

If Not for Her Sex:
The Mysterious Education of American Women, 1750-1850

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Abstract

The topic of educating middle and lower class women, in 1750-1850, has been sparsely annotated in historical research. Historical research hinted that these women were educated far beyond the “female arts,” but little else was written to indicate how women, without substantial means, were able to acquire higher education. Interwoven through historical research on higher education, however, were nuanced mentions that women were educated for professions and acquired high-level literacy.

I embarked on a study to find out how middle and lower class women in the United States, during the 1750s to 1850s, were able to access post-secondary education; what was their purpose in seeking a higher education, and a curriculum, that would inform their lives. Due to the dearth of research on women’s education during this period, I decided to focus my study on the first women’s post-secondary school: the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Other resources unearthed curriculums of both the Moravian Seminary for Young Women and Mount Holyoke. I looked into their archives to understand who their marketed audience was and what kinds of learning materials were used to teach female students. From the curriculum, I hoped to find women’s motivations for seeking post-secondary education and what women expected from gaining this education.

In the 1700s women that were Quakers or Moravians experienced more acceptance and open access to higher education compared to that of their non-secular counterparts. Most [Puritan] women could read, but not write, as it was not deemed necessary for their education. The women that did pursue post-secondary education discontinued this pursuit once married. The general idea about educating lower and

middle class women was that it allowed them the ability to educate their children. In the 1800s, most women who sought education, regardless of class, became educated to be useful to their families and communities. Usefulness was of the utmost importance for all genders, post-revolution, to aid in building the new nation. Usefulness was found inside and outside the home, in the public and private spheres.

The conclusions drawn from my research reassert the lack of primary resource documentation of women's education, particularly in the 1700s and early 1800s. We know that women received post-secondary education. Throughout the period of 1750-1850, the belief grew that women should have an equal education to men. Religious and social dictates encouraged education for women, despite local protest. Women took advantage of the Republican Motherhood patriotism to advance their education. This education was used to teach their own children; in a vocational life; or as an asset for an advantageous marriage.

The historical research of women pursuing higher education in early America needs further attention. Discovering how higher education informed the lives of all sexes in the 1700s and 1800s can give us a fuller picture of their contributions to our present. It could aid historians in understanding the lives of a sex that have been obscured by the category of Private Sphere for too long.

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I. Introduction: If Not for Her Sex

Lucinda Foote was my first introduction into the mysterious world of colonial education for middle class women. It was not so much that she was educated, but more so why she was educated that became an unanswerable question. Lucinda Foote, from Cheshire, Connecticut, was the daughter of a pastor. She traveled to Yale, at the age of twelve, and sat for the entrance examination in 1783 with the president, Ezra Stiles. Clark (1918), in his annotations of the Yale president's diary, noted that President Stiles found Ms. Foote to be well-educated enough to be admitted to the freshman class and gave her a certificate "in Latin, of course" stating her right for admittance, yet added the Latin clause noting her sex, which negated the entire document (p. 417). In his account of the event, Clark assumed Yale had tutors for women during that time - in 1783 - but noted that the "gentler student" would have to wait for centuries for admittance. He was correct; it was not until 1969, that Yale admitted its first female student.

Further documentation on Foote's Yale entrance examination was rather sparse, but there was an article written five years after women were admitted to Yale (in 1969) that reflected on Lucinda Foote's admittance denial due to her sex (Arnstein, 1974). This notation, in the first paragraph of Arnstein's article, is the only reference to Lucinda Foote throughout the rest of the article. It noted that the one serious drawback of admitting Ms. Foote "as indicated when Ezra Stiles wrote, 'I testify that if it were not for her sex she would be considered fit to be admitted as a student of Yale'" (Arnstein, 1974, p. 1). Thelin writes in his history of higher education (2011) when discussing the case of twelve-year-old Lucinda Foote:

What was the reason for this partial acknowledgement of talent without conceding

educational opportunity? What would Lucinda Foote gain or do with the consolation prize that gave testimony to her academic skill? Equally mysterious are the alternative modes of education that enable at least a significant minority of women to acquire a high level of literacy and professional skills, no thanks to the formal schools or colleges. (p 30)

My curiosity sparked, and along with it so many questions, I wondered: how did women receive education in a time when women were not permitted to acquire formal institutional educations beyond dame schools or, if money permitted, governesses? This then lead to a larger question: why would women in the 1750-1850s want to receive formal education, that is, what was the purpose?

Many histories of United States higher education rarely include underrepresented groups such as women, persons of color, different-abled persons, queer persons, those of lower socioeconomic status, or any intersections thereof, in the main body of the text. Instead, these groups are relegated to a paragraph, section, chapter, or left out and erased in historical accounts entirely. Transgender women and lesbians are two groups that have been erased from historical accounts on higher education. Although it was very plausible that transgender women and lesbians were students at seminaries such as The Moravian School for Young Ladies, and other such academies and seminaries, there was no historically documented research about these specific women from underrepresented groups. Due to this additional gap, although it is certain the women were there, I could not speak to the experience of these women and the intersectionality of their experiences. Instead, this thesis relied on the conventional definition of women to be that of a biologically femaleⁱ, heterosexual woman.

In this thesis, I examined the marginalization of women, from lower socioeconomic statuses, in both the access to higher education from 1750-1850, as well as the purpose and outcome of those seeking education during a time when higher education institutes held statutes declaring women not be allowed. There are, however, glimpses of these pioneering women throughout history. This significance was lost when little was about women's access to higher education in the United States. What was found, in small quantities, were diaries, memoirs, and letters describing how and why women sought higher education. Women sought an education that was considered not fit for them; not financially or systemically supported due to their sex and socioeconomic class; and further, this desire to expand their knowledge was seen in some instances as a threat to either their health or their marital appeal.

Lack of Research in the Education of U.S. Women of Lower Socioeconomic Status

The dearth of research available on the histories of women in education, in general, is a gaping hole that has yet to be filled. At this point, in 2017, the research was ongoing, but the publications used were primarily found during times of feminist resurgence. The 1970s, 1990s, and early 2000s are speckled with published research on women in higher education. The answer to the question of why women in 1750-1850 would seek higher education and what the expected and realistic outcome of this education would be had yet to be answered fully.

Current Research on Women in Early United States History and Higher Education

Many of the current historical research published were still relying heavily on work done in the 1970s. In particular, Louis Schultz Boas' book, *Women's Education Begins: The Rise of Women's Colleges*, re-published in 1971, was extensively cited,

regardless that it was originally published in 1935. Another important piece of historical research on women's education in the United States was Barbara Solomon's book, *In the Company of Educated Women*, published in 1985. Both publications were the bedrock of many scholarly publications on the history of women's education in the United States. This research became historical data as it was outdated, yet it continued being referenced. If historians still referenced research conducted more than forty years ago, this raised the question whether research of women in higher education was remaining stagnant. To not look beyond, or even expand on, Boas' view on curriculum or men's colleges and women's seminaries being created in parallel assumed that there was no further existing primary source information to either solidify or negate some parts of her research.

Earliest School for Women in the United States: The Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies

There was historical evidence that women of lower socioeconomic classes were educated beyond the basic law-required education, during the period of 1750-1850, but "how" was the elusive question. Further, why women sought higher education when their "lot" in life was to marry, bear children, and raise the family. An education, on a superficial level at least, was not a necessity for these singular eighteenth and nineteenth century female roles.

To answer these questions, I focused on an institutional history of the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies, founded in 1742 in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. This school provided extensive historical information, but it was less studied than its latter counterpart, Mount Holyoke. The Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies was founded within a religious community that held a liberal view on the equal education of the sexes

and of race. This school was not part of the Seven Sisters schools due to merging with the Moravian brother school, opened later, and becoming a coeducational institute under the current name of the Moravian College. Within the larger scope of the school, I studied the curriculum. I then compared the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies curriculum to that of four prominent female seminaries founded during the 1750-1850s. My purpose of comparison was to understand the reason for formalized female education and if it was catered to a certain class of women, thus informing the curriculum. I also reviewed the social and cultural events occurring during the period of 1750-1850 to determine the effect on the academic structure of the Moravian School for Young Ladies. By using the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies as my anchor for this thesis, the purpose of seeking higher education and the effects this had on women was more cohesive due to the experience and student type. Finally, the Moravians are credited in multiple texts on education history for including women in education earlier than other schools, “The movement toward the higher education of women drew on a tradition of educational emancipation which went back at least to the effective and respectable schools of the Moravians at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in 1749” (Rudolph, 1990, p.310).

I focused on four select academies and seminaries founded during the one-hundred-year period in which I focused: Young Ladies Academy (1787); Middlebury Female Seminary (1814); Troy Seminary (1821); and Mount Holyoke Seminary (1837). Each educational institution contributed to the progression of women’s education from the Revolutionary period to the pre-Civil War period. The Young Ladies Academy was thought to be the earliest institute of higher education for women, which I addressed by comparing its inception; student population; and curriculum to that of the Moravian

Seminary for Young Ladies. Middlebury Female Seminary was started by Emma Willard during the growing national encouragement for women's higher education in seminaries and academies. Middlebury had an emphasis on a more robust and diverse curriculum from those of other seminaries during the early 1800s. The work of an advanced curriculum, started at Middlebury, moved to Troy, New York with Willard when she and her family moved. The new installment of an advanced education for women was called the Troy Female Seminary. Finally, Mount Holyoke Seminary, started by Mary Lyons, specifically for middling classes, was one of the still existing, prominent, schools started by a woman who had an advanced education and a middle-class background. This school had been both extensively studied and had a thorough archive, which was an historian's Eldorado when trying to write about an area in history that was at its inception. Both Troy Female Seminary and Mount Holyoke Seminary are important stepping-stones for women's colleges that come to the fore later in education history (Nash, 2005).

Brief History of the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies

The history of the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies was phenomenal. The Moravian Seminary was founded in 1741 by Benigna von Zinzendorf, daughter of Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, the founder of the "Moravian movement" during one of the familial trips to the American East coast. Why this school was established, when there were schools for both girls and boys in the community was unclear. Per the Bethlehem Digital History Project (2000-2009):

In 1742, Moravian Church patron Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf's sixteen year old daughter Benigna established arguably the first school for girls in

the American Colonies. Permanently settled in Bethlehem since 1749, the Bethlehem Boarding School for Girls – also known as the Bethlehem Boarding School for Young Ladies, Young Ladies Seminary, Moravian Female Seminary and, Moravian Seminary and College for Women.

This project provided a substantial quantity of primary sources for this thesis, but the prestige of this seminary carried over into other historical research and primary documents as well. As the school, now called the Moravian College, still existed, it was important to relay their interpretation of historical events as well,

Benigna von Zinzendorf's school was the first girls' boarding school in America. It gained such a distinguished reputation that George Washington, during his second term as president of the United States, personally petitioned the headmaster for the admission of two of his great-nieces. The Bethlehem Female Seminary, as the school became known, was chartered to grant baccalaureate degrees in 1863, and in 1913 became Moravian Seminary and College for Women. (Moravian College, n.d.)

