

Dante's Not Dead: New York Women's Clubs and the Local, 1910-1922

“Ladies, Dante is dead,” Mrs. Sarah Platt Decker declared. “He died several centuries ago, and a great many things have happened since his time.” Speaking at the 1904 St. Louis Biennial Convention, Decker, the President of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), addressed a large, crowded ballroom of clubwomen. She continued, “Let us drop the study of his ‘Inferno’ and proceed in earnest to contemplate our own social order.”¹ Though Decker did not go so far as to say that women should abandon study, merely that they should study things closer to home, some of her listeners heard her speech as a call to action—a call for women's clubs to permanently transition to national and municipal political issues. Some clubwomen took up that call, and the following year Helen M. Winslow wrote in her club novel, *The President of Quex*, that modern clubwomen would “prefer Doing to Dante, Being to Browning,” in other words, that a modern clubwoman would be one of action rather than contemplation.² One contemporary club historian, Rheta Childe Dorr, expanded on this perceived turn, writing that “The study period did not last very long. In fact, it was doomed from the beginning, for it is not in the nature of women, or at least it is not in the habit of women, to do things for themselves alone. They have *served* for so many generations that they have learned to like serving better than anything else in the world.”³ And subsequent modern historians have pointed to Decker's speech as a tangible turning point, writing that the study and social movement in women's clubs largely died out by the turn of the twentieth century.⁴ Even

¹ Mrs. Sarah Platt Decker, quoted in Rheta Childe Dorr, *What Eight Million Women Want* (Small and Maynard, 1910), 41.

² Helen M. Winslow, *The President of Quex: A Woman's Club Story* (Norwood Press, 1906), 185.

³ Dorr, *What Eight Million Women Want*, 23, 41.

⁴ Alice Boardman Smuts, Robert W. Smuts, R. Malcolm Smuts, Barbara B. Smuts and P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale, *Science in the Service of Children, 1893-1935* (Yale University Press, 2006), 64; Teva J. Scheer, “The ‘Praxis’ Side of the Equation: Club Women and American Public Administration,” *Administrative Theory & Praxis* 24, no. 3 (2002): 522; Karen J. Blair, ed., *Women in Pacific Northwest History* (University of Washington Press, 1988), 275; Theodora Penny Martin, *The Sound of Our Own Voices: Women's Study Clubs, 1860-1910* (Beacon Press, 1987),

historians of women's study and social clubs, like Theodora Penny Martin, who nearly echoes Dorr, write that "These new club women moved quickly and efficiently from philosophy to philanthropy and rarely looked back."⁵

Nevertheless, President Decker, and her quoters, spoke aspirationally. No such turn occurred. Women continued to use clubs for study, but more importantly as spaces to "do things for themselves alone" by seeking their own and their sex's collective self-betterment.⁶ These were spaces where women could be selfish, and they were certainly accused of being so. But to a certain extent, Dorr was right, and even while pursuing their own self-interest, women managed to have an impact on their immediate communities, albeit not always in the large-scale way of civic clubs engaged in city-wide welfare and other services or those focused on more overtly political issues like suffrage and temperance. These were not Kathleen D. McCarthy's "individualistic women" who "sidestepped separatist initiatives" of "women's culture," but rather women who wholeheartedly stepped into collaborative work, even while seeking individual growth.⁷

Certainly, many women engaged in those macro-scale clubs, and many historians have paid heed to their significant accomplishments.⁸ These clubs did important civic work, often

172; Karen J. Blair, *The Torchbearers: Women and their Amateur Arts Associations in America, 1890-1930* (Indiana University Press, 1994), 32; Alixandra B. Yanus, "Learning to 'Play the Game as Men Do': How the General Federation of Women's Clubs Brought Political Science to Women," *Political Science and Politics* 52, no. 4 (2019): 659-662, DOI:10.1017/S1049096519000507.

⁵ Martin, *Sound of Our Own Voices*, 4.

⁶ Dorr, *What Eight Million Women Want*, 25.

⁷ Kathleen D. McCarthy, *Women's Culture: American Philanthropy and Art, 1830-1930* (University of Chicago Press, 1991), xv.

⁸ Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935* (Oxford University Press, 1991); Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890-1930* (University of Illinois Press, 1994); Erika Kuhlman, "'Women's Ways in War': The Feminist Pacifism of the New York City Woman's Peace Party," *Frontiers* 18, no. 1 (1997): 80-100; Jo Freeman, "'One man, one vote; one woman, one throat': Women in New York city politics, 1890-1910," *American Nineteenth Century History* 1, no. 3 (2000): 101-123; Karen Ross, "Winning Women's Votes: Defending Animals Experimentation and Women's Clubs in New York, 1920-1930," *New York History* 95, no. 1 (2014): 26-40; Susan Goodier, Karen Pastorello, *Women Will Vote: Winning Suffrage in New*

pushing municipal, state, and national governments to reform welfare provision and social work or even filling these public roles until governments took over. In particular, historians of urban spaces and the Progressive Era have spilled much ink analyzing the role of the, often married, middle-aged, middle-class, Protestant, White clubwomen in reforming the American city at the turn of the twentieth century.⁹ These women met monthly or bimonthly to discuss issues of the day, both lofty, like national policy and current events, and lowly, like trash removal and street cleaning. Women's clubs studied issues, lobbied politicians, and in many cases took up the work themselves. Historians have written colorfully of Jane Addams working as a street cleaner, of female probation officers filling in where civil servants had not been assigned, of women meeting immigrants at the docks to orient them in the city, and of women building and operating civic institutions like playgrounds through their own efforts. Each of these tasks taken up by women's clubs represents part of what women's historians argue is a broader definition of politics beyond party activity.¹⁰ They offer a valuable feminist read on what constituted political engagement in an era before the vote.

However, these historians, searching for a positive trajectory for women's political engagement have treated women's clubs' origins in study, sociability, and skill-building as a

York State (Cornell University Press, 2017); Elisabeth Israels Perry, *After the Vote: Feminist Politics in La Guardia's New York* (Oxford University Press, 2019).

⁹ Barbara J. Berg, *The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism: The Woman and the City, 1800-1860* (Oxford University Press, 1978); Suzanne M. Spencer-Wood, "Turn of the Century Women's Organizations, Urban Design, and the Origin of the American Playground Movement," *Landscape Journal* 13, no. 2 (1994): 124-138; Maureen A. Flanagan, *Seeing with Their Hearts: Chicago Women and the Vision of the Good City, 1871-1933* (Princeton University Press, 2002); Dorothy Moses Schulz, "A Precinct of Their Own: The New York City Women's Precinct, 1921-1923," *New York History* 85, no. 1 (2004): 39-64; James J. Connolly, "The Feminine Challenge: Clubwomen and Urban Politics," in *An Elusive Unity: Urban Democracy and Machine Politics in Industrializing America* (Cornell University Press, 2010); Jayme Lemke, Julia R. Norgaard, "Club Women and the Provision of Local Public Goods," in *Public Choices Analysis of American Economic History*, 1-19, ed. Joshua Hall, Marcus Witcher (Springer, 2019).

¹⁰ Elisabeth Israels Perry, "Men are from the Gilded Age, Women are from the Progressive Era," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 1, no.1 (2002): 25-48; Kriste Lindenmeyer, "Review: Review Essay: Citizenship, Gender, and Urban Space in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 1, no. 1 (2002): 95-106.

means to the end of political engagement rather than an end in itself.¹¹ In fact, for many women, joining a club and chasing self-improvement was the end goal. For most clubwomen, college had not been available, so the club represented the only formalized avenue for continued learning and self-improvement.¹² At the meeting where New York women's clubs formed their state federation, Mrs. William Tod Helmuth said that "All women are good, or good for something, or good for nothing, and every organization formed for their improvement is only one more step toward that realization of our highest ideal...a woman perfected."¹³ This perfect woman was not the idealized "angel in the house" envisioned in the cult of domesticity, but rather a woman who knew herself and her world, and felt capable of deploying them both.

Though suffrage, temperance, and welfare clubs have been immortalized for their far-reaching impact, far more women engaged in what I will term "local-impact clubs."¹⁴ These were clubs which aspired to create what other historians have described as "women's culture," or a materialization of women's sphere outside of domestic space, a building of female institutions.¹⁵ Gayle Kimball suggests that women's culture is not inherently separatist or

¹¹ Even historians of study clubs have pointed to these as origin points for political actions. Katherine West Scheil, *She Hath Been Reading: Women and Shakespeare Clubs in America* (Cornell University Press, 2012); Gwen Tarbox, *The Clubwomen's Daughters: Collectivist Impulses in Progressive-Era Girl's Fiction, 1890-1940* (Taylor & Francis Group, 1998).

¹² Anne Meis, Knupfer, Christine Woyshner, eds., *The Educational Work of Women's Organizations, 1890-1960* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Leslie Madsen-Brooks, "A Synthesis of Expertise and Expectations: Women Museums Scientists, Club Women and Populist Natural Science in the United States, 1890-1950," *Gender & History* 25, no. 1 (2013): 27-46.

¹³ "Women's Clubs to Unite: First Step Toward a Federation of New York Organizations - Mrs. Croly May Be Its President, Delegates from All Parts of the State meet at the Invitation of Sorosis and Discuss the New Movement," *New York Times*, November 20, 1894.

¹⁴ Nearly 90% of New York clubwomen were not involved in a suffrage club by 1911. In fact, 26% of the women involved in suffrage clubs were involved in at least one non-suffrage club.

¹⁵ Gayle Kimball, ed. *Women's Culture: The Women's Renaissance of the Seventies* (Scarecrow Press, 1981); Laurel Foster, *Magazine Movements: Women's Culture, Feminisms and Media Form* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015); Rosan A. Jordan, Susan J. Kalcik, *Women's Folklore, Women's Culture* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); McCarthy, *Women's Culture*; Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History* (University of Illinois Press, 1991); Estelle Freedman, "Separatism as Strategy: Female Institution Building and American Feminism, 1870-1930," in *Women Together: Organizational Life*, ed. Nancy F. Cott (DeGruyter, 1994); Tarbox, *The Clubwomen's Daughters*.

apolitical and is in fact deeply engaged.¹⁶ I agree. But for many women these clubs were a space to engage in themselves and with other women in a way which was deeply rooted in place. By the late Progressive Era, rather than turn away from micro-scale study and self-improvement, women instead leaned in further. They sought to take charge of an area which might be as small as their neighborhood, their household, or their own person. In fact, by 1922, nearly 40% of New York women were involved in at least one study club, up from 25% in 1911.¹⁷ Other clubs, like heritage clubs, social clubs, parent clubs, art clubs, and more, dominated the club world (Figures 1 and 2). Each of these clubs, regardless of their purpose, served as a social home for women, who could meet at least monthly for social hours and time together as well as a separate business

Types of Club, 1910-1911

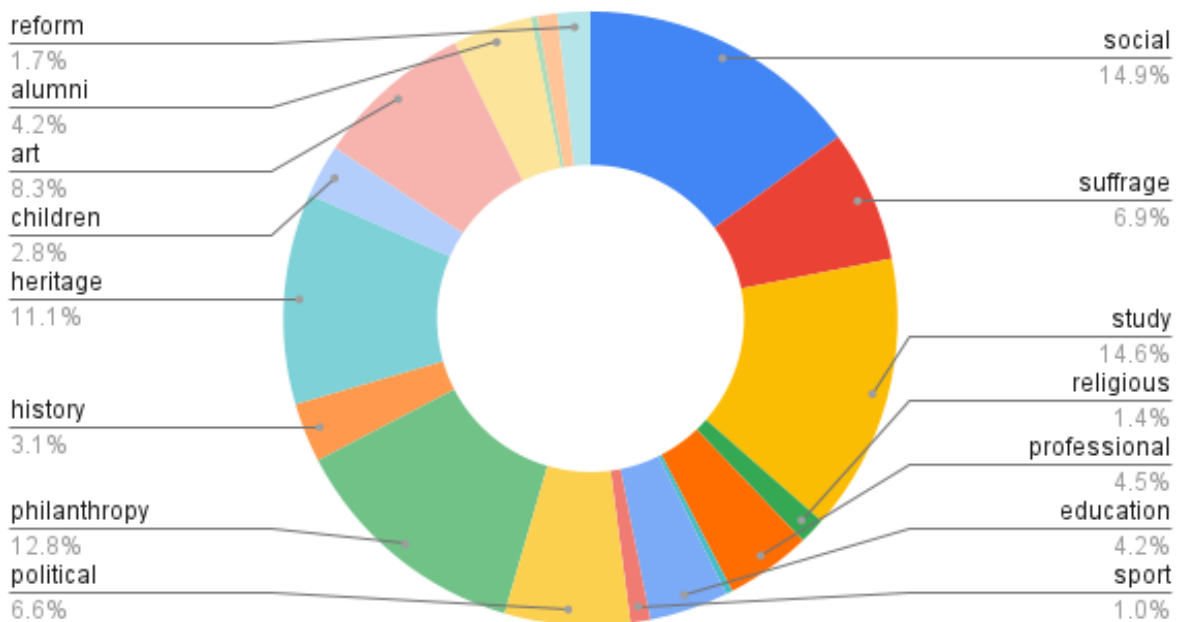


Figure 1: A pie chart of the various categories of clubs in 1910-1911, as listed in Abrahall's directory. The largest category is social clubs, followed by study and philanthropy. Other popular club topics included heritage, art, suffrage, and politics. I categorized the clubs based on their descriptions, and where those were not available, their names. For some of the larger clubs I could also find descriptions of in the press.

