholic and I have a very strong faith. I guess its something that I was raised with. Religion is very important to me and I feel sorry for those without it.

Religious? Well, to me that is an obnoxious term. I would use the word spiritual. I am a very spiritual person. I used to attend the Episcopal church regularly but I no longer do. I guess since my husband died, I don't feel the same type of connection to the church.

I am a religious person. I am Presbyterian and my family was Presbyterian. I don't go to church often now though. It hurts too much to sit in the hard wooden pews. The last time my son came to visit he asked me to go to church with him. I went but the entire time I felt physically uncomfortable and finally I had to make him leave early. Religion is just as important to me though, regardless of whether I go to service.
Religion offered, and still offers, a majority of the women an outlet to organize with friends, an opportunity to work within their communities, and an outlet which affirms the belief systems in which they were raised.

C. SUFFRAGE, FEMINISM AND THE WOMAN'S MOVEMENTS

When discussing the woman's movement, Scott (1970) asserts that Southern women lagged nearly a decade behind eastern and western women. Southern women had more difficulty gaining access to women's organizations, political offices and education. The women's movement and, more specifically, feminism, was a topic of conversation in all ten oral histories. All ten of the women that I interviewed were in their teen years when women received the vote in 1920. Certainly, it is interesting to consider how these women viewed the suffrage movement, and women's issues on the whole.

As defined by Hilda Smith (1976), feminism is a perspective which considers women to be a distinct social group with particular patterns of behavior, legal restrictions, and both latent and manifest role expectations which begin in early childhood. As explored in chapter I, feminism has many facets, and it is certainly not the purpose of this paper to explore each strand of feminist thought. Rather, I have considered how the women define feminism and how they feel about the women's movement in general.
Exploring the women's movement in the South, Friedman (1983) notes that the Civil War did not dramatically change women's roles, rather, change occurred slowly as connections with the church and family competed with the depersonalization associated with the modernization of the late 1880s and 1890s. Yet Scott (1970) emphasizes that with the abolition of slavery and the destruction of plantation life, post Civil War adjustments were considerable; poverty was pervasive and there were many homes without men, considering that a quarter of a million died in war (Scott, 1970:106). Women acquired new responsibilities in addition to their regular duties as homemakers and, according to Scott (1970) these new responsibilities often challenged the rigid patriarchal family structure and subordinate roles of women so prevalent in the past.

All ten of the women that I interviewed were born during the Progressive Era--a period from the late 1890s to WWI. The Progressive Era was noted as a time of reform throughout the nation. Some progressives worked to reform government and the political system; some struggled to reform big business; while others strove towards a more humanitarian society. As noted by Lebsock (1987), this meant greater opportunities for women. Lebsock (1987) goes as far as to say: "In Virginia, as in the rest of the country, this social justice movement within progressivism was largely a women's movement" (105). Furthermore, as suggested by Scott (1970) the growing number of reform-oriented organizations strengthened women's leadership and stimulated the exchange of ideas.
Yet as noted by Lebsock (1987) and Faludi (1991), the 1920s marked the beginning of a period of backlash against women's progress. Lebsock (1987) states that during the 1920's Virginia women were pressured to abandon public life and focus on the domestic sphere. Faludi (1991) notes that just as women got the right to vote in 1920, the Miss America Beauty Pageant was established to further keep women focused on their appearance rather than their minds. Faludi (1991) states, "the '20s eroded a decade of growth for female professionals" (50). Writing about the 1920s, political scientist Ethel Klein suggests that "The dissipation of interest in the women's movement was taken as a sign not of failure but of completion" (Faludi, 1991: 51). Perhaps some women felt as though the right to vote was the final step towards equality.

Lebsock (1987) states that during the 1920s the national political temper became very hostile towards feminism and social reform; many of the powerful female leaders died or retired and the cult of marriage and motherhood returned in full force. Published in 1927 in the Journal of the American Association of University Professors, a female student writes, "We came late enough to escape the self-consciousness and belligerence of the pioneers, to take education and training for granted. We came early enough to take equally for granted professional positions in which we could make full use of our training. This was our double glory; it never occurred to us at the time that we were only taken because men were not available" (Faragheh and Howe, 1988:124). The writer of this
passage keenly articulates the estrangement that the second generation of female scholars felt from the pioneers of the women's education movement. Yet World War I temporarily hid the cultural changes that had caused great hostility toward professional women (Lasser, 1987:61). And by the 1920s, the experience of the first cohort of college educated women was considered an anomaly; it did not represent the normal course of womanhood. By the 1920s, the notion that career was more important than marriage and family was considered absurd and equated with what Palmieri (1987) described as "a race of warped dry creatures" (61). A reunion between marriage and career became the ideal of the 1920s. Educated women were trying to have both a career and marriage. Yet, as noted by Palmieri (1987), "lacking the support of institutions and bereft of a feminist movement, such attempts were often thwarted" (61).

