

# WE ARE NOT EXTINCT

THE FIRST 100 YEARS

OF THE

RADCLIFFE CLUB OF SAN FRANCISCO

1898 - 1998



Compiled from the Archives  
of Club and College

*and*

by

Sarah J. Gregory

Past President  
Club Historian

# WE ARE NOT EXTINCT

THE FIRST 100 YEARS

OF THE

RADCLIFFE CLUB OF SAN FRANCISCO

1898 - 1998



by

Sarah J. Gregory

*San Francisco, California*

Printed for the Radcliffe Club of San Francisco  
1998

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

Every historian and archivist owes much to those who came before and preserved the records which make the writing of history possible. My thanks to to Edith Tracy Gregory, not only for her history of the Club's first forty years, but for the meticulous notes she made and kept when compiling that history. For more recent years I owe much to Eleanor Levine Zuckerman, who generously donated a complete set of Club papers from the 1980s; Eileen Cowell, who donated newsletters back to the 1970s; and Helen Lourie Markwett, who found news clippings from the 1950s that refer to Radcliffe and the Club. Joan Humphrey Hermann and Jeanne Melville Smith contributed valuable reminiscences. In addition, Jane Knowles, Archivist of Radcliffe College, provided material from old editions of the *Quarterly*, and copies of early letters from the College Archives. My gratitude to all these women is great, but what I have made of their contributions is my own, and all errors, mistakes, misunderstandings and misapprehensions are mine alone, and to be blamed on no one else.

I also owe much to Ellen McHugh LaFollette, who has encouraged me mightily, and helped me to see my dream of a Radcliffe Club of San Francisco Centennial come true. Zara Tepper Haimo, Club president, has been a steady supporter of this history. Too many other Club members have helped me in various ways for me to mention all by name, but my gratitude is theirs all the same. However, if there is one person to whom this history owes most, it is

Julia George

and I dedicate it to her memory.

## Photographs

- I. Miss George.....Page 22
- II. S.S. Radcliffe Victory.....Page 23
- III. Ladies Who Launch.....Page 24
- IV. The Christening.....Page 25

## Origins

In August 1898, a small group of Radcliffe alumnae gathered in the San Francisco home of Miss Julia George, and formally constituted themselves as the first Radcliffe Club anywhere. The College's Alumnae Association already existed, of course, but the idea of a local or regional association of like-minded women had never before taken hold. A Constitution and Bylaws were drawn up. The Club's purpose was to be the promotion of "the influence of Radcliffe on the Pacific Coast."

The first ten years of the Club were known to its first historian, Edith Tracy Gregory, as the "Prehistoric Period", because no documents beyond the tattered sheet of handwritten bylaws survived.<sup>1</sup> However, Julia George, the moving spirit behind the Club, was still among its most active members in 1938, and her memories gave the historian material to work with. The *Radcliffe Quarterly* for August 1938 contains a precis of what is known of the first forty years of the Club.<sup>2</sup>

Prior to the formal foundation, Radcliffe women in the San Francisco area had managed to find one another and get together informally. After 1894, Miss George's house had been a sort of club-house, in that she made it her business to entertain any Radcliffe women who visited San Francisco. This informal association encouraged other women to apply to the College, including the

---

<sup>1</sup>This document was presented to the Club for its archive in 1935, by Miss George. It was still in existence in 1943, but I have not been able to trace it since then.

<sup>2</sup>In addition to the published article, I have the original notes collected by Edith Tracy Gregory, which contain details omitted from the *Quarterly* for reasons of space.

## WE ARE NOT EXTINCT

first California graduate student, Mary Matilda McLean (Mrs. Warren Olney, Jr.), who went to Radcliffe in 1895.

An entrepreneurial woman named Mrs. Bull conceived the idea of starting a private girl's school, to be staffed by Radcliffe alumnae. The school was located at Sharon House, on the peninsula, and was not a success. By the time it closed, however, the staff had created for themselves the slogan "Why don't we have a Radcliffe Club!", and at the August 1898 meeting at Miss George's house, they did.

Miss George was duly elected president under the new Constitution, and Miss Katherine Flavan (later Mrs. Felix Conlan) was secretary-treasurer. There is some uncertainty about the names of the other individuals present. Apparently Margaret Sweeney, AB 1899 was one; Alice Tufts Brown may have been another (she is listed as a Charter Member, but her name does not appear on the 1908 list (see below)). The new institution was known simply as the "Radcliffe Club"; if a geographic signifier was used, the title was "Radcliffe Club of the Pacific Coast".

The Club met sporadically over the first decade. Initial enthusiasm faded to quarterly meetings, and those to irregular occasions, usually prompted by Miss George's entertainment of a visitor from Cambridge. The only record, which comes from Miss George's memory, is of the meetings she hosted, but there may well have been others. The more complete record which begins in 1908 indicates a wide range of locations, comparable to today's coverage of the entire Bay area. It is worthwhile to note, in this regard, the superiority of public transportation a century ago! Private automobiles were not yet a necessary part of life.

In addition to its social activities, the Club, in the person of Miss George, acted as a recruiting agent for Radcliffe College. Miss George proctored the required entrance examinations (in the absence of SATs and such standardized tests, Radcliffe, like most colleges, set its own entrance standards) and reassured doubting parents that the expense of sending a daughter to the

## ORIGINS

far-away East coast was indeed a worthy cause. Her letters of introduction ensured that the students were made welcome in Cambridge, and the ladies of the Club were known to "pass the hat" to provide last minute financial assistance. The custom apparently was for the hat to pass last to Miss George, who miraculously found in it the exact sum wanted, every time.

## Miss George

Because the early decades of the Club's history are also in part the story of Julia George, it is appropriate to pause a moment here to give a sketch of this remarkable woman's life. Our source for this information is a short biography published by Radcliffe, which was to be presented to graduate students holding the Fellowship she endowed.<sup>3</sup> The author of this pamphlet notes that facts are insufficient to explain personality; and proceeds to demonstrate this proposition as well as its limits.

Julia George was born in San Francisco in the 1860's. She apparently did not choose to be more specific; in later years she claimed the records were lost in the 1906 fire. Her father was a banker and a lawyer, an immigrant from Bavaria, who had a reputation for "solid wealth, business capacity, and integrity". Her mother was a noted hostess, with a love of language and literature. Both parents were active in civic causes and philanthropies. There is no record of any siblings.

Julia was sent east to school, and entered Vassar College very young. By her own account, she had such a good time her parents reconsidered, and sent her to Europe, where relatives could keep her from distractions. Since, however, the distractions she pursued in Europe were of a decidedly improving sort, we have to wonder what in her earlier giddiness was so

---

<sup>3</sup>"The Julia George Graduate Fellowship" by "L.W.S." (probably Lucy Ward Stebbins, of whom more below), Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass., 1944. The first holder of the Fellowship was Enriqueta Lopezlira Castro of Mexico City, who held degrees from "several Mexican colleges and universities."



## MISS GEORGE

worrisome. Her sojourn on the Continent exposed her to the great movements in social amelioration which were building in response to the urban miseries caused by the Industrial Revolution. The ideas she encountered were compatible with the concerns she had been exposed to in childhood, through her parents' involvement with the social problems San Francisco experienced during the post-Gold Rush period. Julia decided early in her life that she had been chosen, "not to be ministered to but to minister."

Between 1889 and 1893 Julia registered as a special student at the "Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women" at Cambridge, Massachusetts (which changed its name by charter to Radcliffe College in 1894). In addition to regular course work, she observed the operations of various public social agencies, particularly the state system of foster-home care which was being developed in Massachusetts at that time. She designed a plan of study which allowed her to pursue her interest in social work without bothering to acquire a degree. In this she was also displaying a characteristic choice; although she urged other women to acquire professional credentials, she felt no need for them herself, having chosen to go her own way rather than fit herself into any institutional mold. Despite this unconventional streak, she was popular with her classmates and with the faculty, and maintained her contacts after leaving Cambridge.

