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Setting A New Ship A'Sail: *The Founding of Sarah Lawrence College*

BY ELIZABETH SARGENT

On the morning of August 14, 1924, William Van Duzer Lawrence, an aging pharmaceutical and real estate tycoon, wrote to Henry Noble MacCracken, president of Vassar College:



Brochures sent to prospective students for Sarah Lawrence College's first class aptly described the school as "situated among the hills of beautiful Westchester County" [and] "notable for the harmony of its architecture and the charm of its campus."
(Courtesy, SLC Archives)

Dear Mr. MacCracken,
I feel this morning like one who had just embarked on an unknown sea in a craft without a rudder and was appealing to you to give a hand. That you answered "at your service," so I am writing to you now (confirming our conversation at Westlands) for help.

I want to find out

1st- How to rig up this ship – that is, what sort of alterations and repairs are needed to get this craft afloat and in good running condition.

2nd- How is it to be manned for the voyage, and

3rd- Where is it going anyway? What port are we making for?

I feel sure since you are an old navigator in these waters, you can tell me (in a letter) just what to do.

Awaiting to hear from you, I am

Most sincerely yours,

*W. V. Lawrence*¹

The "ship" to which Lawrence was referring was not any ordinary craft, but a new women's college. At the age of eighty-two, Lawrence had decided that he wanted to make this one last gift to the community of Bronxville, New York, the village north of New York

City where he had made a fortune as a real estate developer. As a businessman, not an educator, Lawrence felt he could benefit

from MacCracken's expert advice. Lawrence's daughter Louise, a Vassar graduate and active alumna, had introduced the two men after MacCracken's inauguration in 1915.² Lawrence liked MacCracken and respected him on a professional level. As his notion of starting a women's college took shape, he appealed to MacCracken to lend his ideas and experience to this educational project and help navigate it to the as-yet-undetermined "port."

When Lawrence had first conceived of founding a school in Bronxville during the winter of 1921, his vision was:

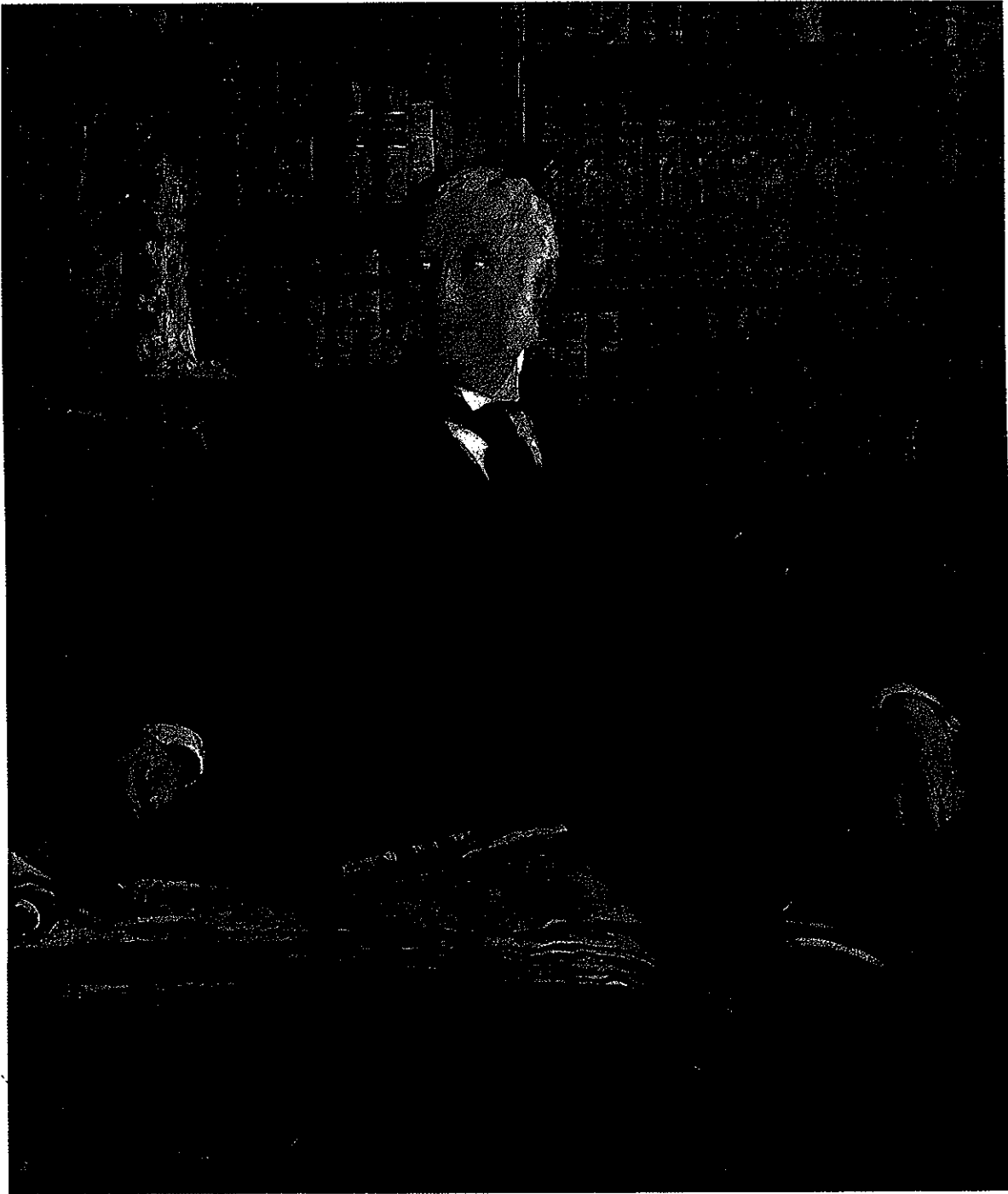
to raise one million dollars to found a women's college with a preparatory school in Bronxville. This college [is] to be a self-supporting institution, restricted to students of quality and refinement, able and willing to pay for their education. This college, unlike others shall partake of the nature of a finishing school for young ladies. The voice and conversation, grace of movement and charm of manner shall be held as important as the sciences or professions. The art of home building, the rearing of children, the molding of character shall precede all other attainments.³

