THE HOME ECONOMICS MOVEMENT AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF NINETEENTH CENTURY DOMESTIC IDEOLOGY IN AMERICA

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the transformation of domestic ideology in the United States from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth century. It traces the emergence and development of the doctrine of separate spheres in the Revolutionary and early national periods and then examines the rise of the home economics movement in the post-Civil War period as an agent and expression of the demise of the separate spheres ideology of domesticity.

The doctrine of separate spheres developed from a longstanding sense of separateness from the public world of men experienced by colonial women. The emergence of this doctrine was facilitated and shaped by the events of the Revolutionary War, the development and spread of commercial and industrial economic activities, changes in religious practises and new notions about the nature and nurture of children. The complex interplay of these factors strengthened women's sense of disjunction from the male-dominated sector of society, but bolstered women's sense of moral authority and autonomy within their sphere, the home. Women saw their domestic role as essential to the preservation of traditional values and morality and therefore critical for the preservation of social harmony. Supported by the doctrine of separate spheres, women organized to protect and project home values, hoping to reform society by their influence. Noted domestic theoreticians such
as Sarah Hale and Catharine Beecher helped articulate this doctrine for women, but their work should be viewed as expressions of widely felt notions about women's place in the family and society.

The emergence of home economics is viewed as a challenge to the basic precepts of the doctrine of separate spheres, thereby calling into question the universality of the acceptance of this doctrine by middle class women in the nineteenth century. As urban reformers, scientists and college educated women, home economists found the doctrine of separate spheres inadequate and outmoded as a guide for modern living. These women sought to replace traditional homemaking practises and ideals with a new domestic ideology, home economics, which they thought would more effectively meet the needs of the family in the twentieth century.

Home economics developed as a social reform movement in two phases, each one dominated by a different generation of women. The pioneer generation of home economists were traditionally educated women who sought to inculcate working class and immigrant women and children with middle class domestic values and ideas. They initiated programs of education in various institutions, ranging from the public schools to church-sponsored mission classes, to teach girls and women homemaking skills such as cooking, sewing and budgeting. Although traditional in their goals, these women created new forms which quickly led to developments which went beyond a re-assertion of domesticity expressed in the doctrine of separate spheres. Home economists began to see themselves as
scientifically-trained experts, not as ordinary homemakers.

This development both coincided and was furthered by the rise of the second generation of home economists, who were largely college graduates and subsequently professors and administrators in institutions of higher learning. This group of women shaped home economics to meet some of their own needs, both personal and professional, and in the process changed the focus of the movement. Home economists became more concerned with reforming the middle class home and homemaker in this period. Home economics became embedded in colleges as a new inter-disciplinary course of study for women and as a new profession.

Home economists promoted a new ideology of domesticity which had as its foundation the emulation of certain aspects of men's sphere: business values of efficiency and rational organization, the use of technology and a reliance on expertise. A belief in the reforming power of science replaced traditional notions of piety in the home economics ideology. Home economists created elaborate hierarchies of expertise based on achieved levels of education, thereby undermining the sense of sisterhood supported by the doctrine of separate spheres. Insofar as women adopted the home economics ideology of domesticity, the homemaker role lost its authority and autonomy and women's sphere lost its boundaries and sense of mission which had informed nineteenth century women's notions of their role in society.
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INTRODUCTION

In 1866 Ellen Swallow was beginning to explore the world beyond the boundaries of her family home and small village. She had gone to Worcester, Massachusetts to attend an academy and expand her store of knowledge. There she also gained experience teaching a mission class and visiting local asylums for the insane and criminal, which prompted her to dedicate her life to some sort of community service. As she wrote to her cousin, "pray to God for me, Annie...that I may be of some use in this sinful world." But, instead, she was called home to nurse her invalid mother, and the sudden shrinking of her horizon brought on a period of deep depression. Later she wrote of that time, "I lived for more than two years in purgatory." Then, somehow, Ellen heard about the newly opened Vassar College for girls, applied and entered as a special student. She was twenty-six years old. After her graduation, she cast about for something to do, preferably in science to which she had been drawn at Vassar under the tutelage of the most eminent woman scientist of the day, Maria Mitchell, the astronomer, and also Professor Farrar who taught chemistry. In 1871 Ellen managed to win entrance to the all-male Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), its first and for a long time only, female student. Thereafter, Ellen Swallow led a distinguished career as a scientist, teacher, lecturer, writer, and not least, crusader for public health, the
reformation of home life and a new domestic ideology for women.⁵

A college education proved to be the pivotal experience in Ellen Swallow's life. It opened up a new world of activity, satisfied her longing for knowledge, and most importantly, gave her the tools with which to break the bonds of traditional domesticity which had fettered her early life. Though she was periodically called home from her studies to nurse first one and then the other parent, from the advent of her college course depression never again disrupted her life. Her experiences at school had effected an irrevocable change in her.

As well as having opened the doors to a career, what Ellen learned at college also changed the way she lived her private life. She had been trained in the traditional arts of housewifery by her mother, well enough to win two prizes at a county fair when she was thirteen for breadmaking and embroidery. But when she married Robert Richards, a mining engineer and professor at MIT, in 1875 and set about creating a home, she drew more upon her knowledge and experience as a chemist than upon the skills imparted to her by her mother.⁶

Calling her new home "the Center for Right Living," Ellen first analyzed and then redesigned every system in the house, its water supply, fuels, heating and ventilation apparatus, sewage disposal and drainage, all in accordance with the most advanced scientific and engineering knowledge available to her. This same grasp of the principles of sanitary science was
applied to the choice of furnishings, rugs and curtains, in contrast with the fashionable but dust-collecting items that usually filled the homes of that era. Her kitchen was conceived as a laboratory, more than a place of traditional food preparation. There each meal was tested for its optimum nutritional value and its cost in preparation time, fuel used, and other materials. Ellen counted steps as well as pennies. Her food was stripped of familial traditions and sentimental values, and was instead "determined with reference to its effect upon efficiency in work. If, after a fair trial a given food seemed to leave the brain dull and the body unfit for labor, it was rejected." Science and efficiency, not tradition or fashion, ruled this household.

Having thrown aside traditional notions about homemaking, Ellen Swallow Richards was more concerned about issues of health and efficiency, economics and sanitation. In the process of remodelling her home, she developed a new approach to women's traditional domestic responsibilities. Informed and fortified by her education, she was able to shed old ways of doing things and create new methods of keeping house. More significantly, she codified her innovations and framed them in a new domestic ideology she called "euthenics," a word of her own coining which meant "the science of right living." Supported by the tightly ordered inner logic of her new system, she was confident enough in the rightness of her own procedures to invite her widowed mother to live with the new couple only a year after their marriage, though she relegated her to a minor role in the household. Ellen Richards had broken with the
past.

The domestic life of Ellen Richards is historically significant for several reasons. First, she was able to fuse together in one integrated approach her two identities, that of a homemaker and an industrial and sanitary chemist. Each part of her life informed the other, making her an unusual homemaker, but also an unusual scientist who focused her energies on solving the problems of the home. At a time when homemaking and being a "learned lady" were thought to be mutually exclusive pursuits, Ellen Richards combined them to an unusual degree. Indeed, she argued that a woman could not be an adequate homemaker unless she brought to that role a background of vigorous training, especially in the sciences.

That belief was the basis of Richard's second contribution. She led in the creation of a new domestic ideology which not only incorporated her scientific knowledge and perspective into ordinary home practises, but made that knowledge the foundation of the management of the home. This new approach undermined the ideological basis of traditional homemaking practises which was grounded in notions of women's innate characteristics and abilities. By introducing and promoting the idea that women needed scientific training to prepare them for homemaking Richards specifically intended to refute the adequacy of "rule-by-thumb" methods for the preservation of the essentials of home life: the health and well-being of the family.

Third and most significant, Richards made her private
solutions to domestic problems, both technical and philosophical, the basis of a public crusade to model all homes along the lines of the prototype she had developed and thus free women, as she had freed herself, from the bonds of traditional domestic ideology. She drew about herself a small, but talented group of women who were also engaged in the search for a model of living, she taught them her philosophy of science, efficiency and service—the methods she had developed both in the laboratory and in her home—and she inspired and encouraged them to devote themselves to the cause of "right living." Led by Richards, these women and the hundreds who joined them over the next several decades, launched what they called the home economics movement, a domestic reform movement which had as its object the transformation of home life through the agency of a highly trained and scientifically enlightened generation of homemakers.12

The emergence and spread of the cluster of ideas and practises known as home economics provides important evidence to the student of nineteenth century domestic ideology that a significant shift in the perception of women's role was taking place in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Several studies by historians have focused on nineteenth century notions of women's place in society, but most have dealt with the origins and development of the ideology of separate spheres which emerged in the late eighteenth century and is thought to have prevailed into the twentieth century.13 In most of these studies the ideology of domesticity, which prescribed and glorified a domestic orientation for women, has
been treated as synonymous with the doctrine of separate spheres. As more and more studies have shown that women have continued to order their lives around their domestic responsibilities, it could be tacitly assumed that the ideology of separate spheres persisted as a valid expression of women's role far into the twentieth century. This thesis will question such a static notion of women's experience by focusing on the eclipse of the separate spheres ideology as signalled by the rise of home economics challenge to that doctrine.

The development of what has been called the modern family roughly coincided with the development of the doctrine of separate spheres, and indeed that doctrine can be said to represent an articulation of the new ideas about the meaning and content of family life which prevailed by the early nineteenth century. It stressed and supported the ideal of the home as private, untouched by economic activity or the values and behaviors which characterized those activities, emotionally-charged, child-centered, and mother-dominated. However, these ideals arose in conjunction with an historically specific set of conditions and as those conditions changed toward the end of the nineteenth century, the doctrine of separate spheres became more of an ideological construction than an adequate description of the reality of home life. The main thrust of the separate spheres ideology articulated a vision of the home as an island of resistance to the mainstream commercial development of society, with women as the standard-bearers of an alternative non-commercial culture. As the
century progressed and more people grew accustomed to the economic order that had appeared so shocking in its earlier stage of development in the early nineteenth century, it grew difficult to sustain a posture of resistance to the rapidly maturing urban and industrial society. The boundary between the home and the public sphere became increasingly blurred as the home became "industrialized" and women entered into more public activities.  

Some women, notably those who formed the home economics movement, were troubled by what they saw as the discrepancy between the prevailing ideals of domesticity and the actual practises of homemakers who were, willy-nilly, resisting some encroachments upon their sphere and succumbing to some others. The lack of a coherent, systematic approach to the forces of change bearing down on the home deeply concerned these women who were themselves caught up in shifting patterns of behavior. Concerned that the home as a social institution was threatened by women's apparent loss of direction resulting from their clinging to outmoded ideals and practises, these women organized to spread a new set of ideals and practises, home economics, which they saw as more fitting for life under the conditions prevalent in the late nineteenth century.

No major studies exist of the home economics movement. Although its development has been noted in several works, neither its significance nor its impact on the evolution of domestic ideology have been adequately explored. This neglect has two possible causes. As has been noted, historians have concentrated more on the discovery and analysis of the
origins and development of the ideology of separate spheres than on its demise. A study of the home economics movement raises the possibility that the ideology of separate spheres was less than monolithic and that several different interpretations of domesticity may have flourished in nineteenth century America. Investigations of competing ideologies such as home economics add to an understanding of the complexity and diversity of women's experience in the nineteenth century. The promoters of separate spheres, notably Sarah Hale and Catharine Beecher, maintained that its teachings were universally applicable, but historians should approach that assertion with caution.

Another source of the neglect of the home economics movement may be confusion about the nature of this movement derived from a propensity to view home economics as a conservative attempt to preserve traditional ideas of women's sphere. In the struggle to enlarge women's participation in scientific and academic studies and careers, home economists characteristically adopted an accommodating rather than challenging stance, one that ultimately limited women's advances in these areas. Moreover, several leading home economists were known to be unsupportive of woman's suffrage. Certainly home economists, despite their promotion of higher education for women and their creation of new careers for women in the profession of home economics, cannot be counted as feminists or as part of the nineteenth century woman's movement as it is commonly defined. In that sense the home economics
movement was a conservative force, but not in the sense that it sought to preserve an allegiance to the doctrine of separate spheres. Rather, home economists sought to formulate an alternative ideology of domesticity. That home economists continued to promote a domestic orientation for women should not obscure that a transformation of perspective was nonetheless taking place.

This thesis indicates that an ideology of domesticity continued to shape the lives of women for an indefinite period into the twentieth century, but that within that large framework more than one set of notions and practices gained a following among women. Home economics was one such example.

Chapter One will describe the origins and development of the ideology of separate spheres. A selection of the recent literature on this doctrine is drawn upon as the foundation for this discussion. More weight is given to those works which are based on extensive documentation of women's experiences and perceptions of their roles, than to the prescriptive literature. The views of leading domestic theoreticians such as Sarah Hale and Catharine Beecher are compared to give examples of various interpretations that existed within the separate spheres school of thought.

Chapter Two will describe the emergence and development of the home economics movement in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. This development occurred in two phases, each dominated by a different, but overlapping, group of women. The first group developed some of the basic concepts of home economics and created some of the first institutional forms for
the inculcation of the public with the home economics message. These women focused mainly upon reaching working class women and their families, a traditional area of concern for reformers, and were more pragmatic than ideological in their approach to social change. In that sense this group will be seen as a transitional generation bridging the adherents of the ideology of separate spheres and "true" home economists.

The second generation of home economists built upon the work of the early group, but formalized the early programs by further embedding them in academic institutions, notably in colleges and universities. Most of these women were college graduates and subsequently college professors. Their influence changed the focus and emphasis of the movement as they came to dominate its leadership. Home economics programs became directed toward middle class women and their daughters. While home economists had long sought to prevent working class and immigrant women from passing on their "slovenly ways" to the next generation, the attention of the movement was turned to the same issue in middle class homes, which can only be interpreted as an assault against the doctrine of separate spheres.

Chapter Three will discuss the formulation of a new domestic ideology, home economics, its basic principles and their applications and meaning for women. The tenets of home economics will be contrasted with those of the ideology of separate spheres to illuminate the direction and degree of change advocated by home economists.
A brief conclusion will explore some of the implications of the development and spread of home economics for women in the twentieth century.

This thesis does not purport to be a full history of the development of either the doctrine of separate spheres or of the home economics movement, but instead is a discussion of the main tenets of each ideology. The home economics movement was a complex social reform movement having many dimensions only touched on in this thesis. The movement was a vital part of the Progressive movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; indeed it can be described as the domestic wing of Progressivism. Home economists were involved in many Progressive campaigns such as campaigns for better housing, work with immigrants, development of public health facilities and the various programs offered in settlement houses which were aimed at alleviating the worst abuses of the industrial order.

Leading home economists such as Ellen Richards and others had especially close ties with Jane Addams, the founder of Hull House in Chicago and the most outstanding settlement worker in America. Home economists and reformers like Jane Addams shared many interests and values as "new women." A study of the home economics movement reveals many parallels between the themes of Addam's life and work and those found in home economics. Like settlement work, home economics embodied both the "hard" and "soft" expressions of Progressivism, respectively, the search for efficiency and order, and the more romantic impulse for "simple living" and the transcendence over
materialism. Yet, like many Progressive era reforms, home economics actually served as an agent of the accommodation of the home to the new industrial and urban society. By promulgating a domestic ideology which counselled women to accept and even embrace the advances generated by technology and science, home economists sought to refute the ideal of the home as an island of resistance to those forces which were reshaping society.

The emergence of the home economics movement held many implications for women in the twentieth century. To the extent home economists were successful in spreading their message, women's perceptions of their role in the family and society were changed. Only in the context of a longitudinal study of the development of domestic ideologies from the mid-eighteenth century to the early twentieth century is the significance of the changes advocated by home economists revealed.
NOTES


2 Ibid.

3 Maria Mitchell was an important influence in the lives of many early women scientists. For information on her role as a mentor see Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, "Maria Mitchell: The Advancement of Women in Science," New England Quarterly 51 (1978): 39-63.

4 Robert Clarke, Ellen Swallow, pp. 23-25. Ellen Swallow was admitted to MIT in 1870 as an experiment. She was not charged tuition and her name was thereby left off the student roll. Women were not admitted to MIT on a regular basis until 1884.

5 For biographical information, see Robert Clarke and also Caroline Hunt, The Life of Ellen H. Richards (Boston: M. Barrows and Company, 1912, 1931).

6 Hereafter Ellen Swallow is listed as Ellen Richards.

7 Robert Clarke, Ellen Swallow, p. 71.

8 For a more complete description of "the Center for Right Living," see Robert Clarke, Ellen Swallow, chapter 8 and Caroline Hunt, Ellen H. Richards, pp. 116-125.