After College she travelled widely, but San Francisco was her home. In 1898 she was the prime mover in a project to create a playground and athletic programs for boys at risk. This was just the first of many projects she instituted which have a decidedly "end of the twentieth-century" feel, since athletic programs to get boys off the streets are a current cause for politicians. After the 1906 earthquake and fire, her abilities became widely known and valued. She was a familiar and welcome figure South of Market (which was then a shabby district, home to immigrants and the poor). Teachers and nurses knew they could call on her to assist the families under their care. Despite her preference for working outside the system, she worked with the constituted

## WE ARE NOT EXTINCT

authorities. Her association with the City Department of Public Health began when she organized the first well-baby clinic in the city. From 1921 until her death in 1944 she served the Juvenile Protective Association and its successor, the Children's Protective Society of San Francisco, as president, vice-president, and director. She was appointed to the board of the Child Welfare League of America.

Much of her work had no institutional affiliation, however. Once a need had come to her attention, she set about answering it, using whatever means came to hand. The fact that she had ample private means of course helped, but in many cases her solutions were intended to be more lasting than the mere alleviation of immediate financial pressures. She was a strong supporter of professional social workers, and in addition to personally providing means of rest and relaxation for the women in the Division of Field Nursing of the San Francisco Department of Public Health, she also served as the first president of the Northern California Chapter of the American Association of Social Workers. As such, she emphasized the need for social workers to have professional credentials and the respect and compensation which such credentials deserved.

Additionally, it must be noted that she was aware of the fact the while most social workers came from the Northern European groups which were the elite in the United States at that time, the majority of the families who needed the services were from other ethnic groups. Since in San Francisco, the Chinese and Spanish American populations were disproportionately represented in the population she served, she devoted considerable effort to recruiting and training young women from these communities to help bridge the gap between servers and served. It is worth noting in this connection that a contemporary of hers at Radcliffe was Mary White Ovington, later the first historian of the civil rights movement.

In addition to her involvement with these social agencies, Julia was an active suffragist, and worked with the League of Women Voters in its

## MISS GEORGE

formative years. Of all the organizations with which she was associated, however, it seems to have been the Radcliffe Club of which she was most fond. Throughout the years there was an irresistible attraction between Julia George and anyone who had any connection with Radcliffe. Her hospitality to fellow alumnae was legendary. In her will, she brought together her two great loves by leaving to Radcliffe College, "the sum of Twenty thousand (\$20,000) dollars for a graduate Scholarship. Preference shall be given to natives of the Spanish Americas and to those of China..." A friend said of her, "She did not expect gratitude for her lavish goodness to others; she simply loved to serve and make people happy."

## Reorganization

In November of 1908, a larger group met, again at Miss George's home, and formally reconstituted the Radcliffe Club. Present were: Miss Julia George, Mrs. John R. Wade, Mrs. Zoeth A. Eldredge, Mrs. Parker Maddux, Miss Fanny Holman, Miss Almira Leavitt (Mrs. Cox), Miss Jane Gay Dodge and Miss Lucy Sprague (Mrs. W. C. Mitchell). The constitution and by-laws of the earlier group were re-enacted with little change, and after considerable debate the club was named simply "The Radcliffe Club". Miss George was elected president, Mrs. Maddux, secretary-treasurer. The first meeting of the new organization was in March 1909, at the home of Mrs. Charles R. Brown of Oakland, when the new constitution was formally signed and put into effect.

The group met again in May and August, and in November held their "Second Annual Meeting", at which time Miss Jane Gay Dodge was elected president, Mrs. Maddux continuing in the other offices. The reason for Miss George's replacement was her absence on an extended trip to Europe; on her return she was re-elected president annually until 1920. Mrs. Maddux and Miss Dodge traded the other positions back and forth. The group met four or five times a year for the next few years; lunch in Oakland, a walk in the Berkeley Hills, tea with Mrs. Maddux in Palo Alto, and innumerable occasions hosted by Miss George, both at her home and at her various clubs in the City. Numbers present varied from two to eight. On a number of occasions the Club joined forces with other organizations; in May 1910 they had lunch with Wellesley, in 1912 met with Mills, in 1915 Miss Stebbins hosted a Radcliffe table at a meeting of "Collegiate Alumnae" in East Oakland.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Lucy Ward Stebbins AB 1902 was one of the students who took her entrance examinations under Miss George's indulgent eye. She was Dean of Women at U.C.

## REORGANIZATION

The first document to have survived in the College Archives from the San Francisco Club is a letter from Miss Dodge to Miss Daniell, dated "Montara, San Mateo Co., Calif, 19 June 1913". It is worth quoting in full:

Expecting to leave California, I have sent the Radcliffe Club records to the President, Miss George, but as I am not going away after all, I suppose I shall go on performing the office of Secretary, so hesitate to ask Miss George to answer your questions. She is such a busy woman. My answers are from memory. This year we had nine members, I think. Our functions are purely social. Miss George has entertained us twice and Mrs. Olney once. It isn't a really exciting record!

Perhaps excitement wasn't what the Club members wanted.

As a side note, it was in the November 1913 issue of the *Radcliffe Bulletin* that the Alumnae Association, in reporting Club activities, began to use the name "Radcliffe Club of San Francisco", presumably because there were enough other Radcliffe Clubs across the nation to render designation appropriate. However, there is no record of the Club adopting the change in title in any formal fashion.

Some of the most active and influential members of the Club don't show up very strongly in the official record, because they were not elected officers. Lucy Sprague (later Mrs. W. C. Mitchell), who received her A.M. at Radcliffe in 1900, is noted as having been one of the moving spirits behind the revival of 1908. She was Dean of Women at U.C. Berkeley for many years, and encouraged many women from that campus to pursue advanced work at Radcliffe. She often hosted Club meetings at Berkeley, and seems to have been a power behind the scenes.<sup>5</sup>

Berkeley starting in 1912, and was active in the Radcliffe Club for many years.

<sup>5</sup>Lucy Sprague Mitchell wrote an autobiography, *Two Lives: the Story of Wesley Clair Mitchell and Myself* (New York, 1953). After leaving Berkeley, at the time of her marriage, she was Chairman of the Bureau of Educational Experiments in New York, later the Bank Street College of Education.

## WE ARE NOT EXTINCT

By 1914 the membership was beginning to grow. The Panama Pacific Exposition provided the Club with a high profile opportunity to make itself known. Mrs. Eldredge and Mrs. Maddux were official hostesses at the Massachusetts Building at the Exposition, and used that position to encourage Radcliffe alumnae to join the Club. At the California Building, the Club entertained Mrs. Cabot, Mabel Daniels (who led an orchestra of eighty-six *men* at Festival Hall), and in August, the visiting delegates of the Associated Collegiate Alumnae, "a brilliant list, with Miss Sophie Hart among their number."

The momentum thus gained was not to last; war intervened. There were no meetings between November 1917 and August 1919. Even the November 1917 Annual Meeting was shadowed by the war; it was held at the Office of the Military Welfare Commission. Club reports to the *Quarterly* consist of recitals of war work. "Miss Lucy Stebbins, on the Board of Directors of the National League for Women's Service ... In Palo Alto a National Defenders Club has been opened for the soldiers of Camp Fremont, and three Radcliffe women ... have given very definite service, Mrs. Maddux, county chairman, Miss Dorothy Gilman, and Mrs. Kate Parrott Gorringe." In June of 1919, Mrs. Maddux further reported: "Our club is as yet down and out, owing to extreme individualism on the part of its publicly active members. We are not, however, extinct."

## Expansion

By August of 1919, people were looking forward to the return of civilian pleasures. Miss George hosted a meeting at the National League for Women's Service Club in San Francisco, and five members vowed then to try to reactivate the Club. Twelve came to the annual meeting that November, and actually elected new officers, Mrs. Edward C. Tolman, president, and Mrs. Thomas B. Hine, secretary-treasurer. In 1920, a new constitution and by-laws, differing in no essentials from the previous documents, were adopted, and meetings were set monthly instead of quarterly. Attendance also rose, averaging fifteen. Unfortunately, I have no roster indicating the size of the Club's membership in these years, but fifteen is a considerable jump from eight or nine.