Two of the women that I interviewed identified themselves as feminists and three of the women discussed aspects of feminism which they supported. One woman stated, "Am I a feminist? Well, I have lived a very independent life. I have done things that women aren't supposed to do. I believe in equal pay. I believe in the ERA. Yes, I guess I am a feminist." Another stated, "Yes, I think I am a feminist. Though I don't agree with everything that the woman's movement supports, I do feel sympathetic towards the general aims of feminism and I realize how much I have benefited from all that the woman's movement has done."
The two women that openly identified themselves as feminist were never-married. Three of the women highlighted inequalities that they felt were due to gender, though they quickly rejected any association with the feminist movement. One woman stated, "I had an experience while at college that really upset me. I knew these two girls that were sent home from the College for becoming pregnant. We all cried because it broke our hearts so much to have them leave; we were just like a family. Now, I've never quite understood this unfair treatment. I mean nothing ever happened to the male students who fathered the children. No punishments whatsoever. They stayed at the College and enjoyed life as usual--just like they took no part in the pregnancy. Now that is what I consider unfair; that was a grave injustice and I'll bet that sort of situation still occurs today."

When asked how they felt about the women's rights movement women had a variety of responses. Interestingly, all of the woman had definite opinion on the subject. It was something each one of them had thought about; their opinions are as follows:

Well, I never felt that I was deprived of anything before the women's rights movement started. I think that if somebody wants it then that's all right but I wasn't a suffragette by any means. I was happy doing what I was doing. You see, when I was teaching I was the only woman in the Chemistry department. We used to go to all of the meetings and I never thought, well he was a man, and I am a woman. We were all treated just the same.

I was not a suffragette. No no. You see, I was living over on the Eastern Shore at that time and I think the war was over for a day or more before we even found out about it. My community was very isolated and I was very sheltered. Yet I think that women today fare much better than women of the past. I don't think there was as much sensitivity to the distinctions between men and women when I was growing up. Women often expected to have a lesser job
and lesser pay than men but there weren’t any issues raised about it. At least, not where I lived.

I never thought much of the women’s movement. It didn’t make much difference to me then and it doesn’t now. I don’t care about it. I guess I have always felt in control. Throughout my life, I could have had whatever I wanted so I didn’t need the women’s movement very much.

I’m not really sure how I feel about the women’s movement. I think they need to do something but I don’t like the way they do it. I get a lot of stuff from NOW in the mall and I throw it away. I don’t like the way that they behave--what they do. I do the same with the Greenpeace stuff I receive. I don’t like that type of demonstration. On the other hand, should we just obey the leaders who don’t have our interests in mind? Throughout my teaching career I followed women in history but I am afraid I wasn’t as aware or active about some of the issues as I am now. I wasn’t as active as I should have been and it’s too late now. But I would call myself a feminist.

My life has led me to be a feminist. I never married; I got an advanced degree during a time when most women did not go to college; I have led a politically active life and due to my political beliefs, I have been referred to as a feminist many times, and I suppose I am a feminist. I believe in equal rights for women and I have spent a good part of my life working towards feminist goals.

Well, my mother was very much in favor of the women’s movement. She didn’t go out an stomp for it but she felt that women had the ability and that it should be encouraged rather than suppressed. My father felt that way too and I suppose I do as well, yet I am not radical if you know what I mean. Politically I guess I am somewhat conservative, yet I do think that women should have the same rights as men.

I think that women should have the right to vote but I don’t have much patience with women who want to be men. Men and women are entirely different people. A man can’t have a baby and a woman can’t have a baby without a man so...they each have their place in the world. I believe in equal pay for the same work but I do think that men and women are altogether different creatures. I remember when women got the right to vote but it wasn’t a big deal. I don’t think that the South was as into the suffrage issue as compared to other parts of the country.

I see two sides to this whole issue. I think that children are going to miss out by not having a mother at home. Nowadays most mothers work outside the home and of course, there are many good mothers that are able to work and still be good parents, yet I guess I may be some what old fashioned on this issue, I just feel that women should try to stay home with their children and I don’t really see feminism supporting this view. I realize that it is a sacrifice in salary to stay home yet I often hear women, so-called feminists, trying to stir up trouble complaining about inequality rather than to work hard to get where they want to be. Nowadays women can do the same things as any man if they want to yet I know that I enjoyed being a house wife and mother and I wouldn’t change that for the world.

It is not surprising that many of the women refused to associate themselves with the suffragette movement, feminism,
or what several referred to as "radicals". Middleton-Keirn (1988) suggest that Southern women were raised to regard femininity as a means of self-presentation that is not threatening to males. The stereotypes of bold suffragettes and bra-burning feminists directly contradict the value Southern women place on being dainty, soft, passive, and gentle (Middleton-Keirn, 1988:152). The few women who could identify with aspects of the feminist movement were all never-married.