The points the college focused on - the prestige of George Washington wanting to have a relative educated at the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies - was a wonderful public relations tool, establishing the distinguished history of the school. Not noting that the first girls' boarding school was the first school for girls in the United States seemed a glaring lack of forethought as to the impact the school's history had on fifty-one percent of our current population. The history noted that a boys' school was also established and that the schools merged in 1759. This is another huge historic moment as it points to one of the first coeducational schools. Of course, it was unlikely that the sexes were taught

together; but that a school had one campus, containing both sexes was an historically important detail the college website glossed over for unknown reasons. They did use von Zinzendorf in other parts of the website to display their longstanding history of creating educational opportunities.

The interesting point of contrasting the Bethlehem Digital History Project - and other historical documents that noted the significance of the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies - and the Moravian College's history on their website was to demonstrate what historians found interesting versus what "sold" to prospective students and their parents. That the Moravian School was a forerunner in higher education for women in the early United States was a very important fact, yet unlike schools like Mount Holyoke that proudly wore the badge of being a pioneer in women's educational pedagogy, the Moravian College states very little about their predecessors' contributions to the transformation of higher education for women.

Social Class

Before delving into the ways and reasons women sought higher education, the social classes to which these women belonged must be discussed as it played a contributing role to a myriad of reasons for seeking higher education. First, the definition of "poor" during this period varied slightly from the current definition. Nidiffer (1999) began her article discussing the different types of populations that fit into the category of poor. For purposes of this paper, the population of study defined as poor or lower socioeconomic class will be defined by Nidiffer's words as "working- and under-classes". This subset of the poor class was distinguished from one another as "the working class [...] was often the presence or potential of income or the ownership of

some capital, most often farm land. Families without able-bodied male or living on some form of religious or community charity typically comprised the poor [the underclass]” (1999). Nidiffer went on to note that this group made up the poorest of those in colleges and had less access to higher education (1999). Poor women had an even lesser chance of access to education as families needed them as laborers to bring in a wage, or to marry to bring more help, in the form of bodies or monetary assistance, to their farms. We saw that this need changed during the one hundred year period under discussion, thanks in large part to the Industrial Revolution.

The emerging, shifting, and growing middle class was another social group that arguably contributed the greatest to the advocacy and establishment of higher education institutes for women from 1750-1850. The key to middle class morality was encouraging and ensuring the best of a person of either sex. As we saw later in this paper, social class contributed to these views on educating women and the social impact therein.

The level of education prior to college determined the access someone of a poor class would have to higher education, and more so what type of higher education. Compulsory education laws came into effect in the mid-1600s (Leonard, 1956). Education laws that pertained specifically to all poor children in the American colonies were enacted from 1683-1732 and deemed orphans and poor children must be educated to improve their condition. The definition of improved conditions for the children of the poor ranged from “the poor may work to live and the rich, if they become poor, may not want” in 1683 to “...good learning is not only a very great accomplishment but the properest means to attain knowledge, improve the mind, morality

and good manners and to make men better, wiser and more useful to their country as well as themselves.” (Leonard, 1956, p. 7). Although these laws enacted by local government in territories, cities, and towns, the type of education provided for the poor was not prescribed by these legislations, thus student preparedness ranged greatly. This variation in education caused additional problems of access to higher education for both sexes.

Focusing on Curriculum

Early curriculum in the late 1700s for the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies included books varying from religious texts - in the native language of Moravians (German) - such as Barby's 1778 *Der hauptinhalt der lehre Jesu Christi zum gebrauch bey dem unterricht der jugend in den evangelischen Brudergemeinen* (*The main content of the teachings of Jesus Christ for the use of the teaching of youth in the evangelical brother congregations* [Google Translate, accessed 5 March 2017]), to the equally useful texts on world geography and household bookkeeping. Generally, in the 1700s, women and men's curriculum varied, but by the nineteenth century, there was a move to make the education between the sexes equal. The Moravians and Quakers had been teaching their students, regardless of sex, with more equality than the public, as noted by historian Frederick Rudolph. Due to the approach of educational equality, the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies was an ideal school used to study the effects of education and curriculum on eighteenth and nineteenth century American women.

Period-specific Definitions

Note that different time periods address higher education in differing ways. Historian, Nash (2005), regarding educational terms during this period, noted:

The lack of clarity in the names of institutions has created confusion in work on

the history of higher education in the United States. When historians began looking at higher education for women, they began with institutions that *called* themselves colleges. This almost necessarily executed antebellum institutions, and resulted in a focus on elite private women's colleges or the land grant colleges (p. 7).

Like the first historians that studied women's education through the institutional history lens, I too used this tactic, but with an eye on the curriculum in order to glean what the women, or their families, hoped to gain from the student's time in higher education. Further, I looked at seminaries and academies only, regardless of curriculum, as seminaries and academies were marketed towards young women serious about an education beyond the feminine arts. The feminine arts, such as social decorum and etiquette, drawing, painting, embroidery, and other domestic arts was an increasingly popular subject matter during the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Nash (2005) further postulated:

The first historical work on higher education for women posited a trajectory from nonexistent formal education for colonial women, most of whom remained illiterate, to fledgling academies in the early national era that taught needlework and a smattering of geography, arithmetic, and English grammar, to antebellum seminaries, a few--and only the best--of which struggled to offer a curriculum similar to men's colleges... (p. 7).

I tried to remain faithful to the period in my writing and only varied verbiage dependent on the text on which I was conferring. I used definitions primarily found on the National Women's History Museum website (www.nwhm.org).

For purposes of this paper, the following terms are used in conjunction with the definitions set out below.

Periods (time periods from ASHE Reader Series: The History of Higher Education, Third Edition, 2007)

- 1750-1789: Colonial Period
- 1790-1860: Antebellum Period

1700s*

- *Bethlehem Boarding School for Girls* – also known as the *Bethlehem Boarding School for Young Ladies*, *Young Ladies Seminary*, *Moravian Female Seminary and*, *Moravian Seminary and College for Women* (*Bethlehem Digital History Project*, <http://bdhp.moravian.edu/education/education.html>).
- *Dame Schools*: Schools where boys and girls were taught the basics such as basic reading and writing, arithmetic, geography, and the bible.
- *Republican motherhood*: Post-Revolutionary War name given to the idea of preparing oneself for all eventualities, self-reliance, and independence. Most women used this opportunity to seek education for this purpose (National Women's History Museum, https://www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/education/1700s_2.htm).
- *Town Schools*: Advanced education after primary, or Dame, schools in the northern colonies and states. Girls were able to attend in the latter part of the 1700s (National Women's History Museum, https://www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/education/1700s_1.htm).
- *Governess*: Governesses were learned women hired by southern plantation

families to teach their daughters, in-house, how to read the bible and basic math (arithmetic) in order to keep the household accounts, nursing for caring for a family, as well as the “female arts” of needlework, music, and dance (National Women’s History Museum, https://www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/education/1700s_1.htm).

*Note: Average age of girls attending boarding schools, or further education, is nine to eleven years old. Further note: Lucinda Foote was twelve when sitting for her entrance exam to Yale in 1783.

1800s

- *Academy*: The name given to most secondary schools for women. This term became popular in the early part of the 1800s (National Women’s History Museum, https://www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/education/1800s_1.htm)
- *Secondary Education*: collegiate education (National Women’s History Museum, https://www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/education/1800s_1.htm)
- *Seminary*: Term used to differentiate secondary women’s schools from the less serious finishing schools. Popularized in 1815 (National Women’s History Museum, https://www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/education/1800s_1.htm)

II. Purpose: The Historical Study of Women in Higher Education

The study of women in, or pursuing, higher education has long gone under researched. Eisenmann (2001) wrote, “The historiography of women’s education is relatively young...[c]ertainly the past 25 years have produced a growing and impressive collection of studies that trace the development of educational options for women, both on the school and the collegiate levels” (“Creating a framework for interpreting”). The study of women’s history in higher education was so new that even the educational options and reasons for women pursuing further education were obscure. There was not one comprehensive research collection to explain the varied nuances of education for women and, more pointedly, reasons women sought education beyond the dame schools or the tutors and governesses they shared with their brothers.

We knew that women were taught to read early so that they may read the bible, and we knew that some women were not taught to write, so that many of them, during the colonial period specifically, would still sign documents with an “x” mark (Lynch, 2011). According to Lynch (2011),

Historians have tended to treat female literacy as a minor postscript to the larger tale of literacy’s spread, but the story for women has important dimensions of its own. Jefferson’s plan for a public school system included girls, but that was not typical of eighteenth-century education; women’s literacy lagged behind men’s. ...while male literacy in New England rose from 60 percent in the late seventeenth century to 90 percent by the early days of the Republic, he estimated female literacy in the same period as rising from 31 percent to 48 percent—roughly half the rate of males. (“Every Man Able to Read”)

Women's literacy was much more severe than that of men in the early United States. Approximately half the women born in or around 1730 were illiterate, but women born eighty years later in 1830 were mainly literate, regardless of social class. Women may have lagged behind men chronologically in obtaining literacy, but their progress came much faster (Lynch, 2011). Literacy or lack thereof, was more in line with one's religious affiliation. The lower end of the literacy scale in the early days of the republic would be more common for Puritans, but not as common for Moravian and Quaker congregants. Yet women, regardless of education acquired, were expected to find social utility in what they were taught. Lynch (2011) noted, "The rise in female literacy highlights changes in social roles."

However, as Lynch further stated, there must have been:

Powerful prejudices worked to inhibit the public exercise of trained intelligence by women. At some point in the modernizing process, nonetheless, female literacy also began to expand. For this to have occurred, society must first have enlarged its assessment of female capability before liberalizing the scope of permissible feminine activity. ("Every Man Able to Read")

The continued battle of researching women in higher education was to find the "what" that occurred to open the conversation and assessment that women had the capacity to learn. Learning was not only permissible, but a basic right of women as it was for a large percentage of the male population.

There seemed to be a gap in historical research on why women sought education, what agency did women have to choose what they learned, and what end would education aid in women's post-academic lives. The lack of women's voice was not

altogether surprising due to literacy, but also due to the loss of any letters or diaries. One in twenty women left a will and it was likely that her writings may have been discarded instead of passed down to family in a time where such letters and diaries were not valued for their rarity (Lynch, 2011). I speculated that, due to the ease of discarding these articles, an educated woman was either not seen as having a prized ability, or was not unusual for her socioeconomic class. Either would contribute to not keeping the rare resources that proved the education and refinement or advancement of the woman.

Why Women Sought Higher Education: 1750-1850

Why women may have pursued further, or higher, education depended on the time period in which they lived as well as the social class to which they belonged. Eisenmann (2001) outlines four frameworks in which women were able to gain access to higher education: institution building, networking, religionⁱⁱ, and/or money. Eisenmann (2001) argued that the first of these, institution building, was the greatest. I argued that for middle and lower classes, networking and religion were the frameworks with which women worked to access higher education, and further social and cultural influences coincided with these frameworks. For example, focusing on the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies, I found the Moravian religion believed in boys and girls having an equal education. How Moravians created social conditions for their members contributed to the next purpose for women to seek higher education: freedom of personal choice.