10 Robert Clarke, Ellen Swallow, pp. 57-58. The significance of Richards' relationship with her mother is illuminated by contrasting it with the mother-daughter relationships of the same period described by Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America" in Nancy F. Cott and Elizabeth H. Pleck, editors, A Heritage of Her Own: Toward a New Social History of American Women (New York: Touchstone

It is impossible to discover how many women were involved in the home economics movement in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Over two hundred women are listed as members of the Lake Placid Conferences by their close in 1908, but that was by no means the extent of the number of women involved in this movement.


economists in her discussion of "material feminists," a designation with which this thesis disagrees, chapters 8 and 10.


18 Notably Ellen Richards and Isabel Bevier.

19 Barbara Berg's definition is used: "[It] is the freedom to decide her own destiny; freedom from sex-determined roles; freedom from society's oppressive restrictions; freedom to express her thoughts fully and to convert them freely to actions. Feminism demands the acceptance of woman's right to individual conscience and judgement. It postulates that woman's essential worth stems from her common humanity and does not depend on the other relationships in her life." The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism: The Woman and the City 1800-1860, The Urban Life in America Series (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1978) p. 5.


CHAPTER I

FROM NOTABLE HOUSEWIVES TO DOMESTIC FEMINISTS: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEOLOGY OF SEPARATE SPHERES

In this chapter the origins and development of the ideology of domesticity known as the doctrine of separate spheres will be traced from its emergence in the late eighteenth century to its further development and spread in the nineteenth century.

The doctrine of separate spheres appears to have been the most fully developed and found its greatest expression in the New England states and the regions subsequently settled by migrants from this region. The conditions associated with the rise of this ideology—the growth of towns and cities and the proliferation of commercial and manufacturing activities—developed earlier and more extensively there than in other American regions. The Puritan heritage of religious and social ideals of this area also supported a utilitarian role for women.¹

In contrast, the slave-holding South fostered what Catherine Clinton has called "a tangled sexual ideology" which viewed women through lenses distorted by issues of slavery and male domination. Clinton found that although plantation mistresses, whose role was most overlaid with notions of
gentility, were "ladies", they were nonetheless deeply involved in the actual daily work of the plantations. Ideally viewed as "ornaments", these women donned coarse aprons and participated in household production quite as often as did their antebellum northern sisters. Still, in the area of ideology rather than actual practise, the South maintained its own traditions and so will be considered only marginally in the discussions of the development and diffusion of the ideology of separate spheres.

Town dwellers of the middle class led in the adoption of this doctrine, but because the population as a whole in the early nineteenth century was highly mobile, literate, and increasingly involved in complex networks of economic and social relationships, new perceptions of women's role were spread widely throughout society. Upwardly mobile women who aspired to an improved position in the family and to achieve middle class status correctly identified this ideology as a support to both these aspirations. Although this ideology flourished most extensively in the settled areas of the country, studies of the diaries and correspondence of women heading westward on the Overland Trail in the mid-nineteenth century revealed that even under the most trying conditions and in the remotest regions, women attempted to preserve some semblance of their role as described by the doctrine of separate spheres. Far from seizing the opportunity which the breaking of familial ties and the move to undeveloped territory may have offered women to forge a new role for themselves, most women sought to re-establish their homes and communities.
according to the precepts of separate spheres.\textsuperscript{4}

The impetus for the development of this ideology lay in the widespread discussion of issues involving the formation of a republican national identity in the wake of the Revolutionary War, the formation and preservation of personal and national "virtue" in a period of rapid changes in the social, economic and religious forms of society, and finally, the perceived need to create new forms of order in a mobile, expanding, and by the mid-nineteenth century, increasingly contentious society.\textsuperscript{5} The home became an important arena for the reconciliation of these issues within the family, and women whose sphere the home was, became important figures in the debates concerning these issues, resulting in the articulation of a new domestic ideology, the separate spheres.

The large events reshaping society in this period--the Revolutionary War and its aftermath, the ensuing acceleration of economic development, and the rapid growth of towns--help to explain why a new domestic ideology emerged, as all these events impinged upon the home and influenced family life. But they do not fully explain why that ideology took the form it did. This thesis will posit that the doctrine of separate spheres grew out of a long-felt sense of separateness between the experience of men and women, which became overlayered with new ideas about child nature and nurture and the role of the home as a social institution in a rapidly changing society.

With the rise of this ideology, the emphasis in women's role shifted from household production to household management and childrearing. This shift had complex implications for
women's position in the family. As women became consumers and managers rather producers of goods in the home, their economic dependence was increased and highlighted at a time when paid work was becoming increasingly important as a measure of social worth. However, if women lost in this area, they gained a measure of autonomy and authority within the family as their role as homemakers and mothers gained more social value.

The doctrine of separate spheres had as its foundation the bifurcation of society along gender lines. Women's prescribed sphere was the home, family and church. For men, "the world" constituted their appropriate area of activity. The domestic sphere was seen as profoundly separate from "the world"; indeed, it was considered to be a place of retreat from the cares of the larger society, a haven of love and affection, and an island of resistance to the main lines of development in society, as it seemed to be the one place that stood outside the transformation of life that overwhelmed many in the nineteenth century. Women as homemakers and mothers were accordingly seen as the standard-bearers of traditional values and morality. Secluded in the home and therefore untouched by the "contagion" of the male-dominated sector, they retained a purity and outlook reminiscent of a simpler age.

The ideology of separate spheres emphasized the gulf which existed between men and women, but the adoption of this doctrine ran counter with three rising trends in the relationships between men and women. As has been noted, women became more economically dependent upon men as the nature of
their contribution to the household changed. At issue is whether this dependence fostered a greater closeness between men and women or more conflict as women experienced a greater vulnerability in this area. Furthermore, for reasons not yet fully understood, men and women began to cooperate more in the limitation of their families at about the same time the ideology of separate spheres was developing. The effort to reduce the number of children required a greater level of communication and sharing between spouses than is thought to have existed in earlier times. Finally, some historians have linked the pervasive Revolutionary era notion of the importance of personal happiness with the contemporaneous development of greater expectations of happiness in marriage for both partners. These three trends would seem to indicate the need for, if not the achievement of, a growing closeness between men and women. Instead, the doctrine of separate spheres was grounded in the notion that men and women were wholly different from one another, with a different range of experience, values and personal characteristics. Moreover, the two spheres were consistently described as polar opposites, at best complementary with each other and at worst in direct conflict.

The cluster of associated ideas and prescriptions which made up the ideology of separate spheres began to appear in various types of literature in the late eighteenth century and increased voluminously in the early decades of the nineteenth century, coinciding with an increase in literacy rates for women. Novels, poems, stories, essays, sermons, specialized advice literature such as housekeeping and childrearing manuals
and "gift annuals" and other publications intended for ladies were all vehicles for the dissemination of this ideology. At first ministers and physicians dominated as authors of advice tracts, but by the 1820s women assumed the lead in this field.\textsuperscript{12} This literature should not be viewed as an imposition of a point of view upon women readers, but as an articulation of widely held opinions of appropriate behavior for women. As noted by historian Nancy Cott,

\begin{quote}
The literature becomes popular...because it does not have to persuade—it does not innovate—it addresses readers who are ready for it.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

Although women who lived in the early eighteenth century and women who lived one hundred years later experienced many different circumstances, they shared some important characteristics, as several studies have shown, the most essential one being a sense of separateness from the world of men. This feeling of disjunction was expressed emotionally but had its roots in a traditional division of labor by gender, women's subordinate position in the family and society and their exclusion from the political realm, institutions of higher learning and the professions. While some men and women may have shared a new emotional intimacy in marriage, this development seems to have been overshadowed by the persistence and even exacerbation of a sense of separateness between the sexes. These dual tendencies may have accounted for the rising expectations of fulfillment in marriage by women matched, paradoxically, with falling assessments of the character of men in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{14}
Carrol Smith-Rosenberg has found evidence in her study of women's diaries and correspondence which suggested that, by the 1760s, women lived in an emotional world of their own making, organized around domestic concerns and the physical and emotional needs of women and children. Women cared for each other in myriad ways: sending gifts, inquiring after each other's health and affairs, sharing workloads, and supporting each other in the big events of a woman's life: marriage, the birth of children and the illness or death of family members, surrounding each event with its own special female-exclusive rituals.

Smith-Rosenberg particularly notes the absence of criticism among women for each other which amounted almost to a taboo. Women's concern for and support of other women existed in sharp contrast to their more distant relationships with men. Throughout the correspondence and diary entries, men appeared only on the periphery of women's world, essential for their economic support and in their familial functions, but still somewhat alien. Smith-Rosenberg noted,

...men appear as an other or outgroup, segregated into different schools, supported by their own male network of friends and kin, socialized to a different behavior, and coached to a proper formality in courtship behavior. For emotional sustenance, companionship and a sense of shared experience, women habitually turned to one another.

Women formed networks of close, often life-long relationships with one another that were patterned on the primary one that existed between mothers and daughters. Not
only did mothers train daughters in the skills of housewifery and motherhood but through their example they imparted a less tangible but no less important sense of what it meant to be a woman. Smith-Rosenberg concluded that,

[as long as the mother's domestic role remained relatively stable and few viable alternatives competed with it, daughters tended to accept their mother's world and to turn automatically to other women for support and intimacy.]

According to Smith-Rosenberg this "female world of love and ritual" lasted until the 1870s.

Keith Melder built on Smith-Rosenberg's work in his study of the expressions of sisterhood in the nineteenth century. He discovered the existence of close networks among women beyond family circles in benevolent and reform organizations, among church women, factory workers and teachers and academy students. Women continued the pattern of turning to other women for support even as they entered new settings. Such relationships may have eased women's anxieties as they forged new paths of activity. In that way, women assimilated new experiences by placing them within a known context.

One of the primary areas of shared experience between women in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was childbirth. As only women experienced the worries and travails of childbirth it set them apart from men, but more than that, the way women approached the event of birth emphasized it as a exclusively female ritual in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

A woman prepared for the birth of her child, in part, by
preparing herself to die. Many women settled their earthly and spiritual affairs as their time of delivery approached, thus creating a peculiarly female pattern of reckoning. Women's other main source of support besides prayers during the birth was the company of other women. Birth was a predominately female experience in the sense that a woman "was brought to bed" surrounded if at all possible by her women friends and relatives. Women travelled long distances if necessary to return to their familial homes or called their chosen attendants to their own bedsides.

Notions of propriety reinforced women's predilections to be attended by other women and female midwives. Judith Leavitt and Whitney Walton, in their study of women's perceptions of childbirth, noted that although women began to employ the services of male physicians as early as the late 1760s, when Dr. Shippen began his practise in Philadelphia, they did so in the hope of alleviating pain and preventing either injury or death, but that they continued the practise of giving birth at home, supported by close friends and relatives throughout the nineteenth century.

If emotionally and biologically women felt separate from men, their everyday experience confirmed this perspective. The labor of society was by long practise divided and allocated by gender, some tasks reserved for women exclusively and some for men. Women's work included the care of children, the sick, and the tasks arising from the daily round of life: preparation of meals, care of clothing, house cleaning, and the direction of servants, slaves or other help in these same areas. In the
eighteenth century and in rural or frontier areas well into the
next century women's work primarily involved the production of
goods, notably textiles and clothing. This emphasis gradually
changed in the next century, as factories began to encroach
upon women's home industry, but women still worked long hours
to achieve a measure of comfort for their families. The time
saved in production work became devoted among other things to
achieving a higher standard of cleanliness, a trend already
apparent among eighteenth century town women.²³

Women's work was largely confined to the environs of the
home. It was uncommon for white women to work in the fields
except in frontier areas under the force of necessity, but this
expedient was abandoned as soon as possible.²⁴ If women worked
in shops, taverns, or other places of business, they usually
did so as an extension of their familial responsibilities or in
the absence of male relatives, rarely as autonomous
individuals. Some women earned a livelihood by performing
domestic tasks for other families, by taking in sewing or
laundry work, or caring for boarders but their employment
retained its domestic character.²⁴

If women felt it an extra burden to perform men's work,
men were also reluctant to do women's work, so closely tied to
sexual identity were most tasks. In part this was because men
and women were from childhood untrained in each other's work.
Mary Beth Norton found evidence that suggests in the pre-
Revolutionary period men and women commonly knew little about
the inner workings of each other's sphere of life, what
activities each was engaged in, what property, tools, and other goods each possessed or what valuation might be placed on such properties. Women especially were not apprised of their husband's financial dealings. Men and women may have worked together for the survival of the family, but the socially sanctioned division of labor reinforced the separateness of their respective spheres.  

The main thrust of eighteenth century domestic ideology consisted of the prescription that women be "notable housewives," that is, good managers, skilful practitioners of the household arts, "strangers to dissipation" and able to find "happiness in their chimney corners." Women were expected to be deferential, pious, frugal, industrious and unremitting in their efforts to ensure the comfort and well-being of their families. As one man advised his daughter in 1787,

> the great Province of a Woman [was] Economy and Frugality in the management of [a] Family...[including] the meanest affairs, are all and ought to be objects of a woman's cares.

Another man, writing in 1745, seemed to believe that women would, to use the nineteenth century term, become "unsexed" if they left the domestic sphere for other activities,

> [women are best] confined within the narrow limits of Domestic Offices [for] when they stray beyond them, they move excentrically, and consequently without grace.

Women were deeply aware of their prescribed place in colonial society. A sense of separateness pervaded all their activities and concerns. Within their own sphere, women had many responsibilities, but neither housekeeping nor childrearing
accoered them much status in society or in their own eyes. Much of women's work in the home involved a daily repetition of tasks, once done only to be done over again. When measured against the accomplishments of men whose agricultural and other work had more variety and led to more remuneration and recognition, women saw their own concerns as "little things." Women were responsible for the care of children and the training of their daughters, but fathers were still thought of as the primary parent.\textsuperscript{30}

In consequence of their position in the family and society, women in the eighteenth century displayed a low sense of self-esteem. Women habitually spoke of themselves as "weaker vessels," "helpless," "poor females," and in other ways which indicated their sense of inferiority as a class. In her study of women in this period, Mary Beth Norton found repeated instances of women's expressions of their limitations. One woman wrote, and seemingly many would have agreed,

\begin{quote}
I own that we are made but for little things and our employments ought to extend at the furthest to the interior economy and policy of the family, and the care of our Children when they are little.\textsuperscript{31}
\end{quote}

Women's domain was an inward-looking one. They turned to one another for emotional support and companionship, sharing feelings, hopes and aspirations which they did not share with men. As Smith-Rosenberg noted,

\begin{quote}
Women who had little status and power in the larger world of male concerns, possessed status and power in the lives and worlds of other women.\textsuperscript{32}
\end{quote}

Beginning in the late eighteenth century, social
perceptions and women's own notions of their sphere were changed, however, by several different but converging developments which were reshaping American society. The transformation of society in the period roughly from the Revolutionary War to the Civil War gave rise to a new ideology of domesticity for women, the doctrine of separate spheres. The main lines of change will be discussed separately, but their overall impact upon the formulation of this doctrine was to increase the valuation placed on women's domestic role by society and by women themselves. It is important to note that the increased worth of women's role was inextricably tied to the continued sense of separateness they experienced throughout this period. The gulf which separated men and women in the eighteenth century only widened in the next century, but increasingly women no longer saw their sphere as subordinate.

One of the most fundamental changes which had an impact upon perceptions of women's domestic role lay in the area of religion. Whereas earlier in the eighteenth century religious beliefs and practices had constituted an area of shared experience between men and women, by the turn of the century, this became an increasingly contentious issue between the sexes. Barbara Epstein, in her study of conversion experiences, found that for much of the eighteenth century men and women had roughly similar religious interests and concerns as measured by their rates of conversion, participation in revivals, and adherence to the traditional Puritan churches. However, by the next century, men's and women's religious experiences were "sharply dissimilar." Epstein concluded,
The masculine and feminine styles of conversion that emerged in the early part of the century reflected a growing disparity between the lives of these men and women and between the issues that concerned them. This disparity of style intertwined with a growing conflict between sexes, a conflict that found expression in revivalism.\textsuperscript{33}

Women continued in their allegiance to the traditional ministerial teachings and forms, while many men began to resist the authority of the Calvinist churches either by joining churches with more liberal interpretations of the Gospel or by drifting away from the practise of religion.\textsuperscript{34} More men may have shifted responsibility for the upkeep of religion in the family to its female members. Mothers instead of fathers began to lead family prayers. Women made up the majority of churchgoers in many congregations by the early nineteenth century and formed the chief support for the clergy in an era of disestablishment. Ministers in turn, began to shape their sermons in ways which reflected women's interests. For example, the doctrine of infant depravity was modified in this period. Barbara Welter has called this new relationship between women and clergy "the feminization of religion."\textsuperscript{36}

The churches subsequently came to be important locations for women's activities in the nineteenth century. As the practise of religion became "feminized," church-sponsored benevolent and reform activities were seen by ministers and women as appropriate extensions of women's domestic sphere. The care of the poor and the unsaved became women's special ministry. At first women assumed responsibility for this work
with the support of their ministers, but within a short period the doctrine of separate spheres alone served to legitimate women's activities in these areas. As the century wore on, women became increasingly adept at incorporating ever wider ranges of activity within their domestic sphere.