According to Boles and Atkinson (1988), Southern women are the most conservative women in the country. Hawks and Ellis (1988) note that anti-suffrage arguments were pervasive in the South, specifically notions that women were too good to vote; they did not have enough education; the vote would destroy family and home life; and the Bible taught that God did not want women to engage in such public activities (81). Middleton-Keirn (1988) asserts that the cultural notions of women as homemakers and as ladies, so common in the South, are very powerful images. The notion of women as homemakers is still a powerful image for some of the women, specifically the four women who were homemakers. All four homemakers had something to say on the subject of homemaking. Speaking about women of today, one of the women suggested that women are too caught up in trying to do a man's job. Another suggested that children are suffering do to the selfishness of mothers who try to work inside and outside the home. Yet another stated that if her daughter-in-law really wanted to be a good parent and wife she would stop worrying so much about trying to move up in her
job and start learning how to cook. This was amusing because just as one woman was suggesting that her daughter-in-law learn to cook, all but one of the never-married women expressed disinterest and even a dislike for cooking.

Some of the women discussed what it was like to be raised in the South. As explored in the first chapter, many writers have highlighted specific issues related to Southern women. The image of the Southern belle symbolized in the famous movie Gone With the Wind, is pervasive throughout American society. According to Boles and Atkinson (1988) the image of the lady holds special significance in the South. The lady was expected to live a life of devotion to God, husband, and children (Boles and Atkinson, 1988:129).

In his book Social Life in Old Virginia, Thomas Nelson Page states that the Southern lady, "...was exquisite, fine beautiful, a creature of peach blossom and snow; languid, delicate, saucy; now imperious, now melting, always bewitching. She was not versed in the ways of the world, but she has no need to be; because she was born one... She lived in an atmosphere created for her--the pure, clean, sweet, atmosphere of her country home...Truly she was a strange being. In her muslin and lawn; with her delicious low slow musical speech; accustomed to being waited on at every turn, with servants to do her bidding" (Abbott, 1983). Lynxwiler and Wilson (1988) suggest that there are six major components of attaining and maintaining Southern

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25 When asked what their favorite movie is, the majority of women who answered the question said Gone With the Wind. Refer to Appendix A.
belle status: 1) Never forget your status lest others forget theirs; 2) Honor the natural distinctions between men and women; 3) Don't be a slut; 4) Remain loyal to Southern tradition; 5) You can never be too rich or too thin; and 6) Pretty is as pretty does (117-119).

As stated by Scott (1970) all of the institutions of American society, particularly in the South, emphasized the same point. Churches, schools, families, magazines and books upheld the same message: "Be a lady and you will be loved and respected and supported. If you defy the pattern and behave in ways considered unladylike you will be unsexed, rejected, unloved, and you will probably starve" (20-21). Leslie (1988) suggests that power for the Southern lady was attained through skillful manipulation; this was affirmed by a few women in my study. Several of the women that I interviewed, particularly the women from the highest income families, had something to say about life as a woman, or a lady, in the South; their opinions were as follows.

I think that the Southern lady knows how to manipulate a man without having him know it. Being a Southern lady is, in my opinion, a gift. Southern women put family first. I do not think that women should work outside the home when they have children because I feel that family must be a woman's priority.

Southern ladies know how to make men feel bigger. Men have egos that need to be stroked and Southern women know how to stroke men's egos. They know how to treat a man, how to make him feel good. I think Southern women are very smart because by flattering men, they in turn, can manipulate situations and get their own way.

Southern ladies are hospitable and friendly and they are very involved in family. They have all the social graces to entertain and the ability to raise children in a healthy environment. Maybe even more importantly, they know how to get their way with men. Its difficult to describe; some call it cunning and sneaky, I call it down right clever!
I lived in New England for a while and I was the head of a small department of six girls working under me. One day one of the girls said to me, 'I thought that Southern girls were slow and you are wearing me out.' I couldn't help but laugh. I don't think that New England women are different from Southern women. I think it's all who you choose to spend time with. I guess I was always with people who did things. You weren't supposed to be milktoast with the people that I was with. You were supposed to get up and go and that's what I did.

All of the women were very interested to know how I felt about feminism and women's issues. Many of them assumed that because I chose to do my thesis on women, I must be what one woman described as ‘one of those radical feminists’. The women seemed very interested to discuss issues related to feminism and the women's movement. We covered issues ranging from abortion to body image to Hillary Clinton, and the women's opinions were considerably varied. They had many questions, concerns, and ideas that took us on a stream of wonderful conversations too varied, and often too personal, to cover in detail on these pages.

A final issue which connected directly to the issue of feminism and the women's movement, was the civil rights movement. Much to my surprise, the women had a considerable amount to say about racial issues.

D. THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND RACIAL ISSUES

Though all of the women in the study were born over thirty years after the Civil War, the after-effects of slavery were powerful. As explored by Scott (1970), the abolition of slavery and the destruction of the plantation system significantly
changed women's lives. Many women acquired new responsibilities which often generated greater equality with men (Scott, 1970). Furthermore, though the women were not raised during slavery, they were raised in a society which generally accepted inequality between the races.

As one woman stated, "Well, when I was younger we didn't go to school with Black people. They were servants in our homes. They ate in our kitchens, not with us in the dining room. Yet the confusing thing to me is that they didn't seem too unhappy then. And they were discriminated against, I know that. They were really discriminated against. But I have read about how African tribes would go and get people and sell them to the owners of the slave ships. So I guess that it wasn't all of the White people's faults. It's just a bad situation. But I think that Blacks should have rights." Interestingly, Morton (1988) explores the notion of "harmony in an era when Blacks knew their place" (37). Morton (1988) suggests that the socio-cultural changes associated with modernization often created a nostalgia toward the traditional ways of life. Morton (1988) notes that Southern history often depicts slavery as a "kindly and paternalistic institution"—a notion that some of the women in my study upheld (37).

Scott (1970) notes that though many Southern women were concerned about slavery, most did not envision a society different than the one in which they were familiar. Friedman (1983) suggests that Southern women's identity was directly tied to race thus hindering the development of an organized
women's movement in the Southern states. Scott (1970) suggests that changes in the racial stratification may have been threatening to many Southern women. Change brought social disorganization and confusion which, for many, may have been frightening and undesirable. Furthermore, as suggested by Glass (1988) "there is a glorification of the Southern lady that has its roots in the uneven sex ratio in the South during its early settlement and as a symbol of Southern ideology which provided a foundation for oppression of Blacks" (192). Simply stated, racial domination gave White men more power and White women greater privilege (Friedman, 1983:xv). Furthermore, Leslie (1988) asserts that the vulnerability and delicacy connected to the ideal of the Southern lady, who was therefore in need of protection, was used to validate violence for the sake of social tranquillity in the South (32).

The women in my study varied significantly in their views about racial issues, yet each one of them expressed great interest in and passion toward the subject. Being raised during segregation, often in households with the hired help of African Americans, all of the women had many different feelings about and experiences with people of color. Some of the women were very liberal about racial issues; they expressed a desire for true equality between all human beings. Some of the women recognized their racist socialization and attempted to reject it yet found it difficult to entirely deny their upbringing. And a few of the women expressed very conservative ideas about racial issues. Politically, the ten women fell on a continuum from very
liberal to ultra conservative. The four married women were all self-proclaimed conservatives. Three of the single women were very liberal, one considered herself to be moderately liberal, one considered herself to be apolitical and one considered herself to be conservative on most issues. The following are some of the responses women gave when asked how that felt about African Americans.

Never-married, considered herself to be politically conservative. I have always thought that the person is more important than the skin color. If a person tries to live by the laws of the land and lives an upright life, then I accept them. Yet I do not believe in intermarriage. I guess my feelings are sort of contradictory. Yet I do believe that Blacks should have every opportunity that they do. As long as they live within the laws...yet so many of them don't. They just are not quite up to our standards—and there are a lot of Whites who don't [live within the laws of the land].

Never-married, considered herself to be politically liberal. I think back to my first experience with racism. I remember it well. This lady came to visit my mother and she was Black. She was a midwife who helped me come into this world and I liked her very much. I had been in contact with her from time to time and we really got along. I wanted to kiss her and she wouldn't let me kiss her and that was my first experience with racism. I wanted to kiss her but she said that no White child should be kissing her. Throughout my life, I have always been an ardent exponent of acceptance of Blacks. I am very opposed to racism. I have had some lovely experiences with Black people. When I was growing up we had a maid. She was a wonderful person. I loved her dearly. I remember one time my mother and father went away and left her to look after my sister and me and somehow or other we wanted her to sleep with us. Finally, she wrapped herself up in a sheet so that she could sleep with us. How can you dislike people who are like that? The way we discriminated and still discriminate is really really sad.

Never-married, considered herself to be politically liberal. I feel that some of the smartest people I have known have been Black. When I was younger, my mother hired many Black people to help. We always had a maid and I didn't feel any differently towards her than anyone else. She was a person and that was that—she wasn't Black, she wasn't White—that wasn't the issue. I feel that people of all races are created equal. Sometimes I feel that Blacks would have been better off if they had developed their own race. It seems like they have never been able to develop their own culture, rather, they have been forced to try to assimilate.