The Expected or Desired Outcome of Education for Women

From older historical texts, it appeared that of the middle and lower classes, the middle class had a socially-approved reason for higher education: to be an asset in marriage and for child rearing. The lower classes could rarely afford to let a child go to

school. If the education was not a town school, but a seminary or academy, the family could not afford this extravagance. The families could also not afford to have their labor force cut down by even one person. As the Industrial Revolution freed time for some women, this time was used to gain an education in order to learn a profession. Many lower middle class and lower class women sought a profession in order to support themselves and/or their families. This new option for women allowed them autonomy and the right of independence.

Particularly in colonial times, for all social classes, “the colonial view of women was simply that she was intellectually inferior - incapable, merely, by reason of being a woman, of great thoughts. Her faculties were not worth training. Her place was in the home, where man had assigned her a number of useful functions” (Rudolph, 1990, p. 307-308). For all the social dictates placed on women, and the belief that women were not biologically equipped to handle higher education, there were women who wanted more. Writings from Judith Murray and Susan Bull Tracey existed from the late eighteenth century describing what women wanted from an education: “...liberal education would not only enable a women better to perform the duties of wife and mother, but would also empower her to think for herself, the Americans were not ready to advocate specific careers for women” (Solomon, 1985, p. 10). Solomon does go on to say Susan Bull Tracey, born in 1759, was of a different belief. Ms. Tracey, in communion with Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, felt that women could learn certain professions and have careers such as surgeon, lawyer, or physician (1985).

The Revolutionary War changed women from being useful to their family in the

home to being useful to their country inside and outside the home. This instilled the realization that not only were they capable of bridging the public and private spheres; they were also capable of successfully sharing the public sphere with men (Nash, 2005). Education was one way to bridge the spheres, but this resource was still more readily available to middle and upper class women. Poor, or underclass, women still had to contend with finding education where and how they could between working for their families. Not surprisingly, an increasing number of women did. Poor women would attend school for as long as they could afford, then return home to earn more money for another semester and to contribute to the familial need, returning to where they left off in their education three months, six months, or even a year later.

How Higher Education Curriculum Contributed to Educated Women's Lives

The curriculum of many girls' academies and seminaries gave a reader an interesting look into the intended outcome of each institution and their respective student body. For example, what, why, and how did women access a set curriculum or was it more a case of accessing whatever learning was available to them?

According to Greer (2013):

Prior to the Revolution, some young women may have achieved the depth of learning that becomes more evident in the late eighteenth century, but that achievement was typically without obvious order and could sometimes be described as accidental...[a student] acquired 'the rudiments of Latin, Greek, geography, and logic' from 'gentlemen who boarded at my father's.' (p. 28)

The time that women had to learn was short both in the 1700s and 1800s as the familial and social restrictions of what women could do impeded women's ability to pursue a full

course of study. Women were to marry and have children while young. Thus, the time before marriage had to be used as efficiently as possible. During post-Revolution America, women sought more than social polish by schools. Women sought to learn so that they would be an asset to their families.

According to Smith (2007):

Academic excellence prepared a woman to preside over her household as her husband would over his business. Governing the home required mental and emotional capabilities equal to those of men. Education gave her the ability to choose a marriage partner carefully and to raise healthy children, or it could free her from the necessity to marry for survival. In turn, a woman could support herself or her family with a profession or a skill should a spouse or a father die or become incapacitated. Finding the right companion was not a matter of chance; rather, it was important for a woman to use sound judgment and wisely consider the commitment she was making. (pp. 277-278)

The growing social awareness that an education was an asset for women and their families, and that it could affect lives profoundly, aided in creating avenues for women to pursue education. This view was not the social consensus, however; but instead the belief of a more liberal population. Additionally, this population was decidedly middle class. The upper classes most often held that marriage was an alliance of families, and the lower classes did not have the luxury to afford marriage, much less choose a mate in a leisurely manner such as described by Smith.

Different Curriculum for the Different Sexes

Different curriculums for the different sexes was a topic that had conflicting data,

according to many sources, but it seemed that for the most part the curriculum was similar. The opportunities afforded the students upon leaving the educational institute, however, were not. For example, Nash (2005) wrote of a student attending a New York female seminary, who published in the *New York Magazine*, “The writer opened the essay by exclaiming that she was ‘struck with amazement to observe the material difference in the education of the sexes’. Asserting as common knowledge that men and women have the same natural abilities, she was unable to understand why equal opportunities were not forthcoming” (p. 21-22).

Smith (2007) asserted that the “[Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies] importance in the history of women's education in America lies in a liberal philosophy that provided, as part of a strong academic curriculum, an education in music equal to that of its European counterparts” (p. 275). Music, and other arts, may seem a choice more in tune with “feminine arts,” but teaching styles were so that many instructors, male and female, used this as the foundation for their lessons. Educators, during the 1800s, found the arts to be important to teaching and learning. “Emma Willard learned geometry by studying linear and perspective drawing, and thereafter taught her students the same way. This was often the case for male students as well” (Nash, 2005, p. 73). This rationale did not hold up with some in the education community and many felt that teaching the arts to the middle classes was inappropriate and elitist (Nash, 2005). Even in the early development of an established curriculum, what was and was not appropriate for sexes and social classes was in dispute. The methodology for teaching and learning was equally contested. All during a time when women’s education was a perilous possibility, and an ambiguous option.

III. Method

Finding, repeatedly, that middle class and lower class women were able to access education in 1750-1850, but that there was no historical data on “how” formed my thesis question. How did these women access higher education during a time when legal statutes closed the doors of academia to them, and what were these women hoping to gain from seeking higher education? I wanted to find the earliest known institute for female education, as education by way of governess or the family tutor was a harder line of inquiry to pursue. Although institutional histories are a somewhat traditional form of historical research, looking at, and comparing, curricula of institutes narrows the scope of research. The curriculum of an educational institute was able to provide a glimpse into the social mores of the people who sent their daughters to higher educational institutes. I came upon the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies quite by accident, but I found this National Trust-funded online archive became a fruitful resource. This website contained the origins of what could arguably be the first formal school for women in the United States, predating the Revolutionary war by over thirty years.

Bethlehem Archives

Finding the Bethlehem Digital History Project online, I first scoured the site for archival and primary sources pertaining to the creation of the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies, as well as any records that described the students, their ages and social class, and the curriculum they studied. I was especially keen to learn what curriculum was offered to the girls attending the Moravian Academy during the outset.

Hoping to find one or two women to research from the early part of the Seminary’s creation, I was lucky to find a class list of the early students at the Seminary.

Finding this list gave me an opportunity to research both the ages of the students and any changes in trends of attendees, as well as economic backgrounds and religious affiliations (if any). Surprisingly there was a student, Maria Beaumont, rumored to be of mixed race, who was one of the first non-secular attendees. She came from a wealthy background and ended up teaching at the school. This bit of information also gave me an idea of the influential reach of the school during this time. Not just Moravian girls were admitted, and not just local, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania students. Per Smith, “Students were not drawn solely from the eastern seaboard: those admitted came from across the nation, as well as Canada, Ireland, Mexico, and the islands of the West Indies” (2007). The cookie crumb trails kept leading me in interesting directions such as the setup of the Moravian communities and how this may have contributed to the open access for education and what expectations came with this access for post-educational opportunities.

The Moravian school changed its curriculum and opened its doors to non-Moravian students in 1785, within 45 years of its founding (Bethlehem Digital History Project, 2000-2009). This large change in both curriculum and student body seemed to be in conjunction with the social events of the times. In 1783, the American Revolution ended in the signing of the Treaty of Paris. Four years later, the constitution was written. Both events influenced a separation of church and state. I wondered about any curricular revisions and student body changes with this impactful event, and if the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies followed the social dictates of change.

Comparing Women’s Educations

The Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies was a wonderful resource to track the progression in women’s education during the early part of the United States. In addition

to studying the Moravian Seminary curriculum, it was important to compare the curriculums of other women's educational institutes created from 1750 to 1850.

Comparing other curricula demonstrated if the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies was keeping up with the changing views on women's education; if they were progressive in their curriculum; or if they were secular in their teachings compared to their steadily newer counterparts. To do this, I researched schools that were considered the earliest of their type for women. I excluded Dame schools and Normal Schools, as they were not equivalent to the type of higher education offered by the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies.

The first of these institutes I studied was the Young Ladies Academy. Founded in June 1787 by John Poor in Pennsylvania, the Young Ladies Academy was one of the earlier schools equivalent to the Moravian Seminary for Young Women. Savin and Abrahams (1957) noted that the success of the Moravian Seminary prompted Philadelphia leaders, such as Benjamin Rush, to give aid to start a girls' academy. This academy was the first chartered institute of higher education for women in the United States, chartered as early as 1792 (Savin and Abrahams, 1957). This school seems to have catered more towards the daughters of the elite, which is not entirely surprising for the time, as the post-Revolutionary period was when the elite had more free time to learn. What was surprising was that the elite did not always encourage the liberal education of their daughters for fear of making them unmarriageable. This was expounded upon in the Findings section of this paper.

Middlebury Female Academy was the next prominent girls' higher educational institution founded in the United States on which I focused. This academy was founded

in 1814, at the cusp of growing academies and seminaries for girls, which boasted curriculums akin to that of male colleges. Middlebury Female Academy was operated in the home of Emma Willard so that she could support her family. The driving impetus behind her curriculum was to be equal to that of the male college, Middlebury College, in the same town of Middlebury, Vermont. This school lasted from 1814 until 1819 when the Willards moved to Troy, New York. There is conflicting data on Emma Willard's intent. Per the National Women's History Museum's site, 'She introduced her students to subjects such as mathematics that were not regularly taught to young women – yet she was careful not to imply that women or women's education should be equal to men's, worrying that her ideas would be immediately dismissed'

(https://www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/education/Biographies_Willard.htm, n.d.). Yet Lord (1873) shared a letter written by Emma Willard stating she wanted a better education for women than what she perceived was available in Middlebury for women, and further, that living in proximity to the Middlebury College made her feel the disparity in education between the two sexes. She also noted she hoped that if she brought this before the legislation, they would correct the matter.

Emma Willard founded Troy Female Seminary in 1821 in Troy, New York. She employed, again, the idea that a female school's curriculum should be a quality institute and more than a finishing school for women. "Troy supplied an ambitious curriculum and attracted the affection of many women. Between 1822 and 1872, 12,000 women received their education at Troy. This was a large number of students for the day. Troy was the first institution of higher education designed to exclusively train women based on a curriculum that was essentially the same curriculum as the men received" (Jeynes, 2007,

p. 113). Interestingly Troy Female Seminary was usual for the time. More and more, society was clamoring for educational opportunities for women. Further, there was an acknowledged need to raise the standards of education for women. Troy Female Seminary was one of the first of its kind to answer this need.