Two main interests spurred the Club on during the 1920's, both monetary. In the first place, the College was engaged in an endowment drive, the first to call on large numbers of alumnae for contributions. And, second, the Club had decided to try to provide financial assistance for young Californians who wished to make the trip to Cambridge. The coincidence of these efforts made fund-raising the chief activity for the Club, and considerable ingenuity went into the matter. Social activities such as bridge teas became fund-raisers. Rummage sales, and sales of linens, bags, garters, Christmas cards and a mystery known as "chichi"<sup>6</sup> apparently provided considerable revenue, since the Club continued to rely on them until the Second War. A play was

<sup>6</sup>Since the ladies who dealt in this substance were still active in the group at the time the earlier history was compiled, one gathers that the mystery of "chichi" was deliberate. It makes me think of the "invisible bake sales" which were popular when I was a child, where instead of baking a cake to contribute, you could buy an invisible cake, no calories guaranteed!

produced, under the management of Miss Orral Matchette, which netted the cause \$200. And every year, as I believe every year since, there was a campaign for subscriptions.

A newsletter titled *Make a Record for Radcliffe*, from April of 1923, urged every alumna to pledge \$30 dollars more to make up the \$75,000 the College needed to win a matching grant. Each club had a quota to raise, and San Francisco had the honor of meeting its quota first. The honor was rather tarnished, our historian tells us, by the fact that the quota had to be reduced to five thousand dollars before they could meet it. However, no mention is made in either source of the amount originally requested. The final sum raised by the Club was \$5,733.19, not bad for a group whose membership list was hovering around twenty.

In October 1922, Dr. Philip King Brown, a member of the National Advisory Board for the Endowment, advised the Club that it would have better success with its fund-raising if it provided some definite and known service to the Bay Area community. This agreed with the sentiment already active among Club members that a scholarship for Bay Area students was a matter of first importance. Initially the focus was on providing graduate students with assistance. In 1923, Juanita Huntley, a graduate of Mills College, was the first Club Scholar. Alberta Marx, (A.B. Stanford 1921) followed in 1925. The Anniversary Scholar in 1928 was Janet Stuart Wentworth, followed in 1930 by Gladys Dahlgren (A.B. Univ. Calif 1930). All of these women either received the degree sought or, if not entered for a degree, finished the course of study undertaken.

Sarah Beckman was the first undergraduate to be a Club Scholar. According to the historian's notes, she was "one of Prof. Terman's Exceptional 12 year olds", a 1927 graduate of Williams Institute. Beatrice Metcalf and Marian Marcus were other Club Scholars. In 1938 it was important to the Club to emphasize that as well as successfully completing their academic work, and achieving professional success, all of these women (with the exception of a



current undergraduate) had married promptly. "Charm and intelligence can reside in the same body!" crowed the chronicler.

All this high finance did not deter the members from socializing. Most of the meetings noted were held, as they still are, at members' homes, featuring discussions of topics of general interest: "Coming elections" one September, a discussion of the "Jewish quota" (which affected Harvard students but not Radcliffe), a program on the Women's College at Tokyo, with guests from that institution, a speaker from the International Society of Policewomen. At a meeting at the Women's Athletic Club in San Francisco in Oct 1921, a note says "22 present, 8 new." Miss George continued her custom of entertaining emissaries from Cambridge, Miss Ella Lyman Cabot in 1922, Miss Ada Louise Comstock (Radcliffe's newly installed President) in 1923.

By the time the Club celebrated Radcliffe's Semi-Centennial in 1929, membership had risen above thirty, and twenty or more might actually attend a meeting of unusual interest. Such a meeting was held May 4, 1929, at Miss Head's School in Oakland. Titled "Radcliffe Revisited" it featured slides and speeches, and a special address in honor of the College's anniversary by Miss Stebbins. May 18th the same program was repeated at the Women's Faculty Club, at Berkeley, with teachers from Girl's Private Schools throughout the Bay area as special guests, an elaborate recruiting gesture.

The pattern in the 1930's was much the same, although the historian's notes are less detailed as we approach her own years in office. A big issue at the time was the College's desire to have each club support a Regional Scholar (do we see a pattern of Cambridge catching up to San Francisco here?) and on February 2 the Club voted to place their original Club Scholars program under the Regional Scholars Fund.<sup>7</sup> This meeting boasted a record attendance, but that may have been the speaker, Grace McCann Morley, Curator of the new

<sup>7</sup>An important difference between the Club's venture and the Regional Scholarship was that the Club's scholars were chosen as much for need as ability, while the Regional Scholars were chosen from a competitive exam. This was a matter of some concern, as noted below.

## WE ARE NOT EXTINCT

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, or it may just have been the beauty of Berkeley when the acacias are in bloom. Hostess for this occasion was Katherine Ehrgott Caldwell, who is today, in 1998, the longest continuing member of the Club.<sup>8</sup>

We learn that Dean Bernice Brown Cronkhite visited the Club in January of that year. In October 1934, the club sent eleven members, not counting Mrs. Meiklejohn, the speaker, to the Seven Colleges Broadcast Luncheon at the Fairmont Hotel.

Depression times made the need for not only scholarships but other kinds of financial assistance for students imperative, and fundraising seems to have been a major item on the agenda of all business meetings. In addition to the Club's commitment to support a Regional Scholar, a general sense for the need for a grant-in-aid fund was felt. In 1938, as part of its fortieth anniversary celebrations, the Club raised \$200 for such a fund, to be named in honor of Miss George. Grant-in-aid funds were used to help provide such incidental necessities as a winter coat for a student from Los Angeles, or a layette for the baby of one of the Chinese graduate students Miss George sponsored.

Many members were involved in recruiting for the College, a precursor of the Schools Committee interviewing of more recent years. For West Coast alumnae, the idea was beginning to take hold that Radcliffe was not a New England institution, but a "national college". Joan Humphrey Hermann recalls,

"How well I remember Miss Julia George, Miss Cady, Mrs. Arthur Allen, Mrs. Tolman. They were outstanding ladies, kind and encouraging - but I was so scared when they interviewed me! I forgot to mention Sophie Kent, but my mother went along to that interview and they got on famously!

At any rate, the Radcliffe Club of San

---

<sup>8</sup>Elizabeth Daniele Allen, '06, (Mrs. Arthur Allen), who died in 1979, was also a member for more than 60 years, however, my record does not indicate the exact year she joined, so Katherine Caldwell holds the record for years of membership.

## EXPANSION

Francisco changed my life when they chose me as Regional Scholar from San Francisco."

As age slowed the indomitable Miss George, Sophie Morris Kent began to take over the role of official Club hostess. Her name appears on the list of members who entertained the group as early as 1920, and she remained a force in the Club into the 1960s. As well as her involvement with the Club, Mrs. Kent was a Trustee of the College, the first Club member recorded to hold that position. At the time of the fortieth anniversary celebration, the historian of the day could proudly say, "...we challenge comparison with any Radcliffe Club in activities, proportion of active membership to Radcliffe women in the locality, and particularly in the interest and friendliness of our meetings."