¹⁶ Kimball, *Women's Culture*; Robin Morgan, quoted in Kimball, *Women's Culture*, 30-31.

¹⁷ All statistics in this paper taken from analysis of Frances H. Abrahall, ed., *Club Women of New York, 1910-11* and *1921-1922* (Club Women of New York Company, 1910, 1921).

Types of Club, 1921-1922

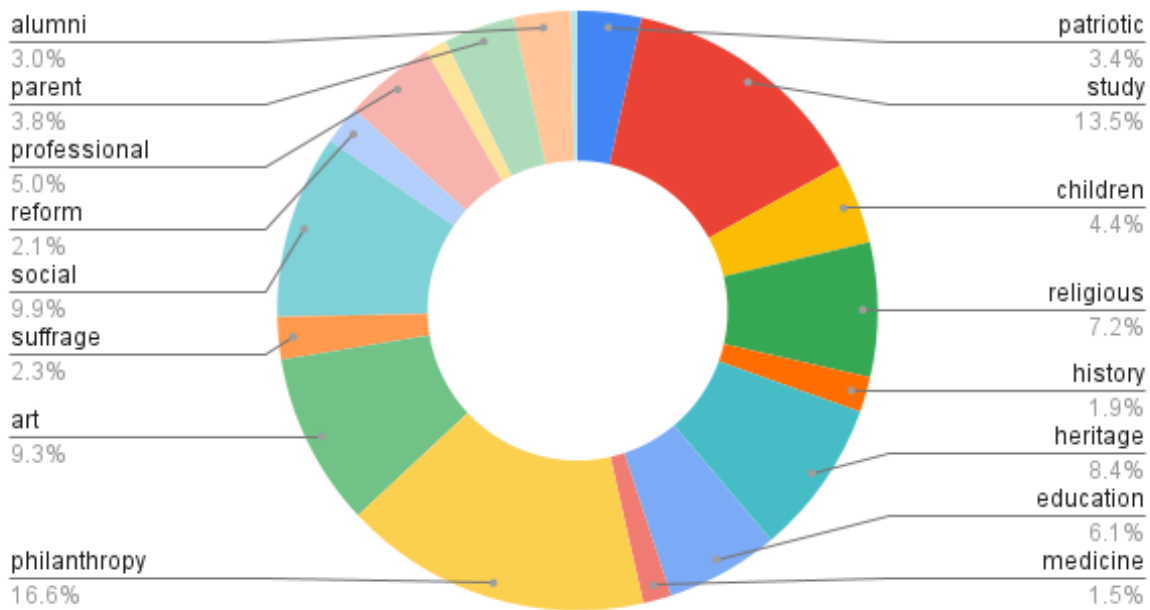


Figure 2: A pie chart of the various categories of clubs in 1921-1922, as listed in Abrahall's directory. The largest category was philanthropic, followed by study. Other popular categories included social, art, heritage, educational, and professional. I categorized the clubs based on their descriptions, and where those were not available, their names. For some of the larger clubs I could also find descriptions of in the press.

meeting. There were even incredibly specific clubs such as those dedicated to chronically shy women (Shut-In Club) and horse driving (Ladies' Four-in-Hand Driving Club). As much as women could and did go far beyond their domestic sphere to engage in city, state, and national politics, they continued to study, put on concerts, and engage in self-interested work in their neighborhoods and on themselves, building not one more local version of the public sphere, but many. Taking the view that there was not one public sphere but rather many helps us to dismantle the false binary between the public and domestic spheres.

These were public spheres largely built by and for women where social life was defined less by conversations on a city-wide scale than on that of the neighborhood and individual. In a sense, these dispersed cultural and social spaces represent a materialization of Foucault's vision of power. Each club, as a center for knowledge production for individual and small groups of

women, divided by space and interest, was one node in the web of Foucault's dispersed centers of power-knowledge. Collectively, the women's clubs represented a significant, if not mass, movement both culturally and politically, towards an expression of women's culture. But individually they each connected themselves to their own specific neighborhoods and made many micro-cultures each with their own influence. These clubwomen operated within their neighborhoods and experienced them as more than the abstract space of streets, and rather as emotionally defined places. They each had their own place-based goals and practices. As a result, these local-impact clubs developed micro-publics. By dispersing cultural production across many nodes, these clubs represented a middle point between public and domestic spheres, bridging their individual lives into the collective without sacrificing themselves.

While acting in their own self-interest may not sound feminist to modern audiences, these women sought to take up space, both physically in the city, and socially in its cultural life. Sherin Susan Babu argues that for clubwomen, the clubs "represent a separate sphere of women's time, forming spaces of temporal reclamation."¹⁸ Instead of tending the hearth, they were tending to their minds and needs. While women certainly did claim their own time, they also claimed space for themselves and their peers, and in doing so often had a physical impact on their neighborhood environments. Only a few historians, including Daphne Spain, have evaluated clubwomen's spaces. She studied the "voluntary vernacular" architecture of women in welfare clubs who built outreach centers far from their homes to house their work.¹⁹ While this is valuable scholarship, I want to add to Spain's study by looking at how clubwomen constructed and acted in spaces more self-interestedly. Self-interest, as opposed to public welfare, often

¹⁸ Sherin Susan Babu, "Clubwomen and Time: An Examination of Temporality in American and British Women's Literary Clubs," (University of Exeter, PhD dissertation, 2022).

¹⁹ Daphne Spain, *How Women Saved the City* (University of Minnesota Press, 2000), xii.

operated on a much smaller scale, even the neighborhood or individual, rather than the whole city. In that vein, Kathleen D. McCarthy suggests that many “nonpoliticized” women’s clubs were “locally, at least, more attuned to the preindustrial scale of the family and the church” because they had limited funds.²⁰ Additionally, to my knowledge, no historian has centered their study on a quantitative or spatial analysis of clubwomen. I propose that a spatial and quantitative analysis, conducted on a highly localized level, allows us a new perspective on the old subjects of women’s culture and club work. Here I will borrow from McCarthy’s formulation of local scale. I argue that it was not merely funds but rather a sense of place which drove women’s club’s concentration on and in the local. Clubwomen believed that the neighborhood spaces around them were important, so their historians should pay attention.

I will demonstrate that among New York clubwomen, the local clubs were an important social and cultural space. They were more than just stepping stones to women’s rights and represented a widely varied set of valuable and active female communities. These were women who wanted to make sisters of their neighbors. Women did not uniformly march out of their homes and into public service, never to return. Rather, many women engaged in some local public services while continuing to seek collective self-improvement. We may not be able to point to them as the forebears of suffrage or municipal services, but nevertheless women in local-impact clubs helped each other. And, just as significantly, they engaged in placemaking. These women engaged their neighborhoods, both people and places, on a deep level. Much of their work was informed by where they lived, by the sense of place which they developed by sharing space. In their small pockets across the city, clubwomen took notice of their neighborhoods, raised them to the notice of others, and built lasting local institutions. They made something

²⁰ McCarthy, *Women’s Culture*, xiv.

valuable. It is to those neighborhood clubs, and the places, both cultural and physical, which women manifested within them that we will turn.

Methodology

In this paper, I draw most of my data from Frances H. Abrahall's *Club Women of New York*, a directory which lists club members and descriptions, from the years 1910-11 and 1921-22. These two years straddle the major developments in women's club world, the constitutional amendments for both temperance and female suffrage, as well as another major organizing point, the First World War. Additionally, these two years are both well into what historians consider to be the height of women's club activity, decades after the first clubs were formed. Abrahall's *Club Women* is a directory of all the clubs and clubwomen in New York City and was published annually under the auspices of both the New York General Federation of Women's Clubs (NYGFWC) and the national GFWC. Contemporary histories of both these organizations reference Abrahall's directory, again lending it credence.

That said, Abrahall's work is problematic. In 1911, the *New York City Charities Directory* listed the NYCGFWC as having around 30,000 members and around 120 clubs.²¹ Abrahall's directory estimates total membership at around 40,000 women but lists around 8,900 women and 186 clubs.²² The extra clubs she lists are all either unfederated or multiple chapters of the same club (i.e., Daughters of the American Revolution), and other sources verify many of the clubs. However, due to the more significant discrepancy between the total estimated number of NYC clubwomen and the number listed, we should consider Abrahall's directory a sample. In other

²¹ S. Eldridge, *New York Charities Directory: An Authoritative Classified and Descriptive Directory of the Social, Civic and Religious Resources of the City of New York, Including the Boroughs of Manhattan, The Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Richmond* (Charity Organization Society in the City of New York, 1911), 334.

²² Frances H. Abrahall, ed., *Club Women of New York, 1910-1911* (Club Women of New York Company, 1910), 10.

years, such as 1921-1922, she requests that women who find themselves not listed should write to her, therefore we may assume that many of the women listed are self-reported or reported by their club leadership. By 1922, the NYCGFWC was estimated to have 80,000 members, which in 1920 would have been nearly 10% of the Native-born White women in all five New York boroughs (total: 810,162), or around 4.6% of all women (total: 1,738,999).²³ Abrahall again lists only around 8,800. A possible source for the discrepancy might include that club leadership only reported active or honorary members, which could equally be true of self-reporting women. Another reason to consider Abrahall's directory a sample is that it lists none of the well-established clubs for Black women in New York. It became the policy of the GFWC to serve White women only, and therefore I assume that all the women listed in Abrahall's directory were White.²⁴

As such, though I use Abrahall's directory as the source for my data, it is not without acknowledging its flaws. However, I believe Abrahall's directory to be a valuable source, not only because it lists individual women's addresses and club memberships, but also because it includes club descriptions, club leadership, advertisements that the publishers considered relevant to clubwomen, and summaries of annual activity. Additionally, I supplement the data I take from this source with the writings of club women, annual reports on the New York and national GFWC, and other documentary sources pertaining to individual clubs and women.

²³ William C. Hunt, *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920 – Bulletin, Population: New York – Composition and Characteristics of the Population* (U.S. Census Bureau, 1920), 7; Helen M. Winslow, ed., *Annual Register and Directory of Women's Clubs in America: Containing Also a Directory of Club Lecturers and Entertainers* (Shirley, MA: 1922), 51.

²⁴ Mary Jane Smith, "The Fight to Protect Race and Regional Identity within the General Federation of Women's Clubs, 1895-1902," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 94, no. 4 (2010): 479-513, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41304225>. Additionally, the MappingHNY census project reveals that Manhattan and Brooklyn were largely white cities, with a few small pockets of Black and mixed-race settlement. I conducted spot checks within these Black enclaves on the few clubwomen who appear there, but their residences were listed as white in the 1910 census.

Both years of Abrahall's directory are available on HathiTrust with complete and reasonably accurate OCR (Optical Character Recognition).²⁵ I used ChatGPT 4.0 to read the OCR of both years, copying and pasting the listed women into the program around 30 at a time. ChatGPT did not train on any of the data I inputted. I instructed ChatGPT to produce a data table of the listed women with columns for page number, line number, title, first name, last name, building (where relevant), address, state, telephone number (where relevant), and clubs (split into 9 columns for ease in reading). As ChatGPT returned this column I watched for any ghosts (i.e., women invented by the AI) or misalignments and, when I saw them, instructed the program to run again. This tended to fix any error it had made in the previous batch. After running the entire directory, I conducted spot checks to evaluate the accuracy of transcription and found that ChatGPT had error rates of less than 1%. I corrected errors in the entire dataset, most of which were small misalignments.²⁶ I also manually constructed a dataset of all the club descriptions and categorized each club according to their stated principal function, or where that was absent, their name. Some clubs had multiple aims, and this was especially true of social and study clubs, which often combined social, study, philanthropic, and political aims.

I inputted the cleaned datasets into ArcGIS Pro 3.0.3. Using the 1910 street geodatabase from Mapping Historical New York, courtesy of S. Wright Kennedy, I created an address locator for both Brooklyn and Manhattan, which I used to map women's residential addresses for both years.²⁷ Because I only had street data for those two boroughs, I did not map any women living in the Bronx, Queens, Staten Island, outstate New York, or further afield. I also did not map

²⁵ Small errors were usually one letter at a time, such as Mks. for Mrs.

²⁶ For a more in-depth discussion of the merits of using ChatGPT as a data structuring tool, please see my forthcoming paper in *Historical Methods*.

²⁷ Gergely Baics, Wright Kennedy, Rebecca Kobrin, Laura Kurgan, Leah Meisterlin, Dan Miller, Mae Ngai. *Mapping Historical New York: A Digital Atlas* (Columbia University, 2021), <https://mappinghny.com>.

women who listed vague addresses such as “23rd Street” or merely “Brooklyn.” As a result, of the women listed in the directory, my map does not represent women living outside Manhattan and Brooklyn, women living in hotels or using PO boxes, or women using unmappable addresses. However, I feel these are acceptable omissions as in both years, over 80% of women listed in Abrahall’s directory lived in either Manhattan or Brooklyn. In 1910-1911 I successfully mapped 77% of the 8879 women listed, and in 1921-1922, I successfully mapped 80.7% of the 8735 women.