Mount Holyoke Seminary, founded in 1837 by Mary Lyon, was purposed to serve the newly emerging middle class. Located in Massachusetts, Mount Holyoke focused on educating women to become teachers and missionaries; it was founded on the ideal of self-reliance in order to help others (Nutting, 1876). Both Mount Holyoke and Troy Female Seminaries did instill some fear in the public. Thelin (2011) noted two specific sets of concerns, from both parents and conservative American culture, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: that [co]education would be too much for women's brains and it would cause them "brain fever, physical fatigue..." and that it would make women unfeminine. The other concerns, found early in the twentieth century, were that higher education would render women unmarriageable and the close female friendships and groups would encourage lesbianism (Thelin, 2011). Instead of developing any sort of medical ailments or change in sexual orientation, higher education institutes brought women increased access to educational opportunities that were on par with that found in men's colleges.

The curriculum in these schools, compared to that of the Moravian Seminary of Young Ladies, needed to be considered in the context of the time period; what was socially relevant; and the usefulness of education for women. In the 1700s, religion allowed for some women to access education. The impetus to be educated was to be a better Christian and/or missionary, whereas in the 1800s, non-secular women's education

became an important and valuable issue for prominent leaders in education. The usefulness of women in the workforce, and as educated advocates in the home, reinforced the idea that women and men's education should be equal.

IV. Findings

Society, through the many changes during the nascent years of the United States, began to see the veritable justification for educating women. Historians looked to the social utility of women's education and, although limited in what was available, there was enough data to provide context for this assertion. The area that was lacking in historical data and research was the personal reason women might have sought higher education and the expectations this education would achieve. Nash (2005) writes,

A full consideration of female education that gives due weight to the idea that women and intellectual interests that deserved realization radically alters the picture of this period. The social utility arguments extended women's opportunities but also maintained women in an inferior position by emphasizing the service that educated women could provide to others. In contrast, arguments from self-interest assumed that women, like men, were fully human in the Enlightenment sense--that they had a capacity for intellectual cultivation. (p. 28)

Early in the history of both the colonial and revolutionary periods, education was tied to happiness; a purely pleasurable pastime; and bringing a learner closer to God. While curriculum was important to understand what women would encounter by attending formal schools, women were also forming reading and writing circles all over the nation (Nash, 2005). Curriculum of the seminary and academy schools was solid evidentiary record posit what may have been women's reason to seek higher education during 1750-1850. With this knowledge, I kept in mind that education was pleasure. The exchange of intellectual thoughts and ideas was a happy pastime for women, outside of formal schools; this culture was what may have encouraged many young women to seek further

education, due to the pure enjoyment of learning.

Moravians: Enabling Women's Education and Freedom

The Moravian settlement in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania was founded in 1741. From 1742-1762, known as the "General Economy" period, the settlement was run on a communal system: all land, buildings, businesses, and goods were communally owned (Faull, 1997). "Bethlehem was founded both as a mission center, consisting of a (*Pelgergemeine*) and also a permanent settlement (*Hausgemeine*). For the inhabitants of Bethlehem, missionary and spiritual work was of primary importance: their sole purpose for being in Bethlehem was to evangelize in North America..." (Faull, 1997, p. xxvi). With the General Economy, congregants were arranged in what was known as the "choir system": married families lived in one section together; single men lived in another area together; and finally single women lived communally together in another separate building. In 1750, some of the Moravians challenged the General Economy. This challenge was put before the Moravians and they were asked if they wanted to set up their own private households. The single women responded with a resounding "no". Per Faull's recount of one single sister, Marie Mainier, "[she] desired to stay in the choir system because of the relative freedom, security, and independence it afforded single women who otherwise, in the eighteenth century, would have been significantly socially and economically disenfranchised" (1997, p. xxvii). This General Economy community did end in 1762,

In 1762, when the communal system was abandoned for a more family-centric arrangement, the close bonds of the Moravian community were not lost with this transition. "Many aspects of the original organization remained with the major change

being the move from a communal to a cash economy” (Bethlehem Digital History Project, Maserjian, 2000-2009). The Moravian Church continued to hold a vast majority of land in Bethlehem; however, the land was leased from the church and used for homes or private businesses by the Moravian members. This organization of the Bethlehem settlement remained in place until 1844 when the community was opened to non-Moravians (Maserjian, 2000-2009).

From a memoir written by one of the married sisters, Margarethe Junmann, the trip that resulted in the establishment of the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies first in Germantown, and later moved to Bethlehem, was recorded. “In 1741, Count zinzendorf arrived in Philadelphia from Europe...[T]he Count rented a house in Germantown, which became a School for children. I thereby came into nearer acquaintance with the brothers and sisters who had come with him into this land, especially with the two sisters, Anna Nitschmann and his daughter, Benigna von Zinzendorf...” (Faull, 1997, p. 50). Levering (1901) noted the different installations of the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies. He noted that a girls’ school was established in 1742 in Germantown - as noted in the memoir above - and transferred to Bethlehem in 1743. By 1745, the day school for older girls remained in Bethlehem, while the boarding school operations were moved to Nazareth. The boarding school returned in 1749 to Bethlehem. “In 1751, space constraints and growing enrollment forced authorities to accept only daughters of Moravian church members. In 1785 the school was reorganized to accept Moravian and non-Moravian students” (Bethlehem Digital History Project, 2000-2009).

The boarding school-turned-seminary was always considered a higher education institute for girls in the Moravian community. In 1785, the school was reorganized and it

became non-secular. It was not until 1786 that Elizabeth Bedell from Staten Island, New York was the first student from “abroad”. This opened a new set of students attending the Moravian school. Within the next two years, a student from Baltimore, Maryland, and five students from the West Indies enrolled in the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies (Reichel & Bigler, 1901). Due to the growing size of the seminary, rules were put in place for students. It is supposed that these statutes, from 1788, are the earliest records outlining the duties of each student in the classroom and when abroad. These rules outline how a student should use their free time as well as when it is time for labor. Additionally there are “suggesting hints for correct individual deportment” (Reichel & Bigler, 1901, p. 46).

The Moravians adopted another interesting and progressive educational philosophy: they believed in the equality between persons of color and whites. Education was available, according to Bancroft (2013), to women and men of color and Native Americans. Both groups could live alongside their white Moravian congregants in the choir houses and worship with them. In 1787, two Moravian Seminary students, Maria and Betsy Beaumont were of mixed race, from the Caribbean. The school “Maria and Betsy were entering had a history of educating some black students alongside its white ones. This was an especially remarkable fact since, at the moment that Maria and Betsy arrived, the school was poised to become the leading educational institution for young women in the United States” (Bancroft, 2013).

In the years after the Revolution, the Bethlehem School for Girls, well established, as a girls' school at a moment when few existed, appeared to offer just the combination of "honest simplicity" and egalitarian values suitable for a generation that

was to grow up under a newly forming government. "A government of persuasion calculated more to attach the affections than pain the body" and a warm family atmosphere appealed to parents who had just thrown off the tyrannical rule and survived a battering war (Bancroft, 2013). "The upheavals of the Revolution, and Bethlehem's role providing a hospital for Continental soldiers, had allowed both members of Congress and officers to see the well-run community first-hand" (Bancroft, 2013). This connection to the governmental and military leaders would be a boon for the school in terms of its enrollees. Later, these connections would also provide indirect income for the school through the students' artistic efforts.

Of note, for a school that was to be open for all Moravian members, the price of enrollment is relatively steep; per the Moravian Seminar Souvenir, the price of board and tuition per quarter was £5, this included the ordinary branches of an English education and instruction in German (Reichel, 1876). Today's equivalent is \$781.61 per quarter for room and board and instruction (Nye, *Pounds Sterling to Dollars*, n.d.).

The price of other "add-ons," or what we would call electives in the twenty-first century, are as follows: 17s. 6d. per quarter for tambour-work and drawing; 17. 6 d per quarter lessons on the pianoforte or guitar; 15s extra for the use of light, fuel, and schoolbooks. The age of admission, eight to fifteen years, is a telling span as it demonstrates the time when a girl could be "spared" from her family from contributing to their income (Reichel, 1876, p. 12).

Interestingly, the Bethlehem School, or more broadly, the Moravian schools, set a paradigm for future schools in way of scholarship for those students that were unable to afford tuition. "The colleges for women that offered part-time employment to help

defray college expenses had a precedent in the Moravian schools of the Colonial period, where the girls were expected to assist with all housekeeping tasks” (Leonard, 1956, p. 76). Mary Lyon at her progressive school, Mount Holyoke Seminary, set this same precedent later.

Why Women Sought Higher Education

Before 1860, Rudolph (1990) speculated that families saw sending women to college (higher education) as a reckless act.

[P]eople often found themselves hard pressed to explain why good families, pillars of the church, not known for any particular foolishness in the past, were sending their daughters off to the female colleges...Maybe a young girl had been bitten by some of the reform bugs - although *one* would have been enough - and there was therefore no way to keep her from wanting to be a teacher in one of the new city high schools. (p. 313)

If educated women were social outcasts, what drove them to disregard social reaction and pursue higher education anyway? It seemed many times religious affiliations aided in women’s desire to seek higher education, but if one did not belong to a religion that advocated for equal education then one’s social class aided in finding a place in higher education. The middle class was especially suitable to ensuring their daughters be educated to contribute to the civilizing of the new nation and to being useful wives and mothers.

1700s Education for Women

Religion played a central role in both the view of higher education for either sexes, as well as the establishment of institutions of higher education in the early periods

of American nationalization. The Quaker and Moravian religions believed in the importance of educating both sexes (National Women's History Museum, 2007). We saw, from the setup of the Moravian communities, education meant a closer religious connection and fuller religious life. The Puritans, on the other hand, believed women should be taught to read so that they may read the bible. For this reason, many Puritan women were often not taught to write as there was no useful purpose, and these same women were only able to sign with an "x". Puritan women's education came from their home, and specifically from their mothers (Jeynes, 2007). "Before the Revolution, most women received some instruction in reading, but for writing depended on access to district schools or private tutors. However, diaries and letters reveal that some women with means and access to a father's or brother's library were self-taught or schooled privately" (Eldred & Mortensen, 2003, p. 24). Women in the elite classes had greater access to higher education. Their motivations for seeking a higher education, and the outcomes they hoped for upon acquired learning, was not under study in this thesis. It was interesting that education was something for "bluestockings" and made a high-class woman unmarriageable, yet this did not stop many women of prestigious families from adding higher education to their personal portfolios. This same drive connected the classes throughout the 1750-1850 period.

Many early religious sects understood the importance of establishing a communal learning facility for their congregants. "Devout Christians...saw higher education as a means to spread the gospel. As a result, Christian groups started virtually all of America's universities of the first 160 years after the Pilgrims" (Jeynes, 2007, p. 17). The 1700s were an important time in religious growth in the colonies. Being part of a

religious denomination was a typical part of identity. This identity - religion - afforded some women the opportunity to pursue higher education in a way that was prohibited to their mothers and grandmothers.