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Violet Oakley, a well-known artist and friend of the Lawrence family, painted this portrait of Sarah Bates Lawrence, the college's namesake, around 1910. Oakley lived with her mother in Lawrence Park West for a brief period in 1912 before settling in the Chestnut Hill area of Philadelphia. (Courtesy, SLC Archives)

OPPOSITE
This imposing portrait of Sarah Lawrence College founder William Van Duzer Lawrence also was painted by Violet Oakley about 1910. The two portraits hang opposite each other on the landing of the great staircase in Westlands, the Lawrence's former home that is located in the center of their estate that became the Sarah Lawrence campus. (Courtesy, SLC Archives)



Lawrence's desire was not to provide Bronxville with an innovative educational institution, but to create a school whose student body would reflect and enhance the village's wealth and refinement. His school would conform to traditional conceptions of women's education and the role of women within society by training

"American" young ladies (i.e. Protestant and of northern European descent) to be homemakers, mothers, and molders of character, not necessarily professionals or scholars.⁴ A proposal he sent to MacCracken in 1925 made this clear:

[The Lawrence College] is founded in the belief that there is a woman's sphere of activities and a man's sphere of activities in the world, that the border line between these is more or less chaotic and undefined and ought to be more clearly divided and set apart.

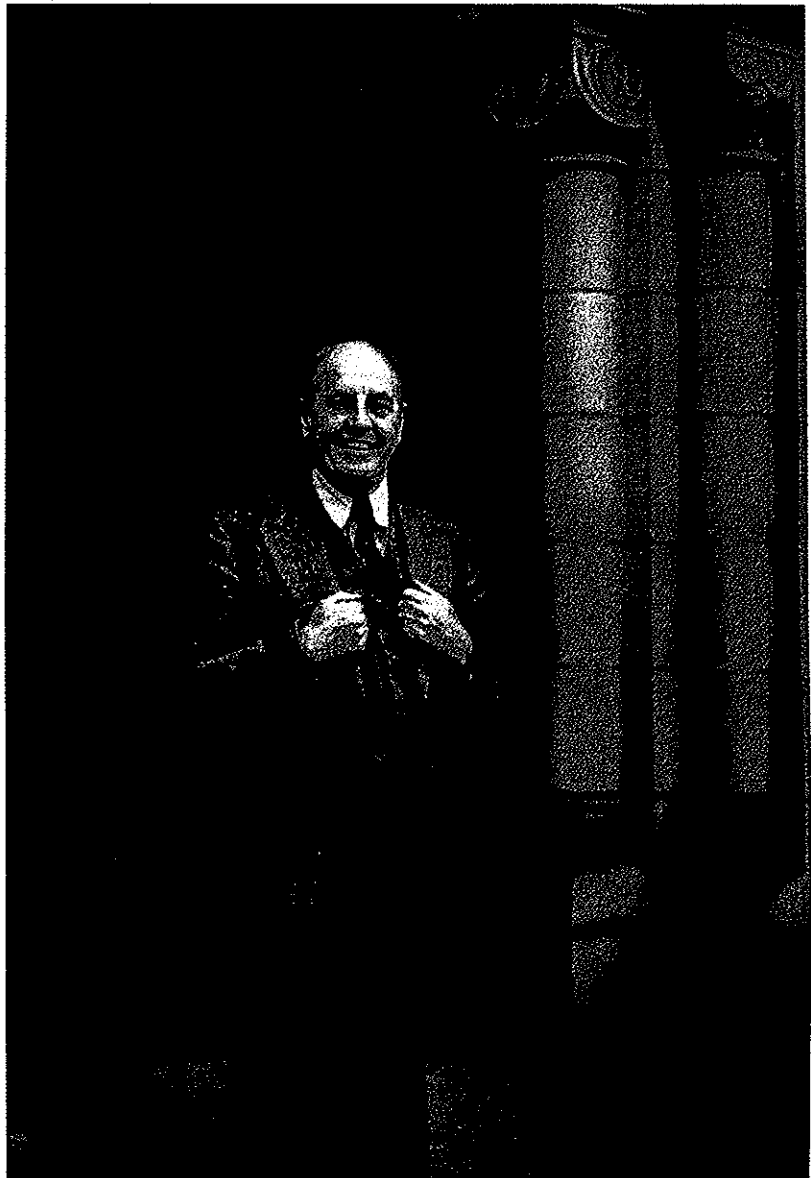
The woman's sphere, or we might say the "woman's world" is quite as large as the man's and we see no just cause for them to leave it and work in the man's field of action which nature never intended her to do.

The Lawrence College proposes to educate its girls to become able and influential leaders in this woman's world, accomplished in all arts and sciences that tend to elevate and strengthen the race and extend the influence of her sex and to this end a new curriculum should be established by this college, having this end in view.⁵