## WE ARE NOT EXTINCT

## Officers of the Radcliffe Club of San Francisco 1909-1938

Year	President	Secretary-Treasurer
1909	Miss Julia George	Mrs. Parker Maddux
1910	Miss Jane Gay Dodge	Mrs. Parker Maddux
1911	Miss Julia George	Miss Jane Gay Dodge
1912	Miss Julia George	Miss Jane Gay Dodge
1913	Miss Julia George	Miss Jane Gay Dodge
1914	Miss Julia George	Mrs. Parker Maddux
1915	Miss Julia George	Mrs. Parker Maddux
1916	Miss Julia George	Mrs. Parker Maddux
1917	Miss Julia George	Mrs. Parker Maddux
1918	wartime hiatus	
1919	wartime hiatus	
1920	Mrs. Edward C. Tolman	Mrs. Thomas B. Hine
1921	Miss Lucy Stebbins	Miss Ruth Pringle/ Mrs. William S. Davenport
1922	Miss Orral Matchette	Mrs. William S. Davenport
1923	Mrs. Edward C. Tolman	Mrs. William S. Davenport
1924	Mrs. George P. Costigan	Mrs. William S. Davenport
1925	Mrs. William S. Davenport	Miss Leila Noland/ Miss Maude L. Fellows
1926	Miss Julia George	Miss Elizabeth Rutan
1927	Mrs. Arthur A. Allen	Mrs. Russel M. Sanford
1928	Mrs. Grace L. Crockett	Mrs. William Y. Allen
1929	Mrs. William Kent, Jr.	Mrs. William S. Davenport
1930	Miss Maude L. Fellows	Mrs. William S. Davenport
1931	Miss Julia George	Mrs. Joseph Felix
1932	Miss Florence Armstrong	Mrs. Frances Ellen Starkey
1933	Mrs. William Y. Allen	Mrs. Frances Ellen Starkey
1934	Mrs. Frances Ellen Starkey	Mrs. Frank Gregory
1935	Mrs. Edward C. Tolman	Mrs. Malcolm Davisson
1936	Mrs. Russel M. Sanford	Mrs. Marcus Nutting
1937	Miss Mildred Corson	Miss Jane Scribner
1938	Mrs. Frank Gregory	Miss Helen Bocher

## Interlude: The Second War

In some ways the Second War was even more engrossing than the first had been, but the Club was larger, and had more bodies to share the work. So the Club apparently did not suffer the same hiatus which marked the years 1917-1919. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for the Club Archive; Mrs. Gregory, having so painstakingly assembled the records of the earlier days, neglected to preserve similar materials from her own terms as president. So we are obliged to guess at the detailed course of events.

One of the Club's main preoccupations was, along with Radcliffe alumnae all over the country, raising funds for the war effort. We can assume that the tried and true methods of rummage sales and the mystery "chichi" were still in force, but penny drives (for the copper, wartime pennies were minted of lead) and scrap metal collections probably featured as well. The results were nothing short of spectacular: a Victory Ship, the S.S. Radcliffe Victory, launched from the Richmond California shipyards of the Permanente Metals Corporation on April 4, 1945.

Victory ships were successors to the better known Liberty ships, which were not made in Richmond after 1944. Like their predecessors, Victory ships were named for prominent people or institutions, and groups could claim the privilege of naming one on the basis of amounts contributed to the war effort, especially scrap metal drives. A series of Victory ships was named for colleges, of which the S.S. Radcliffe Victory was one. The tradition, almost amounting to a superstition, that each ship must be properly christened by a woman or it would find bad luck, meant that the process for launching the ships had to be as streamlined as the manufacture. On one occasion, the honoree, armed with

champagne bottle, was ushered onto a platform over an empty dock. "Where's the boat?" she asked. The reply was, "Start swinging, she'll be here any second now." It took an average of seventeen seconds for the ships to slide down the ways into the water, and the champagne was supposed to break on the bow!

Permanente #2 was proud of the fact they held the record for building and outfitting a Liberty ship; 4 days, fifteen hours to build and launch, 3 days more to outfit for use. Most ships took about ten or twelve days to complete, and up to ninety to outfit, depending on their intended use. About two thirds went to the Navy, the rest to the Merchant Marine to replace ships lost in action or requisitioned by the military.

It was a considerable honor to christen a ship. Representing the Club and therefore the College on that occasion, were Mrs. Kent, Mrs. Sanford, Miss Ethel Springer, Miss Sybil Stone, Mrs. Sumner Brooks, Miss Mary Cady, Mrs. Danforth Ogg, and Mrs. Gregory. Winning the war was a serious matter, and not much in the way of smiles can be seen in the commemorative photos, but the feeling of satisfaction must have been as immense as the ship looming over them looked.

## Fresh Energy

The conclusion of the war released immense energy, and Radcliffe College did its best to harness that energy for its ends. The wartime expedient of having Radcliffe students share classrooms with Harvard students taking the same classes had the effect of freeing up some of the College's resources, and a master plan for expanding the college was soon under way. The first signs of this were a building campaign, new dormitories being the principal goal, so that the increasing number of students from outside the Greater Boston area might have places to live. Hopes were entertained that the total number of students accommodated would continue to increase. At the same time it was not until 1948 that Harvard signified its willingness to continue the combined classes. Radcliffe had always maintained separate classes for freshmen, and intended to do so, and in addition was challenged to begin hiring women faculty members to balance the all-male faculty at Harvard. The first fruits of this part of the effort, the Samuel Zemurray Jr., and Doris Zemurray Stone - Radcliffe Professorship, was announced in 1948, and President Wilbur K. Jordan hoped it would be just the first of many such positions.

Because so many of the themes that would preoccupy the Club in the next half century are outlined in it, I would like to quote at length from President Jordan's letter to alumnae of February 1948.

The enrolment of your college this year numbers 961 undergraduates and 353 graduate students...an increase of 33 1/3 per cent [from 1940-41]...In this academic year the total cost of an education at the major colleges for women will range from Radcliffe's average charge of \$1,140 for residential students (an amount defraying the cost of tuition, room, and board) to \$1600. In colleges for men of

comparable repute and strength, the inclusive charge this year ranges from \$970 to \$1300. This difference in charge, which is discriminatory against young women, is in part accounted for by the fact that it costs considerably more to house a woman student, but much more importantly by the fact that the strong colleges for men possess a far heavier backlog of per student endowment....The cost of living ... has risen abruptly and almost disastrously during the past seven years. The usually accepted index of the cost of living stood at 100.2 in 1940-1941 and in October, 1947, at 160. But while the cost of living has advanced 60 per cent, Radcliffe has been able by heroic and occasionally damaging means to hold the increase in the cost of education, wholly accounted for by the rise in our room and board charges, at a little less than 14 per cent. *If there is any bargain to be found in the American economy, it is a Radcliffe education.*

Among the items President Jordan mentioned were \$100,000 in deferred maintenance, the two new dormitories urgently needed (one of which, Moors Hall, was the subject of another article in the same *Quarterly*) and the need for Radcliffe to have more economic diversity in its student body. "...Almost exactly two-thirds of our students are drawn from an income stratum including only 14.4 per cent of the nation's families." The remaining third of the students were almost all on scholarship (which meant awards based on merit rather than need). President Jordan was very blunt; "It is our firm belief that ... colleges and universities can survive as healthy and significant institutions in a free society only if they can provide education to gifted young people ... from all classes within our society....by no possible stretch of definition is it probable that more than 40 per cent of an undergraduate student body can or should qualify for scholarship awards." He concluded his comments with the reminder, "We have our own job to do and that job must be financed by our own efforts." In anticipation of the College's 70th anniversary (in 1949) the alumnae were asked to help raise \$800,000 toward a planned \$2,000,000 endowment.

Although the Club was of course involved in the general campaign for funds, interest in San Francisco centered primarily around the subject of



scholarships. The fund endowed by Miss George in 1944 had already lost to inflation its ability to fully support a student, and the other endowments the Club had made over the years together amounted to only a couple of thousand dollars. The effort involved in raising sufficient money to send a Regional Scholar to the College even once every two years was draining, and felt futile in that each year the fund had to start over from scratch, instead of building as an endowment does from year to year. In addition, the process for selecting Regional Scholars meant that the money often went to students who would have attended anyway, rather than helping young women with no other chance of "going East to college". The Conference of Radcliffe Representatives was pressed to allow the Clubs to make need as much of a consideration as merit, and a committee was created to study the matter.

Events however moved slowly, in part because of the ever-larger sums needed to meet ever-increasing needs in Cambridge. The Zemurray gift establishing the Radcliffe Professorship was \$250,000. By 1958 the income from even that sum was looking inadequate to fully fund a professorial chair. And another aspect of the fund-raising situation might be termed the demographic aspect; while increasing numbers of Radcliffe graduates combined careers with family life, they still clustered, as women throughout the country did, in lower-paid professions. Until the 1960s, when the proportion began to fall sharply, over a third of all Radcliffe alumnae employed outside the home were teachers. However ardent their desire to support their alma mater, the number of alumnae who were able to make substantial gifts was, and remained, small.