Demographics

Most historians, and most clubwomen, characterize the women’s club movement as one dominated by married, middle-aged, middle-class, Protestant White women. To a certain extent this is true, and certainly Abrahall’s directory seems to include only White women. Among these White women, however, there is a fair amount of diversity in terms of religion (primarily Jewish and Christian), ethnicity (based on surname), political affiliation, professional status (i.e., employed or unemployed), educational status, and marital status. There also seems to be some diversity in national origin and citizenship as between my two years of data there are 4 baronesses, 2 countesses, 31 Madames, and 1 Mademoiselle (the latter two could just be an attempt at fanciness). These categories were also not stable over time. For example, in 1910-11, 72% of women were married. However, by 1921-22, 83% of women were married.²⁸

²⁸ These numbers possibly higher due to inability to determine marital status of Dr., Rev., Hon., and Prof. titles.

Additionally, the women appear to be middle- to upper-class. I assume this based on both their overall concentration in the wealthier areas of the city (the Upper East and West Sides) and the quality of goods and locations of stores listed (Figures 3 and 4). The vast majority of the advertisers are located in and around 5th and Madison and sell luxury goods, indicating the wealth which advertisers assumed in their audience. But, in looking at their addresses, not all women lived in the affluent areas of the city, so there may have been some class diversity. These women often billed themselves as a corollary to men's clubs, which also ran the gamut from smoking clubs to political action groups, and a few clubs admitted both male and female members. In summary, the basic ingredient of a clubwoman is a woman who is engaged in an organized group, or club, usually, but not exclusively, composed of other women.²⁹

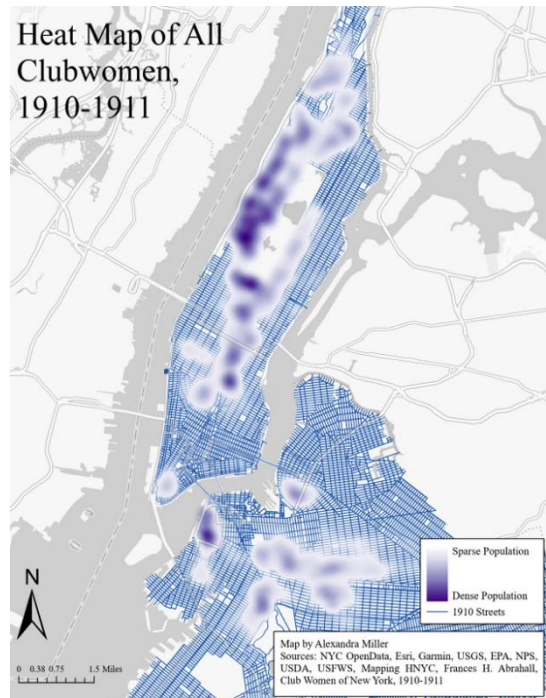


Figure 3: Heat map of all clubwomen in 1910-1911. They are primarily clustered in Manhattan, especially around Central Park on the Upper West Side.

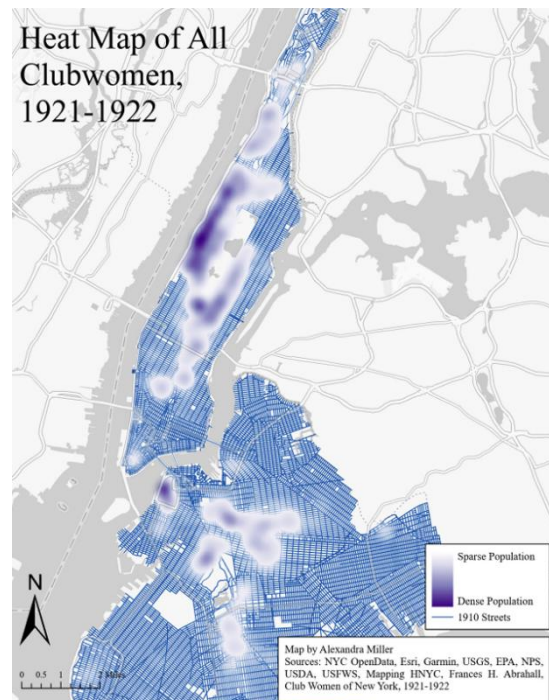


Figure 4: Heat map of all clubwomen in 1921-1922. They are primarily clustered in Manhattan, especially around Central Park on the Upper West Side.

²⁹ A few clubs offered membership to both men and women. Some women in Abrahall's directory were members of only mixed-gender clubs such as the American Playgoers, Barnard, Patria, and Fencers Club.



Figure 5: In this ad from the *American Club Woman Magazine*, Emma Fox advertises her book compiling her columns on parliamentary procedure for clubs. She intended the column, published in *Harper's Bazaar*, to educate clubwomen on formal decorum and order. The illustration of a woman holding a gavel is meant to depict women's clubs as a formal business governed in the same way as men's clubs and the government.

Analysis

Throughout this paper I will use individual clubs to illustrate the various ways in which women both organized within space and, from there, engaged in placemaking. These clubs each had different members, aims, and neighborhoods, but what they share is a deep investment in the places they built. However, though their strategies and values differed by neighborhood, many of their methods were similar across all women's clubs. For

all clubs, regardless of their aim, a significant amount of club work involved meeting with their sisters. Women held these meetings during the club season (approximately September to May) to conduct business, hear a program, and socialize. Many of these meetings took place in

members' homes or in hotels, where women's clubs occasionally gave luncheons. Women might invite men to these luncheons; for example in 1914, Chiropean, a Brooklyn club whose name was the subject of many jokes, held a men's luncheon in which they serenaded their male guests.³⁰ Clubs dedicated other luncheons to lectures, such as one given by Portia in 1905 which included talks on law, the postal service, and Shakespeare.³¹ Because such an important part of

³⁰ Chiropean, "Dinner to Gentlemen," November 23, 1914 (Frank Buttolph Collection, New York Public Library), <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/aca16fe0-c546-012f-e1de-58d385a7bc34#/?uuid=c6d5d0ca-e22f-54db-e040-e00a18063df6>; "Woman as a Namer of Clubs," *New York Tribune*, July 2, 1896; "Chiropean Club of Brooklyn," *General Federation Bulletin* 14, no. 6 (1915); "In the Eastern District: Organization of the Chiropean Club by Women, The Significance of the Name is Known Only by the Members—They Will Discuss Many Things," *New York Tribune*, January 31, 1896.

³¹ Portia, "Third Annual Luncheon of the Portia Club," April 8, 1905 (Frank Buttolph Collection, New York Public Library), <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47db-70bd-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99#/?uuid=510d47db-70bd-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>.

club work was meeting regularly, many clubs offered non-resident dues. They recognized that membership in a club which a woman could not access regularly was less valuable. One club, Colonia, offered free guest membership for “members who have left the club or changed their residence from Brooklyn.”³² Another, the Barnard Club, offered distant members half dues.³³ Allowing distant members to remain part of the club offered women an avenue to maintain the connections they had built to their fellow members and the place the club had built. But clearly clubs were built for members to live close by. They operated on a set of local interests, and therefore worked best when members were local.

In their regular meetings, women’s clubs followed a rigid parliamentary system, and many club publications mention rules of order. Several clubs dedicated themselves to teaching women about parliamentary practice, and club literature depicts meetings as a serious venture.³⁴ One reason clubs depended so much on formal meetings is that women in the Progressive Era had to justify their presence outside of the home.³⁵ Their neighborhood was an intermediate space between their home and the rest of the world. It was there that they could experiment with seeking education, experience, and influence. Women’s historians have identified throughout the nineteenth century and among the middle class a pervasive ideal which permutated from the concept of republican motherhood to the cult of true womanhood to the more general domestic

³² Margaret Hamilton Welch, “Club Women and Club Work,” *Harper’s Bazaar* 30, no. 24 (1897), 488.

³³ “Innovations at the Barnard Club,” *Harper’s Bazaar*, December 8, 1894.

³⁴ Emma Augusta Fox, *Parliamentary Usage of Women’s Clubs* (Doubleday, 1914); Caroline French Benton, *Work and Programs for Women’s Clubs* (Dana Estes & Company, 1913); “Extra Ballot Enlivened Women’s Club Election: Elderly Federation Member Accidentally Put in a Vote Too Many – Scandal Narrowly Averted New Officers Elected for Two Years - \$1,700 Received for Trade School Stock,” *New York Times*, February 9, 1907.

³⁵ The Progressive Era is a contested periodization, but I accept Elizabeth Israels Perry’s call to expand its range for women’s history to include the 1870s through the 1930s. However, in this paper, due to my data source, I will largely be dealing with 1910-1911 and 1921-1922, ranging outside of those dates through mostly the 1890s to 1930 for information on the activities of the clubs identified in those years.

sphere.³⁶ Within this conception, women constructed themselves as essentially different from men and therefore able to offer a unique service to civic society, from raising republican sons to being the angel in the house to managing domestic matters.

Women used this rhetorical position to claim authority over moral and maternal issues, for example child welfare and living conditions.³⁷ However, the concept also worked against women by wrapping them up in domestic matters at the expense of public issues where their “accomplishments have been buried under an avalanche of shirts and puddings.”³⁸ It is for this reason that many historians characterize clubwomen as older married women whose children had left home, because these were women who supposedly had recently acquired time to make their own. They were now purportedly freer to engage with the public sphere on the micro-scale of the neighborhood. It may also be for this reason that Abrahall’s women were in an average of 1.6 clubs in 1911, only increasing to 1.9 by 1922. However, being in fewer clubs also allowed women to dedicate more time to each, thus deepening their connection to their fellows and the places where they met and worked.

³⁶ Historian Linda Kerber coined the term “republican motherhood” in 1976, arguing nineteenth-century women advocated for their own rights to education and social influence by linking their childrearing to the republic. Ruth H. Bloch, “American Feminine Ideals in Transition: The Rise of the Moral Mother,” *Feminist Studies* vol. 4, no. 2 (1978): 100, 115; Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860,” *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (1966): 151; Linda Kerber, “The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment-An American Perspective,” *American Quarterly* 78, no. 2 (1976): 188; Rosemarie Zagari, “Morals, Manners, and the Republican Mother,” *American Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (1992): 192-215; Dawn Sherman, “Virtuous Expectations: Republican Motherhood and True Womanhood in the Early Republic,” in *Early Republic: People and Perspectives*, ed. Andrew Frank (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO, 2009).

³⁷ Jayne Morris-Crowther, “Municipal Housekeeping: The Political Activities of the Detroit Federation of Women’s Clubs in the 1920s,” *Michigan Historical Review* 30, no. 1 (2004): 33-34; Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work*, 2-3; Suellen M. Hoy, “Women as Municipal Housekeepers,” in *Major Problems in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era*, 434-7, ed. Leon Fink (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1983), 435; Susan Marie Wirka, “The City Social Movement,” in *Planning the Twentieth-Century American City*, ed. Mary Corbin Sies and Christopher Silver (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 55; Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1980).

³⁸ “Women’s Clubs to Unite.”

Because many commentators saw self-improvement as a selfish venture, they often accused clubwomen of being bad mothers or wives or pushing against natural order. In one dramatic instance, the firebrand Reverend Madison C. Peters spoke to the West End Women's Republican Association, proclaiming that "God has put into the hands of women at their own hearthstones power greater than that President Roosevelt wields to-day...I challenge you to find in the Encyclopedia of Biography one great man who was the son of a fashion-pampered mother." He amended that he did not mean that "a woman should be a prisoner in her home," but nevertheless, the women listening booed and hissed. Less dramatic instances saw women declare loudly to her sisters that they were good, sober mothers who had evolved to meet a modern world which demanded they be educated.³⁹ However, Rev. Peters' point was clear: women should not spend time on themselves and instead dedicate themselves to the tradition of service which Dorr saw in them.

However much women had to contend with justifying their presence in public life, they nevertheless worked to use the space around them to their own ends. Only a few clubs encountered sustained resistance to their self-interested presence in public space. One of these,

³⁹ "Women Hiss Dr. Peters and Deny Drinking: Pastor's Talk Raises a Storm in the West End Association, He's Against Their Voting, Tells His Audience to Stay at Home and Wield Greater Power Than the President," *New York Times*, March 9, 1906; "New York Not Half Bad: Dr. Parkhurst and the Rev. Mr. Peters Taken to Task at the Minerva Club," *New York Times*, March 27, 1906; "Lone Man Women's Guest: He Tells the Minerva Club They Are Better Off Than They Think," *New York Times*, December 31, 1907; "Toasts of Club Women: Eclectics Drink, in Pure Croton, to Husbands and Children," *New York Times*, April 26, 1906.

the Fortnightly Library Club, “essentially a neighborhood club” centered on Brooklyn’s Twenty-Sixth Ward with social and literary aims, met twice monthly, and had five committees dedicated to “art, education, the home, literature, and history.” Even as late as thirty years after their founding, Fortnightly members maintained a strong residential enclave in their tiny original neighborhood, only having a few members outside a few-block radius (Figure 6). At their fortnightly meetings, the committees rotated turns in presenting a report on a country from each of their perspectives. In addition to their own self-improvement and learning, the members sought to

have a “useful influence” on their neighborhood in East New York.⁴⁰ The club operated a circulating library of over one thousand books which they eventually allowed the Brooklyn Free Library Association to take over in order to conserve their energy for further study and putting on lecture series.