Never-married, considered herself to be politically moderate. My father always told me to judge a person by their character and not by their color; that is what I have always done. Sometimes I feel really discouraged when it just seems like Blacks and Whites are fighting more and more. I always tell my nieces and nephews that we could have been considered different races by the color of our eyes. Imagine that, you and me would have been a different race!
Never-married, considered herself to be politically liberal. When I look at all of the hate in this world sometimes I feel really ashamed to be part of the human race. There is no difference between me and a Black person except that I will be treated with far more courtesy just by the color of my skin. My mother taught me not to judge others and my education only affirmed my mother’s lesson.

Married, considered herself to be politically conservative. I have to fight my feelings about racial issues. When I turn on the television and it looks like there are more Black people than White people I must admit that I often become disinterested in what they are saying. But I think as a Christian maybe I shouldn’t think that way, but when, from the time I was born I was taught things that I guess you would consider racist. Yet I think God loves Blacks just like he loves Whites. To him, color doesn’t make any difference. As my father used to say, ‘We all have to go up the same ladder’ and he meant to heaven. I know that in heaven there will be no difference so this is a difficult issue for me to discuss. I’ve been conditioned for many years. I’m glad they have their rights and I think they should have them. I think that many haven’t had a fair chance. I do try to be big about it yet I don’t want to eat and sleep with them. I can’t say that I am without prejudice. I am too old and was too conditioned for too long to be without prejudice. I can’t put it out of me. But I recognize that Blacks need to get equal opportunities so that they have more of a chance to succeed.

Married, considered herself to be conservative. I guess I feel like we need to look at individuals not at skin color, you know what I mean? When I grew up there were White people and there were Black people and there was no confusing the two. This inter-racial marriage stuff kind of bothers me. I guess that is a personal decision that two people have to work out for themselves yet I don’t really approve of it. I wonder how many mixed couples last. I don’t see any reason why Blacks and Whites shouldn’t be treated equally though. My daughter has introduced me to some very nice Black people and it has made me think that class is more of an issue than race.

Married, considered herself to be conservative: I guess I have a real problem with all of the violence. I think if Blacks could just work hard and go on about their business like Colin Powell, things would be much better. It seems to me that many of them do not come from good family situations and I think that is a major problem.

Married, considered herself to be conservative: Well, one thing that really irks me is when people put women and Negroes together into a category called minorities. Negroes aren’t minorities. They are the majority and they are working hard to keep it that way. I am afraid that I am a little narrow about all of this. I grew up with Negroes. My grandfather had slaves. My grandfather fought in the Civil War and we loved Negroes. We loved those family Negroes and were taught to respect them. They were part of the family. But there was a line and there was a difference. All people aren’t born equal in my thinking. It develops sometimes. There are a lot of very bright Black people but they are usually not Black if you know what I mean. They bear the curse of slavery. I remember one time when I was a child, our cook, who was a Negro, was told that there would be two extra people for lunch. And I heard her go out the back door and angrily slap on her hat and stomp down to the garden to gather some more vegetables. When she returned later she said ‘Oh I do hate to let the nigger in me rise like that’. I don’t believe in interracial marriage. I feel that you must have the same type of background for a happy
marriage. Young people needn't think that they are being so smart to have captured some from another race to marry. Its loaded with many issues.

Working through these complex statements is no easy task. I was truly amazed and thankful for each woman's candid attempt to describe her feelings to me. Scott (1970) states that slavery was intricately tied to the ideal of the Southern lady, an ideal which encouraged women to be fickle, delicate, manipulative, dependent, weak, and in need of protection in order to gain male adoration. An interesting example of the connection between the subordination of people of color and the ideal of the Southern lady arose during one of my interviews. One of the women recalled, "I remember one time when I was about seven years old I said something about a colored lady and my mother looked at me and she pointed her finger at me and said angrily, "They are not ladies. Colored females are not ladies. You don't call them ladies. They are women."

Scott (1970) asserts that the institution of slavery upheld the patriarchal family structure: "Women, along with children and slaves, were expected to recognize their proper and subordinated place and to be obedient to the head of the family. Any tendency on the part of any of the members of the system to assert themselves against the master threatened the whole, and therefore slavery itself" (Scott, 1970:17). When the institution of slavery was destroyed and women gained greater independence and more responsibilities, the patriarchal family structure was threatened.
As mentioned earlier, hired African American help was something almost all of the women were used to during their childhood. They recalled their African American nannies who fixed their meals, tended the gardens, cleaned their homes, and cared for them in a variety of other ways. Interestingly, three of the women mentioned that today they need hired help in order to maintain their homes and lifestyles. All three of the women who discussed their hired help mentioned that they hired African American women to assist them. They each had nothing but kind words to say about their assistants:

I have an aide that comes 2 or 3 times a week to help me clean and take a shower and so forth. She is a colored girl and she is smart. She has been reading a book to me. She is so speedy! She can get more done in a few hours than I could get done in a day.

I have a colored woman come in every week or so to help me out. She washes my clothes and feeds my birds and waters my flowers. She cleans my house and makes my bed and all of that stuff and she is a really nice person. I am lucky to have her help.