1800s Education for Women

The 1800s held a constantly changing social and economic climate. In terms of general ideas of the appropriate space for women, the historic view of women in the home, as it had during colonial and post-Revolutionary War, shifted and blurred. “The lines between ‘public’ and ‘private’ were neither clearly defined nor fixed; instead, they were permeable and constantly being negotiated” (Nash, 2005, p. 9-10). The years of Republican Motherhood, during 1820-1860, contended with ideas of women as anti-intellectual, pure, moral, passive, and domestic, yet 20 to 70 years prior the shift of secular models was beginning in the educational sphere. With the primary study being of male students, there was a noticeable shift in ages and socioeconomic status of the male students from the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries. Detected from the mid-eighteenth century through 1800, there was a shift of students from families in the rank of wealth and power to an older and poorer student. The data showed that the middle and lower portions of the middle class were making up a larger portion of the student bodies (Potts, 2007). This was due in large part to many families profiting from the American Industrialization Revolution. This period began around 1760 and peaked in the early 1800s. The money earned and the conveniences created by the industrialization of America, freed up time for women. Middle class women were encouraged to use this free time to become influential caretakers.

For those in the middle class, they still had other responsibilities, regardless of

“free time”. Most students in the middle and lower classes, men and women, could not go to school for more than a semester or year, coming back once they completed any familial responsibility. According to Nutting (1876), most women did not finish more than a year at the institution. Any education to aid in a middle class woman’s usefulness was significant as the middle class thrived on being useful in both the private and public spheres. Of note, Nutting wrote this history at the behest of the commissioner of education to represent the Department of Education for the centennial, so her view of education may be skewed to appease the department. However, her work was written within forty years of the founding of Mount Holyoke when the stigma of women’s education still persisted, so her enthusiasm can be seen as contemporary to the founding of the seminary. The students to which Nutting refers - attending any amount of time - were significant in a multitude of ways: they bucked tradition as well as social stigma to obtain higher education.

The Romantic Period, as defined by Patricia Palmieri (2007) - or Republican Motherhood as she cited being the term used by Linda Kerber - was a major shift for women’s roles. From 1820-1860, post-revolutionary society was full of optimism. Women were idealized as aforementioned and the “virtuous female was thought to be threatened by too much education”, yet it appeared that women never bought into the idea that education was a threat (p. 205). “Studies of patterns of female reading in the antebellum era reveal women who eagerly sought out images of learned women who demonstrated ‘intellectual agency’ for their role models, apparently with little fear of becoming unmarriedable bluestockings” (Nash, 2005, p. 8). Women accepted the romanticized idea of being intellectual caretakers and used it to access education. “By

laying claim to special emotional and moral traits, women could cultivate intellectual roles as teachers, translators, and social reformers” (Palmieri, 2007, p. 205-206). Women now had a socially sanctioned role and reason to seek further education.

Expectations and Realities of Being an Educated Woman, 1750-1850

Boas (1971) noted, “[t]he value of education had been definitely proved; most communities used women as teachers at least part of the year, in part of the school system[...] If men admired learned women--and all the writing ladies were indisputably admired--then women would endeavour to be learned” (1971, p. 91). I am not sure if the idea of an educated woman being “admired” made education more enticing due to its approval by men. As marriage was an ultimate goal for women and female security during this time - as it had been for centuries - it would make sense that this interpretation of history was not entirely influenced by the 1930s (or 1971 when the book was republished) in which Boas is writing. She also noted that, in general, “scribbling ladies” were more well received than the shrinking violets in Europe and the United States, in the early 1800s (1971). Per Boas (1971), and most historians/historical documentation, it was crass for women to earn money, yet no one complained when a woman would do so by means of writing or teaching. Emma Willard was the primary breadwinner for her family: her husband and four stepchildren. She earned a wage managing and teaching at the Middlebury Female Seminary as well as the Troy Female Seminary. She also wrote textbooks that earned the family an income and her work ensured a financially comfortable (Nash, 2005).

Due to the change in social mores of the 1800s, an education, specifically for the rising middle class woman, allowed for an independent life outside the familial home. A

seminary education allowed women, delayed an early marriage due to the change in the “life-planning” (Palmieri, 2007, p. 206) of men, to seek employment as a teacher which would in turn add to the family income and/or help a woman support herself until she ended up in marriage (Palmieri, 2007).

An educational and cultural benefit to attending the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies was the idealistic view of spiritual equality. Per Bancroft (2013), “race was not seen as a barrier to inclusion in the community. A few people of color had been included among early members of the church, whether in Herrnhut, in Bethlehem, or (later) in Salem, North Carolina. In a few cases, members of color played leadership roles. Most notable was Maria Beaumont, originally from St. Thomas” (p. 164-165). That a woman, more notably due to her mixed race background, could attend higher education institute and go on to teach at her alma mater was amazing for the late eighteenth century. Her life, because of her education, and choice of educational institute, was far more independent than that of her contemporaries. Interestingly, “Given that nearly half of the [Moravian] Seminary students never married, it was necessary for most of them to find salaried work. Further, some women, even though they married, were forced to help support their own family. The change in a woman's status (social, economical, and marital) often dictated the need for employment” (Smith, 2007, p. 278). Higher education, especially for those in the Moravian faith, became a necessity for women in order for them to live. When they were under the General Economy, women had a greater freedom to choose married life or Single Sisterhood, but as time progressed, and the General Economy ended, that choice was no longer. Why half of the seminary students never married was another topic that would benefit from further research. Was it

by choice, circumstance, or something “other” that created another option for these women upon leaving the seminary?

Attending a seminary like Troy or Mount Holyoke saw its own special reward for women after they left the institution.

According to Stow (1887),

“...the relative importance - or unimportance - attached to that of girls, there never was a time when the superior culture of the first colonists were not possessed by some of their descendants...There was no period when women of education and culture were not found in homes of superior intelligence and refinement”.

These educated women, though not of affluent households necessarily, were deemed morally and culturally superior. This passage demonstrated the women who sought education also came from homes that also sought further culture and refinement, regardless of social class.

Education was the cornerstone of social progression and mobility for women. In the 1700s, this mobility was within a religious context. The plethora of school textbooks cited from the Bethlehem Digital History Project denote the importance of a student being able to contribute to a life of a missionary or to support a missionary lifestyle. As time progressed, the textbooks and religious mission, in some ways, becomes less prominent. Instead, the social changes of the 1800s gave way to women finding mobility inside the cultural movement of Republican Motherhood. Women found opportunities to bridge the private to public spheres by way of acquiring education that could lead to a profession. As Boas (1971) wrote, “Be good and you will be happy; to which the eighteen-thirties added with certain conviction; be educated and you will be good. For

knowledge was God's gift to man" (p. 163). Education became a way to be good and to serve God and man, what better utility for a woman than to serve both, according to society in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In both centuries, once a woman was married, her ability to continue in any profession, "female-appropriate" or not, desisted for her new profession of marriage. One such example is Eliza Lucas Pinckney. Prior to 1744 and her marriage to Charles Pinckney, Lucas was free to study the arts, sciences, and "made discoveries about indigo that served her father's business well, but was reminded of her 'place' as a female" (Solomon, 1985, p. 6) when she was to marry. It was understood that she would "accept her husband's authority...for even those with unusual educational advantages accepted authority of fathers and husbands, thereby maintaining the division of the sexes, in theory if not always in practice" (Solomon, 1985, p. 6-7). Like many historians writing on histories of women in higher education, Solomon left the reader hanging with such ambiguous phrases as "in theory if not always in practice". She did go on to say that the 1700s were a time where women, even self-educated ones, would defer to men. The answers are lacking as to why these self-educated women would so easily defer to men in other areas of their lives. Did women adopt this attitude as a case of "pick your battles" or were there other contributors that allowed for education as long as it did not interfere with the status quo of subordination? This was another area that needed exploration by historians for a better understanding of women's lives.

There was much more information available about what nineteenth century married women did to continue the cause of equality for women and men, in education and elsewhere. The eighteenth century had a dearth of information, either from want of

documents, or from the social and cultural upheavals during this century in which a new land was transforming into a new nation. Women helped build this nation, but the higher education opportunities and experiences open to them, and the impetus to seek out further learning still seemed heavily related to religion. The final question from these findings remains, what of pleasure? What part of education did women seek for the pure pleasure of learning and becoming more informed about the world outside their walls? I hypothesized that learning for women was a dual purpose: utility and pleasure to learn and expand their minds beyond their everyday.

Curriculum Comparisons

The curriculum was the core of an institution. It could be what drew a serious student to an institution and what would inform the students' future pursuits and success. The curriculums were also dependent on both the students from which the school was looking to draw and the social movements of the times. In the 1700s, religion was highly influential in education, especially in educational institutes. The 1700s was a time of national pride - a new nation - and women were seen as unlike English women, a different, more capable sort of women (Jeynes, 2007). Women were viewed, within their religious communities, as having an equal need to be taught. In the 1800s, many female seminaries and academies were considered non-secular while still offering teachings in Christianity. The 1800s brought social and technological changes that contributed to the changes in how many women were able to seek higher education and what was taught. The nineteenth century also opened the possibility of women's higher education contributing to a post-academic life. This outcome was more pronounced in the 1800s than during the 1700s when marrying earlier and attending post-secondary schools, to

educate the future nation (one's children), was the more obvious reason for seeking higher education. The curriculum also varied rather starkly to match the ongoing changes from 1750-1850.

Kelley (2008) concisely outlines the curriculum of early female academies and seminaries:

Between 1790 and 1830, the exclusively female schools that offered more than the reading, writing, and ciphering taught in the common schools almost always called themselves academies. Despite the diversity in the course of study in these schools, they shared basic patterns in curricular organization and scholastic requirements. Nearly all the academies established between 1790-1820 instructed students in reading, grammar, writing, history, arithmetic, and geography. Some also taught rhetoric. The transition to a more advanced curriculum that matched the offerings of the male colleges occurred in the 1820s. (p. 86)

This summary was on point with what I found while writing this thesis and comparing seminaries and curriculums. The curriculum of the female seminaries/academies gradually became more robust and started to align with the male colleges in the early nineteenth century. The teaching methods, as well as the course delivery (Pestalozzian method), changed with the times and were equivalent to male colleges as seminaries, such as the Troy Female Seminary and Mount Holyoke Seminary, emerged in the 1820s and late 1830s.

The Changing Curriculum for Women

Studying what women read for pleasure during this the 1700s unearthed an accurate depiction of female school curriculum:

...[W]e sought to learn about women's literacy....from the courses of study for young women that are embedded in novels and advice books written by women for a female readership the early national period. The typical course of study detailed in these books is actually manifest in the records of a few well-publicized female seminaries, as well as a scattering of published diaries, letters, and memoirs. (Eldred & Mortensen, 2003, p. 25)

To know that fiction mimicked life was interesting in a twofold way: education was discussed in literature when literature was accessible by a few and a leisure activity for an even more select few. The main reading material for many women of lower socioeconomic status would not have been novels and advice books by women, but instead the bible or books that would aid in running the home, this assumed a middling or lower class woman was literate.