In other ways the events and aftermath of the Revolutionary War also played a critical role in the formation of this new perception of women's role. Historians have noted that regular family life was greatly disrupted by the war, as homes were broken up, property damaged, men went off to fight, and relationships were tested by the need to chose sides. Linda Kerber has speculated that the war

...was so disruptive to family life that one begins to wonder whether the cult of domesticity—the ideological celebration of women's domestic roles—was not in large measure a response to the war-time disruption and the threat of separation of families. Peace would bring renewed appreciation of what had once been taken for granted. 37

Whether or not men were content to return to their firesides at the close of the war, women must have been eager to resume normal life, given their dependent economic position and the hardship many had suffered. But even for women, the war had proven a galvanizing experience as they had learned to cope with adversity and the new demands put on them with the absence of male family members. Many women had run farms and businesses and supported their families single handedly during the war. They gained a new appreciation of themselves as competent and capable beings who had learned to survive unusual circumstances. 38
Women were changed by the war in other ways as well. Their role as household managers and producers was politicized during the war by their participation in boycotts of such English goods as tea and textiles, their increased production of homespun and its display upon their persons as a sign of independence, and the aid they extended to the soldiers in the form of uniforms, knitted articles, and other goods.\textsuperscript{39} Although women's involvement in political affairs did not last beyond the war years, their contributions raised the issue of the relationship of private consumption habits to the commonweal. As women became the chief purchasing agents for their families over the course of the nineteenth century, this issue became an important one in women's sphere.

Other shifts in perceptions of women's role which contributed to the formulation of the separate spheres doctrine resulted in part from subtle but important changes taking place in the family and from discussion in the post-war period about the need to form a new republican national identity. As has been noted, women began to form more positive assessments of themselves. The later decades of the eighteenth century saw several important shifts in behavior and attitudes which resulted in an improved position of women in the family. These shifts included a new emphasis upon "mutuality" in marriage expressed as expectations of a more egalitarian and emotionally close marital relationship, more freedom for children, including a less authoritarian style of childrearing and a shift from the primacy of the father as parent to that of the
mother as principle childrearer. All these changes enhanced women's role and this was reflected in the spread of the doctrine of separate spheres.

One of the most significant changes was the new emphasis on women as mothers. In part, this shift was a recognition that fathers were no longer readily available to assume direction of childrearing, for reasons which will be discussed shortly, but it also stemmed from new concerns about the national character. Some Americans recognized that in many ways their revolution had just begun. New forms of social order had to be created as old forms were thrown off. Traditionally, women had been associated with the preservation of social, that is sexual, virtue, but in the new republic this view became generalized to include national expressions of virtue. Many social theoreticians and women themselves increasingly saw women as the founders of the character of the state. One young woman declared,

A woman who is skilled in every useful art, who practises every domestic virtue...may, by her precept and example, inspire her brothers, her husband, or her sons, with such a love of virtue, such just ideas of the true value of civil liberty...that future heroes and statesmen, who arrive at the summit of military or political fame, shall exaltingly declare, it is to my mother I owe this elevation.

This emerging view of women as "republican mothers" was paralleled by changes in ideas about child nature. These changes, which began to portray the child as a being with special needs, as innocent and pure, and as "a blank slate" have been traced to the influence of the writings of the
English Romantics such as William Wordsworth and to changes in religion. New doctrines developed which moved away from the notions of the need to "break the child's will" and the depravity of infants to views which called for "Christian nurture" and a more gentle, gradualist approach to conversion. The role of the mother figured largely in this change. Women had long been seen as the more "indulgent" of the parents, but by the early nineteenth century this quality was newly interpreted by writers of childrearing manuals as a positive one. Women were advised to teach their children by precept, not by displays of authority.

This gentler approach, however was not to be a relaxed one. According to the new guidelines laid down by such advocates of the new approach to childrearing as Lydia Maria Child, the mother could not be too vigilant in the care of her child. She was advised to raise it herself and not to entrust its care to servants or even relatives. Child wrote that the mother must

keep herself in a state of tranquility and purity...for it is beyond all doubt that the state of the mother affects her child...it is a vessel empty and pure--always ready to receive and always receiving. Every look, every movement, every expression, does something towards forming the character of the little heir to immortal life.

For mothers who took such advice seriously, childrearing became a much more exacting and time consuming task. Although the birthrate dropped steadily throughout the nineteenth century, women still focused much of their attention and energies on the raising of their children.
The ideology of separate spheres both encouraged and supported women in choosing this vocation. It taught that "a woman's place was in the home" and that the home should remain free from outside influences. With the rise of new views of the innocence and malleability of children, it was thought necessary to protect them from corrupting influences. Many persons in the nineteenth century who were concerned with issues of morality and the preservation of the innocence of children identified the aggressive, competitive world of commerce as a potential source of corruption of character. Not only did men have less time at home to act as parents, but because of their involvement in the economic realm, with its questionable practises and ethics, moralists suspected them as models for children. Conversely, women were seen, by themselves and by these moralists, as possessing the necessary qualities for childrearing, by reason of their innate feminine characteristics and their seclusion in the home away from the "contagion" of the business world. This cluster of ideas formed the core of the ideology of separate spheres.

Men's forays into economic activities, according to this perspective, were morally risky because they seemed to lead men away from religion and traditional values. Men had always been responsible for representing the family in the public arena and for the economic support of their families, but in the late eighteenth century and increasingly during the nineteenth century, these responsibilities involved men in new forms of work and in new work settings that seemed to threaten
traditional ideals of society.

The activities which increasingly engrossed the attention of men both encouraged and required the abandonment of traditional communal restrictions on economic behavior grounded in the ideal of a "moral economy" and the adoption of a more aggressive and individualistic mode of operation. Men's work, where it broke free of traditional restraints, assumed a new character: competitive, full of risk and opportunity for those with an entrepreneurial bent, and for those who became wage laborers, more regulated and disciplined, but for both, more vulnerable to sudden upsurges and downturns in an economy increasingly tied to the vagaries of the international market.  

The changes which men experienced were revolutionary and unprecedented in the scale and speed with which they overturned older notions of proper behavior and the traditional organization of society. The plethora of new opportunities engendered a feeling of "boundlessness" matched only by the size of the continent men sought to exploit. As new territory opened up for settlement, men moved themselves and their families away from the older communities and onto new lands. Men also shifted from town to town in search of new situations. Some men left their families behind for months or deserted them altogether as they pursued the dream of success.

Although women may have eventually benefitted materially from these shifts of location, such mobility destroyed or made more difficult the maintenance of the web of relationships
between friends and relatives that made up women's world. Women did not necessarily share in their husbands' enthusiasms for new places and new ventures. Moreover, the rate of failure in business was high during the nineteenth century; a sudden plunge into poverty was not an uncommon experience with which many women were forced to cope. Women's sphere was thus vulnerable to sudden shifts of location, changing levels of income, and sometimes the desertion or debilitation of the principle breadwinner.

Men's values and women's increasingly clashed as men's activities threatened the stability of the home and sometimes even its existence, generating tensions between the sexes. Women reacted by banding together in associations to promote home values. At first these groups met to discuss childrearing practises under the auspices of the churches, but soon some of these maternal associations became concerned with issues of morality beyond the boundaries of the home. Bolstered by their view of themselves as society's nurturers and moral arbiters, as taught by the doctrine of separate spheres, women actively resisted some aspects of male culture which they believed threatened the sanctity of the home and undermined their efforts to raise morally pure sons and daughters. Moral reform societies sprang up in various places in the attempt to regulate men's sexual behavior, notably the New York Female Moral Reform Society established in 1834, which quickly developed a widespread network of affiliates throughout the region. Women also became active in temperance work which
shared many of the same themes as the moral reform groups. These campaigns represented overt examples of women's solidarity as a group, forging links between classes and extending even to include prostitutes in the sisterhood of women, and their sense of separateness and even hostility toward the sphere of men. This element of resistance persisted as an important expression of the separate spheres into the early twentieth century, principally through the activities of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) which celebrated women's allegiance to traditional domestic values.

Although many men proved adept at handling the challenges of the new economic order, some men, no less caught up in the new ways, were yet deeply shocked by the abandonment of the older forms of behavior. These men turned to the home and women for relief from the struggle which characterized men's world. Kirk Jeffrey, in his study of the Jacksonian family, described the intense anxieties of some rural, middle class migrants to the burgeoning cities and towns of the mid-nineteenth century. Jeffrey concurred with Marvin Meyers who noted that these Americans "...were not inwardly prepared for the grinding uncertainty, the shocking changes, the complexity and indirection" that characterized the new age. Jeffrey associated this anxiety with the emergence of "a middle-class cult of the rural home," which he posited "betrayed...an intense fear, a shock of nonrecognition, with which such Americans greeted their society."

This "cult" involved the idealization of country living, of the redeeming powers of nature, and a nostalgia for the lost
innocence of childhood.\textsuperscript{60} For those who could not face living in the city with its "grinding uncertainties" and "shocking changes" and yet who could not return to life in a rural village, Jeffrey found that an alternative existed which allowed these people to bridge the two worlds. They created a retreat from the city within the city, by fastening upon the home, women's sphere, as the one area of life that was seemingly not subject to the pressures of change. Women, as homemakers and mothers, confined in the home, committed to the preservation of traditional religious forms, working in traditional ways in direct service to loved ones, and uninvolved in morally compromising commercial enterprises, appeared to be living in a different, purer world from that of men. People suffering from the anxieties described by Meyers and Jeffrey sought to draw a sharp distinction between "the world" and the home and to erect ideological barriers to help preserve the home as a place of retreat and women as "the angels of the household."\textsuperscript{61}

Sarah Hale was one of the firmest and most prolific supporters of the doctrine of separate spheres. She was a widow with five children living in a small New Hampshire town when she drew attention to herself by publishing a novel, \textit{Northwood} in 1827\textsuperscript{62} and was invited to become the "editress" of the Boston-based \textit{Ladies Magazine}. She used that magazine and subsequently another publication, \textit{Godey's Lady's Book}, which absorbed the first magazine in 1837, as a conduit for her ideas on women's proper role. Hale remained there until her
retirement at the age of ninety in 1877, turning out piece after piece explaining, promoting and celebrating the doctrine of separate spheres. Her views defined women's role for many women; at the height of her career *Godey's* achieved the largest circulation of a magazine of its type, reaching 160,000 subscribers and an untold number of actual readers in 1860.63

Basically Hale had one theme which she reiterated in different ways throughout her career: the source and scope of women's influence. This was a key issue for Hale and her readers. As women were effectively barred from most forms of activity, their contributions to society had to come through the agency of their influence upon male relatives and friends. Nonetheless, in Hale's eyes, women exerted enormous influence in society. Women's impact upon "the general mass of happiness or misery in the world is perhaps greater...than they can ever hope or believe."64 Hale set out to chart that influence for her readers' edification.

First, she noted that "the destiny of the human race is...dependent on the condition and conduct of women."65 Second, the preservation of women's character was dependent upon a separation of the spheres of men and women: "Our men are sufficiently money-making. Let us keep our women and children from the contagion as long as possible."66 Hale disapproved of women entering men's sphere, no matter how deserving the cause. Women would accomplish nothing by entering the public arena and in fact, according to Hale, they would lose what power they had by destroying the basis of their influence, their imperceptible yet pervasive hold on men's
finer feelings. Third, women were to achieve their ends by force of the purity of their beings, a purity assured only within the boundaries of women's sphere. By embracing domesticity, women could achieve unlimited influence.

The government and glory of the world [might belong to man.] But nevertheless, what man shall become depends upon the secret, silent, influence of women.67

If Sarah Hale saw men and women as different beings in every respect, she viewed the two spheres as complementary. Kathryn Kish Sklar analyzed Hale's 'bargain' between the sexes.

The male and female spheres were separated to allow men to continue their acquisitive pursuits and to enable women to concentrate on their moral role. Without one the growth of society would stop, and without the other the course of that growth might be morally objectionable. Together they gave the society an energized labor force and a free conscience. So long as women's labor was unsullied by the business mentality, so long as it was a labor of love and not for gain, the culture might retain its contact with primitive virtue and goodness.68

Catharine Beecher, a near contemporary of Sarah Hale, agreed with the basic outlines of her interpretation of the doctrine of separate spheres, but greatly expanded some of the themes and extended women's sphere beyond the confines of the home. Beecher was an innovative teacher, founder of girl's academies, a peripatetic supporter of advanced education for women, writer and organizer of societies to promote her various projects.69 Her contribution to the development and promotion of the separate spheres assumed three forms.

Beecher was probably best known in her own times as the
author of the Treatise on Domestic Economy, first published in 1841 and many times thereafter. Beecher's first contribution to the promotion of women's sphere was to compile and order the information women needed to carry out their duties. Because of the mobility of American society which interfered in the generational passing on of housekeeping knowledge and because of changing technology in use in homes—Beecher carefully explained the use of new stoves on the market among other innovations—many women had to depend upon written guides rather than upon oral traditions for their information. With the Treatise in hand, women could gain competency in areas ranging from care of children to installing a kitchen sink.

But Beecher did not intend women to become too immersed in housekeeping. Instead, she declared that women's first duties were religious in nature. Women were to care for the souls of their families and themselves before all else. Beecher noted that "system, economy and neatness are valuable only so far as they tend to promote the comfort and well-being of those affected." Women were to order their priorities and then ignore what they could not accomplish. The needs of religion came first.

Her second contribution was to foster a sense of pride in women regarding their duties. Beecher urged women to consider homemaking a high calling.

In the first place, a woman, who has charge of a large household, should regard her duties as dignified, important and difficult. Surely, it is a pernicious and mistaken idea, that the duties, which tax a woman's mind, are petty, trivial, or unworthy of the highest grade of intellect.
and moral worth. Instead of allowing this feeling, every woman should imbibe, from early youth, the impression, that she is training for the discharge of the most important, the most difficult, and the most sacred and interesting duties that can possibly employ the highest intellect.  

Noting that doctors, lawyers and physicians had schools to set and maintain standards for their professions, Beecher called for similarly endowed academies for women's professions of homemaking and teaching. Her Treatise was designed as a school text as well as a manual for homemakers. To this end also, Beecher stumped the country, speaking in favor of women's education, raising funds for schools, forming committees of support and recruiting women as teachers. She saw school teaching as a natural extension of women's sphere and a way of spreading women's influence.

Beecher's convictions about the uses of women's influence on the national level constituted her third contribution to the promotion of women's own sphere. In the period when she was formulating her theories of domesticity, the nation was increasingly torn by sectional strife which eventually resulted in the outbreak of the Civil War. During this same period families experienced the stress engendered by economic fluctuations, new forms of work replacing older ways, geographic and economic mobility, and changing religious practises. Beecher developed a complex and ingenious approach to these issues which focussed on women's role in the home.

First, Beecher noted that if women confined themselves to the domestic sphere voluntarily two things would result. Half the population would be removed from the political and economic
struggle which threatened to tear the country apart. If women did this voluntarily, they could set an example of self-sacrifice—Beecher did not claim women were domestic by nature or inclination—which could then be emulated by men to achieve a further reduction of tension. Second, if all women devoted themselves to homemaking, and especially if they dismissed their domestic servants and learned to do the work themselves, they would create a levelling effect, banishing "aristocratic tendencies" and elevating others to the middle class. Thus Beecher promoted a democracy of homemakers who shared a domestic orientation and value system.

Beecher linked women's sphere with important national issues, giving women a critical role in their society.

Let the women of a country be made virtuous and intelligent and the men will certainly be the same. The proper education of a man decides the welfare of an individual; but educate a woman and the interests of a whole family are secured...No American woman has any occasion for feeling that hers is a humble or insignificant lot.

Leading domestic theoreticians articulated for American women the sense of separateness from the world of men they had long felt, stressing the gulf which existed between the sexes, and imbuing women's sphere with a heightened significance for women, the family and society. One writer characteristically drew a sharp distinction between the two spheres, depicting one as full of risk to moral health and the other as full of redeeming qualities.