Despite their deep entrenchment in their own neighborhood, the Fortnightly members and their activities did not make their neighbors happy. In one particularly cinematic and telling instance of local resistance, in 1899, Fortnightly tried to hold a lecture by Charles Skinner at Public School 108 for the club and “its friends.” They were rebuffed repeatedly by Principal

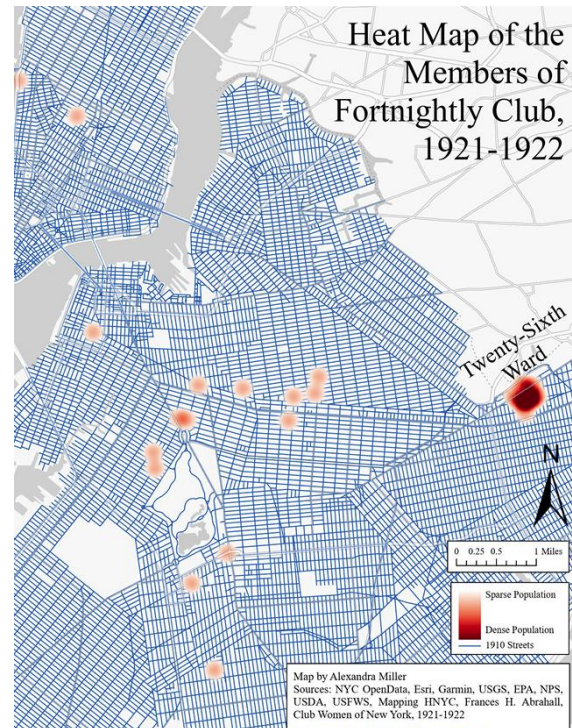


Figure 6: Heat Map of Fortnightly Library Club. The club members primarily lived in Brooklyn's Twenty-Sixth Ward, where you can see the deepest red color. The membership was kept limited, but the club did not entirely close itself off to members outside the original neighborhood, as you can see there are also members in Bedford and Manhattan. However, the residential enclave remained strong even thirty years after their formation.

⁴⁰ Anna D. West, “Club Women and Club Work,” *Harper's Bazaar* 32, no. 14, April 8, 1899.

Frank B. Stevens, and eventually went over his head to the city for permission.⁴¹ In response, on the day of the lecture, Principal Stevens slyly alerted all the children in the Ward that there would be a magic lantern show at the school in the evening, then disappeared. When the clubwomen and their speaker arrived, to their great shock they found an excited “human deluge” who jostled and barred their entry. The members called for police reinforcements, a full squadron of whom arrived shortly after and escorted the women into the building. The police reinforcements thinned the mob down to only around five thousand. But with the promise of a magic lantern show dashed, the remaining crowd sat unhappily, catcalling Mr. Skinner throughout his educational talk “Across British America.” Over the loud jeering inside, the members could still hear the mob which had not been admitted yelling outside and hurling stones at the windows. In the aftermath, Principal Stevens told the *New York Times* “with a bland smile” that “I am very sorry this happened, but the Fortnightly Club should have made better preparations for handling a large crowd.” The reporter called him a “wag” but noted that the ladies used “much more vigorous” language.⁴² For many of these women, the school was only a few blocks from their home. Clearly their attempt to use their own public space, even in such a small area, was not without contest. In his machination, Principal Stevens made a deliberate effort to prove that women had no right to use public space in their own neighborhood. If they had accepted defeat, Fortnightly would have been relegated back to meeting only at the homes of members.

Though the Fortnightly Library club incident was just one snag, and other clubs faced even fewer obstacles, or at least less violent resistance, the club’s attempt at a lecture series

⁴¹ “Children Caused Trouble: Police Reserves Called to Public School No. 108, Principal Stevens’s Announcement of a Free Lecture Caused a Stampede Which Nearly Ended in a Riot,” *New York Tribune*, January 14, 1899.

⁴² “The Principal Laughed Last: Fortnightly Library Club of Brooklyn Treated to a Disagreeable Surprise by Mr. Stevens,” *New York Times*, January 14, 1899; J.T. McKechnie, “Mr. McKechnie Replies: The Statement of Principal Stevens on School No. 108 Dissected,” letter to the editor, *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, January 15, 1899.

illustrates three things about the ways clubwomen interacted with space. First, they often organized their clubs within a neighborhood, in this case the Twenty-Sixth Ward. Second, they often organized or met within local institutions like P.S. 108. Third, they often saw the spaces around them as their own, in this case somewhere where they had the right to host a public lecture series, somewhere where they could and did develop a strong sense of place and ownership. Throughout the rest of this paper, I will use several case studies to explore the various ways in which women's clubs organized around or built their own local institutions. In doing so they not only used their neighborhood space but also engaged in placemaking, creating for themselves an emotional attachment and a public association with the space. These women felt, justifiably, that they had the right to use public space, and a right to shape it.

One space or institution around which clubs might form was schools. For example, parent organizations were, by nature of school assignments, often clustered close to the schools. Another instance of this phenomenon is the Columbia Dames, an organization "composed of the wives of graduate students of Columbia University and wives of instructors, also mothers of graduate students in temporary residence."⁴³ Of Abrahall's six listed members, four lived within four blocks of the campus, the other two living around 185th Street, where the medical campus would soon be built (Figure 7).⁴⁴ The Dames described their goals as professional improvement, writing in their constitution that "We believe that home making is a profession and that home makers should be as alert and progressive as other professional people."⁴⁵ They quite literally aspired to exert their influence on their own homes, but needed to take up public space beyond

⁴³ Columbia Dames, in Abrahall, *Club Women of New York, 1921-1922*, 85. Columbia University did not admit women until 1983.

⁴⁴ The Columbia Spectator estimated the membership in the same year as around 150. "Women of University Meet," *Columbia Spectator*, October 28, 1914.

⁴⁵ "'Columbia Dames' Hear Dr. Miner," *Columbia Spectator*, March 6, 1914.

those homes to do so. The Dames clearly confound the division between public and domestic spheres because they at once had a foot in both, using each to inform the other, standing in the middle with their sisters.

To that end, they met weekly in Barnard College, Columbia's women's college, to hear lectures, go on hikes and picnics, and otherwise seek "social entertainment."⁴⁶ However, the Dames, like many social clubs, also worked philanthropically and politically. They "exercise[d] their maternal instincts" to operate a day nursery for the children of students.⁴⁷

Additionally, during the three years New York experimented with a women's police precinct, the Columbia Dames petitioned Police Commissioner Enright to consider the value of a special training course for policewomen. He denied the petition, responding that "There cannot be a field for women in the regular uniformed part of the department, not as patrolmen, of course: the conditions of the work bars them for the

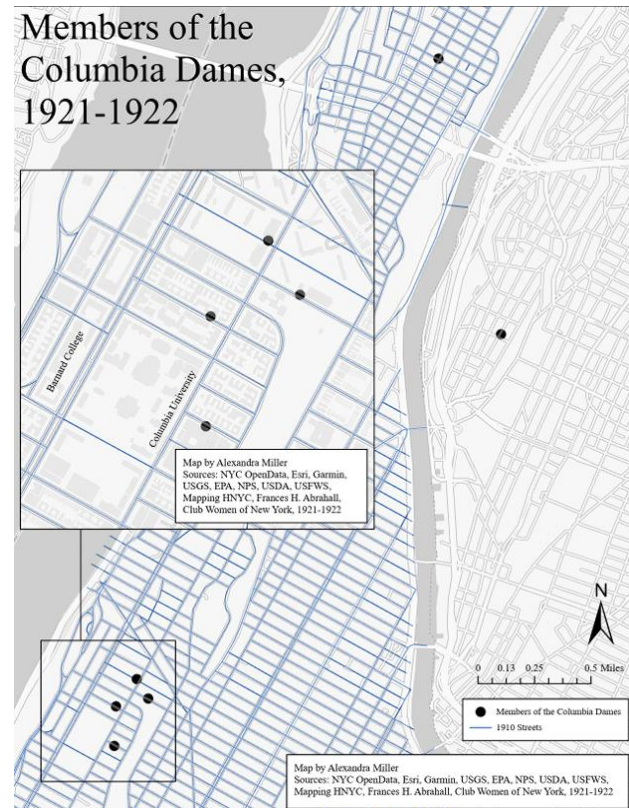


Figure 7: Map of the members of the Columbia Dames, an organization composed of women related to Columbia University students and faculty. As you can see, most of the club members lived very close to the campus (shown in the inset map). Two other members lived further uptown in Manhattan and in the Bronx, near to where the medical college would be opened in 1928.

⁴⁶ "Columbia Dames Hear Dr. Miner"; "Dames Will Visit 'Times,'" *Columbia Spectator*, January 10, 1927; "Dames Announce Meeting," *Columbia Spectator*, November 25, 1924; "Women of University Meet"; "Teachers College," *Columbia Spectator*, September 27, 1913; "Wives of Graduate Students Form Club," *Columbia Spectator*, September 29, 1908; "Columbia Dames Meet Again," *Columbia Spectator*, February 3, 1911; "Society of Columbia Dames Addressed," *Columbia Spectator*, March 20, 1914; "Columbia Dames plan Picnic in New Jersey," *Columbia Spectator*, July 26, 1920; "Columbia Dames To Meet," *Columbia Spectator*, March 16, 1927; "Columbia Dames to Meet," *Columbia Spectator*, January 19, 1927.

⁴⁷ "Children Play in Columbia Dames Nursery While Parents Are Occupied With Studies," *Columbia Spectator*, October 20, 1932.

same reasons that only men are taken into the army and the navy.” He amended that women could fill special roles on juvenile delinquency cases.⁴⁸ Clearly, the Columbia Dames, though they formed around homemaking and their connection to a local institution, had larger aspirations to impact, which they connected back to that same institution.

Another local institution around which clubs might organize was heritage sites. Women might feel an even greater connection to these places as compared to a temporary place association such as a school. Clubs like Chiropean often used nearby historic homes like the Knapp Mansion and Pouch Mansion as meeting spots, especially when their membership grew too large to meet in members’ homes. But heritage sites, because they were local landmarks, might also serve as founding sites for clubs, thereby deepening their emotional attachment to place. For example, in 1897 Mrs. Ferdinand P. Earle, the last owner of the Morris-Jumel Mansion, the oldest residential building in New York, founded the Washington Heights Chapter of the DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) in the house. The new chapter also placed a commemorative bronze tablet on the house, which they later claimed showed “clearly that they were the first discoverers of the house as a Revolutionary souvenir.”⁴⁹ Later, after Captain Earle’s death in 1903, the Washington Heights and Knickerbocker Chapters of the DAR, came together to



Figure 8: The Jumel Mansion, pictured from the front in 1908.

⁴⁸ Moses Schulz, “A Precinct of Their Own”; “Enright Advises Women: Finds Them Useful on Force, but Not as Patrolmen,” *New York Times*, November 10, 1922. Schulz writes that in fact there were patrolwomen.

⁴⁹ “Warriors of the Daughters Who Fight Against the Dames: An Up-to-Date Revolution Over the Possession of the Jumel Mansion is Being Waged by Twenty-Eight Women,” *New York Times*, April 24, 1904.

form the Washington Headquarters Association in an attempt to purchase and maintain the Mansion (Figure 8). For them, the Mansion was not just a local landmark, located near the two chapters in Washington Heights and the Upper West Side, respectively (Figure 9). It was also their founding site, part of their own history, their own local landscape, a place towards which they could orient themselves and their society. But for the rest of the city and country, the Mansion was a point of national history, home to loyalists, Frenchmen, and at one time General Washington, who, after the

Battle of Long Island, stayed at the home for five weeks, using then loyalist Roger Morris's estate as his headquarters.⁵⁰

The divide between the DAR's local and personal attachment to the place and the city's more general patriotic attachment to the building shortly came to be a problem. The DAR petitioned the city repeatedly beginning in 1900 to purchase the grounds from Mrs. Earle for a

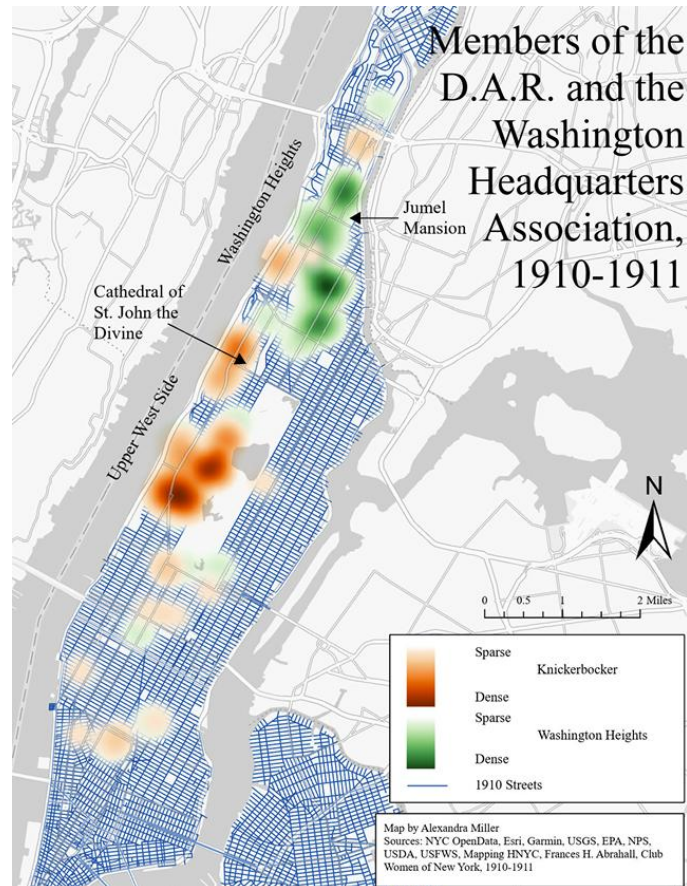


Figure 9: Map of the members of the Washington Heights and Knickerbocker Chapters of the D.A.R. and the Washington Heights Association. The Knickerbocker Chapter is clustered around the Upper West Side and the Washington Heights Chapter is clustered around Washington Heights.