Lawrence's notion of "separate spheres" for men and women was a construct that originated in the nineteenth century. By upholding this theory, and stating that women should not cross the borders between the gender spheres, Lawrence expressed his intrinsic conservatism.⁶ Yet his notion that education should empower women within their "sphere" was an enlightened view.

In contrast, MacCracken embraced the ideas of philosopher and educator John Dewey who believed that education could be a lever for social change by encouraging responsibility and individualism. The progressive education movement, based in part on Dewey's ideas, promoted creative expression, self-motivation, and individualized instruction, particularly in the elementary, junior high and high schools.⁷

As an admirer of Dewey, MacCracken believed that colleges should give students control of their studies, allow them to direct their own goals, and encourage them to minister to society.⁸ When he became president of Vassar in 1915, his first concern was to update the curriculum to reflect these principles, and he tried to in-



Henry Noble MacCracken, president of Vassar College (1915-1946) and educational advisor to William Lawrence, was a man who truly had "respect for women and faith in their capacities." He became Sarah Lawrence College's first Chairman of the Board and served until December 1936, the tenth anniversary of the college and four years after the official connection to Vassar had ended. (Courtesy, Special Collections, Vassar College Libraries)

troduce several new courses. Some of these, such as a course called "euthenics," appeared to be an interdisciplinary approach to incorporating women's traditional roles into the pure and social sciences,⁹ but the new curriculum was not well received by the faculty.¹⁰ Frustrated by Vassar's resistance to what he perceived to be an

innovative program, MacCracken saw Lawrence's proposal as a fresh opportunity to put his educational views into practice.