We go forth into the world, amidst the scenes of business and of pleasure; we mix with the gay and the thoughtless, we join
the busy crowd, and the heart is sensible to a desolation of feeling: we behold every principle of justice and of honor, and even the dictates of common honesty disregarded, and the delicacy of our moral sense is wounded; we see the general good, sacrificed to the advancement of personal interest; and we turn from such scenes, with a painful sensation, almost believing that virtue has deserted the abodes of men; again, we look to the sanctuary of home; there sympathy, honor, virtue, are assembled; there the eye may kindle with intelligence, and receive an answering glance; there disinterested love, is ready to sacrifice everything at the altar of affection.

This theme appeared again and again in the literature which celebrated women's separate sphere. The world of men was consistently negatively compared with that of women. Not only were these two worlds wholly different from one another, but the values which informed them were seen to be in conflict. The doctrine of separate spheres, as it was promulgated in countless editorials, didactic stories and advice columns, enjoined women to focus their energies on their children, their homes, and religious and benevolent concerns. By remaining in their domestic sphere, women would maintain their purity and traditional forms of deferential behavior. Through their example, women would cheer and uplift the male members of the household, who would then spread women's influence through their own improved conduct in the world. Moreover, women in the protected home would raise virtuous sons and daughters, who in their turn, each according to the dictates of their sex-defined role, would send out a ripple of influence, and thus, society would gradually be reformed. If all women followed these precepts, within one or two generations American society
would reach the millennium.

Such a doctrine conferred upon women both enormous influence and enormous responsibility, both to be exercised within the home. The source of women's influence and authority was their separateness from the world of men and their maintenance of traditional morality and values. Women's domestic role was described as forming a necessary balance, compensation and antidote to men's sphere. The cult of the home, as described by Jeffrey, lent itself to such views, which many women used to bolster women's position in the family and society. If men's world was a morally precarious one, women had the duty to become the moral arbiters of society.
NOTES

1Nancy Cott, Bonds of Womanhood pp. 10-11.


6Nancy Cott, Bonds of Womanhood pp. 5-6.

7Daniel Scott Smith "Family Limitation, Sexual Control, and Domestic Feminism in Victorian America" in A Heritage of Her Own, Cott and Pleck, eds. 222-245.

8Linda Kerber posits that women experienced an historical lag of experience. She noted that "deference was an attitude that many women adopted and displayed at a time when it was gradually being abandoned by men; the politicization of women
and men in America, as elsewhere, was out of phase." "The Republican Mother" p. 203.


10The growth of romantic love as a basis of marriage is noted in Nancy Cott, "Eighteenth-Century Family and Social Life Revealed in Massachusetts Divorce Records," A Heritage of Her Own, Cott and Pleck, eds. Family limitation is discussed by Daniel Scott Smith in "Family Limitation, Sexual Control, and Domestic Feminism in Victorian America."

11For a discussion of rising expectations of happiness in marriage in the post revolutionary period, see Kerber, Women of the Republic, pp. 174-184.


13Nancy Cott, Bonds of Womanhood, p. 2.

14See Nancy Woloch's discussion of the work of Mary Livermore for an example of women's declining assessment of men's character, Women and the American Experience, pp. 274-275. Woloch links such views with the declining rate of marriage among middle class educated women who had high expectations of marriage.


16Ibid. p. 325.

17Ibid. p. 322.

18This is, interestingly, the same decade Sarah Hale began to lose her influence over the imagination of American women according to her biographer, Ruth E. Finley, The Lady of Godey's: Sarah Josepha Hale (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1931) p. 194.


Leavitt and Walton, "'Down to Death's Door'," pp. 160-161. See also Catherine M. Scholten, "'On the Importance of the Obstetric Art': Changing Customs of Childbirth in America, 1760-1825," Women and Health in America, Judith Walzer Leavitt, ed.

Mary Beth Norton, Liberty's Daughters, pp. 11, 21-22.

Ibid., p. 13. Black women and women from some immigrant groups did work in the fields.


Governor William Livingston of New Jersey, quoted in Mary Beth Norton, Liberty's Daughters pp. 4-5.

Samuel Purviance to his daughter Betsy in 1787, quoted in Mary Beth Norton Liberty's Daughters pp. 3-4.

A 1745 essayist quoted in Mary Beth Norton, Liberty's Daughters p. 8.

Mary Beth Norton discussed the lack of variety in women's domestic work and their resulting dissatisfaction with their round of duties, Liberty's Daughters, pp. 34-39.

Ibid., p. 123. Chapter 4 contains a full discussion of this phenomenon.

Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Female World of Love and Ritual," p. 21.


Ibid., pp. 48-55.

Nancy Cott, Bonds of Womanhood, chapter 4.


38 Mary Beth Norton, Liberty's Daughters, pp. 155-188, chapter 7.


40 Nancy Cott, "Eighteenth-Century Family and Social Life."

41 Mary Beth Norton, Liberty's Daughters, pp. 242-250.


43 This is a term used first by Linda Kerber.


48 See for example Nancy Woloch's discussion of Sarah Hale's views on women's characteristics in chapter 5. Hale identified "benevolent feelings...amiableness of disposition...delicacy of moral sense...more aridency of feeling, greater strength of attachment and superior purity of affection" as female traits, p. 102.

49 Barbara Epstein, Politics of Domesticity, pp. 49-51. For a description of the breakdown of traditional restraints on


52 For a study of transiency, see Michael Katz, The People of Hamilton.

53 Carroll Smith-Rosenberg cites many letters and diary entries which express the anguish women felt over such separations. "Female World of Love and Ritual."


55 Michael B. Katz, People of Hamilton, pp. 188-206.

56 Carroll-Smith Rosenberg, "Beauty, the Beast, and the Militant Woman: A Case Study in Sex Roles and Social Stress in Jacksonian America," A Heritage of Her Own, Cott and Fleck, eds.


58 Barbara Epstein, Politics of Domesticity, chapter 5.


60 Kirk Jeffrey, "The Family as Utopian Retreat," p. 25.


63 Nancy Woloch, Women and the American Experience, pp. 110-111.

64 Ibid., p. 106.

65 Ibid., p. 103.


67 Ibid., p. 103.

68 Kathryn Kish Sklar, Catharine Beecher, p. 163.

69 Ibid. for a description and analysis of Beecher's life and career.


71 Catharine Beecher, Treatise, p. 158.

72 Ibid., p. 152.

73 Ibid., pp. 150, 157.

74 Ibid., pp. 51-67.

75 See Kathryn Kish Sklar's analysis of Beecher's ideology of domesticity and its relation to national issues in Catharine Beecher pp. 155-167. See also, Catherine Beecher, An Essay on
Kathryn Kish Sklar noted, "Thus what some historians have called the feminization of American culture can be seen as a means of promoting nationally homogeneous cultural forms, and the emphasis given to gender identity can be viewed as an attempt by a society laden with class and regional anxieties to compensate for these divisive factors." Catharine Beecher, p. 161.

Catharine Beecher, Treatise, p. 37.

Author was probably Sarah Hale, "Home," Ladies Magazine, p. 218, quoted in Kirk Jeffrey, "The Family as Utopian Retreat," p. 28.

For a discussion of the growth of women's authority in the home, see Daniel Scott Smith, "Family Limitation, Sexual Control, and Domestic Feminism in Victorian America."
CHAPTER II

THE EMERGENCE OF THE HOME ECONOMICS MOVEMENT

By the second half of the nineteenth century, the cluster of ideas, values and behavioral prescriptions which made up the ideology of separate spheres was a widely accepted code for women. Its teachings provided an ideological basis for the dominant experience in most women's lives—their role as homemakers and mothers. Moreover, for women who were adept at handling its various themes, it sanctioned the expansion of educational opportunities, the opening of some professions for women—notably teaching—and supported women's membership in myriad reform, benevolent, and cultural associations.

The decades following the close of the Civil War saw a widespread proliferation of women's organizations devoted to causes ranging from the education of freed slaves, the closing of saloons, the opening of colleges for women, to the creation of urban playgrounds, the supply of clean milk for babies and the Americanization of immigrants. Women increasingly entered the public arena as "civic housekeepers" and standard-bearers for "the white life", an omnibus term originating in the WCTU which signified a life lived according to the precepts of the doctrine of separate spheres. While thousands of women across the country crusaded for the preservation of home values and
against the forces which seemed to threaten family life in such organizations as the WCTU, many more thousands of women experienced an increase in authority and autonomy within the home, as they gained influence over the size and spacing of their families, the quality of the marital relationship, and other aspects of family and home life. By the closing decades of the nineteenth century the ideology of separate spheres, which grew out of women's shared experiences and their sense of separateness from male activities and values, supported the notion of a vast sisterhood of women, united by their domestic orientation in life and the values which sprang from such a perspective.

In the midst of the full flowering of the doctrine of separate spheres, however, a small but growing number of women began to turn away from the teachings of this ideology and to develop an alternative set of ideas and practices. No one pattern existed for this shift of attitudes and no one set of circumstances accounted for the abandonment of one ideology and the creation and adoption of another. Rather, these women followed various paths that only gradually began to intersect with one another and share common elements, a process which took decades to achieve. From these small and scattered beginnings a movement developed which, by the early twentieth century, involved hundreds of women in all parts of the country and had an impact on many more women and their families. It was variously called domestic science, domestic economy, household arts, and home economics, the last being the title preferred by its leaders and organizers.2
The home economics movement was fundamentally a domestic reform movement whose object was the development and spread of a new set of homemaking ideals and practises through the agency of various institutions, notably the public schools and colleges. The movement taught a new domestic ideology, one that refuted some of the basic concepts of the doctrine of separate spheres. The women who made up the membership in this movement, especially those who became leaders, had become disillusioned with the doctrine of separate spheres. They saw it as an inadequate underpinning for domestic life in the rapidly maturing urban and industrial society of late nineteenth century America. Home economists believed that women should maintain their domestic orientation but that they should adopt new attitudes about the relationship of the home and society and women's role in the home. Much of the movement was dedicated to the organization of an institutional framework for the systematic dissemination of home economics as a set of principles and practises. But even more essential, the home economics movement helped focus attention on some of the limitations of the separate spheres ideology of domesticity and created an alternative interpretation of women's domestic role.

This chapter will trace the main lines of development of the home economics movement from its emergence in the 1860s to 1909. During this period, the movement was made up of a loose affiliation of various domestic reform campaigns and programs of public education. Increasingly over these years home economics activists in different cities began to work more
closely together and feel the need for a more formal organization than that afforded by their personal ties with one another. Accordingly in 1899, Ellen Richards, who was widely recognized as the leader of home economics, called a meeting of prominent workers in this field to give shape to their burgeoning movement.³ This was the first of ten annual meetings known as the Lake Placid Conferences, which eventually brought together over two hundred leading home economists to deliberate over the structure, content and meaning of home economics. The outcome of the last conference was the formation of a professional organization, the American Home Economics Association, and the launching of a professional journal.⁴ The transition from reform movement to professional organization occurred in a similar fashion in home economics as the developments which transformed voluntary benevolent activities into the organized profession of social work in the same period.⁵ While the transition was not complete in 1909, that year represented a benchmark in the history of home economics and will mark the end of the discussion in this thesis.

Home economics as a social reform movement developed in two overlapping phases. Each phase was dominated by the work of different generations of home economists, and reflected their particular interests, background and perspectives. The first group of women active in home economics work were born mostly in the 1840s and began their reform work in the Reconstruction era after the close of the Civil War.⁶ Most of these women had received a traditional education, either at
home or in female academies. They had been raised according to
the precepts of the doctrine of separate spheres and brought
this perspective to their early work in home economics. These
women considered the home to be the primary location for the
formation and preservation of character. They believed that if
the home was clean and orderly, if housework was accomplished
in an efficient manner and held to a high standard, then all
members of the family—especially children—would imbibe the
moral lesson implicit in the keeping of such standards. Such a
home would become an agency of moral uplift in the family and,
by extension, the wider society.

Although home economists were champions of the private
institution of the home, in their judgement many homes failed
to uphold traditional standards and inculcate proper values.
They considered working class and immigrant tenement homes
especially deficient in carrying out these primary functions.
Isabel Hymans described what she believed typified the family
life of tenement dwellers, a view that was shared by other home
economists.

But among the poor, at any rate in the
crowded districts of our large cities, the
children see little, if anything, of home
life. The mothers of most of them are
inexperienced women who live from hand to
mouth on the scant earnings of their
husbands or of their own hands. One home
describes them all; there is no place for
anything and nothing is ever in its place;
there is no meal hour and no bedtime, the
children retiring late with the parents and
eating where and when they please, the
street and doorstep serving this purpose as
well as any other place. Cleanliness and
privacy are luxuries rarely to be attained.
In post-Civil War America the traditional home seemed threatened by several developments. New waves of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, with customs and languages new and strange to old stock Americans, crowded into unsanitary quarters in coastal cities. Young women from poor New England farms flocked to the towns and cities, unprotected and ignorant of city ways, to find work in the mass of low skilled jobs which were increasingly available to women. As these jobs paid little and were subject to sudden lay-offs, women were believed vulnerable to the lures of prostitution in order to make ends meet. Still, most women preferred factory work to domestic work as it afforded them more freedom and did not carry with it the stigma of "being in service." The first home economists were deeply concerned with these and other tendencies in American society which they believed were undermining the integrity of the family. They noted that many working class girls entered industrial labor in the years formally reserved for the perfecting of domestic skills in preparation for marriage. Moreover, exposure to the masculine world of work and the possible danger of sexual exploitation and degradation would, they feared, coarsen and unfit girls for their true vocation in life as homemakers and mothers. Finally, these reformers saw nothing in working class and immigrant tenement homes that could provide an adequate model of family life for the rising generation of children, which seemed to portend the perpetuation of poverty and vice.

Home economists were equally alarmed with the failure of girls to enter domestic service, the traditional area of work
for young women. In consequence, many believed that the very existence of middle class homes were put in jeopardy through their dependence upon and frequent failure to secure domestic help. Although some historians\(^\text{12}\) doubt that middle class homes went very long without the services of some help, many women of this period were deeply concerned about both the availability and quality of the servants they were prepared to employ. Having a servant virtually qualified a family as middle class, and not having one reduced women to household drudges.\(^\text{13}\)

Many women raised according to the teachings of the doctrine of separate spheres felt that they should concentrate their energies on raising their children and not on housekeeping chores. One overworked housewife, Charlena Anderson, expressed this view in a letter to her husband in 1887,

> Every night when I go to bed my heart sinks at the thought of opportunity lost for drawing out some faculty or doing just a little toward it, for directing them into better habits, or for leaving some pleasant impressions upon minds.\(^\text{14}\)

To gain time for her children and "relief from the time-consuming details of housekeeping," Anderson proposed moving the family into a boarding home, the increasingly popular choice of nineteenth century families without servants.\(^\text{15}\)

Women in the home economics movement were deeply troubled by this tendency to abandon traditional homemaking and opt instead for life in the new apartment hotels and the ubiquitous boarding houses. They agreed with the popular writer Marian Harland who wrote,
People who eat by contract and in herds, and whose very bed-chambers are not secure from prying eyes and intrusive feet...soon begin to dress, look, talk, and think for the vulgar many, rather than the beloved few.  

Ellen Richards likened such boarding houses to "caravans" and, placing private home ownership at the center of progress and civilization, saw the development of boarding houses as a reversion to "the communal life of primitive people." Home economists believed that the essence of family life was its privacy which could not be assured in such a setting. Although home economists recognized that only a small percentage of women faced the dilemma of struggling unaided to maintain a home for their families or of giving up their homes for boarding house life, they saw this group as "an important one in our social and intellectual life" and, generalizing from the experience of these families, found that "the happiness and even the existence of private home life seems to be threatened."

The first generation of home economists responded to these issues and concerns in a variety of ways. They developed largely pragmatic responses to the ills they believed were undermining family life, focusing most of their attention upon working class, immigrant and migrant rural women and girls for whom they created programs designed to address the perceived problems and needs of these women. The basic thrust of their work involved a re-assertion of traditional domestic values such as orderliness, cleanliness and thrift, but they developed some novel approaches for the spread of such values.
A greater sense of the contributions to reform made by this group of early home economists can be gained by comparing their work with that of another group of women active in domestic reform work in the same period, the scientific charity workers, led by Josephine Shaw Lowell. This group was firmly planted in the tradition of the separate spheres. They too were concerned with the quality of family life among the poor, but their approach focused on issues of morality and character and relied on the agency of women's power of influence. For this group, the root cause of poverty could be traced to defective character in individuals, which could be corrected by exhortation and example. Accordingly, they relied upon "lady visitors" of approved character who were sent out to establish relationships with the poor. Lowell described their system:

The main instrument to be depended upon, to raise the standard of decency, cleanliness, providence and morality among them [the poor] must be personal influence, which means that a constant and continued intercourse must be kept up between those who have a high standard and those who have it not, and that the educated and happy and good are to give some of their time regularly and as a duty, year in and out, to the ignorant miserable and the vicious.19

In comparison, the home economists placed less emphasis upon questions of personal morality and focused instead on the actual skills they believed were necessary for homemaking. They also rarely dealt with the poor as individuals and relied less on the efficacy of influence, although this element was present in their work. Rather, home economists responded to domestic problems by creating classes in which homemaking
skills could be taught to large numbers of women at once. Holding the view that many families were failing to live according to standards they deemed necessary for the progress of society, home economists felt that the situation justified, even demanded, systematic intervention by those who possessed the requisites of proper domesticity in the lives of others who did not. They saw schools as the most efficient agency of intervention in working class families. The notion that the home could be saved through action in the schools was repeatedly voiced in home economics literature. Annette Philbrick, a home economist from Lincoln, Nebraska, set forth a representative argument for use of the schools to remedy home problems.