⁵⁰ Emma A.F. Smith, "Historical Sketch of Washington's Headquarters," Washington Headquarters Association, 1908. Mrs. Ferdinand P. Earle was his second wife, Lydia Jones Tuttle, widow of Doriphus Tuttle. Before his death, Ferdinand P. Earle had written that the Jumel Mansion was not for sale and that he intended his grandchildren to live in the house. Ferdinand P. Earle, "The Jumel Mansion Not for Sale," letter to the editor, *New York Times*, February 14, 1898.

museum, which they eventually did after many delays. But then the real war began. The DAR fell into a heated battle against the Colonial Dames over who would administer the site, eventually going over the authority of the city to the state government in Albany, which again returned the decision to Park Commissioner John J. Pallas. In their repeated entreaties to him, daily committee visits, and loud complaints, the DAR and Washington Headquarters Association claimed that they had the stronger claim because they “saw the Jumel mansion first.”

While the city-wide Dames made their claim in a more generally patriotic way, the local DAR and Association made theirs personal and based on their perceived ownership of the site. It was part of their neighborhood and their institutional history, therefore they could not stomach it going to another organization, even one with such similar aims and composition.⁵¹ An anonymous “Historian” wrote to the *New York Times* summarizing the conflict as one between a national organization with only a passing interest in New York (the Dames) or the local chapter of Daughters who had been there since 1897. They wrote that “what these seventy-five women [the Dames] are asking is that the city authorities shall turn out the Daughters to accommodate them.”⁵² Ultimately, the city decided with the DAR. To the great acclaim of many in the city, the organization worked to preserve the building and its history, and to augment its place as a cornerstone of their community. They renovated the building, put on exhibits, held annual

⁵¹ “City to Buy Jumel Mansion: Board of Public Improvements Determines to Secure the Historic Spot as a Show Place,” *New York Times*, March 7, 1901; “Jumel Mansion Mortgage: Proceedings to Foreclose It Begun—The City Urged to Buy the Property,” *New York Times*, May 4, 1902; “Union Franchise Granted: Board of Estimate Again Acts on Bronx Railway Project, Aldermen May Approve It This Time – Jumel Mansion to be Bought for \$235,000,” *New York Times*, July 30, 1903; “Pallas in the War of Dames and Daughters: Legislature Makes Him Judge in Contest for Jumel Mansion, Trouble Coming His Way, Women of Rival Patriotic Organizations Give Their Views of Each Other’s Claims,” *New York Times*, April 3, 1904; “Jumel Mansion Bill Signed: Structure Can Now Be Turned Over to Women’s Patriotic Society,” *New York Times*, May 5, 1904; “Dames and Daughters Urge Claims Again: Pallas Sits as Solomon on the Jumel Mansion Case, But, Alas! No Decision, Senator Grady Butts Against a Genealogy Rock – Unpleasant Words Like ‘Tory Bandied Freely,’” *New York Times*, November 20, 1904;

⁵² Historian, “Dames and Daughters: The Latter Willing to Share Custody of Jumel Mansion,” letter to the editor, *New York Times*, November 24, 1904.

fundraisers and lawn parties, bought back original furnishings, held lecture series, and continued to meet there regularly. They made the house museum and even more central place within their organizational memory and agenda. On a larger scale, they headed the annual city-wide celebrations of Washington's birthday, his inauguration, and Memorial day.⁵³ As such, they also raised their neighborhood to the eyes of the city and proclaimed its city-wide relevance.

Not only did the Daughters bring the institution more firmly into their own community, they also tangibly influenced the material aspects of their neighborhood. One effect was economic. The Association claimed that in 1912, over 30,000 visitors toured the Mansion, each paying a small fee and possibly spending more time and money in the area before returning home. Additionally, the Association donated money to local causes, like the construction of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine (Figure 9).⁵⁴ Another (intended) effect was social. The Association, along with several other heritage organizations, petitioned the City Park Commissioner to rename the site from Jumel Mansion to Washington's Headquarters. The Commissioner forwarded the petition to the aldermen and, had they accepted, the Association would have reoriented the neighborhood's century-long memory along new lines. Mrs. Rosalie Loew Whitney, representative delegate of the Women's Municipal League, argued against the

⁵³ "Activities of Women's Clubs," *New York Tribune*, November 8, 1914; "Washington's Anniversary Is Observed Here: Tributes Paid to Founder of Country in Churches and at Public Meetings on His 190th Birthday, Senator Willis a Speaker, Bishop Manning and Others Point to Inspiration in Life of First President," *New York Tribune*, February 23, 1922; "North and South Join in Honoring Gen. Grant," *New York Tribune*, May 30, 1919; "Relics at Jumel Mansion," *New York Tribune*, May 10, 1912; "Going On To-day," *New York Tribune*, June 1, 1921; "Colonial Relics Exhibited," *New York Tribune*, May 28, 1920; "Washington's Mother: Mr. Shelton Tells History of Portrait in The Times," letter to the editor, *New York Times*, March 11, 1914; "Jumel relics bring \$12,959: Societies of Revolution Compete for Historic Souvenirs, \$10,000 Tintoretto Canvas sold for \$150, Napoleon's Army Trunk is Knocked Down for \$310, His Clock for \$525," *New York Tribune*, April 2, 1916; "Napoleon's Trunk is Sold for \$310: War Chest Carried by Emperor in campaigns Was Damaged by Fire in Moscow, Jumel Portrait for \$735, Bought by Washington Headquarters Association—Her Ballroom Gown of 1852 Fetches \$22.50," *New York Times*, April 2, 1916; "Wouldn't Wed Washington," *New York Tribune*, February 23, 1913; "Step Into the Distant Past by Entering the Jumel Mansion," *New York Tribune*, May 24, 1914.

⁵⁴ "Wouldn't Wed Washington"; "'Golden Roll' of Cathedral Givers to Be Enshrined: Bishop Manning Announces Plan at Luncheon Given by Gen. Sherrill to Historic and Patriotic Societies," *New York Tribune*, December 5, 1924.

change, declaring that everyone was familiar with the Jumel name and that Washington “had the reputation of sleeping in so many places which now bore the name of his headquarters, she doubted he had ever had time to sleep two nights in the same house.” She was concerned with maintaining the unique Jumel name for the landmark, rather than diminishing its distinctiveness. *The Times* did not report on whether she named the other two Washington Headquarters museums within fifty miles of the Mansion.⁵⁵

A final, and more dramatic,

example of women’s clubs organizing around local places was the Woman’s League for the Protection of Riverside Park. Rather than organize around a single building like Barnard College or the Jumel Mansion, these women instead organized around the sixty-block park on the Hudson River. Several railroad projects threatened Riverside Park, particularly the Central Railroad which petitioned for permission to build track through the park. In response, women formed the League to repeatedly demonstrate and protest against the destruction of the park. A

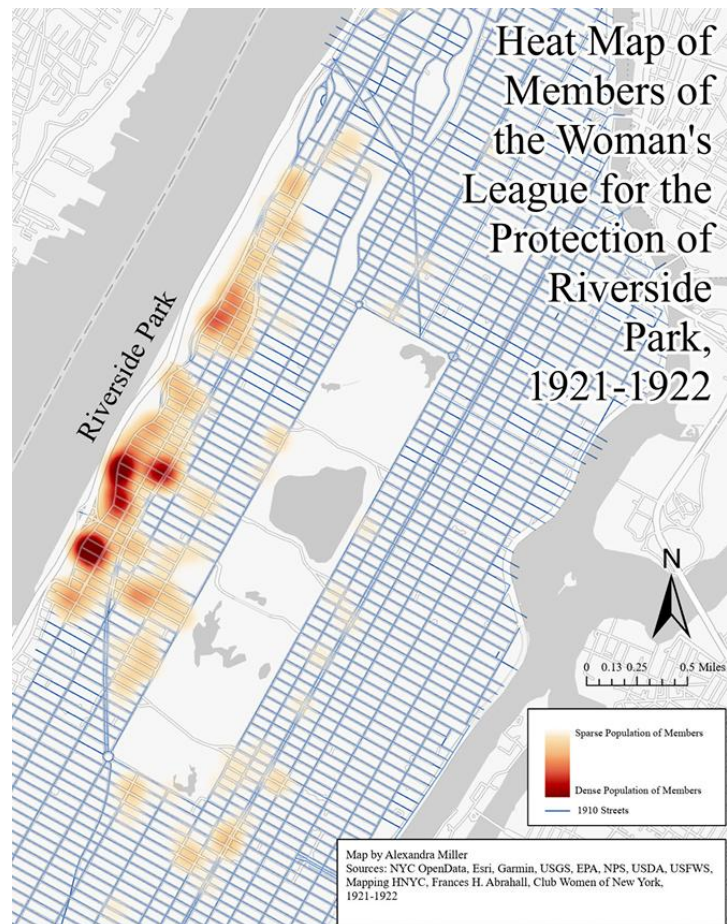


Figure 10: Heat map of members of the Woman's League for the Protection of Riverside Park. The darker red color, indicating dense population, is clustered along Riverside Drive and the Park, where the vast majority of members lived.

⁵⁵ “To Rename Jumel House: Aldermen Asked to Call It ‘Washington’s Headquarters,’” *New York Times*, March 11, 1915. Many other people protested the name change. Roland Burbank Smart, “The Roger Morris House: This Name Suggested in Place of ‘The Jumel Mansion,’” letter to the editor, *New York Times*, March 14, 1915

small delegation even went to Albany for a state hearing on the issue, and several members wrote passionate letters to newspaper editors in defense of the park.⁵⁶ The members, the architects they hired, and their allies, appealed to “the broader and fuller sense of citizenship” by referencing not only economic, social, and natural harms, but also future harms to generations who would not be able to play.⁵⁷ The League often framed its protest as a benefit to the entire city, calling the park a valuable waterfront playground for every New Yorker, and even a national treasure.⁵⁸

However, while the League may have spoken to the entire city, for members it was a deeply neighborhood issue. A large majority, 65%, of League members lived along Riverside Drive or within two blocks of the Park. Nearly 80% lived in the four blocks between Riverside and Central Parks (Figure 10). Thus, when the members made appeals referencing the community of nearby residents who would lose access to “their front yard” and claimed that the value of the Park (beyond beauty) was its use “as a residential centre,” they meant it quite literally.⁵⁹ This was not just a park near them. It was a park where they promenaded, where their

⁵⁶ “Riverside Fight in Albany To-Day: This City’s Delegations Will Present Arguments in Capitol, Opposing Factions to Make the Trip, Hearings on Bill Expected to include Discussion of West Side Project,” *New York Tribune*, February 6, 1917; Mrs. John C. Coleman, “Woodman, Spare That Tree,” letter to the editor, *New York Tribune*, January 12, 1917; Helen Culver Kerr, “Riverside Park Plans: Indorsement of the Scheme of Park Commissioner Herrick,” letter to the editor, *New York Tribune*, February 18, 1929; Georgie Wayne Day, “Save Riverside Park,” letter to the editor, *New York Tribune*, January 10, 1917; “Asks Taxpayers to Mass Meeting: Women’s League to Protest Destruction of Drive To-morrow Night,” *New York Tribune*, May 18, 1916; “Riverside Women to Attack Central: Say Steam Trains Destroy Park as Residential Centre,” *New York Tribune*, June 2, 1916; “Don’t Want Freight in Their Front Yards: Riverside Residents Protest Against N.Y.C. Plans,” *New York Tribune*, July 22, 1916; “To Protest West Side Plan,” *New York Tribune*, June 13, 1916; “New Riverside Plan Shifts Cost: Opponents’ Proposal Adds \$6,000,000 to Central’s Share in Project, Calls for Roofing and Track Changes, Hearing May Bring About Compromise—Court Action On To-day,” *New York Tribune*, January 18, 1917; “Women Assail Plan for Riverside Park: Want Bridges, Not Tunnels, as Engineers Propose, to Give Access to Outer Edge, Fear Commercialization, Too Much Land North of 137th St. Conceded to Railroad, Says Protective League,” *New York Times*, July 5, 1927; “Fight 79th St. Ferry Slip: Ta-Kala Society and Woman’s League Protest Riverside Plan,” *New York Times*, March 8, 1928.

⁵⁷ Jens Jensen, “Report to the Women’s League for the Protection of Riverside Park on the proposed plan for changes in the New York Central Railroad along the Hudson,” November 29, 1916.