Lawrence's desire to found a new college for women occurred at a pivotal moment in the consciousness of 1920s America as the struggle between progressivism and conservatism reverberated in all strata of American society, especially with regard to the role of women.¹¹ As Lawrence and MacCracken worked to define the institution and its ideology, questions relating to gender, education, and the place of women within modern culture converged. Should women's education be different than men's? What type of educational institution could best manage the increasing demand for women's education while still operating under the progressive rubric? Where was the modern woman's place within society? Throughout the 1920s, a number of models of womanhood prevailed, including the flapper, the female consumer, the housewife, the career woman, the educated mother, and the feminist. The abundance of such varied models proved that women's roles within society were evolving, and hence increasingly difficult to define.¹²

As Lawrence and MacCracken began to design their women's college, they explored various educational prototypes. By 1924, there were a number of educational options available to women, including the traditional liberal arts women's colleges (known as the Seven Sisters), co-ed universities such as Michigan and Cornell, and finishing schools for the elite.¹³ Initially Lawrence was most interested in founding a finishing school. At MacCracken's behest, however, he began to consider the idea of founding a junior college for women. The first junior (or two-year) colleges had been founded in the West in the early 1900s as adjuncts to state universities.¹⁴ A response to the nation's growing demand for higher education, some junior colleges provided students with vocational or professional training, while others offered an abbreviated version of the liberal arts education. Despite the fact that junior colleges had remained a Western and Midwestern phenomena, MacCracken felt that the junior college model would be the best fit for Lawrence's project, as it would allow upper-class young women who "have not the opportunity

and in some instances not the mental equipment" to pursue an alternative form of higher education.¹⁵

MacCracken and Lawrence decided that their institution would uphold the individual as the central focus of its educational ideology. As Lawrence stated, "An ef-



This photograph of Sarah Bates Lawrence appeared in the college's first yearbook, which was dedicated to her memory. A woman devoted to education and social justice, Sarah Lawrence served as president of the New York Exchange for Women's Work, and she was an active supporter of Bethune-Cookman College, a school for African-American women in Florida. (Courtesy, SLC Archives)

fort will be made to discover the particular talent of each girl, after which she may specialize as far as possible in this trend of thought."¹⁶ They also embraced an innovative curriculum that would include fine arts, drama, and music as formal courses rather than extracurricular activities. By including these programs of study, the incipient school stepped outside the bounds of the traditional liberal arts curriculum.



Charting the Course: The Realization of Sarah Lawrence College

As the Lawrence College project evolved, William Van Duzer Lawrence saw the necessity of ensuring its future. In 1925 he allocated a million dollars worth of assets to the school, including his twelve-acre estate and Tudor-style home, Westlands, as well as furniture, books, bonds, and securities. He also directed the trustees of this trust to secure a charter for the junior college within two years of his death and continue with the plans that he and MacCracken had made for the school.¹⁷ The death of Sarah Bates Lawrence on May 9, 1926, however, changed the course of Lawrence's plans. He decided to begin the project immediately as a memorial to his beloved wife. Faced with this daunting task, Lawrence wrote to MacCracken:

I feel that this matter we are interested in here at Bronxville needs a second Moses who is learned in all the ways not of the Egyptians, but of modern college life to lead it up out of the wilderness which it is in at present. I have no doubt such a character will turn up.¹⁸

MacCracken believed that this "second Moses" could be Vassar graduate Marion Coats. As the principal of

Built in 1917 as the estate of William and Sarah Lawrence, Westlands first served the college as its nucleus, a blend of dormitory and administrative and institutional space. The sunroom, with the Lawrence's Louis XVI furniture, and the white salon, with its fern-surrounded fountain and reed furniture, became reception rooms where students received guests. The kitchen was converted to a biology lab. Twenty-three students were housed on the third floor, and the floor below included five classrooms. Today Westlands houses the office of admissions and the President's offices. (Courtesy, SLC Archives)

Bradford Academy in Bradford, Massachusetts, Coats had successfully implemented a junior college program.¹⁹ Known as the "Bradford Program," this system stressed the "development of the aesthetic side of the student's character" through a two-year course that emphasized individual academic training, group activities, and the profitable use of leisure time.²⁰

In January 1926, MacCracken had attended a conference at Bradford Academy and was greatly impressed by Coats and her educational program. He wrote to Lawrence that Coats' "three outstanding qualifications" were her "American background of culture, her solid academic scholarship, and her experience in the development of a junior college for women suited to eastern conditions."²¹ Lawrence began corresponding with

Coats and was soon equally taken with her purposefulness and forward thinking. In late May, less than three weeks after his wife's death, he offered Coats the presidency of Lawrence College. Although she was hesitant to leave Bradford, Coats agreed to assist him in formulating the ideology, curriculum, and charter for the junior college. Provided that the school would not open until the fall of 1928, she also agreed to serve as its first president.