The great problems which [the school] encounters are the street habit, street environment, dishonesty and uncleanliness. The school must meet these problems. Its ideal must be to broaden, sweeten and enrich the child's life; its great end, to implant in the child honesty, self-control, love of home and work, concern and care for others, that out of these may grow civic and altruistic virtues and social service, order and progress. The greatest need of such ideals is in poor, ignorant and cheerless homes. Home and school should everywhere work together, but where home fails the school must bear the greater burden.

One of the earliest home economics programs to use the public schools in this manner was initiated by the philanthropist Mary Hemenway in Boston in 1865. While involved in Sanitary Commission work during the Civil War, she was troubled by the fact that many soldiers' wives were unskilled in the art of sewing and thus would be ill-equipped to teach
their daughters this art. Accordingly, in 1865 she began funding salaries for teachers and materials for sewing classes at the Winthrop School in a Boston working class district. The program was judged a success by school administrators and interested reformers who in 1873 persuaded the city to assume responsibility for the classes. Sewing had been taught sporadically in Boston schools in previous years, but the steady financial support of Hemenway from 1865 to 1873 and the passage of a measure legalizing sewing and other industrial education courses in Massachusetts in 1872 resulted in the permanent inclusion of these classes in the public school system.22

Hemenway was also interested in upgrading cooking skills among the working class population. She began her involvement in this area by sponsoring manual training vacation schools for girls in 1883 and 1884, directed by Miss Amy Homans, and expanded the classes in 1885 with the addition of a kitchen for lessons for older girls, about one hundred and fifty of whom participated in the pilot program. It proved such a success that it too became a permanent program in the school curriculum and other kitchens were later opened.23 Hemenway commissioned a suitable textbook for the classes, written by Mary Lincoln of the Boston Cooking School, another home economics pioneer. To ensure a supply of properly trained teachers, Hemenway then established the Boston Normal School of Cookery in 1887, again under the direction of Amy Homans. Students of this school were also given instruction by Ellen Richards in the appropriate sciences at MIT.24 The school was eventually
transferred to the State Normal School at Framington, where it became the Mary Hemenway Department of Household Arts, headed by Miss Louisa Nicholass.  

Mary Hemenway established a characteristic pattern for early home economics programs. Upon identifying what she perceived to be a social problem, the lack of homemaking skills among working class girls, she systematically organized classes, determined the content of the lessons through use of authorized textbooks, and set standards by training teachers for the carrying out of this work. Because these programs were formalized, they were easily spread from one institution or school to another. Pauline Agassiz Shaw, another noted Boston philanthropist, followed Hemenway's lead and established a school kitchen modelled after Hemenway's "School Kitchen Number One" in the North Bennet Street Industrial School which she had founded in Boston in 1881. The propensity to institutionalize programs, control their content and rely on experts specially trained all became hallmarks of home economics programs.

Another home economics pioneer, Emily Huntington, followed a similar pattern in her work among working class and immigrant families in New York City. Huntington had been involved in a church mission in Norwich, Connecticut for several years and then transferred to New York in 1872 where she became the matron of the church-sponsored Wilson Industrial School for Girls. Conditions of life in the city's tenement districts were worse than anything Huntington had yet encountered. Her
biographer noted,

Shocked by the poverty and wretchedness of the immigrant families with whom she came in contact and by the utter inability of her students to perform even the simplest household tasks...

Huntington developed a set of techniques for teaching homemaking skills in classes for small girls based on Froebelian kindergarten forms, using small, child-sized implements and furniture. She called this new system of instruction "kitchen gardening." In a manual *The Kitchen Garden* published in 1883, Huntington described her system by comparing it with the kindergarten approach.

While the kindergarten has for its object the whole training of the child, the education and development of all its faculties, the object of the kitchen garden is to train little girls in all branches of household industry, and to give them as thorough a knowledge as possible of housekeeping in all its various departments—knowledge which every girl should possess, whether she uses it simply in her own home or in the homes of others.

Like the work of Hemenway, Huntington's Kitchen Garden quickly became systematized and copied in other centers. In 1875 she published *Little Lessons for Little Housekeepers*, and finding success for her ideas, began to teach others her methods. Within a few years fourteen industrial schools in New York and several in other cities were using her system. In 1880, aided by Grace Dodge, a prominent New York welfare worker and volunteer teacher of kitchen garden classes, the Kitchen Garden Association was organized to promote this approach. Reorganized in 1884 as the Industrial Education Association,
this group had as its goal the introduction of this method in New York public schools and the training of teachers in kitchen garden techniques. The work of this group bore fruit when in 1888 New York schools adopted the program, leading to its introduction in schools across the nation, and Teachers College was established at Columbia University as a center for teacher preparation.29

Both the work of Mary Hemenway and Emily Huntington fit with emerging developments in public schools. From the close of the Civil War until the turn of the century schools were an important arena for preserving traditional cultural values and a location for reform efforts directed toward working class and immigrant families. Kitchen garden and sewing and cooking classes became part of the manual training movement which arose in this period as the favored method of reformers attempting to deal with the impact of industrialization on urban families. While boys did wood working, iron molding and other traditional craft work designed to teach the work ethic, girls learned domestic skills to prepare them for their prescribed future role as homemakers or as domestic servants. More than an answer to the question of what to do with the girls while the boys were engaged in carpentry work, domestic science in the schools formed an integral part of reformer's program to preserve traditional values in the face of rapid industrial development.30

While Mary Hemenway and Emily Huntington developed programs to address the perceived needs of immigrant girls who were deficient in traditional homemaking skills, other home
economics pioneers focused on rural migrants to the city in a program offered by the Boston Young Women's Christian Association. Mary Lincoln, Anna Barrows, Emily Huntington and Emma Ewing at various times taught young women "scientific" cooking and homemaking skills for use in their own homes or in domestic service. A course to prepare women as teachers of domestic science was also offered. Ellen Richards helped design the program and the facilities at the YWCA along prototypical home economics lines.

The experimental kitchen was a model of its kind, for it was a large airy room fitted up as a laboratory with individual equipment for each student and with charts, a food museum and other teaching appliances.31

The classes were divided not by the skill level of the women but by the use they planned to make of their training, whether as domestic servants, housewives or teachers. The three-way focus of the YWCA courses sought to bolster the home by training servants, inculcating young women with traditional values while improving their skills, and by preparing more teachers to spread home economics ideals and practises. YWCAs in other centers followed the lead of Boston and incorporated domestic science classes into their programs.

In other developments important to the dissemination of home economics, various women's groups opened cooking schools. These schools offered different types of instruction to different classes of women. Free mission classes were given to the poorest and youngest girls, classes for "plain cooks" taught young working class girls menus suitable for their
station in life and skills useful in domestic service, while "ladies" were taught more elaborate and expensive dishes. These schools also offered courses and lectures in cooking for invalids, designed for nurses, medical students and women who would become the first hospital and institutional dieticians.  

The first cooking school was established in 1874 by the Women's Educational and Industrial Society (WEIS) in New York as part of their Free Training School for Women. The Training School had been established in response to the widespread unemployment stemming from the financial panic of 1873. Instead of offering charity, these women wanted to train working class women for self-support by teaching them such skills as sewing, proofreading and bookkeeping. When cooking was added in 1874, the secretary of the society, Juliet Corson, was pressed into service as the lecturer.  

Although her only preparation for this new role involved reading some French and German cookbooks, Corson was a great success. By 1878 she opened her own school, the New York Cooking School, which became the model copied in other cities. Corson was the first to divide her classes by the income level of her students. She also taught more than cooking, including visits to local markets for the instruction of her students in purchasing tips. For her classes, Corson wrote a *Cooking Manual* in 1877 and in 1899, a *Cooking School Text-Book*, several collections of recipes and a manual of domestic management, *Family Living on $500 a Year*, in 1887. This last work was the outgrowth of two pamphlets designed to teach economy measures to working class
families in times of labor strife.

Following the example of WEIS of New York and Juliet Corson's success, a group of Boston women in the Women's Education Association (WEA) established a cooking school in their city in 1879. They engaged the service of Maria Parloa, a former school teacher who was gaining prominence in Boston through her cooking lectures. Parloa had actually worked as a cook earlier in her life and, to prepare herself as a lecturer, she had studied at the National Training School for Cookery in London, England and spent some time in France. Besides teaching at the WEA school, Parloa ran her own school, trained teachers in a normal course and lectured widely. Like Corson, Parloa wrote several cookbooks and homemaking manuals. She became active in the home economics movement and was an early participant in the Lake Placid Conferences.

A group of Philadelphia women, in the New Century Club, followed suit by opening a school in 1879, beginning with a student of Maria Parloa as teacher, but soon employing Sarah Tyson Royer, who went on to gain national prominence as a cooking teacher, lecturer and author of cookbooks.

Several other women gained prominence and launched lifelong careers through their work with the Boston Cooking School. Fannie Farmer was first a student there, then a teacher and principal. She also ran her own school, wrote cookbooks and lectured. Farmer is noted for her advocacy of exact measurements, a practise which helped standardize recipes and simplify cooking. Mary Lincoln and Anna Barrows were also trained at the Boston Cooking School by Maria Parloa. Both
women then had long and active careers as cooking teachers and became involved in the home economics movement. Mary Lincoln taught at the Boston Cooking School, lectured widely and wrote cookbooks and a school textbook used by Mary Hemenway.\textsuperscript{38} Anna Barrows taught cooking and domestic science at a variety of institutions and finally became established at Teachers College, Columbia from 1905 to 1932.\textsuperscript{39} Both Barrows and Lincoln formed part of the staff of the "New England Kitchen Magazine." This publication was an early forum of home economics thought and particularly served as a conduit for the writing of Ellen Richards who had been instrumental in the founding of the magazine.\textsuperscript{40} Both women were active members of the Lake Placid Conference, where Barrows served as secretary.

These domestic reformers established the foundations from which the home economics movement developed. In a period when "lady visitors" dispensed advice and moral uplift among tenement dwellers, these women created new institutional forms to address the social issues which concerned them. Beginning in public and industrial school classrooms, kitchen garden mission classes and cooking schools, they sought to train young girls and women homemaking skills in a systematic, uniform way, using trained teachers and approved textbooks. Their goals were traditional in the sense that the underlying assumption of all these programs was the centrality of domesticity for all women. Like many reformers, the home economists sought to inculcate working class women with middle class ideas and practises. While the early work of this group of home
economists fell within the accepted boundaries of women's sphere, their first programs quickly led to developments which challenged some of the basic precepts of the doctrine of separate spheres.

Untrained women had often been recruited to teach the early home economics classes, but within short order normal classes were instituted and standards set which served to distinguish home economists from other domestic reformers. The move to train teachers began a spiral of developments which ultimately led home economists beyond the boundaries of the separate spheres and into men's world of science, academia and professionalism. One of the central elements of the separate spheres ideology of domesticity was the role of the mother as the transmitter or teacher of domestic skills and knowledge to the daughter. Early advice books had urged the formation of an apprenticeship-like arrangement whereby the daughter spent several years assisting her mother in the housework and care of younger siblings in preparation for her future role as mother and homemaker. The first home economists, like other domestic reformers who believed that working class mothers were inadequate models for their daughters, had sought to insert themselves in the mother's place so as to ensure the perpetuation of domestic values and the passing on of skills. However, where the first home economists had seen themselves as more competent versions of ordinary women, trained home economists increasingly saw themselves as experts in homemaking and not as mother-substitutes.

The teacher became part of a hierarchy in which highly
trained experts held positions at the apex and untrained housewives held subordinate positions. In this system knowledge flowed downward from experts to nonexperts. At first this tendency to structure relationships in a hierarchical fashion was expressed traditionally in the form of class relationships. Upper and middle class women instructed working class women and children. Notions of shared sisterhood often informed this relationship, at least from the point of view of the higher class women. But, as home economists became more highly educated a greater and different type of gulf was created between them and ordinary women, which undermined the traditional sense of shared experience, which formed the heart of women's sphere. This trend became more marked as home economists shifted the emphasis of their work from a focus on working class families to middle class homes toward the end of the century. Moreover, when home economists began to work more with middle class women, they deliberately fostered the gulf which separated them from women untrained in home economics. Traditional notions of class relationships had supported the intervention of home economists in working class homes, but no such tradition existed to justify intervention in the home life of middle class women by other middle class women. Indeed, the notion that middle class homes needed complete reformation originated with the home economists. To justify their goals for reform in middle class homes and their self-appointment as the agents of that reform, home economists stressed their differences from other women. The main difference between home
economists and other women was their training in the sciences—the source of home economists' expertise.

The shift to a focus on middle class homes occurred for many reasons. Home economists may have been overwhelmed by the numbers and depth of the problems of tenement-dwelling families. Reports of work in this area are laced with comments on the size of the problems and the limited means to counter them.\textsuperscript{44} Also, as home economists increasingly stressed science as the means of solving home problems, they recognized that programs designed for children were not suitable means of disseminating scientific knowledge. As schools were the chief institutions for reaching this class, and most working class girls left school before the age when scientific training became feasible, home economists turned to work with older girls. By choosing to work through the schools, home economists \textit{ipso facto} chose to work with the middle class.\textsuperscript{45} They did not entirely abandon working people, however, continuing some programs, and also adopting what can be described as a "trickle-down" method of addressing the problems of that class. Ellen Richards noted,

\begin{quote}
The attention of students of social science should not be wholly absorbed in the so-called tenement home problem; the needs of the higher-class wage earner should be considered and by this means the other object will be soonest accomplished. Example is more powerful than precept.\textsuperscript{46}
\end{quote}

The increased stress on science as the foundation for modern homemaking and the shift in perspective from working class to middle class homes can be traced to the manifold influence of Ellen Richards. As a leading woman scientist and
one of the few who was working in the area of scientific applications to household problems, Richards had long acted as a senior counsellor to the home economics movement. As early as the mid-1870s, she had organized her own home as a center for "right living" and conducted much of the basic research there and at MIT upon which home economics as a domestic "science" was based.\(^47\) Richards was involved in studies at MIT of adulterations in foods, the creation of systems of water purification and the treatment of sewage, and the proper heating and ventilation of buildings.\(^48\) The more she learned, the more concerned she grew that homemakers knew nothing of these advances. Sheltered in the home and largely cut off from the scientific education they needed, women had followed the advice of Sarah Hale too assiduously for Ellen Richards. By escaping the "contagion" of "the bank-note world," women had also deprived themselves of the new knowledge and technology which was reshaping society. Richards contrasted the worlds of men and women and found women's sphere a bastion of complacent ignorance.

The improvements that affect our daily lives have resulted from Mechanics and Chemistry...the mechanical devices which render travel [and] communication...comfortable and easy and rapid...methods that make possible things that seemed impossible...But where are the advantages [in the home] commensurate with manufacturing?\(^49\)

In part Richards laid the blame of the unimproved home on women themselves. The new inventions and methods developed by men were not filtering through to women in the home.
The woman's province is degraded by her own connivance, since knowledge is at her disposal and she does not avail herself of it. She persists, ostrich-like, in ignoring the movements in other departments of social life. She should make the home an expression of her individuality, but she has none to express.  

Richards made it her crusade to reform the retrogressive middle class home. She criss-crossed the country, speaking wherever she was invited on the problems of modern living and women's responsibility to reform the home. She told a women's club in Poughkeepsie, in 1879,

Perhaps the day will come when an association will be formed in each large city or town with one of their number a chemist...The power of knowledge is appreciated by manufacturers. They take advantage of every new step in science. The woman must know something of chemistry in self-defense. If the dealer knows his articles are subjected to even simple tests, he will be far more careful to offer the best.  