⁵⁸ Jensen, “Report to the Women’s League for the Protection of Riverside Park on the proposed plan for changes in the New York Central Railroad along the Hudson”; Woman’s League for the Protection of Riverside Park, “Our City,” 1916; Woman’s League for the Protection of Riverside Park, “Some Plain Facts About Riverside Park,” 1916.

⁵⁹ “Grove of ‘State’ Trees for Drive is Planned,” *New York Tribune*, January 26, 1923; “Don’t Want Freight in Their Front Yards”; “Riverside Women to Attack Central”; “Mayor’s Aid Sought for Riverside Park: Trees Along Drive

children played, where they watched “sweethearting.” Several neighborhood residents and League members complained that, if the Central Railroad won its contract and laid tracks, they would have to move away. One member, Mrs. Amelia Bingham, declared at a League meeting that “if they persist I shall sell my home for what I can get and move where I won’t have to listen to steam shovels for ten years, for, I tell you, there are lots of us who can’t wait the generation it will take the trees to grow again in our beautiful front yard.”⁶⁰ In her complaint, Mrs. Bingham, who lived on Riverside Drive, gave the Park a sensory neighborhood as well as an emotional one. The Railroad would negatively affect anyone living within sight or sound of the Park, and it would destroy the park as a cherished place which defined the neighborhood. The League members felt so strongly about their local attachment that, when asked by State Senator Nathan Straus to change their name to “Protection of Parks,” they refused. President Mrs. John Clapperton Kerr responded that the League was a “little watchdog for Riverside Park” and that other organizations could cover other parks.⁶¹ For them, the Park was part of their homes and community. They established a bird sanctuary, planted trees, asked for fences and other improvements, held annual luncheons and public lectures, and played within it.⁶² In a very real sense it was theirs.

Are Dying, League Women Declare, and Caretakers are Needed, Ask Action Before Spring, Want Curbing Along Old Bridle Path Removed and Fence Put Up for Safety of Children,” *New York Times*, February 25, 1927; Grace P. Stewart, “Fighting for Riverside: Active Interest Needed to Save the Park from Destruction,” letter to the editor, *New York Times*, July 28, 1916.

⁶⁰ “Exodus Threatened on Riverside Drive: Woman’s League Fears Noise of Steam Shovels and Destruction of Park, Denounce West Side Plan, Speakers Say City Loses \$1,800,000 to N.Y. Central—Urge Estimate Board to Examine Titles,” *New York Times*, June 21, 1916.

⁶¹ “Estimate Board Boosted as ‘Show’: ‘Its Meetings Better Than Any Theatre,’ Mrs. John C. Kerr Tell Clubwomen, Riverside Park Discussed, League for Its Protection Hears Addresses by Senator Straus and Assemblyman Kaufman,” *New York Times*, April 17, 1924. Mrs. John Clapperton Kerr was Helen Culver Kerr.

⁶² “An Act of Vandalism: Junipers Stolen From Riverside Bird Sanctuary,” *New York Tribune*, May 17, 1928; “‘Grove of States’ Dedicated To-day in Riverside Park: Patriotic Societies Hold Ceremonies on 300th Anniversary of Peter Minuit’s Arrival,” *New York Tribune*, May 4, 1926; “Grove of ‘State’ Trees for Drive is Planned,” “Bird Protection Gains Impetus by Federal Fund: Many Groups in New York City and State Organize Conservation Association, Scout Troops Lend Aid, Central and Battery Parks Rendezvous for Flocks,” *New York Tribune*, June 2, 1929

These clubs formed around existing institutions like schools, churches, outreach centers and neighborhood services, museums, and parks. The similarity across each of these institutions was its centrality to the neighborhood, and its ability to serve as a forum for women to meet and speak. Clubwomen saw these places as an avenue into public worlds, where they could both learn from each other and make their opinions known. For these women, their clubs offered them female companionship, work, and a feeling of importance and accomplishment. Women came to them to learn, both by listening and by doing. Above all, these clubs offered women a deeply-rooted sense of place and ownership in their neighborhoods.

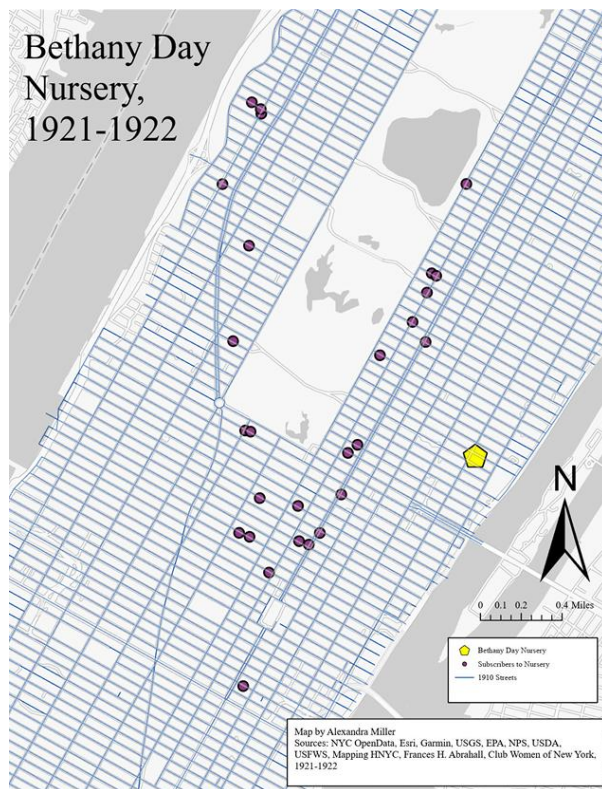


Figure 11: Map of Bethany Day Nursery and its subscribers. The members, represented by dots, are clustered around Central Park in the Upper East Side, and the Nursery, represented by a pentagon, is along the waterfront of the Upper East Side, likely in a poorer district, but still very close to its members.

In cases where clubs organized without an existing institution, they occasionally built their own. Two clubs offer views into how clubwomen deployed space for philanthropy, one which built a community institution and one which built a more colonial welfare institution from which to export their values to a distant site. The first, Bethany Day Nursery, had members who funded a day nursery for the children “of the neighborhood” through their subscription fees to the club. Throughout the year they also hosted ticketed luncheons, lecture series, performances, and even an annual Snow Ball for debutantes, all held at the nearby

Nursery, and the proceeds of which went to operating the Nursery.⁶³ The effect of this social work was two-pronged. The clubwomen managed the health, food, recreation, and early education of the hundred children in their daily care, and alleviated the burdens of their parents. They also offered services for people of their own age, by offering educational, social, and entertainment opportunities at the same site. Both functions brought the nursery into the community, making it an active and productive institution in the neighborhood.

The dual impact stems from the Nursery's location very near to its subscribers.

The Bethany Nursery had a radically different spatial approach from other nursery clubs, like the Little Mothers' Aid Association, which operated three "home-making circles."⁶⁴ Bethany subscribers lived relatively close to the Nursery, making the two feel more closely linked (Figure 11). Though the members primarily lived in the Upper East Side, an affluent district, the Nursery was only a few blocks away towards the waterfront. Because of the short distance, Bethany

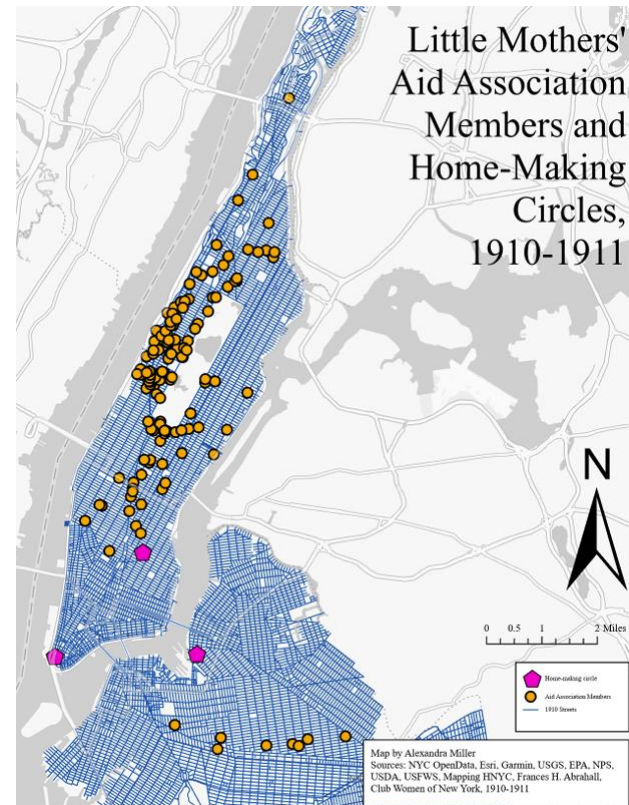


Figure 12: Map of the Little Mothers' Aid Association members and home-making circles, or outreach centers. As you can see, the members, represented by dots, are living far from the homes, which are represented by pentagons. The members are primarily centered on wealthy districts, whereas the homes are in much poorer neighborhoods.

⁶³ "Snow Ball at the Park Lane: Entertainment on Saturday Will Be Given for the Benefit of the Bethany Day Nursery," *New York Times*, January 17, 1926 (quotation); "Had a Real Lamb on the Stage: Other Things Made Bethany Day Nursery's Show a Success," *New York Times*, April 22, 1896; "Society Girls Act in the Snow Ball: Winter Scenes in Decorations of Park Lane Ball at Bethany Nursery Benefit – 'Icicle Blues' a Feature – Dancers in 'The Leslie Winter Steppers' Are Enthusiastically Applauded," *New York Times*, January 18, 1925; "For Bethany Day Nursery," *New York Times*, October 23, 1921; "In Aid of Bethany Day Nursery," *New York Times*, February 6, 1928; "Bethany Day Nursery," *New York Tribune*, November 11, 1899; "Lecture to Assist Day Nursery Fund: Professor William Starr Meyers Will Be Heard on Afternoon of Nov. 1," *New York Tribune*, October 28, 1923.

⁶⁴ Little Mothers' Aid Association, in Abrahall, *Club Women of New York, 1921-1922*, 108.

subscribers felt that the Nursery was part of their own neighborhood and social life, which is why they held their meetings, lectures, and neighborhood social events there.

Conversely, there was a spatial gulf between the members and beneficiaries of the Little Mothers' Aid Association. The members again clustered around Central Park, particularly in the affluent Upper East and West Sides. But the Association members operated day nurseries which were miles away in the much poorer Lower East Side, Battery, and Williamsburg (Figure 12). Similarly, the Association held its fundraising bazaars at the nearby Waldorf-Astoria, rather than their outreach centers.⁶⁵ Because the distance between Bethany subscribers and the Nursery was much smaller, it was more possible for the members and their supporters to build the Nursery into their neighborhood and social calendar, as opposed to the more distant Little Mothers' Aid Association, which did their socializing and fundraising far away from their nurseries. Though both organizations built institutions, only Bethany built a community.

Though the Bethany Day Nursery could be construed as a purely philanthropic institution, since it dealt in child welfare, it was also a deeply social place where women could control their own public sphere and deploy the space for their own purposes. A more clearly self-interested instance of club placemaking was the club house. Club houses, or rented rooms were a popular phenomenon among women's clubs, even those which were ostensibly philanthropic. In 1920, the GFWC estimated that there were a thousand women's clubhouses in the country, with many more planned.⁶⁶ Several club authors characterized the club house as "some central place where women met simply to exchange visits...a calling centre," or a replacement for the older

⁶⁵ "Women's Club Activities: Seasonal Activities Increase Among Women's Clubs of City: New York Mozart Society, Verdi, Washington Headquarters Association and Other Organizations Hold First Meetings and Prepare Programs," *New York Tribune*, November 9, 1924.

⁶⁶ "Own Your Own Home," in General Federation of Women's Clubs, *The General Federation of Women's Clubs Magazine* (New York: General Federation Magazine, Inc, 1901-Present) 19, no. 6 (1920): 15-16.