I have a lady who helps me and she is Black. I never think of her as being Black because she is so nice. I wouldn’t be embarrassed to go with her if we were to go out to eat. I would not mind. She is a nice, generous, and caring person."

It is important to recognize that even in a sample of ten, clear differences were evident when comparing married women to never-married women. On the whole, the never-married women expressed ideas which tended to be more liberal in content, while the married women often expressed ideas that were more conservative in content. The married women were much more likely to uphold traditional views about society, family, religion, and issues involving women and race. This is not surprising considering that they took part in one of the most
accepted and traditional institutions in our society, the institution of marriage. The one never-married woman that considered herself to be politically conservative was also the only never-married woman that did not establish a career due to her responsibility to her father and his company.

The primary issue of community involvement which revolved around two topics, religion and politics, arose time and again in all ten interviews. Initially I was taken back by all ten women’s willingness to discuss what I consider to be very personal issues yet it was clear that all ten of the women had strong feelings about topics like religion, women’s rights, and civil rights. The women’s opinions varied considerably, yet as with the institutions of education, work, and family life, the marital status variable was a consistent dividing factor among the ten women.

CONCLUSION

When I initially began to analyze my data, I became increasingly frustrated at how difficult it was to compartmentalize the different societal institutions which are involved in the study. After weeks of agonizing I came to the realization that this difficulty was due to the fact that societal institutions are not distinct spheres; in fact, they are intricately connected to one another in a web of ideologies that shape, mold, and reinforce social norms and values. I can only hope
that through this paper the complexity of human life, and the institutions affecting it, become evident.

This project has been enlightening in many ways. By no means is it an attempt to draw any overarching conclusions about the first women at William and Mary. In truth, it is an attempt to relay the life histories of ten of the first female William and Mary graduates. Though I do make parallels between the women, I want to emphasize the fact that I recognize and respect each women's individuality. Recognizing that each woman is unique, it is also important to look for connections between the women. Marital status was the most influential variable that affected the ten women in relation to all six of the institutions considered in this paper. Marital status affected the amount of education that the women attained, the types of jobs that the women held, women's relationships with their parents and siblings, friendship networks, religious beliefs, and political beliefs. Married women were less likely to have a career, less likely to care for aging parents and siblings, less likely to travel extensively, and less likely to have a large group of close friends. They were more devout in their religious beliefs, more conservative politically, and less independent. Never-married women were in contrast, more likely to have a career, to pursue higher education, to care for aging parents and siblings, to travel extensively, to have a large friendship network, to question religion, to be more liberal politically, and to express a strong need for independence.
Certainly the role of wife and mother could explain some of these differences. As a wife and mother, it is probable that a woman would have less time to give to a career, to travel, to continue her education, to develop close friendship networks, and to care for aging parents. Furthermore, the current emphasis on "Family Values" which is often associated with conservative ideology may in fact be appealing to women who enjoyed happy marriages and raised children successfully. The church and the family oriented values which it often upholds would also be a comforting institution for a married and/or widowed individual.

Though the women who chose not to marry did not consider themselves to be any different or to be a special category of women, clearly their marital status is related to other facets of their lives. By having the desire or strength to reject a social institution as widely upheld as matrimony, it is likely that the never-married women may feel comfortable rejecting or at least questioning other highly esteemed social institutions and ideologies: for example, religion, and the domestic sphere as women's work.

It is also important to consider some of the obvious differences between what the women reported that they experienced and what the literature reported that the women experienced. These conflicts between the women's recollections and the literature are important to consider for this paper and related works. Are the women victims of false consciousness--unable to see the institutional obstacles which
surrounded them daily? Or are many of the modern writers who explore women's experiences historically coming from a tempocentric perspective?

A final thought which may help explain some of the differences in decisions about whether to marry relates to the women's positions in relation to their own siblings. In four of the six cases the never married women were either the eldest children or the only children, whereas the married women were never the eldest or only children. Though the notion of family placement is far-fetched, it is interesting to consider the factors that would give a person the confidence and desire to go against such a widely accepted social norm, especially seventy years ago.

As mentioned earlier, my aim is not to draw overarching conclusions with such a small sample yet certainly the life differences that appeared directly related to marital status are thought-provoking. Future research should explore marital status as a primary variable affecting women's lives.