To guide Coats, Lawrence sent her another letter in mid-July and specified that the college would now be called Sarah Lawrence College, in memory of his wife. In the letter he also outlined his expectations for the institution. It would be a junior college for two hundred and fifty young women, located in the Bronxville community, and built in the Tudor architectural style. Students would work one-on-one with faculty members, would participate in physical activity as well as academic studies, and would take advantage of the vast resources of New York City. Although some students might choose to further their education by attending a four-year college, most Sarah Lawrence graduates would simply go on to lead lives enhanced by their experiences at the junior college.²²

With Lawrence's guiding principles in mind, Coats assumed the primary responsibility for developing the curriculum and ideals of the college. At the heart of her vision was the Bradford Program, which placed emphasis upon three components: academic learning, group activities, and the profitable use of leisure time. In the classroom, the focus would be on the individual student, "each student becoming a special problem in herself." The curriculum would include standard liberal arts subjects, but would place a particular emphasis on the fine arts, "with a view to developing the qualities of appreciation and good taste." Students would be encouraged to participate in activities such as student government, athletics, music, or publishing in order



A shrewd businessman and energetic planner, William Lawrence, at the age of 82, founded Sarah Lawrence College in memory of his wife. He did not live to see the school in operation. Here, he enjoys a ride through his 12-acre Lawrence Park West property that would become the site of the college. (Courtesy, SLC Archives)

to emphasize the "need for intelligent cooperation in dealing with group problems." Finally, students would be encouraged to develop a hobby and profitably use their leisure time – this would

serve the purpose of "preventing the pernicious effect which too much leisure has on our youth," and would give the students lifelong skills.²³

During the summer and fall of 1926, Coats also helped Lawrence and MacCracken obtain, with some difficulty, a provisional five-year charter for the "Sarah Lawrence Junior College." The Regents of the University of the State of New York had never before granted a charter to a junior college, believing it to be an untested and illegitimate form of higher education. After putting off the decision for months, the Regents granted a provisional charter to the Sarah Lawrence College for Women on December 9, 1926, making it the first junior college in New York State.

To add legitimacy to the nascent school, Coats and MacCracken established a formal affiliation between



A well-known "progressive" educator, Marion Coats was a key figure in the planning of Sarah Lawrence College, but she served as its president for only one year. In explaining the school's objectives and her aspirations for "starting girls in life," Coats stated: "We want to turn out the sort of person you'd like to sit beside at dinner!" (Courtesy, SLC Archives)

Sarah Lawrence and Vassar. The terms of this ratified agreement stated that the Board of Trustees for Sarah Lawrence College would consist of ten members, five of whom would be elected by the Vassar Board of Trustees. One of these five would be Henry MacCracken, who would serve as chairman of the Sarah Lawrence Board. The Board of Trustees would immediately be responsible for overseeing the construction of a campus sufficient to accommodate 250 boarding students. The agreement also stated that Lawrence's

\$1,250,000 gift would be transferred by May 1, 1927, and that neither Vassar nor Mr. Lawrence would be responsible for making up any deficit that might be incurred during the first five years of the college's operation. During this five-year period (from the date of incorporation), or until Sarah Lawrence College obtained a permanent charter, the college would be run as a junior college, and the Vassar and Sarah Lawrence educational and business departments would work in cooperation. Finally, and most importantly, at the end of the five-year period, or when it obtained a permanent charter, Sarah Lawrence College and its property would be turned over to Vassar control, unless the Sarah Lawrence Board of Trustees deemed the arrangement with Vassar to be unsatisfactory.²⁴

William Van Duzer Lawrence did not live to see Sarah Lawrence College open its doors. The eighty-four year old philanthropist and civic leader died on May 16, 1927, in Lawrence Hospital in Bronxville from "complications of diseases."²⁵ The Sarah Lawrence project had occupied his thoughts to the end and allowed him to channel his grief over the loss of his wife into a memorial to her life and legacy. Two days before his death, he summoned his secretary to his bedside and dictated notes to her about how to proceed with the college construction.²⁶ His son Dudley recounted that the last words his father spoke to him were words of "concern and solicitude for the great task he had started but could not live to complete."²⁷ With Lawrence's death, Sarah Lawrence College lost a tremendous driving force and a man of action and vision – albeit a vision steeped in conservative and traditional impulses that others involved in the college's founding had not fully shared.

Preparing for the Maiden Voyage: Promotion and Recruitment at the New College

Coats and MacCracken continued their plans for the college after Lawrence's death. Both recruited faculty members interested in experimental education, and they oversaw the construction of the campus. Coats also turned her attention to the critical matter of publicity.