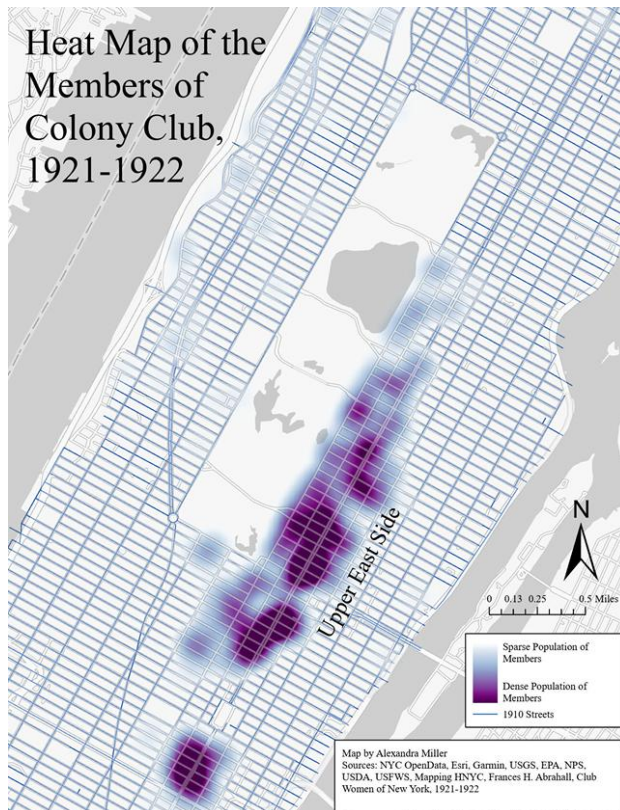


Figure 13: Heat map of the members of the elite Colony Club. The densest population is indicated by the darker purple, and sparser population by a lighter purple. The members primarily lived in the affluent Upper East Side and along 5th Avenue.

practice of calling, made impracticable by the city's growing size.⁶⁷ Perhaps the most famous club to own their own house, and certainly the one with the most expensive house, was Colony. Founded in 1903, "the club practically limits membership to owners of full pocket-books" – Astors, Vanderbilts, Delanos, Rockefellers, Morgans, the first Mrs. John Barrymore, and Mrs. George Creel, to name a few. Colony required an invitation, a \$150 assessment fee, and a \$100 annual dues payment to join.⁶⁸

Elite Colony members shared

neighborhood space by virtue of their class,

clustering around the Upper East Side, the wealthiest neighborhood in the city (Figure 13). As soon as the club formed, the members solicited architect Stanford White to build them a club house at 120 Madison Avenue, near the center of where the club members then lived. The club house was an important community space for its exclusive membership. Gradually they outgrew the space, but more importantly, the center where members lived migrated north. Thus began a long series of debates over where to move, with many members wanting to remain within the

⁶⁷ Ella Giles Ruddy, *Club Etiquette: A Conversation Between a Club Woman and a Non-Member Who Answer the Calling Question Over the Tea Cups* (Los Angeles: Out West Company, 1902), 49-50; "Innovations at the Barnard Club," *Harper's Bazaar*, December 8, 1894.

⁶⁸ Mrs. John Barrymore was the actress Katharine Harris, Mrs. George Creel was the actress Blanche Bates. Bertha Damaris Knobe, "The New York Women's Colony Club," *Harper's Bazaar* 40, no. 4 (April 1906): 340. Today the annual dues would be about \$3,500.

midtown shopping district and near the theater. Charter member Mrs. James W. Wright commented to a reporter after a particularly boisterous debate that “They ought to remember that not all of us have automobiles, and it would be very inconvenient to have the club away from the centre of things.”⁶⁹ Clearly Mrs. Wright, and other members felt that the new club house should fit within their already established sense of place. Finally, in 1916 the club again hired an architect, the firm Delano and Aldrich, and the decorator Elsie De Wolfe, to construct them a new, bigger club house at 564 Park Avenue, in the Upper East Side, at the heart of their new neighborhood (Figure 14). The new house had a sitting, room, lounge, library, card room, loggia, swimming pool, rooftop garden, gymnasium, squash court, cocktail bar, smoking room, reception area, musician’s gallery, bedrooms, public rooms, dining rooms, servants quarters, and even a room for pets.⁷⁰ In short, it had everything a woman could want.

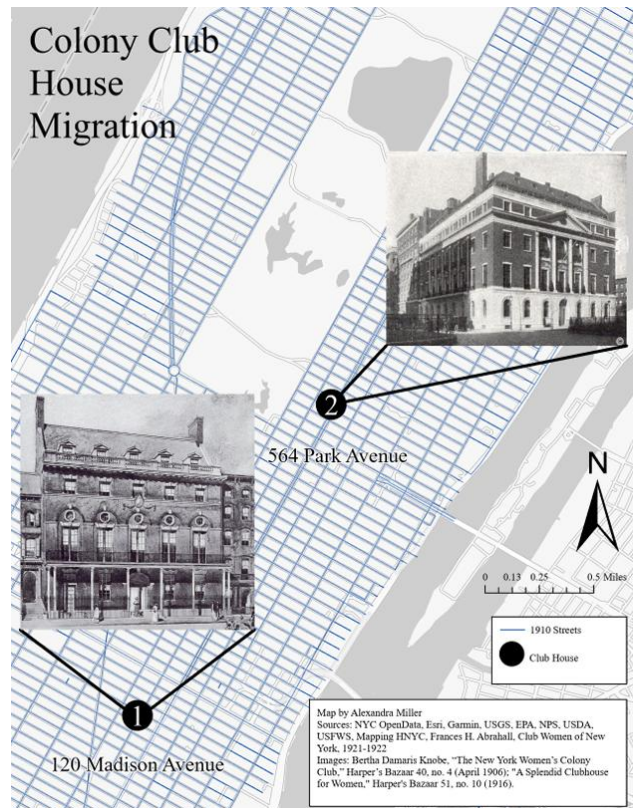


Figure 14: The Colony Club built their first club house in 1903, then migrated in 1916 to the new house in the Upper East Side. The move allowed them to have a bigger space, but also to have their clubhouse closer to the heart of their own neighborhood.

⁶⁹ “No New Home Yet for Colony Club: Women at Annual Meeting Decide Not to Buy the Chapin Property, Democratic Members Cause Lively Time, Exclusive Set Said to Fear That Socialism May Enter Its Famous Portals,” *New York Tribune*, January 30, 1914.

⁷⁰ “A Splendid Clubhouse for Women,” *Harper's Bazaar* 51, no. 10 (1916): 48-49; Knobe, “The New York Women’s Colony Club”; Karen J. Blair, “Colony Club,” in *Encyclopedia of New York City*, 2nd ed., ed. Kenneth T. Jackson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 283. The old building was converted to a home for working girls. “Former Colony Club to Become a Home for Working Girls: Once Gathering Place of the City’s Most Aristocratic Women and Owned by Mrs. Nicholas Brady,” *New York Tribune*, January 28, 1919.

For Colony members, their house was a center for social life. Daughters debuted there, friends met for lunch, and members exercised their bodies and minds. Though the club's initial object was purely social, over time they developed weekly literary and artistic programs and held debates on topics like suffrage.⁷¹ The wide range of activities that the house allowed was enabled by its central location for many of Colony's members. Whatever its purpose, it is clear that the women's club house became a community institution, which might even have an impact beyond its exclusive female users. For example, Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald declared that the architecture of Colony's Park Avenue house had influenced the other buildings in the neighborhood around "New York's Most Dignified Street."⁷² Though the house existed purely for Colony members and their own particular public sphere, they nevertheless turned it into an important and recognizable neighborhood institution, a place for all to admire.

One final club demonstrates each of the types of organizations I have made. The Williamsburg-based Chiropean Club, formed with "the purpose of bringing together intelligent women of the locality" out of an offshoot of the older, more established club, Sorosis.⁷³ Like all the clubs I discuss here, the member shared neighborhood space. They largely resided in Williamsburg, where the club was organized at the historic Knapp Mansion. Even when they began to incorporate members in nearby Bedford, where they earlier had a small presence, the club retained a strong residential enclave in their original neighborhood, especially relative to the

⁷¹ "Colony Club Opens: Handsomely Appointed meeting Place of Exclusive Women," *New York Tribune*, March 12, 1907; "Of Interest to Women: Colony Club Debate, Suffragists and 'Antis' Discuss Socialism and the Ballot," *New York Tribune*, April 1, 1908; "Finnish Exile Defiant: Mme. Malmberg Challenges 'Antis' at Colony Club But None Was There, Speaker Insisted Giving the Ballot to Women Had Helped Her Country," *New York Tribune*, January 16, 1913.

⁷² Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald, "The Changing Beauty of Park Avenue: New York's Most Dignified Street," *Harper's Bazaar* 62, no. 2583 (1928): 60-63.

⁷³ Chiropean, in Abrahall, *Club Women of New York, 1910-1911*, 95; "Sorosis One of Its Models: Chiropean Club Organized by the Women of Williamsburg, Its Object Educational, Charitable, and Municipal Reforms, Starts with 140 Members," *New York Times*, January 31, 1896.

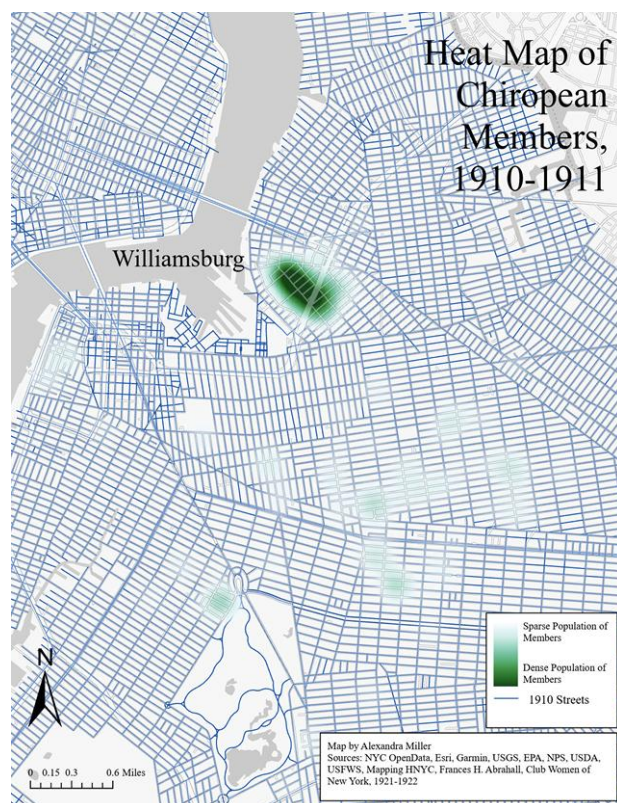


Figure 15: The members of Chiropean in 1910. The heat map, which indicates denser population with a darker green, indicates that the club, which formed in Williamsburg, still had a strong centralized membership in that neighborhood.

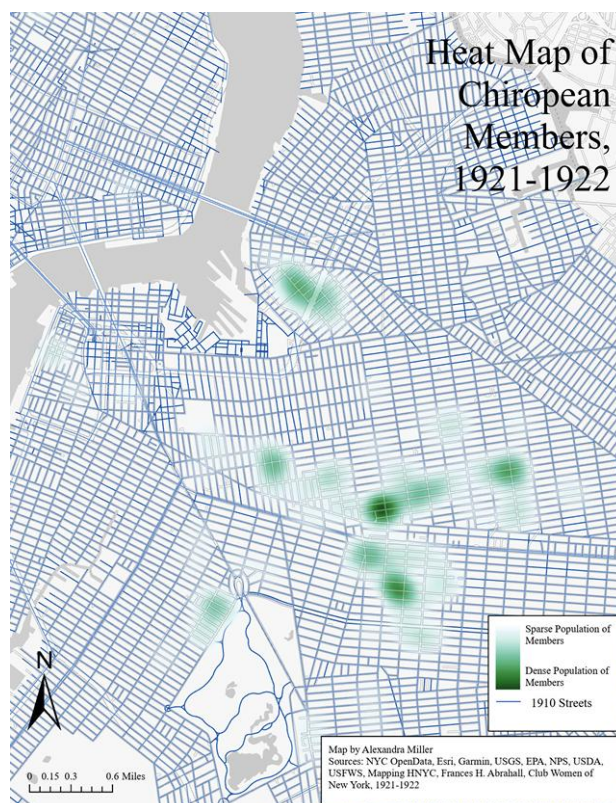


Figure 16: The members of Chiropean in 1921. The heat map, which indicates denser population with a darker green, shows that the club, which formed in Williamsburg, but accepted members from the rest of Brooklyn, began to develop a strong presence in Bedford, but continued to retain the original Williamsburg enclave.

sparse population of clubwomen in Williamsburg by 1922 (Figure 4). Even with the slight expansion, the Chiropean members remained within a fairly small geographic range, their new center only half a mile from the old one (Figures 15 and 16). And, just like Colony, when their center of population shifted, so too did their meeting space, moving to the Clinton Hill Pouch Mansion (Figure 17).⁷⁴ The club was involved in philanthropy, even going on to build a playground, a new community institution just like the Bethany Day Nursery, in their Williamsburg neighborhood.⁷⁵ Finally, Chiropean, as the one of the largest Brooklyn women's

⁷⁴ "In the Eastern District: Organization of the Chiropean Club by Women"; "Women's Clubs Preparing for Spring Elections," *New York Tribune*, March 29, 1914.

⁷⁵ "Club Women Open Annual Brooklyn Week for Blind: Entire 106th Regiment Armory Given Over to Benefit," *New York Tribune*, May 1, 1928; "Chiropean's Playground: Brooklyn Children Rejoice and Celebrate Opening Day, An Enterprising Maid, with an Eye to Business, Sets Up a Water Pitcher and Earns Money," *New York Tribune*, July

clubs, was heavily involved in a borough-wide debate about opening a women's club central club house. The clubs debated for years, not whether they needed one, but rather where to put it. "The women of Brooklyn Heights considered their section the most available. The women of the Park Slope and those of the Stuyvesant section considered that they had sites better," and Chiropean came out with their own bid for the Eastern District.⁷⁶ Each club wanted the club house near to their own neighborhood so that they might more easily see it as theirs and that it might fit into their own sense of place.