In 1958, a Radcliffe trustee named Robert Hunneman took it upon himself to raise \$10,000,000 for the College, and San Francisco was one stop on his nationwide tour in that effort. Helen Lourie Markwett ran a publicity campaign during his visit to the City which resulted in well-placed articles in local newspapers. His efforts were apparently successful; the building of the "Jordans, J, K, & W", the co-operative houses, was one tangible fruit of



---

Miss Julia George



---

S.S. Radcliffe Victory



---

Ladies Who Launch

Mrs. Kent, Mrs. Sanford, Miss Ethel Springer, Miss Sybil Stone  
Mrs. Sumner Brooks, Miss Mary Cady, Mrs. Danforth Ogg, and Mrs. Gregory



---

The Christening

Hunneman's campaign, and a fitting memorial to President Jordan's desire to ensure that Radcliffe would remain an affordable institution.

The Club archive takes up again in detail in 1966, when the Club was in the middle of a major effort to bring the various endowments formed over the years into a form useful to students of the day. After much correspondence with the College, it was decided that the smaller sums should be lumped together to make a single endowment, which could then be augmented by the Club's fund-raising to make a full scholarship.<sup>9</sup> In September, 1966, the total in the Club's various funds, including accrued interest and capital gains, and unused income, was \$3476. The Club had raised a little more than two thousand to add to that sum, while the College required \$10,000 in endowment to create a named scholarship. Catherine C. Hislop, president of the Club, sent out an impassioned appeal, "For 500 women of our caliber, \$4,500 is not an impossible goal. In one splendid united effort let's raise our \$10,000 and be done with it!" The Club did, in March of 1967.

A good part of the fund-raising that took place was in conjunction with other groups; the Seven College Conference, for instance, ran an annual project in Berkeley called the Christmas Showcase, which brought in a good proportion of the Club's yearly donations to the College. By sharing the work, it was possible to put on more elaborate events, and each group's proceeds were commensurately larger.

It was during this time period that the Club began to investigate the possibility of acquiring tax-exempt status, so that it could more easily raise contributions directly rather than soliciting donations to the College. A letter from 1968 (unsigned) to the College requesting the return of canceled checks mentions that the Internal Revenue Service had been investigating the Club the year before. Apparently the IRS found nothing amiss, but if the Club obtained tax-exempt status it later allowed it to lapse.

<sup>9</sup>The Radcliffe Club of San Francisco and the Helen Garrison Phoutrides Grant-in-aid Funds are the two named in the documents to hand; I believe the first was the fund endowed in 1938 in honor of Miss George. If not, there was a third.

## FRESH ENERGY

It was with pride that the Club celebrated its seventieth birthday in January of 1968. Membership had passed the one hundred mark and was headed up; the Club was sound financially; and projects undertaken had been successfully completed. College President Mary Bunting joined the Club at the Town and Country Club as guests of Mrs. Kent. The location was chosen because it was a favorite of Julia George's and it seemed a fitting way to honor the past while looking to the future. Helen Markwett, Club president, reported to the *Quarterly* in March 1968, "In these days of Radcliffe's stellar achievement in the field of women's education, San Francisco Club members find it refreshing to pause and reexamine their beginnings, when a girl who attended what was then called "The Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women" pledged herself "to promote the influence of Radcliffe on the Pacific Coast."

## Years of Turmoil

The 1960s and 1970s were decades of turmoil, not less for Club and College than for the rest of the nation. The San Francisco Club (as noted before, no act of the Club ever made the name official, but by the 1960's it was used by Club and College without question) expressed the general restlessness in ways not unprecedented; it split. The Radcliffe Club of the Peninsula was formed in 1967, in response to the lack of adequate transportation between the City and its outliers. In contrast to the early days, when it was possible to get from Palo Alto to San Francisco by train in thirty minutes or less, the dominance of the private automobile had isolated the peninsula towns. Traffic jams slowed movement, and if one succeeded in driving into the City in a reasonable amount of time, there was no place to park the car. For Club members used to the old ways, coming to San Francisco had become an impossible chore, but the desire to maintain the fellowship of the Club remained strong. Thus the San Francisco Club's first daughter was born, a healthy daughter now grown to a friend, 30 years old, as the mother Club approaches 100.

Another contentious issue that surfaced in the 1970's was the question of the relationship between the Radcliffe Club and the Harvard Club of San Francisco. The Harvard Club was founded in 1874, and is as proud of its history as we are of ours, but it also has changed as the face of Harvard has changed. As women began to claim places in the Harvard Club, many members of that institution began to ask why the Radcliffe Club continued as a separate group. The answer has always been, "Because that's the way we like it!" Every few years the question of a possible merger between the Clubs is



raised, and every year it is pointed out that fewer independent Radcliffe Clubs remain. When the question was first raised, in the 1970s, the Radcliffe Club voted decisively to keep itself a separate institution. Under Eleanor Levine Zuckerman's leadership the Constitution and By-laws were brought up to date, and amended by Alison Lord Boeckmann to bring them into compliance with the Internal Revenue Code's requirements for section 501 c (3) tax-exempt status in 1979. The Club has operated under this Constitution ever since.

Just as the relationship between Clubs in San Francisco was being redefined, the relationship between Radcliffe and Harvard was constantly changing, as both institutions struggled to meet the needs of a rapidly changing student body without jeopardizing their traditional missions. As Harvard doors, one by one, slowly opened to admit women, Radcliffe was in reaction obliged to constantly redefine what its role in the "greater Harvard University community" was to be. This process continues today, and could be called the keynote of the later 20th century.

Harvard's graduate and professional schools were the first to begin admitting women directly, so Radcliffe's graduate programs were the first to decline. In 1948, more than a quarter of Radcliffe's students were enrolled for graduate degrees; twenty years later, none for degrees, and only a handful for special post-graduate studies. The nature of the Club's interests reflected this change; since the earliest days the Club had given as least as much attention to graduate students as to undergraduates. Now the emphasis was entirely on undergraduate needs.

One of the first areas to become Harvard-Radcliffe was the Admissions Office, which began joint operations with the incoming class of 1977. The Harvard and Radcliffe Clubs, under the able leadership of Helen C. Barber, formed a joint Harvard-Radcliffe Schools Committee, which took on responsibility for interviewing applicants from Northern California. The Schools Committee operates independently of the Clubs, but with their full support, and annually interviews hundreds of applicants, offers prizes to

promising high school juniors as a recruiting device, and entertains admittees and current students.

Even as the Club proudly completed the Scholarship endowment, inflation was eating away its value. As Radcliffe devolved more of its teaching functions to Harvard, more and more of its tuition revenue went directly to the other institution, so that scholarship money which had once supported all of Radcliffe's programs now supported Harvard's. In addition, the overall cost of education had begun the astronomical rise which has led to the high fees we so fear and take for granted today. Between 1950 and 1970, the cost of tuition, room and board more than tripled.<sup>10</sup> This increase, coupled with the egalitarian ethos of the 1960s, made the idea of "need-blind" admissions and full financial aid necessary. So Radcliffe was spending increasing amounts of its general fund on financial aid to students, whose tuition monies brought no benefit to the College. As Harvard took over more of the housing, eventually all of it, room and board fees were also transferred. As a result, the Clubs were increasingly urged to devote their fund-raising to monies which could help Radcliffe either meet its increasing obligations to Harvard, or make up the deficits caused by those obligations.

The San Francisco Club was glad to oblige, but at the same time, some of the earlier ideals were not forgotten. President Jordan's plea for more Radcliffe professorships had not yet borne fruit, and in 1979 women in the San Francisco Club decided it was time to do something about it. Eleanor Levine Zuckerman and Ellen McHugh LaFollette suggested to the Club that a Radcliffe Alumnae Professorship would be a tremendous asset for the College, and the idea took hold. Integral to the concept from the beginning was the idea that this should be a project involving *all* Radcliffe alumnae, in hopes of rekindling the

---

<sup>10</sup>Between 1970 and 1990, fees went up an additional 500 percent, from 1990 to 1998, they increased by 50 percent again; in round numbers, a change over fifty years from under \$1200 per year to \$30,000. The cost of living from 1950 to 1990 increased about 500 percent; (Department of Commerce Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1997.) The tuition increase was closer to 2500 percent.

community spirit which had been somewhat dissipated by the "non-merger merger" of the late 1970s.