She understood that this was the key to ensuring that Sarah Lawrence College would open with a student body of two hundred and fifty young women. In July 1927, Coats sent out 4,500 pamphlets to educators and prospective students announcing the opening of the college:

The Sarah Lawrence College
Bronxville, New York

Founded by
WILLIAM V. LAWRENCE

On the site of Westlands, his former home
in Bronxville, New York

Situated among the hills of beautiful Westchester County, it will have all the privileges of a country college, while its location, only 15 miles from 42nd Street, New York, places the Music, Art, Drama, and other educational advantages of the great City within easy reach of the student.

This is an institution collegiate in grade, restricted in membership, progressive in its educational policy, notable for the harmony of its architecture and the charm of its campus.

The Sarah Lawrence College will open October 1st, 1928.

Applications for enrollment received after July 1st, 1927.

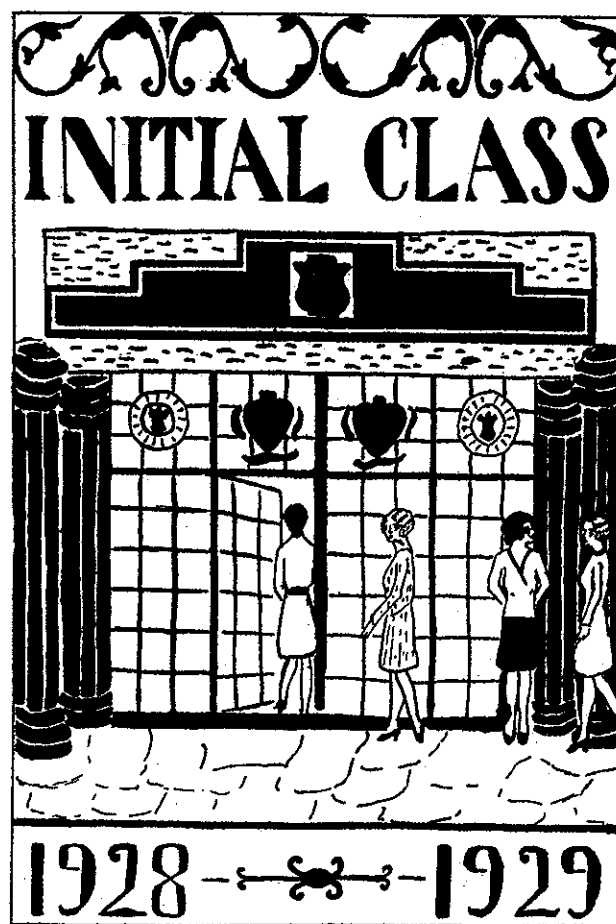
Further information may be obtained by addressing Miss Margaret Roycroft, Secretary, Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, N.Y.²⁸

To further promote the school, in early September Coats wrote form letters and sent them, along with a catalogue for Sarah Lawrence, to two hundred and fifty principals of private schools for girls. She also sent personal handwritten letters to a select group of principals to announce the opening of the college.²⁹

Recognizing that this limited publicity would reach only a few potential students, Coats published a number of articles in journals such as *Progressive Education* explaining the new college's experimental approach to education.³⁰ In all of these writings, Coats emphasized Sarah Lawrence College's connection to the principal tenets of progressive education: responsibility for one's own education, freedom to learn at one's own pace, and encouragement to develop one's individuality.³¹ These articles made it clear, however, that Sarah Lawrence College was not for the ordinary young woman; its

students would be well-to-do girls who had the luxury of cultivating interests and hobbies rather than the necessity of developing professional skills.³²

Despite the exclusivity of the Sarah Lawrence program, the response to Coats' publicity efforts was largely positive. The principals of many schools, having received her letter and the Sarah Lawrence College



On a page taken from the 1928-1929 SLC Yearbook, the first class enters the stylized doors of Westlands, embracing a new school and educational philosophy. "Mr. Lawrence's experiment is highly commendable," reported the *Mount Vernon Argus*. "It is a constructive protest against the much talked of 'flapper,' and will be watched with interest by students of education." (Courtesy, SLC Archives)

catalogue, wrote to Coats with praise and congratulations. Many viewed Sarah Lawrence as a symbol of innovation and change in the field of women's education.³³

Just as importantly, many prospective students began to contact the college to request applications. The

THIS COLLEGE WILL WELCOME FADS AND TELL GRINDS TO GO ELSEWHERE

"We Want to Turn Out the Sort of Person You'd Like to Sit Beside at Dinner!" Says Miss Marion Coats, First President of the New Lawrence College, Explaining Its Aims
And Her Ambition For Starting Girls in Life

LAWRENCE COLLEGE TO FIT GIRLS TO WED

Founder Asserts Many Now Get Man's Education and Are Unprepared for 'Real Career.'