Historical documents, such as newspapers, also pointed to the social class of eighteenth century women who had more opportunities in education.

Per Monaghan (2003):

Girls from 'middling' families particularly urban ones, also saw their educational horizons expand...Robert Seybolt found more than 200 newspaper advertisements between 1722 and 1776 for private schools targeted at 'young ladies.' The notices specified instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, accounts, needlework, vocal and instrumental music, advanced reading, English grammar, letter writing, Latin, French, other romance languages, and geography. (p. 18)

This sort of finding set a precedence for what the schools felt the "middling" class families of young women would be looking for in way of instruction. These go beyond

the womanly arts, but they still closely follow the idea of usefulness to a household. The utmost importance for women was to be useful, and this was especially true of those with middle-class upbringing. These advertisements are valuable to demonstrate both the marketing angle and audience of the private schools.

The lower classes also made advancements in access to education during this time. Girls from the lower classes were taught to write, which, when compared to the education of the Puritan girls in the pre-revolutionary period, was a progressive act. “...the Massachusetts Bay law of 1771, which finally legislated that girls apprenticed under the Poor Laws be taught to write as well as read, signaled the widespread acceptance in colonial culture of the necessity to teaching girls of every social rank to write” (Monaghan, 2003, p.18). Due to laws like the Massachusetts Bay law, women’s literacy rose swiftly for women of all classes. This legislation, on par with Scotland for its progressive view, contributed to the United States being one of the most literate countries in the early years of the United States (Lynch, 2011).

Curriculum in the 1800s was much more advanced for women. By the turn of the 1800s, the United States saw a rise in female educational institutes and Republican Motherhood was a burgeoning movement.

The nineteenth century was an age of growing access to literacy for U.S. girls, especially Anglo-American girls of the middle class [...] an eighteenth century constriction of female education to ‘decorative arts’ or practical domestic skills exploded into a much wider array of literacy instruction...Girls were taught to compose letters, journals, and essays; to read, take notes, and keep commonplace books; to declaim and recite poetry, and to spell and parse sentences. (Carr, 2003,

p. 51)

The 1800s were a time in which women gained a measure of independence through newly opened advantages. Higher education opened doors even further into a future of possible self-reliance, independence, and most importantly, change.

Female educational institutions under discussion:

Years	Schools Compared
1740s	Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies (founded)
1780s	Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies and Young Ladies Academy (founded)
1810s	Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies and Middlebury Female Academy (founded)
1830-1850s	Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies, Troy Female Seminary (founded), and Mount Holyoke Female Seminary (founded)

Young Ladies Academy versus The Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies (late 1700s)

The colonial and revolutionary periods had a lasting impact on curriculum, especially for women. The colonial period offered little for women beyond the womanly arts, which were of little use to the poorer classes, and even the middle classes who had more leisure time than the lower classes. “The Revolutionary War had a tremendous impact on the U.S. education system. Before the Revolutionary War, the settlements in America operated largely as separate entities...The Revolutionary War set into motion the move toward a national consciousness, national goals, and the building of a national

consensus on various issues” (Jeynes, 2007, p. 33).

The Young Ladies Academy, in the 1790s the school curriculum “embraced reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, english grammar, composition, rhetoric, geography (with use of globes and maps), history, and vocal music (including the singing of religious hymns) in which the young ladies seem to have excelled...Astronomy was also in the curriculum in 1801” (Savin & Abrahams, 1957, p. 60). Socially, this was considered a liberal education for women, yet it was noted that the ladies all had fine manners and were well-behaved, never having to be disciplined like at other schools where women were subjected to the same disciplinary actions as at boys schools (Savin & Abrahams, 1957). Although for 1957 this seems to be the epitome of a good school, it begged the question of the equality of experience between an all-male school and this all-female school. The Moravian Seminary for Young Women had guidelines for their conduct, guidelines that were revised repeatedly with the changing time: shortly after they changed to a non -secular institution, rules and guidelines for the students were written first in 1788 and revised multiple times through 1816.

In his Medical School address at the University of Pennsylvania in 1787, Benjamin Rush noted his feelings on the appropriate girls’ school curriculum and the outcome of said curriculum.

“Dr. Rush felt that girls’ education should be practical and accord with the needs of the times. Such education should be given over to useful branches of literature, homemaking, care and instruction of children, a knowledge, of government, and the principles of virtue and liberty. It should include knowledge of the English language, reading, speaking, handwriting, spelling, arithmetic, bookkeeping,

history, and geography, so that a girl could become ‘an agreeable companion to a sensible man’ and not have to seek the company of ‘fools and coxcombs,’ nor resort to “stooping to novels or romances for entertainment,’ or conversations on ‘dress fashions or scandals’. (Savin & Abrahams, 1957, p. 64)

Dr. Rush’s fervid speech reflected the time of blurred lines of public and private spheres that were shifting due to the need for women to aid in post-Revolutionary War America as they did during the war. This speech also informed what the new social expectation of liberal learning was by those advocating for women’s higher education at a governmental level (Dr. Rush was a signer of the Constitution).

The Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies had the onus not only being the first school of higher education for women in the colonial New World, but they were also of a secular religion that was able to dictate the curriculum and mold the educational direction of the students. The Moravian Seminary Souvenir noted, of the early structure of the school, “On the tutoresses mainly devolved the moral education of their charge. They were expected to take the parents’ place, to exercise a prudent watchfulness, to teach by example as well as by precept...” (Reichel, 1876, p 50). In the early period of the school (1742-about 1787), the curriculum was composed of reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, history, astronomy, and plain sewing. Learning German was also a necessary part of the Moravian curriculum as it was the native language of most Moravian tutoresses (Reichel, 1876). In 1787, lessons on the spinet were first given and tambour and fine needlework - spinning, knitting, and weaving - were introduced into the curriculum. Learning fine needlework was especially important as it helped with an “honest and independent living” (Reichel, 1876, p. 52). These items were sold to military

persons who passed through the area and others who would come in for decorative pieces for their homes (Reichel, 1876). This part of the curriculum provided the students with a sense of usefulness and application for what they were learning.

A “cyphering book” used in 1790 by a Moravian Seminary student, Susan Shimer, gave a glimpse to the reader of the type of coursework done: “addition in money”/bookkeeping and extensive “subtractions in money”; addition tables in weights and travel; multiplication; division; word problems that involve the purchasing of goods; and yet other mathematical problems surrounding the Single (and Double) Rule of Three (Bethlehem Digital History Project, 2000-2009). The use of arithmetic in the cyphering book was a significant primary source as it documented the exact type of arithmetic being taught and how its application was, like the needlework, set up to mimic the world outside the school walls.

Other primary sources from the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies were geography books such as *Beschreibung des Chinesischen Reichs seiner einwohner und deren sitten, gesezze und religion ; ein lesebuch zum nuzzen und vergnugen fur den burger und landmann. (Description of the Chinese empire, its inhabitants and their habits, of their laws and their religion; a reading book for the use (Nutzen!) and for the pleasure of citizen and compatriots* [translated by Wolf-Rüdiger Heidemann, 20 March 2017]) by Weissenfels und Leipzig. Friedrich Severin, 1790 and *The American universal geography : [...] and of the United States of America in particular ; illustrated with maps* published in 1793. Again, these books showed the range of study in one subject: geography. The young women were being introduced to further lands than the Americas. This was especially important as Moravian congregants often lead lives as missionaries.

Young women and young men would need to be familiar with both the lands, customs, and religions of places they may encounter in their missionary work. In addition to missionary work, the students, too, were from outside of Pennsylvania; students came from New York, Nova Scotia, Maryland, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and the West Indies (Leonard, 1956). To be more familiar with their fellow students from outside the United States, as well as prepare for a life of a missionary was a useful lesson for the young women of the Moravian Seminary.

Other useful and interesting, by today's standards, textbooks used by the students, and noted as primary resources on the Bethlehem Digital History Project from the eighteenth century are as follows:

1. Comenius, Johann Amos. *Physicae ad lumen divinum reformatae synopsis ...* Amstelodami, Ianssonius, 1645. In the preface of this book, it is noted that the text is intended for "Common and Grammar schools" and for families. This was a telling choice for a young women's higher education institute. This school was neither a grammar school nor a Common School, yet because the book was leveled at families, it may be assumed that the choice of book was made for practical purposes. If the Moravian student was to marry, she would need this to care for her family. Regardless of marital status, even as a missionary or as part of the Choir System, a woman would need this to aid in mission work or in service to her community.
2. The below three textbooks are further indication of the usefulness that was assumed when choosing books for the curriculum in the 1700s for the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies. The last book, on the English language, was

important as it noted that not all students were American born, and so it may have been an English as a Second Language-type book, or simply an advanced English language book as learning to read and write was a newer addition to young women's education in colonial times.

- a. Mitchell, William. *A new and complete system of book-keeping, by an improved method of double entry ... To which is added, a table of the duties payable on goods ... imported into the United States ...* Philadelphia, Printed by Bioren & Madan, 1796.
- b. *Models of letters, for the use of schools and private students; being an epitome of the large octavo volume, entitled Elegant Epistles: and containing select letters from the best English authors, with many translated from the French* London: Printed for C. Dilly, in the Poultry, 1794.
- c. Tompson, John. *English miscellanies ; consisting of various pieces of divinity, morals, politicks, philosophy and history; as likewise of some choice poems; all collected out of the most approved authors in the English tongue ... and chiefly intended for the advantage of such, as are willing to apply themselves to the learning of this useful language.*
Goettingen : Printed for the Widow of Abram Vandenhoeck, 1755.

An interesting, and pertinent, piece of information regarding the textbooks used for classes, specifically at the Moravian Seminary - although we might safely assume this was a widespread practice - was due to the expense of textbooks, only teachers/tutoreses had copies and they read them aloud to the students. Note taking during this time, for

students, was especially important, as was the ability to write well enough to take notes.

Middlebury Female Seminary versus The Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies

(early 1800s)

Middlebury Female Seminary opened in Emma Willard's home in 1814 and was located in Middlebury, Vermont. The Middlebury Female Seminary's curriculum was comprised of geography, philosophy, and history. As well, Lord (1873) noted that part of the curriculum was extensive recitation and that, "[t]he recitations were also directed to the strengthening of the memory, that faculty for which girls are most distinguished" (p. 36). This curriculum was taught in such a way that the professors of the local Middlebury College attended her examinations and "called out great admiration" (Lord, 1873, p. 36). While running the Middlebury Female Seminary, Emma Willard was also making plans for a hardier curriculum for girls. She looked towards creating ways where more public-access seminaries could be opened so that girls had access to an improved educational experience (Lord, 1873). Middlebury Female Seminary closed in 1819. The reason for its closure is under minor debate. Some historians list it as closing due to finances, and some note that she did so well in Middlebury, and presented her ideas for a new female curriculum to the legislature of New York, that they recruited her to Troy, New York to implement the new curriculum. During her time running the Middlebury Female Seminary, Willard created, tested, and cultivated a new curriculum for women that was closer to the curriculum taught at the Middlebury College for men.