Such associations of women employing chemists would not exist however until more women understood the importance of the sciences in homemaking. Toward that end, Richards wrote more than a dozen books, helped organize courses in YWCAs and other places, conducted research and found ways to publicize it. With the help of Pauline Agassiz Shaw, Richards opened the New England Kitchen as an experiment in nutrition education in a working class neighborhood. Although that experiment foundered on the difference between ethnic immigrant tastes and the traditional New England diet, she used it as a prototype for other kitchens, notably the Rumford Kitchen. This Kitchen operated at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 and introduced
thousands of people to the basic concepts of nutritional science. As a member of the Boston WEA, Richards helped sponsor the Boston Cooking School and she was involved in public school domestic science projects with Mary Hemenway and others.

More and more Richards viewed the home economics movement as a useful vehicle for the dissemination of the scientific knowledge she considered essential to the management of a modern home. She was already involved in several projects to teach women science, notably as the chief correspondent in the sciences for Anna Ticknor's Society to Encourage Study at Home and as a teacher at the Girls' Latin School in Boston. As early as 1875 she began to train individual women in analytical chemistry at MIT, although women were still not officially allowed to attend classes. In the same year Richards persuaded the Boston WEA to fund the establishment of a Woman's Laboratory at MIT. This was an alternative structure in which Richards and sympathetic MIT professors trained classes of women in the basic sciences.

While most of these women were teachers, some became involved in the home economics movement through the influence of Richards. Much of the science she taught was illustrated by its applications in the home and several of her students joined with her in seeing the potential benefits to homemaking which science represented. Besides training these women in the sciences, Richards acted as their mentor. She counselled them, sometimes fed and housed them, raised money for scholarships when necessary, and in the end, helped find them positions
teaching home economics or directing programs. Richards shaped the movement by grooming many of its future leaders. Bringing these women into the home economics movement was one of Richards' greatest contributions to its development.

The recruitment of women through the Women's Laboratory at MIT to home economics changed the composition of the movement. These women came to form the second generation of home economists. Born two decades or so after the first generation, many of these women were college graduates in search of a way to use their education and serve society. They brought to the movement the special problems faced by women pioneers in the field of higher education. If home economics needed the contributions of college women, its teachings dovetailed with the needs of this group. As this generation gained ascendency in the movement, they shaped home economics as a response to issues they faced.

The first generation of college women were deeply cognizant that they were engaged in a social experiment first as students and later as professors and college administrators. In search of intellectual development beyond that offered by women's academies, they tested the boundaries of women's sphere. Whether the college experience ruined women for their domestic role, either by making them unfit by destroying their health or by fueling intellectual ambitions incompatible with homemaking was a source of controversy. In 1872, with the publication of *Sex in Education* by Dr. Edward Clarke of Harvard, the concerns about women's attendance at
college were given more precise form and weight. Clarke argued that the years devoted to intense study were the same years women were developing their reproductive systems and, according to the prevailing medical theories, the body could only support growth in one area at a time. He cited numerous 'cases' where girls suffered physical breakdowns under the stress of this double load and were ruined for life as mothers. He warned that women could not be scholars and mothers both.

While woman preserves her sex, she will necessarily be feeblener than man, and, having her special bodily and mental characters, will have, to a certain extent, her own sphere of activity; where she has become thoroughly masculine in nature, or hermaphrodite in mind,--when in fact, she has pretty well divested herself of her sex,--then she may take his ground, and do his work, but will have lost her feminine attractions, and probably also her chief feminine functions...the identical education of the two sexes is a crime before God and humanity that physiology protests and that experience weeps over.

Another physician simply queried, "Why should we spoil a good mother by making an ordinary grammarian?"

College administrators did not fully respond to these charges, other than by employing physicians and gymnastics instructors to watch over the health of their students. They offered women a full liberal arts course based on the model of men's colleges, but were vague about how women would use this education. Many graduates were left treasuring their hard-won intellectual development, but at a loss to discover its application in their lives, as expressed by one such graduate,

I hang a in void midway between two spheres...A professional career...puts me beyond reach of the average woman's duties
and pleasures [but] the conventional limitations of the female lot put me beyond reach of the average man's duties and pleasures.65

It was generally left to college women themselves to settle the issue of their own femininity. Conventional domesticity seemed closed off to these women, who by going to college had gained important experiences beyond its boundaries already. One young woman noted,

My mother used to write me that my name was never mentioned to her by the women of her acquaintance. I was thought by my family to be a disgrace to my family.66

Marion Talbot, graduate of Boston University and later a leader in the home economics movement, wrote of her own situation in the early 1880s,

No 'Junior League' or 'Sewing Circle' or 'Vincent Club' of those days wanted as a member a young women whose aims were so different from their own and whose time was absorbed by what seemed to them a hopeless tangle of tormenting questions whose solution got one nowhere socially when it was all over.67

Led by women like Talbot and Richards, college graduates sought to counter the social disapproval and dire warnings showered upon them. First, they banded together for mutual support and companionship. Talbot, with the help of Richards, formed the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA) in 1881 as an organization to fill the needs of college graduates.68 Second, through the ACA, college women conducted a study to collect statistics on the health of women college graduates. Their research helped lay to rest the claims of Dr. Clarke and his colleagues about the ill effects of serious study on
women. The third way these women sought to gain social approval was more complex. It involved the reconciliation of the competing claims of intellectual activity with domesticity.

Ellen Richards provided the model. In her own life she had fused together her two identities as scientist and homemaker, and drawing from both spheres, had created a role for herself which satisfied her ambition for knowledge and her more traditional desire for social service. Whereas Sarah Hale had proposed a delicate balance between the sexes, each in their own sphere, less than fifty years later, Richards proposed a judicious mixing of the spheres. She brought home problems into the laboratory and science into the home. Richards held out to women a vision of a new role, informed by a new domestic ideology, one commensurate with their educational attainments and yet one which could answer the critics of women's higher education by its domestic orientation.

If there is to be an aristocracy in America, let it be an expression of the real American character...Who will shape it? Who better fitted to mould it aright than the young men and women trained in the higher institutions of learning...The educated woman longs for a career, for an opportunity to influence the world. Just now the greatest field open to her is the elevation of the home into its place in American society.

For Richards and the women who joined her in the home economics movement, college-trained women represented the most potentially progressive element in society. The home needed the uplifting influence of such women if it was to survive as the "corner stone on which the best in civilization will be
In turn, involvement in home economics helped these women settle the issue in their own minds that domesticity and intellectuality were compatible and even critically necessary tandem pursuits. In the home economics movement, these women found companionship, purpose and a way to express their womanliness without submerging themselves in the home. As teachers and promoters of a new ideology of domesticity, these college women found their place in society. Second generation home economists accepted as axiomatic that the home should be run along scientific and business lines which could only be learned in institutions of higher education and by contact with the world outside of women's separate sphere. The ideology which they developed reflected the new perspective these women had gained by their broader experience.
NOTES


2 For a chronology of the history of the home economics movement see for example, Emma Seifrit Weigley "It Might Have Been Euthenics: The Lake Placid Conferences and the Home Economics Movement" American Quarterly 26 (March, 1974) 74-96; and Hazel T. Craig, *The History of Home Economics*. Every year of the Lake Placid Conferences nomenclature of the movement was discussed, with a standing committee appointed to make recommendations. See for example, Proceedings of First L.P.C. (1899) p. 4-5; Proceedings of Sixth L.P.C. (1904) pp. 63-64; and Proceedings of Ninth L.P.C. (1907) p. 125.

3 See *Proceedings of First L.P.C.* (1899) for a list of participants in the conference, pp. 4, 8-9. Numerous references to Ellen Richards' leadership occur throughout home economics literature. See for example, Marion Talbot, "Tribute to Mrs. Richards' Pioneer Work," *Proceedings of Seventh L.P.C.* (1905) p. 127; and Benjamin Andrews' introduction of Ellen Richards at the final conference, "It is the glory of the conference that it has but one chairman, Mrs. Richards. We bring to her tributes of honor, respect, affection and devotion." *Proceedings of Tenth L.P.C.* (1908) p. 19.

4 *Journal of Home Economics*. Its first editor was Dr. C. Ford Langworthy for the first three issues and then Mary Hinman Abel from October, 1909 to June 1915.


9 For an examination of domestic service, see David M. Katzman, Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), especially chapter 6 for a discussion of why women sought alternatives to service. Home economists themselves acknowledged some of the problems of this 'industry.' See for example, Ellen Richards, The Cost of Living: As Modified by Sanitary Science (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1900, second edition) p. 116, where she describes domestic service as "slavery."

10 Girls were encouraged to enter domestic service instead of factories. Reform schools trained girls for service as a way to both reform their character and ensure a 'better' form of employment for girls. Marvin Lazerson, Origins of Urban School, pp. 93-94.

11 Some home economists believed that only through intervention with the youngest children could a change in manner of living be accomplished. See for example, Isabel Hymans, "The Teaching of Home Economics in Social Settlements," Proceedings of Seventh L.P.C. (1905) p. 55. "...none know as well the settlement work the almost complete hopelessness of trying to reach the intelligence of one who has grown up to manhood or womanhood amid the surroundings so common to poverty all over the world."

12 Susan Strasser, Never Done, p. 163. She notes that the issue was one of quality, not quantity.


14 Charlena Anderson, quoted in Carl Degler, At Odds, p.
For a discussion of boarding see Susan Strasser, Never Done, chapter 8. Interestingly Catharine Beecher boarded with other families for extensive periods of her life despite her celebration of the home, prompting her sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe, to describe her as "a trunk without a label." Kathryn Kish Sklar, Catharine Beecher, p. 272. See also Peter G. Filene, Him/Her/Self: Sex Roles in Modern America (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1974) pp. 10-12, for a discussion of women's perception of their role and their flight to apartment hotels. One woman gave up housekeeping, saying, "'I hear certain women asking why I don't do the work myself despite my husband's prohibition. 'What have you to do the livelong day but keep your home?' they ask. I have this to do, to keep my husband...'"

Marian Harland [Mary Virginia Hawes] quoted in Susan Strasser, Never Done, p. 150.

Ellen Richards, Cost of Living, p. 97.


See for example, Proceedings of Sixth L.P.C. (1904) pp. 64-65, 67. "[The school] offers one of the best mediums for health instruction, reaching to the parents and homes of the children." Emma Jacobs, in a presentation about teaching home economics in rural areas, asserted that even if only a few girls were reached, "they would act as a leaven in their communities." Jenny Snow listed nine reasons why home economics should be taught in schools. Proceedings of Eighth L.P.C. (1906) pp. 26-27.


Katherine H. Stone "Mrs. Mary Hemenway and the Household Arts in Boston Public Schools."


This would have been in Richards' "Women's Laboratory." MIT did not admit women until 1884. Robert Clarke, Ellen Swallow, p. 53.

Louisa Nicholass gave a report on the establishment of
this school to the first Lake Placid Conference, Proceedings (1899) p. 5.


27 Robert J. Fridlington, "Emily Huntington" NAW vol. 2, pp. 239-240.


30 Marvin Lazerson, Origins of the Urban School, chapter 4.

31 Elizabeth Wilson, Fifty Years of Association Work Among Young Women, 1866-1916: A History of Young Women's Christian Associations in the United States of America (n.p.: National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America [c. 1916]).

32 For an overview of the development of the cooking schools, see Isabel Bevier and Susannah Usher, The Home Economics Movement, part 1, pp. 44-51; Hazel T. Craig, The History of Home Economics, pp. 6-7.

33 Mary Tolford Wilson, "Juliet Corson" NAW vol. 1, pp. 387-388. Information on the New York WEIS is included in this entry.

34 Information on the Boston WEA can be found in Dolores Hayden, The Grand Domestic Revolution pp. 62, 171, 324 n 30, 327 n 8. Ellen Richards was a member. Clarke includes many references to but not much description of the WEA, for example pp. 62, 86, 109.

35 Mary Tolford Wilson, "Maria Parloa," NAW vol. 3.

36 Emma Weigley, Sarah Tyson Royer; Boyd "Sarah Tyson Heston Royer," NAW vol. 3.

37 Elizabeth Bancroft Schlesinger, "Fannie Merritt Farmer" NAW vol. 1, pp. 597-598.
38 Mary Tolford Wilson, "Mary Johnson Baily Lincoln," NAW vol. 2.


40 Robert Clarke, Ellen Swallow, pp. 133-134, 165, 170-172.

41 See for example, Lydia Maria Child, The Mother's Book, pp. 62, 146-148.

42 In an ACA report on "Standards of Living as Interpreted Thru Facts In Regard To Food," the unidentified writer noted that women must understand nutrition. "Either she herself must make a study of the question of foods and master its scientific and its technical aspects, or she must be willing to rely on and accept the judgement of others...she must relegate the whole subject to experts..." Proceedings of Fourth L.P.C. (1902) p. 43; See also Proceedings of Sixth L.P.C. (1904) pp. 35-36 for a discussion on the danger of women only partially understanding the scientific background of an issue and thereby causing harm to their families. "Truly a little learning of isolated facts is a dangerous thing"; implying that it was better to rely on experts. For a model of home economics hierarchy, see Henrietta Goodrich of the School of Housekeeping in Boston, "Suggestions for a Professional School of Home and Social Economics," Proceedings of Second L.P.C. (1900) pp. 26-40.

43 See for example the complaints of Annie Allen about private charities setting up vacation domestic science classes. She declared that the work "has been done in a slipshod and haphazard fashion...it has given a wholly wrong impression..." Proceedings of Fourth L.P.C. (1902) pp. 74-75.

44 For example, Isabel Hymans in a report on the Louisa May Alcott Club, "with the means at hand it was not easy to provide a suitable place for the work...this is only a beginning..." Proceedings of Second L.P.C. (1900) pp. 18-23.


46 Ellen Richards, Cost of Living, p. 44.

47 Robert Clarke, Ellen Swallow, chapter 8, Caroline Hunt; Ellen H. Richards, pp. 116-123.

48 Robert Clarke, Ellen Swallow, on food adulterations: pp. 102-104; on water purification: pp. 144-149; and on pure air: pp. 150.

49 Ibid., p. 81.

50 Ellen Richards, Cost of Living, p. 114.
51 Robert Clarke, *Ellen Swallow*, p. 82.

52 Ibid., pp. 256-259, for a complete list of Richards' publications.

53 Ibid., pp. 128-131.

54 Ibid., pp. 130-133.


57 Caroline Hunt, *Ellen H. Richards*, pp. 143-145, lists several "testimonials" to Richards' influence. As well, Marion Talbot, Isabel Bevier, Frances Stern, Isabel Hymans, Sarah Wentworth and Alice Peloubet Norton were all brought into the home economics movement by Richards. Talbot met Richards after she graduated from Boston University and was searching for something meaningful to do. She began to take classes at MIT in 1881 and went on to teach sanitary science at Wellesley and the University of Chicago; see Richard J. Storr, "Marion Talbot" *NAW* vol3. pp. 423-424. Isabel Bevier was searching for a life's work after the death of her fiancé. She studied with Richards at MIT in 1897 and went on to head the home economics department at the University of Illinois, Lita Bane, *The Story of Isabel Bevier* (Peoria, Illinois: Charles A. Bennett Company, 1955) pp. 21, 23. Richards also helped Alice Norton find direction in her life after the death of her husband. Norton had already studied sanitary science with Richards in the ACA Sanitary Science Club in 1883 and was then encouraged by her to begin teaching home economics, Mary Tolford Wilson, "Alice Peloubet Norton" *NAW* vol.2 pp. 637-638. Frances Stern recalled "the happy chance, with unforeseen developments" her work with Richards had in her life. Through her friend Isabel Hymans, who had studied at MIT with Richards, Stern became Richards' assistant and then student. Stimulated by her work with Richards, Stern went on to do nutritional counselling work with immigrants, Mary F. Handlin, "Frances Stern" *NAW* vol. 3. pp. 363-364. For information on Sarah Wentworth see Robert Clarke, *Ellen Swallow*, pp. 58, 69, 130.

58 Caroline Hunt, *Ellen H. Richards*, pp. 138-139, 151; Robert Clarke, *Ellen Swallow*, pp. 58, on scholarship work for women, p. 85. See also, Margaret Rossitter, *Women Scientists in America* on Richards' work to enable women to study science, pp. 38-39, 95.
Robert Frankfort, Collegiate Women for a discussion of the social and psychological problems which beset the pioneer generation of college women students and teachers, especially Frankfort's analysis of Alice Freeman Palmer, President of Wellesley College, chapters 1 and 3. See also Barbara Miller Solomon, In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985) chapters 5-7.


Edward Clarke, quoted in Rosalind Rosenberg, Beyond Separate Spheres, pp. 11-12.

T.S. Clouston, quoted in Rosalind Rosenberg, Beyond Separate Spheres, p. 8.

Sheila Rothman, Woman's Proper Place, pp. 36-37.

Nancy Woloch, Women and the American Experience, p. 279.

Ibid., unidentified woman, p. 281.