TUTORIAL SYSTEM PLANNED

New School to Reduce Classroom Work — Graduates Will Receive Diplomas Rather Than Degrees.

One purpose of the Sarah Lawrence College for Women at Bronxville, N. Y., will be to train girls for marriage, its founder, William Van Duzer Lawrence, indicated yesterday before leaving New York for his winter home at Daytona Beach, Fla.

He criticized the education of girls by thousands in large colleges over a four-year term as "too mechanical." He asserted that many girls were receiving a man's education which they did not need, and found themselves upon graduation "unfitted for marriage, which is their real career."

application approached the prospective student from a personal stance and included a series of questions about her preparation, methods of work, hobbies, social interests, group activities, personal traits, moral character, mental health, experience, and future plans. Among the questions were: "What subjects have you studied hardest?" "Do you express yourself better in speech or writing?" "Do you consider yourself a girl who is easy to get along with?" "Does your mother select your dresses or do you?" In addition, the application also required the student's parents to describe their daughter's interests, habits, travels, religious observance, and family

Ruleless Girls' School Raises Old Fight of "Town and Gown"

The ancient feud of "town and gown" has been renewed with all its mediaeval vigor in the court of White Plains, as the residents of Lawrence Park, that exclusive section of Bronxville, New York, have moved to prevent the expansion of the Sarah Lawrence Junior College, so recently opened in their midst, "to the detriment of the peace and moral tone of the neighborhood."

Can a school without classrooms, without bellies to summon laggards to work, whose avowed ideal is few or no rules, and whose student government can defy faculty suggestion, survive? Such an institution is this new experiment in progressive education, and it has not only survived since its opening on Oct. 4th, but has become so popular that a number of applicants for next season have already been refused, and officers have found it necessary to lay plans for extension beyond the twelve-acre tract which was donated for the founding of a cultural college for girls.

"They play jazz all hours of the day and night," moan the neighbors. "And they wear practically no clothes!"

There is a strange familiarity between the modern outcry and the accounts of the university problems of the 14th century.

"There is no peace with them," the preachers of Paris complained of the students, "wherever they go they disturb the country, their associates and the towns themselves."

Sensational publicity abounded following the announcement of the new college in 1926. Newspaper headlines around the country reported that Sarah Lawrence was "Banishing Boredom for Leisure-Time Wives," and that "You've Got to Know Love at this College" and "This College Will Welcome Fads and Tell Grinds to Go Elsewhere." A May 12, 1929, article in *The World*, headlined "Ruleless Girls' School Raises Old Fight of 'Town and Gown,'" indicated a strong disapproval among Lawrence Park West residents: "[The students] play jazz all hours of the day and night," moaned the neighbors, "and they wear practically no clothes!" (Courtesy, SLC Archives)

heritage.³⁴ The range of questions illuminated the tension between lingering nineteenth-century ideas of womanhood (i.e. questions regarding experience with sewing and cooking) and progressive ed-

ucational ideology (i.e. questions regarding individual interests and modes of learning).

The questions about family heritage and religious observance were of particular significance. From the beginning, William Van Duzer Lawrence had conceived of Sarah Lawrence as a college that would only accept well-bred young women of true "American parentage." This phrase had not only national but also religious undertones. Lawrence intended that the student body would be made up of wealthy Protestant women whose families had been in the United States for generations. This restriction was made in the interest that:



the group may be as homogenous as possible, that parents may have the satisfaction of knowing with whom their daughters are associating during the most impressionable years of their lives. Moreover, this College is located in a restricted village; the clientele of the college should be acceptable to the rest of the community, and the college should serve the needs of daughters of Bronxville and surrounding sections of Westchester County.⁵⁵

In essence, Lawrence was advocating the selective admission of young women based on their racial, religious, and ethnic backgrounds, a position that reflected his role in keeping Bronxville a "restricted" village. As a real estate developer, he had always been a practitioner of "selectivity" in real estate transactions in the community, though these restrictions stopped short of incorporating covenants about personal characteristics into the deeds.⁵⁶ Lawrence had openly fostered this sense of exclusivity within the community, and clearly believed it would be best for both the students and the community if these restrictions extended to the new college as well.