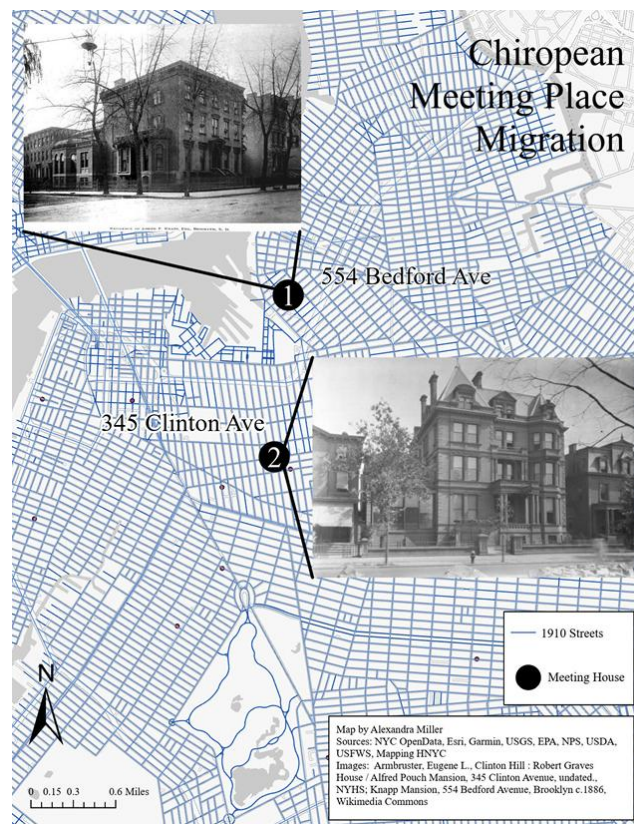


Figure 17: Map of the meeting places of Chiropean. They initially met in the Williamsburg institution, the Knapp Mansion, then moved to the Clinton Hill landmark, the Pouch Mansion.

In each of these issues, like the other clubs I have discussed here, Chiropean had a strong local bent. Its members lived near to each other, attended and invested in local institutions, practiced local philanthropy, engaged in local politics and public works, and all the while continued to pursue collective self-improvement by listening to lectures and socializing with their sisters. They were deeply engaged in the places they had built and in their own public sphere. But, as the conflict with the other Brooklyn clubs demonstrates, women's clubs often felt

17, 1898; "Public Playgrounds: Philanthropic Women of Brooklyn Working for the Children, The Chiropean Lends a Helping Hand to Establish Open-Air Kindergartens During Vacation," *New York Tribune*, June 22, 1898.

⁷⁶ "For Women's Clubhouse: Brooklyn Corporation Formed to Erect Building," *New York Tribune*, April 24, 1910 (quotation); "Brooklyn Women Plan a Fine Club: Stock Subscriptions to Amount of \$20,000 Pour in Quickly, with More Promised, Won't Let Men Interfere, They'll Manage the Institution Themselves and Expect It to Earn Dividends for Them," *New York Times*, April 15, 1910; "Central Clubhouse Proposed: Brooklyn Women Want a Home, 'Be It Ever So Humble,'—Practical Suggestions," *New York Tribune*, February 10, 1903.

an allegiance to more than one place. Chiropean was simultaneously within two public spheres of its own making, each operating within concentric places. While the club was rooted in first Williamsburg then Clinton Hill, it was also part of a larger network of Brooklyn-based clubs which saw all of Brooklyn as their space. It is this sort of layering of places which allowed some women to be in many clubs and allowed women's clubs to collaborate across space and interest. It is also this layering of places which makes it all the more apparent that there was no single public sphere, but rather a cacophony of them.

In the end, we may revive President Decker's declaration that "Dante is dead." He was not dead in the minds of the many women who continued to study him and other authors in their clubs. But he is dead in the sense that if, by continuing to quote from her speech, historians treat local-impact clubs as a mere stepping stone towards more overtly political clubs behind which all women could unite, then we miss much of the depth in their worlds. What these several case studies demonstrate for us is that there was not one single public sphere into which women demanded entrance. Each club constructed their own micro-scale public sphere, composed of their own institutions, their own values, and their own people. The fact that Abrahall's sample represents such a small subset of the vast body of American clubwomen, excluding Black women and many others, means that in all likelihood there were many thousands more club micro public spheres formed across the country. These women bridged the false divide between the public and domestic spheres, creating a middle space of their clubs. To seek self-improvement collectively they had to exist in the middle space between self and society. We can consider these women as materializing Foucault's theories about the dispersion of power. Rather than acting as one body, one Woman with one Interest, they instead enacted their many cultural powers on the growing city from many scattered centers of social activity. They did not exist in

the discursive constructions of either the domestic or public spheres but rather in the real space of the neighborhood which blended the two. For women's clubs, the chief product was not political progress or playgrounds but rather community institutions onto which women could hang their sense of place. It is just as clear that as much as these women constructed their publics self-interestedly, they nevertheless built places with which all New Yorkers could engage and thus enriched the collective city public culture.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Abrahall, ed., Frances H. *Club Women of New York, 1910-11*. Club Women of New York Company, 1910.
- Abrahall, ed., Frances H. *Club Women of New York, 1921-1922*. Club Women of New York Company, 1921.
- Benton, Caroline French. *Work and Programs for Women's Clubs*. Dana Estes & Company, 1913.
- Brooklyn Daily Eagle*.
- Columbia Spectator*.
- Dorr, Rheta Childe. *What Eight Million Women Want*. Small and Maynard, 1910.
- Eldridge, S. *New York Charities Directory: An Authoritative Classified and Descriptive Directory of the Social, Civic and Religious Resources of the City of New York, Including the Boroughs of Manhattan, The Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Richmond*. Charity Organization Society in the City of New York, 1911.
- Fox, Emma Augusta. *Parliamentary Usage of Women's Clubs*. Doubleday, 1914.
- Frank Buttolph Collection, New York Public Library.
- General Federation Bulletin*.
- General Federation of Women's Clubs Magazine*.
- Harper's Bazaar*.
- Hunt, William C. *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920 – Bulletin, Population: New York – Composition and Characteristics of the Population*. U.S. Census Bureau, 1920.

Jensen, Jens. "Report to the Women's League for the Protection of Riverside Park on the proposed plan for changes in the New York Central Railroad along the Hudson." November 29, 1916.

New York Times.

New York Tribune.

Ruddy, Ella Giles. *Club Etiquette: A Conversation Between a Club Woman and a Non-Member Who Answer the Calling Question Over the Tea Cups*. Out West Company, 1902.

Smith, Emma A.F. "Historical Sketch of Washington's Headquarters." Washington Headquarters Association, 1908.

Winslow, Helen M. ed. *Annual Register and Directory of Women's Clubs in America: Containing Also a Directory of Club Lecturers and Entertainers*. Shirley, MA: 1922.

Winslow, Helen M. *The President of Quex: A Woman's Club Story*. Norwood Press, 1906.

Woman's League for the Protection of Riverside Park. "Our City." 1916.

Woman's League for the Protection of Riverside Park. "Some Plain Facts About Riverside Park." 1916.

Wood, Mary I. *The History of the General Federation of Women's Clubs: For the First Twenty-two Years of Its Organization*. History Department, General Federation of Women's Clubs, 1912.

Secondary Sources

Babu, Sherin Susan. "Clubwomen and Time: An Examination of Temporality in American and British Women's Literary Clubs." University of Exeter, PhD dissertation, 2022.

Berg, Barbara J. *The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism: The Woman and the City, 1800-1860*. Oxford University Press, 1978.

Blair, Karen J. *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914*. New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1980.

Blair, Karen J. "Colony Club." In *Encyclopedia of New York City*, 2nd ed. Edited by Kenneth T. Jackson. Yale University Press, 2010.

Blair, Karen J. *The Torchbearers: Women and their Amateur Arts Associations in America, 1890-1930*. Indiana University Press, 1994.

Blair, Karen J. ed. *Women in Pacific Northwest History*. University of Washington Press, 1988.

Bloch, Ruth H. "American Feminine Ideals in Transition: The Rise of the Moral Mother." *Feminist Studies* vol. 4, no. 2 (1978): 100-126.

- Connolly, James J. "The Feminine Challenge: Clubwomen and Urban Politics." In *An Elusive Unity: Urban Democracy and Machine Politics in Industrializing America*. Cornell University Press, 2010.
- Flanagan, Maureen A. *Seeing with Their Hearts: Chicago Women and the Vision of the Good City, 1871-1933*. Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Freedman, Estelle. "Separatism as Strategy: Female Institution Building and American Feminism, 1870-1930." In *Women Together: Organizational Life*. Edited by Nancy F. Cott. DeGruyter, 1994.
- Freeman, Jo. "'One man, one vote; one woman, one throat': Women in New York city politics, 1890-1910." *American Nineteenth Century History* 1, no. 3 (2000): 101-123.
- Foster, Laurel. *Magazine Movements: Women's Culture, Feminisms and Media Form*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015.
- Goodier, Susan, Karen Pastorello. *Women Will Vote: Winning Suffrage in New York State*. Cornell University Press, 2017.
- Hoy, Suellen M. "Women as Municipal Housekeepers." In *Major Problems in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era*, 434-437. Edited by Leon Fink. Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1983.
- Jordan, Rosan A., Susan J. Kalcik. *Women's Folklore, Women's Culture*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985.
- Kerber, Linda. "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment-An American Perspective." *American Quarterly* 78, no. 2 (1976): 187-205.
- Kimball, Gayle, ed. *Women's Culture: The Women's Renaissance of the Seventies*. Scarecrow Press, 1981.
- Kuhlman, Erika. "'Women's Ways in War': The Feminist Pacifism of the New York City Woman's Peace Party." *Frontiers* 18, no. 1 (1997): 80-100.
- Ladd-Taylor, Molly. *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890-1930*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994.
- Lemke, Jayme, Julia R. Norgaard. "Club Women and the Provision of Local Public Goods." In *Public Choices Analysis of American Economic History*, 1-19. Edited by Joshua Hall, Marcus Witcher. Springer, 2019.
- Lindenmeyer, Kriste. "Review: Review Essay: Citizenship, Gender, and Urban Space in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era." *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 1, no. 1 (2002): 95-106.
- Madsen-Brooks, Leslie. "A Synthesis of Expertise and Expectations: Women Museums Scientists, Club Women and Populist Natural Science in the United States, 1890-1950." *Gender & History* 25, no. 1 (2013): 27-46.

- Martin, Theodora Penny. *The Sound of Our Own Voices: Women's Study Clubs, 1860-1910*. Beacon Press, 1987.
- McCarthy, Kathleen D. *Women's Culture: American Philanthropy and Art, 1830-1930*. University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Meis, Anne, Knupfer, Christine Woyshner, eds. *The Educational Work of Women's Organizations, 1890-1960*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- Morris-Crowther, Jayne. "Municipal Housekeeping: The Political Activities of the Detroit Federation of Women's Clubs in the 1920s." *Michigan Historical Review* 30, no. 1 (2004): 31-47.
- Moses Schulz, Dorothy. "A Precinct of Their Own: The New York City Women's Precinct, 1921-1923." *New York History* 85, no. 1 (2004): 39-64.
- Muncy, Robyn. *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935*. Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Perry, Elisabeth Israels. *After the Vote: Feminist Politics in La Guardia's New York*. Oxford University Press, 2019.
- Perry, Elisabeth Israels. "Men are from the Gilded Age, Women are from the Progressive Era." *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 1, no.1 (2002): 25-48.
- Ross, Karen. "Winning Women's Votes: Defending Animals Experimentation and Women's Clubs in New York, 1920-1930." *New York History* 95, no. 1 (2014): 26-40.
- Scheer, Teva J. "The 'Praxis' Side of the Equation: Club Women and American Public Administration." *Administrative Theory & Praxis* 24, no. 3 (2002): 519-536.
- Scheil, Katherine West. *She Hath Been Reading: Women and Shakespeare Clubs in America*. Cornell University Press, 2012.
- Scott, Anne Firor. *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History*. University of Illinois Press, 1991.
- Sherman, Dawn. "Virtuous Expectations: Republican Motherhood and True Womanhood in the Early Republic." In *Early Republic: People and Perspectives*. Edited by Andrew Frank. ABC CLIO, 2009.
- Smith, Mary Jane. "The Fight to Protect Race and Regional Identity within the General Federation of Women's Clubs, 1895-1902." *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 94, no. 4 (2010): 479-513.
- Smuts, Alice Boardman, Robert W. Smuts, R. Malcolm Smuts, Barbara B. Smuts and P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale. *Science in the Service of Children, 1893-1935*. Yale University Press, 2006.
- Spain, Daphne. *How Women Saved the City*. University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

- Spencer-Wood, Suzanne M. "Turn of the Century Women's Organizations, Urban Design, and the Origin of the American Playground Movement." *Landscape Journal* 13, no. 2 (1994): 124-138.
- Tarbox, Gwen. *The Clubwomen's Daughters: Collectivist Impulses in Progressive-Era Girl's Fiction, 1890-1940*. Taylor & Francis Group, 1998.
- Welter, Barbara. "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860." *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (1966): 151-174.
- Wirka, Susan Marie. "The City Social Movement." In *Planning the Twentieth-Century American City*, 55-75. Edited by Mary Corbin Sies and Christopher Silver. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Yanus, Alixandra B. "Learning to 'Play the Game as Men Do': How the General Federation of Women's Clubs Brought Political Science to Women." *Political Science and Politics* 52, no. 4 (2019): 659-662.
- Zagarri, Rosemarie. "Morals, Manners, and the Republican Mother." *American Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (1992): 192-215.