However, if raising \$250,000 had seemed impossible in 1950, the one to three million dollars that were needed to endow a chair in the late 1970s was even further out of sight. To add to the difficulties, Harvard maintained that it was no longer able to accept gifts limited to women, and Radcliffe was reluctant to encourage alumnae to put their money into a professorship when so many of the College's other needs and programs were seriously underfunded.<sup>11</sup> In fact, the College was not at all certain that it was ready to have the alumnae take such a decided leadership role in what was actually a policy decision; further, there was some concern that Harvard might take the whole effort amiss, and Radcliffe's attempts to maintain what had become a tenuous position vis-a-vis Harvard would be jeopardized by this eruption of alumnae enthusiasm. After considerable long-distance discussion, the Committee (which by this time included Cassandra Chrones Moore as a representative of the Peninsula Club) was persuaded to shift its aim slightly, and endow a Visiting Professorship. Radcliffe was already experimenting with such an arrangement with Harvard, and funding for that position was very welcome.<sup>12</sup>

In 1982 a trust agreement was drawn up by B. Lynne Parshall and in 1983 a fund-raising program was developed. Because the Clubs wished to broaden the scope of the project beyond Northern California close cooperation with the College was essential. However, the Committee began to feel that some malignant angel had ill-wished its birth; every plan was almost ready for implementation when some unforeseen glitch was discovered by the College and everything had to go back to the drawing board. In January of 1984, the

---

<sup>11</sup>Title IX of the Civil Rights Act, which forbids discrimination on the basis of sex, is the statute cited. It is ironic that laws intended to prevent discrimination are used to prevent efforts to remedy past ills. Harvard's poor record on hiring and promoting female faculty is well known.

<sup>12</sup>The Visiting Professor was named by Radcliffe, and by agreement held the same position at Harvard, although Radcliffe had to foot all the bills.

College received a foundation grant which would cover the costs of the Visiting Professorship, and the alumnae-generated project was demoted to a "support group". Fund-raising would be limited to California, and the name "Radcliffe Alumnae Professor" would not be used. In frustration, the group almost disbanded.

However, the idea of using the energy and information brought together for the Professorship project for the good of the College lingered, and eventually a much smaller project was substituted, the Radcliffe Alumnae Lecture. \$30,000 would be needed initially, and since most of the money would have to come from Northern California, the two Clubs swung their fund-raising expertise into gear. A benefit dinner at the California Culinary Academy got things off to a good start, and many of the Club members volunteered to write personal appeals to alumnae they knew in other parts of the country, to informally spread the word, and get as many major donations as they could without trespassing on the College's other projects. A brochure was designed and mailed to all Northern California alumnae, whether Club members or not, and in short, the \$30,000 mark was reached in less than two years of dedicated work. The first Alumnae Lecture was given by Representative Pat Schroeder on April 10, 1988.

One of the college's great concerns about permitting the alumnae to go forward with this plan of their own devising was the fear that giving to Radcliffe's other needs would suffer, and so the Club made a formal pledge in 1987 to increase the amount of scholarship giving by six percent each year, that being the annual increase in Radcliffe's obligation to Harvard. Considerable efforts were made to keep that pledge, with the amounts added to the Club Scholarship endowment going from \$1,800 in 1986-87 to a high of \$3,600 in 1994. In short, the Club's members felt they had more than met the expectations the College had of them, and despite the frustrations of the failed Professorship project, that the times of trouble had been survived in style.

While all this serious business was going on, the Club continued to

provide the good fellowship which was the foundation of its traditions. Meetings continued to be held, for the most part, in members' homes, and featured a wide variety of speakers. Grace Kennan Warnecke on Russia, "Women's Career Planning in the 80s" with Phyllis Stein, director of the Radcliffe Alumnae Career Services, "Women in California History: Girls of the Golden West" were among the programs of the early 1980s. Rona Jaffe visited the Club and taped interviews with members for an article she was writing for *The Ladies Home Journal*.

The Club had in addition to its working committees (membership, programs, nominations, etc.), a Business and Professional Women's group which met regularly for lunch at convenient downtown locations, and allowed members to network and exchange useful information on how to get up the ladder and through the glass ceiling. There were less formal lunch meetings in different locations throughout the Bay Area, allowing members who could rarely make it to the Club's main events to gather locally. Marin, the East Bay, and two or three different locations in San Francisco had lunches as often as once a month.

Museum tours became a mainstay of the Club's calendar; since many popular exhibitions feature long lines and dense crowds, the chance for a docent tour, frequently before the general public is admitted, is a great draw, and a good occasion for a fund-raiser. Starting in 1975 with the Chinese Art extravaganza at the Asian Art museum, and the King Tut and Age of Alexander exhibits at the DeYoung Museum in 1979, the tours were all sold-out successes.<sup>13</sup> Concerts by the Women's Philharmonic were also popular, as were readings by authors with Radcliffe connections: poet Maxine Kumin (courtesy of her daughter Jane Kumin), novelists Mary Mackey, and Edna O'Brien. More serious topics had their share of attention: "Homelessness - What is it and why won't it go away?" and the filmmaker Harriet Koskoff's

---

<sup>13</sup>A number of these occasions, particularly fund-raisers, were done in conjunction with the Harvard Club.

work in progress, "Patently Offensive", a project for Public Television on pornography. So many of the Club's own members have made significant contributions to their fields that we have drawn heavily on our roster for speakers: Sociologist Jewelle Taylor Gibbs, anthropologist Laura Nader, psychologist Eleanor Levine Zuckerman, are only a few of the distinguished individuals who made time for the Club in their busy schedules.

And then there's the holiday season ritual of the Christmas Revels, directed by Elizabeth Lloyd Mayer. The major social event of the decade, though, was the grand party in honor of Radcliffe College's Centennial in 1979, with President Matina Horner dancing up a storm at Earthquake McGoon's to the music of Turk Murphy's Dixieland Band. Nothing quite like it had ever been seen!

## The Present

It is more difficult for the historian to properly weigh events of the present, particularly those with which she has been personally involved. But the last decade of the Club's history has been plentifully packed with events, both of the planned variety and ones unforeseen. I will try to give some sense of where the Club finds itself as it approaches its great anniversary.

One fact of the Club's current situation is a plateau in membership, which had been steadily growing through the 1970s and 1980s, but which in the 1990s leveled off just under the two hundred mark. At first, with about 1600 Northern California alumnae, this was considered a good number, but alumnae continued to move into the Club's service area without being motivated to join, and at last count number close to 2200. The fact that the Club's area included everything in California north of a line drawn due east from Monterey Bay didn't help; members as far apart as Ukiah, Stockton, and King's Beach (that's on the north shore of Lake Tahoe) were seldom, if ever, able to attend events, and it was hard for the group to appeal to people who lived so far away. The growth of the Silicon Valley region benefited the Peninsula Club more than the San Francisco group, simply because a meeting in Palo Alto was at least a possibility for someone working in Santa Clara or Cupertino, while a meeting in San Francisco or Berkeley was not. There has even been at times talk of a club forming in Sacramento, but so far no one has actually wanted to create one.

Because, despite all the talk and space devoted to fund-raising for Radcliffe, the real purpose of the Club has always been, and remains, the fellowship of educated women here in the Bay Area. For many members,

despite their devotion to Radcliffe College as an idea, the whole point of joining the Club is what they find here. Lunches are still a feature of the program, although their regularity depends on someone volunteering to organize them. A book group was started in 1988 by Wendy Sonnabend Erickson, which met regularly, and took on a life of its own.