During the 1810s, the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies, the curriculum seems to have grown stagnant, especially considering that the United States was on the cusp of gaining more female institutes of higher education than ever before. The

Moravian Seminary's curriculum, during the early 1800s reflected more on lessons for children than young women seeking higher education. This belief is based on the titles of the books used (listed below) as well as twenty-first century ideas of what "children" and "school children" mean.

The Moravian seminary, by the early 1800s, had become non-secular, yet the curriculum and available textbooks for the young women of the seminary were still religion-centric. For instance, author Anna Barbauld contributed two books in the young women's curriculum, and both texts have a religious-leaning message. "Barbauld, Anna Letitia. *Hymns in prose ; for the use of children*. New-York : Printed and sold by S. Wood & Sons, at the juvenile book-store ... , 1816".

The audience for this book was, as noted in the preface of the book:

"The peculiar design of this publication is, to impress devotional feelings as early as possible on the infant mind; fully convinced as the author is, that they cannot be impressed too soon, and that a child, to feel the full force of the idea of God, ought never to remember the time when he had no such idea—to impress them by connecting religion with a variety of sensible objects" (Barbauld, 1816).

A companion book was also used, written by Barbauld as well. *Pastoral lessons, and parental conversations : intended as a companion to E. [i.e. A.L.] Barbauld's Hymns in prose*. New-York : Printed and sold by Samuel Wood & Sons ... , 1816.

Goldsmith, Oliver. *Goldsmith's natural history, abridged, for the use of schools, by Mrs. Pilkington*. London : Printed for Vernor Hood & Sharpe [et al], 1810. The preface in Oliver Goldsmith's book - the preface written by Mrs. Pilkington - again notes the audience, "The following work is presented to the Public and particularly to those

who have the instruction of Youth as a faithful transcript of the Original's descriptions though more completely adapted to the Use of Schools" (1810). This book was to be used for the instruction of "youth" and adapted to use in schools, but what ages are included in "youth" during the 1800s could very well fall under the admittance ages (eight to fifteen) for the Moravian Seminary outlined in the Moravian Seminary Souvenir.

German was still being taught in the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies, well into the 1800s, The texts used, such as Georg Otterbein's *Lesebuch für Deutsche Schulkinder, 1813 (Reading book for German school children)* and Johann Schoner's *Historisches Lesebuch der christlichen Bibellehre : für Liebhaber der Wahrheit unter Jungen und Alten, 1801. (Historical reading book of the Christian Bible teaching: for lovers of the truth among boys and elders* [translated by Wolf-Rüdiger Heidemann, 20 March 2017]) are further indications that German was not taught in the conventional sense, but in a way that could be useful to the student, specifically children who were being raised to possibly be missionaries and spread the Moravian religion.

Troy Female Seminary versus the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies (1820s)

The ideas and curriculum created and tested at the Middlebury Seminary gave way to the Troy Female Seminary. Emma Willard founded the Troy Female Seminary in 1821 in Troy, New York. "The curriculum included geometry, algebra, botany, chemistry, modern languages, Latin, history, philosophy, geography, and literature...To reassure parents and the public generally that she did not intend for women to renounce their own station, students at Troy also learned embroidery and other forms of needlework" (Nash, 2007, p. 225). Per Lord (1873), "Her seminary was a normal

school, to train teachers as well as educate young ladies for the duties of life” (p. 97).

The stark contrast to what our view of Willard’s motives compared to that of the contemporary views in 1873, fifty years after the fact, are a stark reminder that we may see what we look for. Lord (1873) repeatedly praised Emma Willard for being a woman and not a feminist, but instead feminine. He praised her beauty as well as her intellect, but noted that she did not try to compete with men on intellectual matters.

The interpretation of Willard’s actions vary greatly one hundred and fifty years later,

One scholar of Willard stated that ‘subordination’ was one of her favorite words.

Yet Willard also engaged in a wide array of activities beyond motherhood and

rarely subordinated herself to anyone. She not only founded and ran a high-

caliber institution for women, and took it upon herself to propose legislation to the

State of New York, but she also wrote a dozen highly successful texts. (Nash,

2007, p225)

A progressive method used at the Troy Female Seminary was the Pestalozzian Method/techniques. This technique was used increasingly throughout higher education institutes both for men and for women. The method called for learning by observation and experimentation versus reliance on books; it encouraged students to be active learners and disparage passivity (Nash, 2005).

“The spirit of instruction at Troy was zeal for the solid branches of study, rather than for the lighter and more common ones, which, it would seem, were only pursued before her day” (Lord, 1873, p. 97). A student, Chloe Cole, wrote to her family in 1832 about the curriculum she was studying at Troy Female Seminary. In April of 1832 she

noted, “My studies this term are Euclid, American History, French, Music, Arithmetic, & Writing” (Chloe Cole to Daniel Hyde Cole, 7 April 1832). The topic of curriculum came up again for her in November of that same year, “My studies are French Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Writing and Music” (Chloe Cole to Daniel Hyde Cole, 24 Nov 1832).

The following year, 1833, her studies continued to progress and the Pestalozzian Method was being used in her language class, although she did not call the method out by name:

The Seminary has been very much improved since I left...But a very few of the old scholars have returned, mostly all new ones, which is not as pleasant until we become acquainted with them [...] We have a new music teacher and I intend and hope I shall improve very much with it before I return home again. I expect we shall learn to speak the French very well also for Mlle De Coural (?) (our teacher) intends to make us speak to her in French & never in English it will be very improving for us, & I hope she will...My studies are French, Music, Kames Elements of Criticism, & Mechanics, a very pleasant but rather hard course.
(Chloe Cole to Dan Hyde Cole. 4 Oct. 1833)

These letters were invaluable for historians as they demonstrated the actual use of a curriculum found in primary source school catalogues or contemporary books. These letters demonstrated that beyond printing “arithmetic” or “french” in a catalogue, the students were learning these subjects; further, this described the progression and method used for learning.

The Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies, in the 1820s, saw a rise in curricular reform efforts. The eleventh principle, the Reverend Charles F. Seidel, (1822-1836) “did

much towards elevating the schools of music, both vocal and instrumental, and the beginnings of the reputation the Seminary at present [1876] enjoys for the excellence of its instructions in this ornamental branch of female education, were made by its highly accomplished eleventh Principal” (Reichel, 1876). Unfortunately, it appeared the Seminary took a turn from an equal education and created a more socially acceptable curriculum full of feminine arts. As we saw from Willard’s Troy Female Seminary, they were able to skirt the line of “socially acceptable” by using a false subordination, whereas the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies did seem to conform to the social ideals of womanhood. Whether this conformity was due to ensuring donor funding, church consent, and maintaining enrollment numbers, or it was because of the male leadership is unclear.

A few textbooks from the curriculum did not give many similarities to previous curriculum at the seminary as those proved more overtly useful for outside the schoolroom. The primary sources listed on the Bethlehem Digital History Project website focused on moral guidance. The 1832 text, *Bible stories; or, A description of manners and customs peculiar to the East, especially explanatory of the Holy Scriptures* by Bourne Hall Draper, was an interesting choice especially considering the customs of the east, combined with bible stories, being the focus of the text (Bethlehem Digital History Project, 2000-2009).. Earlier, a focus on China was also part of the Moravian Seminary of Young Ladies’ curriculum. Interestingly, “the years from 1807 to 1841 mark the first period in the modern phase of the Protestant missionary enterprise in China” (Tiedemann, 2010, p. 133). This possible reason for learning about China could account for the usefulness of the Moravian Seminary curriculum, as we had continually

found true with much of the Moravian curriculum.

The next text on record is Jesse Torrey's 1824 *The moral instructor, and guide to virtue : being a compendium of moral philosophy, in eight parts ... : designed for a national manual of moral science, in American seminaries of education, and private families* (Bethlehem Digital History Project, 2000-2009). This book was interesting as it was noted to be for use in American *seminaries* of education and for private family use. Again, a curriculum focused on usefulness was the cornerstone to learning at the Moravian Seminary. This time the text was directed at "seminaries of education" which acknowledged both the burgeoning existence of the seminaries, but also demonstrated to an historian the interchangeability of a private family or seminary education: both were a space for women.

Finally, the text also used prior to 1840 was the 1834 text, *The popular reader, or complete scholar; intended as a reading book for the higher classes in academies and other schools in the United States* by A. Phelps (Bethlehem Digital History Project, 2000-2009). This text, like *The moral instructor, and guide to virtue* text, was aimed at an advanced curriculum, regardless of the focus of growing the robustness of the musical offerings to students. For all the seeming impracticality of expanding the musical education at the Moravian Seminary, Nash (2005) noted that "in a world in which rapid shifts in economic condition rendered class standing precarious, some educational reformers argued that even the more fashionable accomplishments could be used in remunerative, therefore practical, ways" (p. 74). Although the impression was that an expansion of the curriculum in the musical teachings seemed minimal considering the growing change of curricular offerings for women throughout the United States, it

appeared once again that the Moravians erred on the side of practicality for their students.

Mount Holyoke Seminary versus the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies (1837-1850s)

Mary Lyon founded Mount Holyoke Seminary in 1837. Mount Holyoke, located in Massachusetts, focused on educating women to become teachers and missionaries and founded on the ideal of self-reliance in order to help others (Nutting, 1876). What was interesting about Mount Holyoke, beyond the strenuous curriculum lifestyle lived in the seminary school, was the population to which it was marketed. This seminary was especially relevant as it was founded during the height of finishing schools and other female educational institutes that mirrored the curriculum of “lighter” learning for women. Lyon wanted her school to be accessible to these middle class women.

This admission criterion was on par with what Mary Lyon detailed as her admission standards, wanting only the best, most gifted women, enrolled in her seminary. She was resolute in her criteria of what constituted a Mount Holyoke girl (Stow, 1889). Stow (1889) noted that Lyon wanted Mount Holyoke to be for an “older class of young girls, and it is desirable that they should advance in study as far as possible before entering”. As noted earlier in this thesis, the level of education varied for students of lower classes as the access to education - public or private - was not reliable for most women.

Like Troy Female Seminary, Mount Holyoke Seminary established a rigorous curriculum that was taught with the Pestalozzian Method. Laubach and Smith (2013) summarized how the Pestalozzi Method was especially effective for women’s seminaries. Pestalozzi’s method was considered part of the legacy of seminarian education for

women. The two most historically famous archetypes for his methods were Mount Holyoke and Troy Female Seminary. Pestalozzi's method, best summed up by how Mary Lyon embodied these principles in her teaching and throughout her curriculum: "An observer who watched Lyon teach part of the Bible noted that children seemed to want to learn. They were engaged and learned easily without the use of rote memorization, recitation, rewards, or punishment" (Laubach & Smith, 2013, p. 365).