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\[3 ^{26}\] In order to protect the privacy of the women involved in this study, all of the names used in this paper are fictitious.
APPENDIX A

Jane Perkins

Place of Birth: Newport News, Virginia
Date of Birth: 1/9/03
Religion: Baptist
Ethnicity: English
Number of Brothers and Sisters: None
Marital Status: Never-married
Father's Place of Birth: near Warwick Courthouse, Virginia
Father's Occupation: City Sergeant in Newport News
Mother's Place of Birth: Fredricksburg, Virginia
Mother's Occupation: Homemaker
Personal Career: Sixth and Seventh grade teacher in Newport News schools
Organizations supported: National Teachers Association
Which states have you lived in?: Virginia
Number of years attended William and Mary: 2
First year attended William and Mary: 1922, Sophomore class (transferred in)
Favorite Areas of Study: Education
Hobbies: Collecting Hats, traveling abroad
Favorite Food: Chocolate
Who do you feel closest to at present?: My old neighbor and her daughters

26 In order to protect the privacy of the women involved in this study, all of the names used in this paper are fictitious.
Emma Gold

Place of Birth: Dare, Virginia
Date of Birth: 1906

Religion: Methodist

Marital Status: Never-married

Ethnicity: English

Number of Brothers and Sisters: 1 Sister, 1 Brother

Number of Nieces and Nephews: 2 Nephews

Father's Place of Birth: Norfolk, Virginia

Father's Occupation: Farmer, Waterman, Yorktown Ice & Storage Corporation

Mother's Place of Birth: Dare, Virginia
Date of Birth & Death: 1876-1978

Mother's Occupation: Homemaker

Personal Career: Bookkeeper and treasurer, Yorktown Ice & Storage Corporation; U.S. Naval Weapons Station, Yorktown

Which states have you lived in?: Virginia

Number of years attended William and Mary?: 2

First year attended William and Mary?: 1923

Major area of study: Mathematics

Organizations to which you belong: Church Organizations

Hobbies: Church activities, managing personal

Favorite Music: Popular music of 1930-60
Favorite Food: Vegetables, bread

Favorite Book: Gone with the Wind, Books on health

Favorite Movie: Gone with the Wind

Who do you feel closest to at present?: Nephews, cousins
Lynn Mathews

Place of Birth: Suffolk, Virginia  Date of Birth: August 11, 1901
Marital Status: Never-married  Religion: Baptist
Number of Brothers and Sisters: 8 brothers, 9 sisters
Father's Place of Birth: Girtletree, Maryland
Date of Birth: October 8, 1838
Father's Occupation: Lumberman
Mother's Place of Birth: Marionville, Virginia
Mother's Occupation: Homemaker
Date of Birth and Death: July 4, 1862 - October 28, 1944
Personal Career: College teacher 9 years, State supervisor of Home Economics
Education in North Carolina for 32 years
Which states have you lived in?: Virginia, North Carolina, New York, Maryland
Number of years attended William and Mary: 3 years, B. S. 1921
First year attended William and Mary: 1918
Major: Home Economics
Organizations to which you belong: D. K. G.; P. B. K.; D. A. R.; Jamestowne Society; Colonial Dames; Suffolk General Society; Suffolk Art Society
Hobbies: Music, reading and genealogy
Favorite Music: Operatic  Favorite Food: Salads
Who do you feel closest to at present? Two great nieces
Mieve Jenkins

Place of Birth: Berlin, Maryland  
Date of Birth: October 19, 1904

Marital Status: Married  
Religion: Presbyterian

Number of Brothers and Sisters: 3 Brothers and 3 Sisters

Father's Place of Birth: Delaware  
Birth and Death: 1978-1958

Father's Occupation: Lumberman throughout Virginia

Mother's Place of Birth: Berlin, Maryland  
Birth and Death: 1880-1951

Mother's Occupation: Housewife

Husband's Career: Built and owned property in Williamsburg

Personal Career: Housewife

Children: 2 Sons

Which states have you lived in?: Maryland and Virginia

First year attended William and Mary: 1924

Number of years attended William and Mary: 1.5 years, some night classes

Favorite Area of Study: Government because Dr. Pollard was my teacher!

Hobbies: Growing flowers, quilt making, making own clothing

Favorite Music: Semi-Classical  
Favorite Food: Chicken and Fish

Favorite Book: Biographies  
Favorite Movie: Gone With The Wind

Who do you feel closest to at present? My sons and nephew and his wife
Carey Harris

Place of Birth: Newport News, Virginia  
Date of Birth: August 2, 1906

Marital Status: Never-married  
Religion: Episcopal

Ethnicity: Scottish, English, and French

Number of Brothers and Sisters: 2 Sisters, 4 Brothers (1 sister still living)

Father's Place of Birth: Richmond, Virginia  
Date of Death: 1950

Father's Occupation: Businessman

Mother's Place of Birth: Washington, D. C.  
Date of Death: 1947

Mother's Occupation: Housewife, Mother

Personal Career: Office work for father's company, kept house for invalid mother

Which States have you lived in?: Virginia

First year attended William and Mary: 1925

Number of years attended William and Mary: 2

Major: Biology

Place of Residence while studying at William and Mary: Home, Day Student

What organizations are you a member of?  
Bruton Parish Church, APVA  
Women's Club