Speakers from Cambridge are still a draw on the west coast. In recent years the Club has hosted Florence Ladd, past Director of the Bunting Institute, Rita Nakashima Brock, current Director of the Bunting, Anne Colby, Director of the Murray Institute, Barbara Haber, Curator of Books at the Schlesinger Library, Deans Phillipa Bovet and Tamar March, as well as annual visits from College President Linda Wilson. In addition to these individual visitors, the College has begun to host a series of travelling seminars under the name *Radcliffe on the Road*. The first such gathering in San Francisco was on the topic of health care, and was sold out; the second, on "Women and Power", was held at a larger venue and sold out again. The third is currently in the planning stages and will be held in the spring of 1999.

We continue to draw on our members for speakers: Professor of Women's Studies Irene Tinker, Director of California Department of Health Services S. Kimberly Belshé, book designer Christine Taylor, choreographer Ruth Langridge, and artist Penelope Comfort Starr have recently contributed in this way.

Fund-raising of course continues, but in ever-changing ways. As the College embarked on its Capital Campaign, it became clear that the Alumnae Lectures needed much more than the \$30,000 endowment raised in the 80s. The College Development Office added the Lecture to the list of projects its solicitations included, and the Club generated another brochure mailing, this time to all of California, and helped to achieve the hoped-for goal of \$250,000.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup>The sums pledged to date cover that amount, but until the money is in hand, the Lecture cannot consider itself "fully endowed". The goal is to have the income cover all expenses of the expanded program, including an extended stay by the lecturer on campus with opportunities for interaction with undergraduates. Until 1996, the College had to heavily subsidize the program on a reduced scale.



However, the status of the Scholarship endowment became a concern during the 1990s, because as Harvard took over the financial aid process during the 1980s, the funds were no longer really under Radcliffe's control. In addition, it developed that money going to the Club endowment did not help Radcliffe meet its ever-increasing annual payment to Harvard.<sup>35</sup> That obligation had to be met by Radcliffe's general funds, which relied more on Alumnae Annual Giving. In 1997, therefore, with regret but accepting that times had changed, the Club for the first time in more than thirty years made no addition to the Scholarship endowment, but rather gave the surplus of Club funds to the College General Fund, to help meet the annual financial aid contribution to Harvard.

The latter half of the decade also saw the Club facing a crisis in leadership. Alison Boeckmann and Linda Vallee had been holding the Club together by trading off offices for almost twenty years. Club members were not volunteering to serve on the Board in any capacity, much less agreeing to accept the elected offices. The small group of stalwarts who were willing to serve began to get tired, and in the spring of 1996, the Board reluctantly put before the Club membership a series of options: if no one volunteered to take over the elected Board positions, the Club would either vote itself out of existence or merge with the Harvard Club. To the immense relief of most members, enough people stepped forward to make the continuation of the Club a possibility, and the energy and enthusiasm generated by new leadership, and by the prospect of a good party for the Centennial, put the Club back in business. Zara Tepper Haimo, the president of the Harvard Club, agreed to become president of the Radcliffe Club as well, inaugurating a new era of friendly co-operation between the two Clubs. Many of the day to day

<sup>35</sup>The purpose of the payments was to help equalize the financial aid resources available to women students, since at the time of the 1977 agreement between the colleges merging the admissions and financial aid offices, a large proportion of Harvard's financial aid funds were specifically for male students. The increase, however, was perpetual, whether the number of women students increase or not, although with the extreme inflation (see note 7 above) in term bills, the point was perhaps moot.

## WE ARE NOT EXTINCT

operations of the Club were moved to the office maintained by the Harvard Club, so that maintaining membership lists, mailing monthly postcards and similar time-consuming business is now done by a paid employee. A generous donation from Eleanor Levine Zuckerman made this possible, and the change to professional administration has helped the Club considerably.

In conclusion, the Radcliffe Club of San Francisco is in good shape to meet the challenges of a second century, and is looking forward to the new millenium with fresh energy, and fresh hope. Our rampant individualism is as much alive as ever, and we are not yet extinct!

## Officers of the Radcliffe Club of San Francisco 1965 - 1998

We have the names of only one set of officers between 1939 and 1957, Mrs. Ellery C. Stowell, president, and Miss Mary N. Scott, secretary, for 1948.

Year	President	Secretary	Treasurer
1957	Helen L. Markwett		
1958	Helen L. Markwett		
1959	Eleanor Sachs Mandelson		
1960	Eleanor Sachs Mandelson		
1961	Revilla Wright		
1962	Revilla Wright		
1963	Helen L. Markwett		
1964	Helen L. Markwett		
1965	Catherine C. Hislop		Christine Shoredike
1966	Catherine C. Hislop		Christine Shoredike
1967	Helen L. Markwett		Christine Shoredike
1968	Helen L. Markwett		Christine Shoredike
1969	Helen L. Markwett		Christine Shoredike
1970	Helen L. Markwett		Christine Shoredike
1971	Kay Wood Bartlett		Christine Shoredike
1972	Kay Wood Bartlett		Christine Shoredike
1973	Ellen McHugh LaFollette		Christine Shoredike
1974	Margaret DeBeers Brown	Kay Wood Bartlett	Christine Shoredike
1975	Margaret DeBeers Brown	Kay Wood Bartlett	Christine Shoredike
1976	Ellen M. LaFollette	Kay Wood Bartlett	Geraldine P. Shohet
1977	Ellen M. LaFollette		Geraldine P. Shohet
1978	Ellen M. LaFollette		Geraldine P. Shohet
1979	Ellen M. LaFollette		Alison L. Boeckmann
1980	Eleanor L. Zuckerman		Alison L. Boeckmann
1981	Eleanor L. Zuckerman		Alison L. Boeckmann
1982	Eleanor L. Zuckerman	Martha Olson	Kathleen G. Henschel
1983	Kathleen G. Henschel		Peggy Umanzio
1984	Kathleen G. Henschel		
1985	Kathleen G. Henschel		
1986	Patricia G. Bourne		
1987	Patricia G. Bourne		
1988	Patricia G. Bourne		
1989	Geraldine P. Shohet	Helen Hope	Linda Vallee
1990	Geraldine P. Shohet	Helen Hope	Linda Vallee
1991	Geraldine P. Shohet	Helen Hope	Linda Vallee

## WE ARE NOT EXTINCT

1992	Sarah J. Gregory	Helen Hope	Linda Vallee
1993	Sarah J. Gregory	Michelle Fontaine	Linda Vallee
1994	Sarah J. Gregory	Mary C. Castle	Linda Vallee
1995	Mary C. Castle		Linda Vallee
1996	Sarah J. Gregory	Mary C. Castle	Linda Vallee
1997	Zara Tepper Haimo	Lillis G. Stern	Nancy So
1998	Zara Tepper Haimo	Lillis G. Stern	Nancy So

## Radcliffe 100 Years Ago

As has been noted more than once in these pages, Radcliffe has changed a great deal over the years. This is a modest attempt to give you some idea of the College these early alumnae knew, and also a glimpse of what their lives after College were like.

Lucy Sprague Mitchell referred to Radcliffe as a "small, man-scared women's college" and there was much justification for that appellation.<sup>16</sup> The decision to tie Radcliffe to Harvard when Harvard as an institution absolutely did not want her there brought a number of problems. Had there not been from the outset a number of highly influential individuals within Harvard who were strong supporters of Radcliffe, it is doubtful that the enterprise ever would have happened at all. Even many of Radcliffe's supporters went out of their way to emphasize that higher education was not intended to make women compete with men in the professions, it was merely to make them better mothers. But the young (and sometimes not-so-young) women who flocked to take advantage of the new institution's offerings did not necessarily agree with their cautious elders.

Lucy Sprague (A.B.1900) lived with family friends during her Radcliffe years; the friends just happened to be George Herbert Palmer, of Harvard's Philosophy department, and his wife Alice Freeman Palmer, one of the first women to attend the University of Michigan, and President of Wellesley College at age 26. Professor Palmer was one of Radcliffe's strongest advocates,

---

<sup>16</sup>*Two Lives: The story of Wesley Clair Mitchell and Myself* by Lucy Sprague Mitchell (New York 1953). All quotes from Lucy Sprague Mitchell are from this work, which I highly recommend.

and he made it possible for Lucy to attend classes and seminars in the Yard which were usually closed to female students. But she was still forbidden to walk through Harvard Yard on her way home from Radcliffe classes.