Below was listed the curriculum set forth for the first Mount Holyoke school year, 1837-1838 (Mount Holyoke College: Annual Catalogues, 1837-1900, 1997). The information was found in the printed, annual catalogue, from Mount Holyoke.

Per the Five College Archives Digital Archive Project (1997),

Annual Catalogues of the Seminary (later College) generally include information about faculty, trustees and students; requirements for admission and promotion; curriculum and text books; travel and lodging arrangements; tuition and other costs; and domestic duties [...] Issues increased in size from twelve pages in 1837 to 96 pages in 1900

This catalogue seemed a luxury especially considering the cost of paper and ink. The 1837-1838 catalogue mentioned that this catalogue/call for enrollment would not be printed in paper the following year.

The textbooks assigned, which could be purchased for a lower price at the seminary, were strikingly different from the books we had seen for the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies. *Murray's Grammar and Exercise*, *Simson's Euclid*, *Hayward's Physiology*, *Beck's Chemistry*, *Beck's Biology*, *Whately's Logic*, and *Whately's Rhetoric* are about half of the list of required books for students during the

1837-1838 school year (Mount Holyoke College: Annual Catalogues, 1837-1900, 1997, p. 9). During the 1810s, the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies had an abridged version of a Goldsmith's book, a book for natural history. Mount Holyoke's required Goldsmith's book was *Goldsmith's England, Greece and Rome*. This book was not abridged for youth, as was the one used at the Moravian Seminary.

APPENDIX.

COURSE OF STUDY AND INSTRUCTION.

There is an extensive and systematic English course of study pursued in the Seminary in three regular classes, denominated Junior, Middle and Senior. The studies of each class are designed for one year, though the pupils will be advanced from class to class according to their progress, and not according to the time spent in the Institution. In some cases, individuals may devote a part of their time to branches not included in the regular course, (Latin for instance) and occupy a longer period in completing the studies of one class.

PREPARATORY STUDIES.

The requisites for entering the Junior class are, an acquaintance with the general principles of English Grammar, a good knowledge of Modern Geography, History of the United States, Watts on the Mind, Colburn's First Lessons, and the *whole* of Adams's New Arithmetic, or what would be equivalent in Written Arithmetic. These branches are to be required of candidates for admission to the Seminary.

STUDIES OF THE JUNIOR CLASS.

English Grammar, Ancient Geography, Ancient and Modern History, Sullivan's Political Class Book, Botany, Newman's Rhetoric, Euclid, Human Physiology.

STUDIES OF THE MIDDLE CLASS.

English Grammar continued, Algebra, Botany continued, Natural Philosophy, Smellie's Philosophy of Natural History, Intellectual Philosophy.

STUDIES OF THE SENIOR CLASS.

Chemistry, Astronomy, Geology, Ecclesiastical History, Evidences of Christianity, Whately's Logic, Whately's Rhetoric, Moral Philosophy, Natural Theology, Butler's Analogy.

The above is the course, as pursued in the Seminary the present year. To the studies of the Senior class, there will probably be added, hereafter, two or three branches, and something will be taken from the present list, and added to those of the two preceding classes. On this account, it will be more important, that the preparation to enter the Junior class should be full and thorough.

The Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies, in the mid-1830s through 1850s saw more curricular changes focused on both the arts and the sciences, although perhaps not as strenuous as those set out by Mount Holyoke Seminary. The principal, the Reverend

John G. Kummer, hired a drawing-master; he added physics and chemistry into the curriculum, and employed a professor to lecture on physics, chemistry, and other branches of sciences. Reverend Kummer also “added largely to the stock of Philosophical Apparatus” (Reichel, 1876, p. 21).

The next principal, his tenure running 1844-1847, was the Reverend Henry A. Shultz. Reverend Shultz introduced:

painting-in-oil among the accomplishments taught at the Institution, - purchased a collection of Grunewald's Gustav Grunewald, a meritorious artist, who was connected with the Institution for more than thirty years, works in colors, crayon and pencil, and formed a ‘select class,’ some members of which were, under his direction, trained for teachers. He also erected a gymnasium. (Reichel, 1876, p. 22)

Shultz was proactive in instituting early electives, and started the vocational portion of the school curriculum. Women could be missionaries with their husbands, but the work of the Single Sisters was more blurred. They were to help take care of their community, but as the General Economy had dissolved, their place and usefulness may have been a question for the Moravian heads of the church. Hiring women teachers was a new and cheap labor option for many institutions and industries, tying in nicely with the push for the higher education of women (Palmieri, 2007).

The one primary source textbook found in the Bethlehem Digital History Project website for this time period is the 1842 *The handbook of needlework* by a “Miss Lambert”. The book of the feminine arts was a bit contrary to the curricular robustness the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies was implementing at this time.

It was not until after the 1850s that the curriculum at the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies was reviewed and another, larger, curriculum revision undertaken by the principal, the Reverend Sylvester Wolle, 1849-1861.

Reichel (1876) stated,

Recognizing the importance of affording his pupils all due advantages for the acquisition of knowledge, in order that the Institution entrusted to his care, while maintaining its traditional prestige for thoroughness and excellence of instruction, might compete with other seminaries of the day in meeting the requirements of new modes of thought and new generations of men, its sixteenth Principal wrought zealously for the attainment of this end. He accordingly remodeled the course of study, introduced regular Professors into his corps of teachers, and to raise the standard of the schools of music both instrumental and vocal, engaged the services of graduates of the Conservatories of Music on the Continent. (p. 22)

Reichel demonstrated that Reverend Wolle, and thusly the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies, was very aware of the need to keep up with schools like Mount Holyoke and the Troy Female Seminary.

V. Conclusion

Women in the 1750-1850s, from all social classes, sought higher education for various reasons. The reasons and ways in which they accessed education varied, not due to social class exclusively, but due to what was both available and necessary for them to succeed outside their familial home. The new type of curriculum of many of the seminaries and academies that started to spring up all over the east coast told a story of changing needs for the women, yet the main need of higher education remains.

The constant social and economic changes of the 1700 and 1800s contributed to women's availability to pursue education, particularly in the emerging middle class. The middle class embraced and encouraged their daughters to seek education for improvement, enjoyment, and to help contribute either to the family's finances or to her own finances. When a woman was able to acquire a profession after higher education, she gained the freedom to support herself and be self-reliant. Society did not entirely embrace the idea of female self-reliance, but the idea of women contributing to their community or family was a more popular, acceptable, outcome of wage earning. To have the option, however, was a revelation for many women of all social classes. The opportunity of private and public sphere choice was new to women.

There was little in way of historical research done that answered my thesis question: why did women seek higher education and what did they gain, or hope to gain, from further education. The most current references used on this paper - published in 2013 and 2016 - both continue to refer to research from the 1970s (Boas - which is a reprint of her 1935 text), 2004 (DeBare) and 1990s (Kerber).

Referring again to Nash's (2005) statement,

A full consideration of female education that gives due weight to the idea that women and intellectual interests that deserved realization radically alters the picture of this period. The social utility arguments extended women's opportunities but also maintained women in an inferior position by emphasizing the service that educated women could provide to others. In contrast, arguments from self-interest assumed that women, like men, were fully human in the Enlightenment sense--that they had a capacity for intellectual cultivation (p. 28).

We did not see, in any of the historical research texts on women in higher education, a reason for pursuing education that goes beyond utility. The outcomes of a higher education for women - contributing to the community or family, missionary work, or gaining a profession - still fell under social utility. Education for the expansion of intellect, or for the pure joy of learning about the world around them, had yet to be studied thoroughly. This may be due to the times and the assumptions that came with it: that doing something for the pure joy of it was a frivolousness few could afford, sans the elite classes. However, humans needed frivolity in order to manage the constant utility, work, and responsibilities of life. So then, where is the historical research on education being something that gave women agency and a sense of self in the world by gaining learning in higher education? The main research done on women in higher education still centered on their access and how educating women supported national advancement.

On a superficial level, studying the curriculum can tell an historian at least why women attended and what they hoped to obtain from their time in a seminary or academy. It can also tell us the social class and type of women seeking education at a time when access was not a foregone conclusion, nor was it a socially popular idea. The whys of

seeking higher education were still unclear as there was no concrete information researched and published that would speak to this topic. Scholars like Linda Eisenmann continued to concentrate on women in education, but her areas of research are varied and do not cover this specific area of women and higher education. Eisenmann's work does not cover how women were able to, as Thelin states in the introduction of this paper, "acquire a high level of literacy and professional skills, no thanks to the formal schools or colleges" (Thelin, 2011). Historical research had yet to answer this question fully. There were glimpses here and there, and using curriculum to unify the search helped somewhat in that we see how students acquired skills and high-level literacy, but it did not give us a full picture. Curriculum depended on the schools, and the school's curriculum depended on the students. Women were especially disadvantaged coming to an institutional education. The level of education varied greatly for women due to access, and thus the makeup of any given class was so sporadic that an eighteen year old could be sitting next to a twelve year old learning the same information. Although learning in an eclectic environment was not prohibitive to learning, it may be a very general learning experience that could not be correctly tailored to a student's needs causing a disadvantage for all students in the class.

Finally, there were many more questions raised after researching and writing on how women achieved high literacy and professional skills in a time when they had no access to professional schools, and what they hoped to do with these abundant and unusual [for the times] talents of higher education. The curriculum of womanly arts never truly seemed to leave schools, even when the educational institute, such as Mount Holyoke, was striving to equal that of men's colleges. Needlework, painting, singing,

comportment, and morality were seen as just as important as arithmetic, chemistry, English, reading, writing, and religious classes. I knew my bias reading these historic articles was based on a twenty-first education, but when a school is trying to avoid being labeled for having a “soft curriculum”; it is interesting that these “soft arts” remained. I strongly advocated for the arts, but I was not sure, in a time where usefulness and utility were the utmost goals of education women, that painting and singing would help. Even needlework, by the time of Mount Holyoke, would be less necessary due to the Industrial Revolution in the United States - alternatively hand-sewn items were still a higher-class commodity and luxury and machine made clothing was seen as cheap and not of superior quality. The contrasts of this, however, are undiscussed in the research covered. In addition, the practical applications and the not-so-practical applications of having an education were mysteriously absent from historical research. I know many women saw education as part of their lives and then any further continuation of their work post-higher education was dropped in favor of marriage and child rearing. What was the mindset of these women that they could so easily discard something that had consumed a large part of their lives? Again, there was little research on these women although they existed in the research and they have contributed to the general history of women in higher education.

As Linda Eisenmann stated, the study of women’s history in higher education was in its infancy. I hoped that historians continued to see the value in studying how women navigated a system that was only partially open to men, and was a much more difficult and perilous place for women.

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ⁱ Female (and male), as it pertains to this thesis, references white, Anglo-Saxon persons, unless otherwise noted.

ⁱⁱ Religion, as it pertains to this thesis, references Christian-based religions.