Unidentified woman quoted in Robert Clarke, Ellen Swallow, p. 83.


Ibid., pp. 116-124.


CHAPTER III

HOME ECONOMICS: A DOMESTIC IDEOLOGY
FOR THE 'NEW WOMAN'

At the final Lake Placid Conference in 1908, Ellen Richards summed up the work of the home economics movement. She noted that, over the course of its development, home economics had evolved from

...lessons in cooking and sewing given to classes supported by charitable people for the poorer children to enable them to teach their parents to make a few pennies go as far as a dollar spent in the shops...¹

to an "ethical" movement concerned with standards and ideals of homemaking. Although the teaching of homemaking skills continued to be a large part of any home economics program, of greater concern to home economists by the end of the century was the dissemination of a new approach to homemaking, rather than the perfecting of traditional domestic skills among women. Richards commented,

Many well meaning but short sighted persons have preached the doctrine that there can be no home unless the mother washes her own dishes or dusts her own room and the father looks after the furnace and his boots...But we mistake in holding that the form of yesterday holds the ideals of today and the possibilities of tomorrow.²

The most fundamental task of the home economics movement involved changing the "form" or ideological framework which governed women's homemaking practises. By the turn of the
century, the goal of the movement had become a refutation of the doctrine of separate spheres and its replacement with a home economics ideology of domesticity.

This chapter will describe the main tenets of home economics as a domestic ideology. Like more traditional domestic theoreticians, home economists continued to view the home as women's proper sphere and as the primary location for the formation and preservation of character, especially that of children. As described by Ellen Richards,

"...it is the economy of human mind and force that is of most importance and so long as the nurture of these is best accomplisht within the 4 walls of a home so long will that word stand first in our title."

Unlike traditionalists, however, home economists approached their conception of women's duties from outside the boundary of the separate sphere of women. As scientists and college graduates, home economists developed a different perspective on women's domestic role. They began from the point of view that the developments which were reshaping nineteenth century American society were largely beneficial and progressive and therefore should be embraced by women rather than resisted. The ideology of domesticity formulated by home economists flowed from this premise.

Home economists still saw the home as the best place to rear children. Although they had little specific to say about actual childrearing methods in comparison with more traditional domestic advisors, they claimed that the whole point of their movement was to create homes fit to prepare children for a
useful role in life. Home economists were environmentalists; that is, they believed that a person's environment, particularly his first one in the home, helped shape his personality, capabilities and outlook. A clean and orderly home not only protected and promoted the health of the child, it fostered in him a love of beauty and a respect for social order. Home economists held that it was women's responsibility to ensure the existence of an appropriate physical environment. Alberta Thomas, of the Hackley Manual Training School in Muskegon, Michigan expressed the typical home economics view of women's role as the creator of the home.

The ultimate aim [of home economics] is to give the girl a realizing sense of her responsibilities...that whether she be wife, mother or sister, she is largely responsible for existing conditions and atmosphere of the home; that on her rests the decision of the problems as to whether the home shall be the place wherein each member shall reach his or her highest physical, intellectual and spiritual development.

Home economists were particularly concerned with how middle class women carried out their duties of creating the "conditions and atmosphere of the home." This group of women had the greatest potential for "right living" because of their level of income and access to education. Moreover, these women helped determine the quality of society through child raising and through the reform activities they engaged in as club women. Yet, home economists expressed contradictory feelings about this group of homemakers, saving for them their opprobrium. Eventually they gave up their best efforts to
educate this group and largely turned their attention instead to these women's college-bred daughters. As one home economist remarked, she was working toward "the tenth generation." Home economists considered these women "complacent" and overconfident, with a "I-know-it-all spirit as regards household affairs." If they studied cooking in their clubs, they seemed to favor "fancy dishes, manipulation, rather than instruction as to food values or suitability of the daily menus."

If perchance the conscientious teacher emphasizes food principles, lingering on proteids, carbohydrates and fats, her pupils frankly say, "Such things are beyond me, I do not care to know about them," and dismiss from their minds the information which might have been to their great advantage and the advantage of their families.

Home economists were anxious to combat the notion "that any woman could keep house satisfactorily provided she had a liking for it." In a discussion of the propensities of club women, Linda Hull Larned, herself a club woman and president of the National Household Economic Association, complained,

There are many who...believe that no special training is necessary for the housekeeper except that which she picks up while under the maternal wing, or else they think sufficient knowledge of housewifery comes when needed by some mysterious intuition.

Home economists believed these women, because of their cavalier attitudes about homemaking, were failing their families.

Middle class women harmed their families by clinging to outmoded traditions either from complacence or ignorance. Both of these conditions could be corrected through programs of education, but at heart home economists recognized that the
changes which they wished to see implemented in the nation's homes involved first an abandonment of the doctrine of separate spheres and then the adoption of the home economics approach to homemaking. Again and again home economists discussed the issue of standards, and the fact that most women had 'none'.

In truth, women did possess standards but ones which had no relevance for home economists. Women kept house according to the traditions and tastes of their families and as they had been taught by their mothers. As Carroll Smith-Rosenberg has described, nineteenth century women lived an insular existence and gained their sense of worth from their interactions with each other.

The doctrine of separate spheres encouraged women to view homemaking as an expression of their character and personality. Such women were concerned with issues of purity and piety, which were best preserved in the seclusion of the home. Home economists considered this approach completely inadequate and entirely mistaken.

Home economists attacked the traditional views of homemaking and women's sphere in two areas: its impact on the family and on the larger society. They declared that women failed their most essential function, their preparation of their children for "future service" in the world. Caroline Hunt, a professor of home economics at the University of Wisconsin, discussed this issue in a presentation to a housekeepers' conference in 1905. She listed the functions of the home as a place of "rest and recuperation" for adults and "the long preparation of the child for future social service."
Hunt noted,

But we must not forget...we are preparing him [the child] for work in a field that is wider than the home, and that those who train him must know the field, which is the world, with all its needs and all its opportunities...The mother who does not know the society for which her child must work is only half ready to educate him, and the home which gives to the mother no leisure for learning what the world is doing is failing in its responsibility to the child.12

Untrained women were unable to create the proper home environment for childrearing because, mired in the traditions of the past, they did not understand the requirements of modern society. Children reared in a home run by the "whim" of the individual housewife would be handicapped in a society which demanded system and order. Where the doctrine of separate spheres taught that the child's character was largely determined by the moral character of his mother, home economists stressed the role of the mother as the interpreter of society for her children through her own activities in the home. If women employed scientific knowledge in their housekeeping, understood the relationship their buying habits had to labor conditions and wages, and recognized the "sociologic" aspects of domestic service, their children would better grasp the nature of modern life.13

Moreover, if women discarded the outmoded ideals which impeded their appreciation of modern technology and services, home economists believed they would be more effective homemakers and mothers. Schooled in the doctrine of separate spheres, women mistakenly resisted the encroachments of
industry on traditional household production. Housewives rejected "the good of the Aladdin oven," Ellen Richards found, "not because it did not do its own work, but because it did not do what the cook thought she wanted it to do." They were reluctant to use cooked food services, commercial launderies, or purchase processed foods, bakery bread, and ready-made clothes and linens. Richards noted that women

...have lost control of so many things, we childishly hold on to those we see slipping from us and make it difficult, almost impossible for these last industries to be organized in a way to help us.

Subsequently, women wore themselves out sewing, baking, laundering and performing other tasks in the home which were better left to the organized labor and machinery of the business world. Other women gave up homemaking to reside in boarding houses and apartment hotels because they thought housekeeping was too complex, too expensive, too full of demeaning drudgery, or because they wished to devote themselves to activities they thought more worthwhile. In either case, women failed to meet the needs of their families for private, uplifting home life.

These same untrained women brought their incompetence in homemaking to their activities in reform work. Confident in the rightness of their campaigns to protect their homes, women confused their moral authority as homemakers with authority derived from scientific knowledge. Caroline Hunt, in a presentation to the 1907 Lake Placid Conference, discussed the problems home economists found with "women's public work for the home." First she lauded women's involvement in campaigns
to improve city life and reform abuses stemming from the excesses of industrial development, but then went on to caution women about the danger of using private domestic standards in public work, in effect, of following Frances Willard's WCTU slogan of "the home going forth into the world." 

[a] woman says in public and in good faith that tuberculosis may be spread by allowing green vegetables to be exposed to the dust of the street in front of grocery stores, and the bacteriologist who hears her smiles and says, "Perhaps she can prove it; I can't." She uses for argumentative purposes in public an article illustrated by a picture representing a shelf containing ostentatiously labeled bottles supposed to hold the poisons which constitute the dangers in adulterated foods, and there beside wood alcohol is glucose, and the chemist smiles... 

Home economists identified not with the earnest club women who sought to protect the home, but with the scientists who while equally concerned with alleviating the ills of society, disdained the inexpert and 'sentimental' crusader. Hunt concluded that "family tradition and personal finicality can never be the basis of standards for public work." Moreover, tradition and personal taste were not adequate foundations for women's work in the home.

The overarching problem facing middle class homes was the persistence of outmoded ideals of homemaking which kept the home out of the mainstream of society. Rather than viewing the home as the polar opposite of "the world," home economists saw it as an integral part of society, as a microcosm of the whole. For the sake of social harmony and the preservation of the family, home economists worked for the adoption of one standard
in both the home and society. In contrast however with women moral reformers who were also working for a single standard of conduct, home economists promoted the flow of influence not from the home to society—as in the WCTU slogan "Woman will bless and brighten every place she enters, and will enter every place"—but from society to the home. Further, home economists worked not to protect women's separate sphere, but to erase the boundaries which separated women's domain from the world of men.

Home economists went to some lengths to disassociate themselves from women who still celebrated the notion of separate spheres or who worked from that perspective, so concerned were they to discredit such a point of view. When Ellen Richards was invited as one of the most eminent women scientists of her day to participate in the women's exhibition at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 by its Board of Lady Managers, she declined, explaining

> From the start I have declined every appointment on the women's branch...I do not wish to be identified with a body, the very existence of which seems to be out of keeping with the spirit of the times. Twenty years ago I was glad to work on women's boards for the education of women. The time is now some years past when it seemed to me wise to work that way. Women have now more rights and duties than they are fitted to perform. They need to measure themselves with men on the same terms and in the same work in order to learn their own needs...[separatism] seemed always a mistake to me and one which I prefer not to be connected with in any way...24

The growing professionalism of the movement at the end of the
century, and the increased emphasis on expertness based on
scientific training, led home economists to downplay the
overwhelming predominance of women in their movement and to
exult over every sign of approval which their work received
from men in academic and scientific circles.\textsuperscript{25} In part, home
economists' unusual lack of identification with other women can
be traced to their professional need for acceptance by their
male colleagues in a time when that acceptance was both
critical for the success of home economics programs in colleges
and was often only begrudgingly extended.\textsuperscript{26} It was also a
matter of home economics philosophy.

Home economists believed that the home must be re-
integrated into society; that is, man's world. They sought to
have women adopt masculine values and behaviors. Identifying
progress with science and industry, home economists sought to
bring the benefits of both to the home. They believed that it
ill served society and the family to maintain the ideological
barrier which made the home a haven from industrial and
commercial values. Ellen Richards noted,

\begin{quote}
The home is still an individualistic
industry, protected from competition,
hedged about by tradition, and nearly
smothered by dust from the wheel of
progress now far ahead [of us]; it [is] no
longer the center of enjoyment for the
products of wealth because the woman has
lost her grip and the cable travels only
the faster without her.\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

Home economists began their analysis of the management of
the home not with a re-assertion or extension of traditional
domestic values and practises, but with the question, "What is
essential for home life?" Ellen Richards posed these questions
at the 1904 Lake Placid Conference.

Is it essential to the idea of home that the food eaten in it should be prepared in it or may it come in from outside, ready to serve? Is it necessary that we shall dust and clean our own Lares and Penates or that our own minion shall do it under our vigilant eye? Must our clothes be displayed in our own back yards and flavored by our own dinners as they are ironed in our own kitchens?²⁸

How home economists answered these questions revealed their fundamental values, the foundation for their ideology of domesticity. Taking man's world as their model, home economists identified the elements which they believed generated progress in that sphere. Knowledge of science and its applications, the uses of technology and industrial forms of organization such as "scientific management," the understanding of economic and social factors and their effect upon relationships, and the value of efficiency as a measure of competency were all incorporated into the home economics approach to homemaking. Each component of women's domestic role was reorganized to reflect the closer relationship home economists attempted to foster between the home and society.

The preparation of food received a great deal of attention in the discussions of home economists and was a focus of many of their educational programs. Home economists saw themselves as apostles of 'scientific' diet, not as purveyors of recipes. By drawing attention to the relationships between the choice and manner of preparing foods and the expression of different values, home economists aimed to raise the consciousness of women about the relationship between the home and society.
From the kindergarten to the college home economists always strove to present a comprehensive view of this subject in all its complexity. For example, in the Louisa May Alcott Club for primary grade girls, home economists managed to include in a potato cooking class information on the biology of plants, the chemical composition and nutritional content of foods, the various social agencies involved in food production and distribution and even geography and ethics. This format was more or less repeated with growing sophistication of presentation all the way up the educational hierarchy. The study of foods thus became a vehicle for the dissemination of particular values, as well as specific information about nutrition. For example, Isabel Hyams noted at the end of the series of "potato lessons,"

Now they begin to realize how many agencies were needed to give them the boiled potato which they have so often eaten, and may we not hope that here is a beginning of gratitude and consideration for all those thru whose efforts they are blessed with food and clothes and shelter? 

Home economists stressed the interconnectedness of all of society and strove to foster an awareness of the need for cooperation and coordination among all members of the community.

Home economists characteristically invested the choice, style of preparation and manner of serving food with several layers of meaning: scientific, social, ethical and economic. Foremost, food was 'fuel' for the body; a good meal consisted of balanced proportions of the nutritional components required
for good health. Home economists stressed that nutrition was a scientific matter to be determined in the laboratory; all other aspects of food intake were subordinate.\textsuperscript{31}

Home economists tried to discourage the view of food as an expression of cultural or personal taste, what they termed "unreasonable preferences for particular foods"\textsuperscript{32} or "finicalities of appetite due to bad living." Ellen Richards linked personal consumption habits with the expression of wider social values.

Each man likes to be a law unto himself...He thinks that is democracy. But the student finds true democracy is sacrifice for the sake of the many. In food, not what we like but what is good for the many should be the standard...that which is healthful and suitable for the children and for efficient life.\textsuperscript{33}

Home economists advocated the broad acceptance of standard foods, to be determined by scientific research as in the experimental New England Kitchen, so that waste of time and materials would be eliminated. If everyone ate the same foods, these could be mass-produced, and thus according to Caroline Hunt, women could devote themselves to cultural and other pursuits instead of to cooking.\textsuperscript{34}

That women in the late nineteenth century were consumers of goods and not producers was a tendency recognized and encouraged by home economists. In part, they saw this trend as an expression of the spread of business values which they applauded. They constantly urged women to put their homemaking on a 'business' basis.\textsuperscript{35} Ellen Richards identified a whole series of benefits to the home if this could be done.
When housekeeping is reorganized on a business basis the present waste and drudgery and dirt in the house kitchen will be abolished, and along with the soap-making will go the soup- and bread-making, the heavy kettles and greasy dishes...More refined ways of doing the necessary tasks will make the work a pleasure and yet...will keep the family circle intact.36

Adopting business practises in the home had multiple meanings. It implied that 'efficiency' was valued. This could mean, according to home economists, that women needed to clear their tabletops of items which needed dusting, that women should redesign their kitchens to save steps, or that women should use more labor-saving devices to do their housework.37 More specifically, home economists associated the adoption of business values with a greater awareness and appreciation for economic factors in homemaking, chiefly in the areas of consumption of goods and consumption of services.

Where and how goods were purchased were significant issues. Home economists believed that as consumers, women had enormous influence. By patronizing some stores or by placing their faith in certain brand-name products, women might encourage laudable business practises while discouraging others. Thus in order to use their consuming power most effectively, women had a duty to be aware of the contents of the products they purchased and the conditions under which they were made and sold.38 Women, then, needed to school themselves in economics and chemistry in preparation for this aspect of homemaking. Ellen Richards declared,

Housekeeping no longer means washing dishes, scrubbing floors, making soap and candles; it means spending a given sum of
money for a great variety of ready prepared articles and so using the commodities as to produce the greatest satisfaction and the best possible mental, moral and physical results.  

Moreover, by embracing their role as consumers, by accepting the technological changes which were reshaping society, and by rightly understanding the relationship of the home and society, women would ease their work loads and become better homemakers. Home economists taught women to place a different value on their time and energy.