A decade later, Edith Tracy (A.B.1906) wrote her brother, "... sometimes I think it would be better for a girl to do her work at Summer School, when all the labs. and the Library are really open to women. Radcliffe girls are hardly allowed to walk on the same side of the street as Harvard." When Edith needed access to the University Library for the German treatise she was translating for her "Long Theme" (senior thesis), she had to have her professor arm her with letters of permission, knock on the side door of the Library, and wait to be escorted to a windowless room equipped with a table and a single chair. She was locked in, and the books she requested were brought to her via a small wicket in the door. She had to knock for an escort to leave the building. Not the best conditions for study, but the best Radcliffe could offer. It is not surprising that many of the professors who accepted the extra money to repeat their classes in Radcliffe Yard grew to have immense respect for the intellect of the "girls", or that the "girls" had less respect for the men, or for Harvard, by the time they were through.

Edith's letters refer to instructors who "cut classes" ("Prof. Shaler ... died last week. The stores in Harvard Square closed during his funeral, and we had several "cuts" at Radcliffe in his honor"), and to others who casually set evening lectures inaccessible to Radcliffe students, most of whom commuted. (Bertram Hall, opened in 1904, was the only Radcliffe dormitory.) "Thursday when I reached Cambridge, I found that Prof. Baker had put a very important lecture for that evening ... We had to interrupt dinner, for Prof. Baker's lecture ... was set for seven. From Bertram Hall girls went, over the rough frozen snow: and got inside Fogg Hall just in time to hear the applause as Prof. Baker appeared."

About a third of the students at the turn of the century were "specials", women who were doing an extra year of undergraduate work to convert a

lesser degree to an A.B., or (like Julia George in the early 1890s) who did not wish to pursue a degree program. Another third were graduate students. Three of the MA degrees granted in 1906 went to women who already held that degree, and who may have counted as "specials" also.

Why did these women want so much to have the Harvard experience, when in so many ways it was a negative one? Harvard's faculty in classics and the humanities was unequalled, but in many other subjects it was not particularly good. Edith Tracy's years at U.C. Berkeley (she got her B. Lit. there in 1903) had exposed her to a science faculty far better than Harvard's; Lucy Sprague's home in Chicago was a center for the luminaries of the University of Chicago, and she counted John Dewey and Thorstein Veblen friends before she got to Cambridge. Harvard in fact had a reputation as a college where teaching was the first priority, and research was a poor second. As a result, the Harvard faculty in many departments was distinctly behind the times. President Lowell said, "Our tendency, unconsciously, has been to value erudition above production." But the Harvard name still shed luster and opened doors, and it was a place where women with purely intellectual interests could indulge them without having to fit into training programs designed to turn them into schoolteachers. Lucy Sprague recalled "Most of them [the other students] regarded Radcliffe as the great center of educational enlightenment, which I never did. Nevertheless I had probably the ablest teachers at Radcliffe that were to be found in any women's college and I enjoyed the work enthusiastically."

In 1906, Radcliffe granted 80 degrees: 58 AB (3 recipients had previous undergraduate degrees), 20 of them *cum laude*, 9 *magna cum laude*, 1 *summa cum laude*; 20 AM, 1 *summa cum laude*, and 2 Ph.D. Seventy one of the eighty replied to the 25th reunion report in 1931. Of these, 39, or 55%, had married. However, only 20 of those had not pursued some kind of a career, mostly prior to marriage but not inevitably. Twenty four were teachers, 6 did social work, 2 each were court reporters, politicians, physicians, artists, and librarians. Four

were doing administrative or secretarial work, 4 more were in business, and there was one minister, one musician, and one astronomer. Not surprisingly, the women in such time-consuming occupations as science and medicine remained unmarried; I was more surprised to learn that politics appealed to married women. One could run for, and serve successfully on, a town council or party national committee without impinging on one's feminine duties.

It is harder to tell such details as age at marriage, but in a number of cases we can say without reservation that it was later than the average for their decade of birth. Many of the women who were married at their 25th reunion had not been at their 15th. Not all the capsule biographies give date of birth, so it is impossible to be accurate, but the average age at marriage for the 39 individuals looks to have been over 30, at a time when the national average was closer to 22. And again, 45% of the class of 1906 never married, at a time when the national average of 11% was described as "the highest ever".<sup>17</sup>

For many of the Radcliffe alumnae, it is clear that education created opportunities which would not otherwise have come their way. Whether it lessened their opportunities for marriage is not clear, but it may very well have raised their expectations in a way few men were prepared to meet. Lucy Sprague Mitchell had not the slightest intention of giving up her vision of working to improve education for America's children, but she recognized in herself a reluctance to be "only a professional woman", and agonized greatly over whether Wesley Mitchell understood her vision sufficiently not to ask her to choose between it and marriage to him. She was lucky, for if she had been a teacher, as were most of her employed contemporaries, she would have had no choice. Edith Tracy was Assistant Principal of Analy Union High School in Sebastopol, California, when she decided to marry Frank Gregory. She was out of a job immediately, without even the politeness of "thank you" for her service. Few schools allowed married women to teach, fewer still women who

---

<sup>17</sup>See Ellen K. Rothman, *Hands and Hearts. A History of Courtship in America*. (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1987).



were having families. Pregnancy was cause for immediate firing.

Not all the women who married were reluctant to give up the pressures of earning money, but the majority kept their interests alive through volunteer work of various sorts, and in some cases those volunteer jobs became second careers once their children were raised. Very few tried to work through their child-bearing years, and those who did faced all the difficulties we agonize over today. Possession of private means was almost a prerequisite for a working mother; almost no occupation open to a woman paid enough to offset the costs of household help and childcare. Lucy Sprague Mitchell's experience is instructive here; Wesley Mitchell was a very involved father, and completely supported his wife's career, but his work was never interrupted by family cares, while Lucy trained herself to work with constant interruptions. Once, when she had pneumonia, he chivalrously insisted she not get out of bed to fix his supper. At that he was a mighty improvement over her father, who permitted her to go to college on the understanding that if his tuberculosis flared up she was to come home to nurse him, since he was too scrupulous to expose an employee to the risks of contagion. He also was humiliated to learn that his daughter was paid a salary as Dean of Women at Berkeley.

Because the 1906 class cohort married later, their family size tended to be smaller. Thirty women listed children, 10 had 1 each, 6 had 2, 8 had 3 and 6 had more than 3 children, not all of whom lived. Nine of the married women listed no children, probably at least partly due to age at marriage. I have not counted step-children or adoptees. Smaller family size of course means more time for other pursuits, and it is clear from the lists of activities that most of the women enjoyed many such pursuits. Alumnae clubs, whether college clubs for women from the Seven Sisters, the AAUW, or Radcliffe Clubs, were important institutions for many, and it is notable that both of the women from 1906 who lived in the San Francisco area were active in the Radcliffe Club of San Francisco.

## SPECIAL THANKS



TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE MADE  
THE RADCLIFFE CLUB OF SAN FRANCISCO  
CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION POSSIBLE

GOLDEN GIFT	Ellen M. LaFollette, Eleanor Levine Zuckerman
SILVER STAR	Lisa M. Erdberg, Kathleen Gregory Henschel, Leslie P. Hume
BRONZE GIVER	Nancy J. Bartusch, Joan Humphrey Hermann
CENTENNIAL SCHOLAR	Kimberly M. Avila, Kay Hannam Bartlett, Sheila O'Connell Berg, Alison Boeckmann, Mary Piper Bolles, Margaret deB. Brown, Mary Claugus Castle, Eileen Cowell, Rosemary Enthoven, Pamela Forbes, Jewell Taylor Gibbs, Joan Eames Hayes, Friends of Sophie Morris Kent, Ellen Chang Lew, Helen Lourie Markwett, Carland Nicholson, Lorraine Williams Norby, Michelle Disario Stratton, Mary Clark Swinerton