Hobbies: Volunteer work, Reading, Traveling, Games

Favorite Music: Semi-Classical

Favorite Food: Vegetables and Sweets

Who do you feel closest to at present?  
Sister
Grace Oliver

Place of Birth: Fluvanna County, VA  
Date of Birth: October 24, 1904

Marital Status: Never-married  
Religion: Agnostic (raised Methodist)

Ethnicity: English, Scottish and German

Number of Siblings: 2 sisters, both deceased

Number of Nieces and Nephews: 1 niece, 2 nephews

Father's Place of Birth: Fluvanna County, VA  
Birth and Death: 1879-1954

Father's Occupation: Signal Maintainer, C&O Railroad, Toano

Mother's Place of Birth: Fluvanna County, VA  
Birth and Death: 1880-1970

Mother's Occupation: Housewife, Mother

Career: History teacher in the secondary schools, Technical writer and Publications Editor for Army Transportation Corps

First year attended William and Mary: 1922

Number of years attended William and Mary: 3.5

Major: English  
Minors: Psychology and History

Graduate Education: Attended London School of Economics, 1932-33

Which states have you lived in? Virginia, ENGLAND

Hobbies: Travel, Reading, Flower gardening, Art, Archaeology

Favorite Music: Violin  
Favorite Food: Beef

Favorite Book: Too varied to select

Favorite Movie: Gone With the Wind and To Kill a Mockingbird

Who did you feel closest to in your life? Sister
Harriet Valentine

Place of Birth: Cheriton, Northampton County

Date of Birth: February, 8 1903

Marital Status: Married, 5/15/27

Religion: Baptist

Ethnicity: English and Scottish

Number of Siblings 2 Brothers

Father's Place of Birth: Deltaville, Middlesex County, VA

Father's Occupation: Carpenter, House Building, Restoration, Maintenance

Mother's Place of Birth: Popular Valley, Northampton County, VA

Mother's Occupation: Home Maker

Husband's Employment: Electrical Contractor, Appliance dealer

Personal Career: Homemaker, Assisted Husband in his Appliance Store

Children: 1 Son born in Williamsburg, 9/26/28 / 1 Daughter born in Williamsburg, 10/31/30

Which States have you lived in?: Virginia

Number of years attended William and Mary: 1

First year attended William and Mary: 1925

Favorite Areas of Study: English and Government

Hobbies: Reading and Needlework

Favorite Music: Orchestra, Piano

Favorite Food: Fruits (all kinds)

Favorite Book: Freedom at Midnight

Who do you feel closest to at present? My children and my brothers
Mona Heard

Place of Birth: Williamsburg, VA  
Date of Birth: April 30, 1904

Marital Status: Never-married  
Religion: Methodist

Ethnicity: English

Number of Siblings: 3 Brothers and 1 Sister

Number of Nieces and Nephews: 4

Father's Place of Birth: Williamsburg, VA  
Birth and Death: 1873-1960

Father's Occupation: Merchant in Williamsburg

Mother's Place of Birth: Iowa  
Birth and Death: 1879-1982

Mother's Occupation: Home maker

Personal Career: College Instructor of Chemistry at Mt. Holyoke College (1 year) College Instructor of Chemistry at Lynchburg College (21 years)

Which states have you lived in? Virginia, West Virginia, Massachusetts, Maryland

First year attended William and Mary: Summer school, 1920

Number of years attended William and Mary: 5 years

Major: Chemistry and Education

Hobbies: Reading, Exercise, Church, Attending plays and concerts

Favorite Music: Big Band  
Favorite Food: Desserts

Favorite Book: The Bible  
Favorite Movie: Gone With the Wind

Who have you felt closest to in your life?: My friends and Family
Victoria Lowry

Place of Birth: Christiansburg, Virginia       Date of Birth: April 26, 1908
Marital Status: Widow                        Date & Place Married: 1/1/42- Boston, MA
Religion: Episcopalian                       Ethnicity: English
Number of Siblings: 2 sisters and 2 brothers
Father's Place of Birth: London, England
Date of Birth and Death: 1865-1941
Father's Occupation: Manufacturer, Ice and Refrigeration
Mother's Place of Birth: Pilot, Virginia
Date of Birth and Death: 1871-1953
Mother's Occupation: Homemaker
Husband's Career: Marine Safety Engineer, U. S. Army
Personal Career: Home Service Director for Public Utility Company for 12 years, sixth grade teacher for 22 years.
Which states have you lived in?: Virginia, Illinois, Massachusetts
Children: 1 Daughter and 1 Son
Number of years attended William and Mary: 2
First year attended William & Mary: 1928 transferred to William & Mary from Longwood
Major Areas of Interest: Biology, Education, and Home Economics
Hobbies: Sewing, reading
Who did you feel closest to in your life? My Husband
Who do you feel closest to at present? My children
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VITA

Diane Marie Roy