The woman who today makes her own soap instead of taking advantage of machinery for its production enslaves herself to ignorance by limiting her time for study. The woman who shall insist upon carrying the homemaking methods of today into the tomorrow will fail to lay hold of the possible quota of freedom which the future has in store for her.

Home economists saw no point in women doing their own laundry and ironing when commercial laundries could to the work faster, cheaper and even better. Food processors, cleaners and garment factories all possessed specialized equipment, trained staff and modern methods of work to accomplish the same tasks an unskilled woman at home with outmoded equipment wore herself out doing. Ellen Richards observed,

The traditions of the past bind as with bands of steel and most of us have felt that shame, or at least a disinclination to have our aunts know that we had a man from the Buildings care company wash our windows, or that we sent our husband's vests to the tailor to have the pockets mended. It is not because we do not know how to do things; oh, no! It is because we hold other affairs of more value, and yet, if the whole truth were told, these others do, in the main, do better work.
Home economists urged women to value expertise—to make themselves experts through study of home economics—not so they could do their housework themselves, but so they could effectively use the services of others. If housewives thoroughly understood each process of each homemaking task, they would know the correct value of purchased goods and services. They could then order their priorities according to their incomes and achieve the best possible results. If all women agreed on the worth of certain services, these services could be more easily standardized and industrialized. Women needed to subordinate their own idiosyncratic tastes to common standards determined by scientific judgement and economic factors. In short, if all women adopted the home economics approach to homemaking a kind of domestic democracy would result.\textsuperscript{42} By giving up some of their housekeeping, women would thus become better homemakers. As Ellen Richards asked, "...which tends most to a high state of civilization [doing one's own housework or giving it up to purchased services], are we holding on to something which is not worthwhile?"\textsuperscript{43} Caroline Hunt added,

Nothing can be higher than homemaking, but housekeeping is not a synonymous term...The final test of the teaching of home economics is freedom. If we have unnecessarily complicated a single life by perpetuating useless conventions or by carrying the values of one age over into the next, just so far we failed. If we have simplified one life and released in it energy for its own expressions, just so far have we succeeded.\textsuperscript{44}

Home economists stressed again and again that "right living" was first a matter of correct ideals and then an application of
appropriate techniques.

Home economics as a system of ethics was most fully developed in their approach to the issue of domestic service in the home. Here the work of both generations of home economists merged. Building on the early programs which were aimed at working class and immigrant girls, home economists by the end of the century were running several schools to train domestic servants. They believed training and certification would help professionalize this work, raising its wages and thus attracting a "better class of girl" to this "industry." Further, home economists tried to address the problems of service which led girls to shun this work in favor of factory employment. In a discussion of the issue before the 1907 Lake Placid Conference, Mrs C. S. Buell, president of the Wisconsin State Federation of Clubs, suggested,

Let us learn again from our rival, the factory...Should not an effort be made to remedy the isolation of the household employee by allowing such to live with their own families and among their own friends as factory employees do now?...Do you observe how the work of every department [in a factory] is simplified by proper equipment? by the best possible tools? how every utensil is the most convenient? the most economical of time and effort?

Home economists promoted the regularization of hours for service and the standardization of housework--much like the rationalization of work in a factory--so that domestic service could become an industry like any other. Mrs. Buell concluded that, "women must recognize household management as an industry, eliminating the personal point of view." Ellen
Richards added,

There is still too much of the element of slavery in the work of the house, a disregard for the mechanical efficiency of the human machine. I do not in the least blame young women for going into the factories, where their work is measured by law and not caprice.48

To be good employers of servants, then, middle class housewives also needed training in housework so that they could reorganize their homes for the sake of efficiency as well as they would understand the work processes they were asking their servants to perform. Women needed to be more aware of the economics of their expectations, home economists asserted. The manner of serving meals offered one illustration of this principle.

...is the housekeeper who employs one maid aware that to increase the number of 'courses' at dinner is to decrease the working power that the maid can apply to other branches of housework? Does the employer measure the economic significance of a 'course' of finger bowls for dinner? Can she give its equivalent in time and strength?49

In the final analysis, how women managed their servants and their homes was a statement of their social values. Home economists held out two propositions for women. One, women could cling to old ideas and run their homes "without system" or labor-saving devices and services, and so overwork themselves and their servants. The result, according to home economists, would be "houseworn" women and a parade of unsatisfactory and unhappy servants through the door. Family life would suffer both from the disarray caused by lack of

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organization and the insecurity of the help, and from the failure of the mother to surmount her housekeeping and achieve a "higher life."  

The second choice for women involved the adoption of the home economics approach to homemaking. Using this approach women would first determine both their means and their needs and eliminate the inessential by ordering their priorities. Once 'correct' values were determined, women could organize their work by discovering the "one best way" of accomplishing each task, either by using the most modern equipment available or by purchasing the necessary goods and services. If women who followed these methods employed a servant to assist them, the servant would become part of the system, with clearly defined duties and hours. Thus, such an employee would find self-respect in her work and, through contact with her enlightened employer, would imbibe higher standards. Not only would the home life of the mistress then be on a higher level, but her influence would extend to the future homes of her domestics. Moreover, children raised in such homes would also absorb salutary values which would help prepare them for life.

Home economists adopted a more utilitarian view of the home than did earlier domestic thinkers. They still saw it as the most crucial institution in society, but they considered it more as a means to a larger end. If the home was to be the place where children were prepared for their part in the activity of the world, then the home must become a vital part of the world, at one with the best society had to offer. In formulating their domestic ideology home economists sought to
turn the doctrine of separate spheres on its head. They advocated that the flow of influence be from the progressive 'world' to the home, thereby doing away with the boundary which separated the spheres. Home economists adopted the words of their fellow reformer Jane Addams and made them the watchwords of their movement and the foundation of their domestic ideology.

To fail to apprehend the tendency of one's age, and to fail to adapt the conditions of an industry to it, is to leave that industry ill adjusted and belated on the economic side, and out of line ethically. Let us put ourselves in the right attitude, willing not only to accept but to aid that which is truly progressive, realizing that we personally are either promoting or retarding every onward effort in the sphere over which we naturally preside.
NOTES

1 Proceedings of Tenth L.P.C., p. 21.

2 Ibid., p. 24.

3 Ibid.


5 An opposing point of view was proffered by eugenists who wanted to improve the human race through "better breeding" rather than "right living." See Mark Hughlin Haller, Eugenics: Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought (New York: Rutgers University Press, 1963).


7 For home economists attacks on club women see Proceedings of Fourth L.P.C. (1902) pp. 51-53. "Mrs. Dewey asked if the trouble with club women was not simply the spirit of the day? People want to push a button and have all the hard work done for them...Others thought the subject of home economics was above the level of most club women. They can write very good papers on art and the Renaissance, but when it comes to a paper on the standard of living it is above their intellectual grasp..." College women showed more promise: "Herein lies our hope that in the near future the younger college-trained element will be induced or forced to realize the value of home economics."

8 Ibid., pp. 51-52.

9 Ibid., p. 86.


11 Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual."


14 Ellen Richards, "Domestic Industries, In or Out?" Proceedings of Sixth L.P.C. (1904) p. 29. The Aladdin oven was an invention by Edward Atkinson, "a device that made possible the cooking of cheap, unpopular cuts of meats without destroying their taste or food values." Robert Clarke, Ellen Swallow p. 119.

15 Proceedings of Sixth L.P.C. (1904) p. 29.

16 Ibid., pp. 29-30.

17 Ellen Richards, Cost of Living, pp. 56, 112.

18 Quoted in Sheila Rothman, Woman's Proper Place, p. 67.


20 Ellen Richards advised women to stay home and master their housekeeping before becoming involved in public reform campaigns "Meanwhile let her serve in the home an apprenticeship which will make the future study easier and which will more sensibly advance the welfare of the community than any outside work can do." Cost of Living, p. 114.


22 Quoted in Sheila Rothman, Woman's Proper Place, p. 67.

23 This occasionally took the form of home economists repudiating the work of their colleagues. See Isabel Bevier's views on the work of other land-grant college home economics departments, which she deemed to be of "cooking school quality." Lita Bane, The Story of Isabel Bevier, p. 39.


25 For example, when home economists experienced difficulties getting their courses accepted by the ACA as of college grade they cited the support of male professors for their work to counteract the ACA allegations. See Proceedings of Eighth L.P.C. (1906) pp. 41-42 and Proceedings of Ninth L.P.C. (1907) pp. 7-8. See also Proceedings of Fifth L.P.C. (1903) p. 58 and Proceedings of Sixth L.P.C. (1904) for the encouragement home economists derived from male support.
See for example the resistance to home economics at Cornell University, Flora Rose, A Growing College: Home Economics at Cornell University, part I (Cornell: New York State College of Human Ecology Publication, 1969) pp. 16, 36-39. Home economics was thought to be "unworthy of college credit" by professors in other departments. Martha Van Rensselaer and Flora Rose, who were joint heads of the department, were given small, unequipped quarters and when finally given the academic rank of "lecturers" after some struggle, were advised by a supporter not to presume to attend faculty meetings as was their right. Home economics continued to be underfunded "for years." Marion Talbot revealed her recognition of the weakness of home economics as a new academic discipline when she recalled her introduction to the University of Chicago in 1892, "Then came one of the most gratifying experiences of my life, a letter of welcome from Prof. A.W. Small, head of the department [of Social Science]...written...without a trace of condescension or irritation because this strange young woman, with her at that time, nonacademic subject, had been administered into his Department." More Than Lore, p. 147.


"Domestic Industries, In or Out?" Proceedings of Sixth L.P.C. p. 27.


Home economists strove to link their subject to all areas of study in school curricula. They saw potential for "correlation" as the greatest strength of their program, making the home central to girls' education but vitally connected to all aspects of society. For representative discussions of correlation see report on "Status of household arts in American public high schools," Proceedings of Seventh L.P.C. (1905) pp. 8-10; discussion of report from meeting with the Eastern Manual Training Association, Ibid., p. 14: "...the household arts are effective tools in training in mental efficency, and...they make for true economy in the school curriculum, since they are the focal point for the sciences and fine arts, making the latter real to the girl and therefore a part of her permanent mental equipment."

Caroline Hunt asserted for example, "Cooking...meets a need that is the same in all. Scientists tell us that all healthy people with the same amount of exercize need the same quantity of food of the same composition." Proceedings of Fourth L.P.C. (1902) p. 58. Much time was spent in the conferences discussing findings in food research, particularly at Yale University. See for example presentations by Otto Folin, "Protein Metabolism in its Relation to Dietary Standards," pp. 101-110; "Letter from Mr. Horace Fletcher," pp. 110-113 on his food experiments; discussion on Dr. J.H.
Kellog's work at the Battle Creek Sanatorium, pp. 113-114; and "Summary of Recent Investigations of Prof. Chittenden and Mr. Fletcher at Yale University: Attitude of the Scientific Man Toward Food Habits," pp. 115-116, in Proceedings of Seventh L.P.C. (1905).


33 Ibid., p. 35.

34 Proceedings of Third L.P.C. (1901) p. 89.


36 Ellen Richards, Cost of Living, p. 73.


38 Women as consumers was the topic of many discussions at the conferences. See for example, Proceedings of Third L.P.C. (1902) p. 120 and Proceedings of Eighth L.P.C. (1906) p. 39.

39 Ellen Richards, Cost of Living, p. 103.


41 Proceedings of Sixth L.P.C. (1904) p. 28.


43 Proceedings of Sixth L.P.C. (1904) p. 29.


45 See Caroline Hunt's description of the Household Aid

46 Proceedings of Ninth L.P.C. (1907) p. 94

47 Ibid., p. 97.

48 Ellen Richards, Cost of Living, p 116.


50 Alice Chown, "Non-Resident Household Labor, A Study in Economic and Ethical Values," Proceedings of Sixth L.P.C. (1904) pp. 32-33. She notes, "All this [overworking of servants] means that either the housewife does practically most of her own cleaning or that the rooms are not kept in satisfactory condition. All this means a loosening of the tie which binds the family to the home..."


CONCLUSION

At the heart of the doctrine of separate spheres was the notion that women were different from men. In a word, they were special. Over the course of the nineteenth century, supported by the widespread acceptance of the cluster of ideas which made up this ideology of domesticity, women gained autonomy and authority within their own sphere, a phenomenon Daniel Scott Smith has called domestic feminism.\(^1\) Moreover, as the century progressed, women expanded and extended their sphere to include a wide variety of activities ranging from schoolteaching to civic housekeeping. Women believed that they had a special contribution to make to their society because of their domestic perspective, a position which eventually led many women to demand the vote in the name of the home.\(^2\) While the doctrine of separate spheres ultimately restricted women's aspirations and could be interpreted in ways which prevented women from becoming full members of their society, in other ways it supported an improved position in the family for women, provided a rationale for women's activism and bolstered women's sense of self-esteem. Most critically, this doctrine was inclusive of all women; it was the foundation for the expression of nineteenth century sisterhood.

When home economists attacked traditional homemaking practises and ideals, they challenged the precepts of the
doctrine of separate spheres. One home economist, Alberta Thomas, made an oblique reference to women's resistance to this challenge posed by the emergence of a new ideology. She noted,

"Thru all this work will be the problem of overcoming prejudices regarding its supposed uselessness and absurdity; the antagonism of the housekeeper toward the teacher of such arts as the usurper of her rights...it will be no easy task or one which can be accomplished in one year or 10, but it must all aid toward the millennium which we hope will some day be reached."

Women were correct in their perception of the role of the home economics teacher in the school life of their daughters. The specific intention of such a teacher was to intervene in the private life of the family and to break up the traditional relationship between the mother and daughter. Home economists were anxious to prevent mothers from training their daughters in "rule-of-thumb" methods of homemaking. They used the schools from the kindergarten to college graduate programs to drive a wedge between the generations. They sought to instil in daughters new attitudes and methods, and to discredit the ways of mothers.

If one of the attributes of nineteenth century women's relationships with each other was an absence of criticism, as Carroll Smith-Rosenberg has asserted, then home economists were 'new women' indeed in this respect. Their discussions and writings are liberally sprinkled with perjorative comments about women. Isabel Bevier, professor and head of the home economics department at the University of Illinois, was one of the most outspoken exemplars of this tendency. She quarrelled
with the women trustees of the University and with the women in
the Farmer's Institute, almost losing her job over one
incident. These altercations were directly linked to her need
to establish her identity as a home economist, scientist and
expert. In her memoir of her struggles, she revealingly
commented, "Those women and I have never spoken the same
language."6

The insistence by home economists on the need for expert
knowledge for adequate homemaking divided them from other
women. As home economics became a profession and was embedded
in college programs in an age when only a tiny minority of
women attended college, home economists fostered the creation
of a gulf between themselves and untrained women. Insecure in
their positions in the universities, and outside the regular,
male-dominated scientific community, home economists did not
turn to other women for support.7 Rather they created
hierarchies of domestic expertise and claimed for themselves
the highest positions. It is revealing of home economists'
ambivalent attitude toward housewives that, in a proposed
outline of home economics courses constructed in an elaborate
hierarchy, the author of the plan, Henrietta Goodrich of the
Boston School of Housekeeping, was uncertain of the proper
place to include ordinary homemakers.8

The implications for the twentieth century women of the
emergence of a movement which celebrated scientific and
academic training and which purposely set about to undermine
the structures of women's separate sphere are many.
Fundamentally, home economics challenged the notion that women
had any inherent authority in their own sphere. When home economists broke through the boundaries between men's world and women's sphere, they located all the progressive elements to be emulated by women in men's world. By adopting business methods, by using the factory as a model for the home, by asserting the authority of the scientific laboratory, home economists rejected women's source of authority: their piety and purity. In the secular world of the home economists, such attributes were considered obsolete. As Ellen Richards characteristically remarked,

If the housewife cannot and will not apply herself to the problem [of reorganizing the home], let her not stand longer in the way of progress as she is surely doing today.

The home economics ideology of domesticity left an ambiguous legacy. On one hand the home economist continued to invest the home with important social functions, but, on the other, she undermined women's authority and the sense of esteem gained from the homemaker's role. As a result, women gradually lost their special social role and became instead 'mere housewives.'
NOTES

1Daniel Scott Smith "Family Limitation, Sexual Control, and Domestic Feminism in Victorian America," in A History of Her Own, Cott and Pleck eds., pp. 236-239.


5Carroll Smith-Rosenberg "Female World of Love and Ritual" in A History of Her Own, Cott and Pleck eds. p. 321-323.

6Quoted in Lita Bane, The Story of Isabel Bevier, pp. 46, 52-54, 58-59.

7Margaret Rossiter documents the marginal position of all women, including home economists, in the scientific community of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Women Scientists in America.


9Ellen Richards, Cost of Living, p. 118.
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