While Lawrence was still alive, MacCracken and Coats did not voice opposition to this policy, though neither of them held the same religious and ethnic biases. They privately agreed, however, that though they would cover the "American parentage" issue by requiring applicants to fill out information on their grandparents' ancestry, the college might not rigidly enforce the restrictions. Both proved true to their word: the very first entering class included one Jewish girl, and the class of 1929 had two. In the years that followed, these

Gilbert, Titsworth, and Dudley Lawrence Halls, the first dormitories built on campus, were named after members of the college's board of trustees. Each housed about forty students with similar interests. In the basement of Titsworth, for example, an 80-foot-long theater workshop with a 28' by 22' stage was built for the residents whose chief activity was dramatics. Dudley Lawrence accommodated students interested in publications and athletics. (Courtesy, SLC Archives)

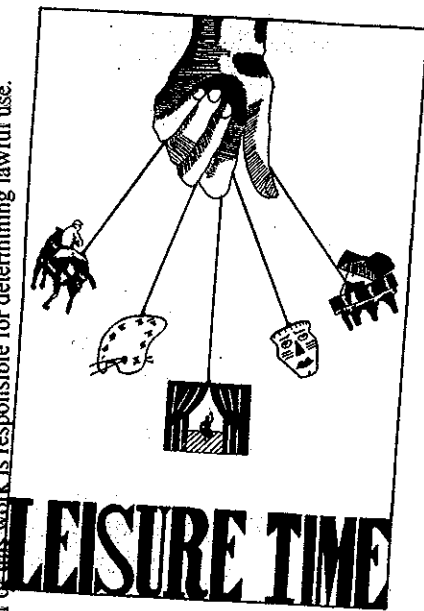
numbers increased dramatically, signifying the administration's evolving endorsement of social, religious, and educational diversity.⁵⁷

Sailing the Open Sea: The First Year of Operation

By the end of summer 1928, Coats and her administration had admitted two hundred and ten students — young women who were "recognized by [their] Preparatory School as best in spirit, influence, social contribution and leadership; and whose major interest is in group activities."⁵⁸ They had appointed twenty-five faculty members who had prepared their courses according to the terms set out by the Sarah Lawrence Faculty Conference held in December 1927. The only remaining issue was the campus construction. Although Dudley Lawrence Hall was complete, the other two dormitories, Titsworth Hall and Gilbert Hall, were still under construction. In addition, the refectory and service quarters were weeks from completion.⁵⁹

Despite these unfinished residence and dining halls, Sarah Lawrence College opened on September 29, 1928, and thus began its "experiment to carry out ideals of modern cultural education."⁶⁰ Students immediately filled the finished dormitory and Westlands. For the first month or so, a shiny gray bus, nicknamed

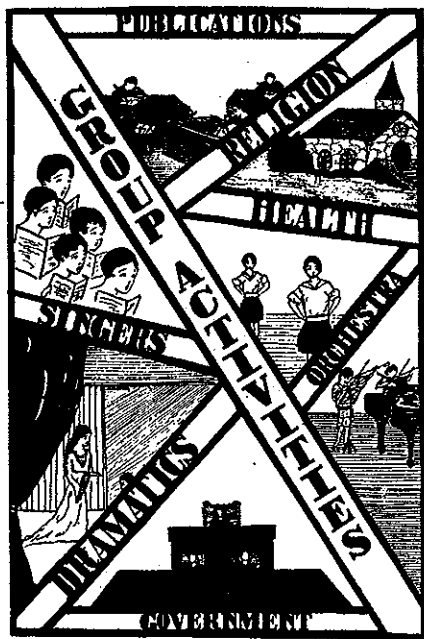
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Three pages from an early yearbook illustrate the campus life and characteristics of the new Sarah Lawrence student. The college required student participation in eight hours per week of "leisure time" activities in order to "graduate women who have experienced the value of leisure and whose varied interests insure the profitable use of whatever leisure time shall be theirs." These activities included sewing, painting, horseback riding, French conversation, weaving, dance or pantomime. "Characteristics" of the Sarah Lawrence student are artistically illuminated as images of the modern woman converge: rebellious smoker, world traveler, competitive athlete, and cultured musician.



SLC students were required to participate for two hours a week in "group activities" that were monitored by a faculty member. Activities included music, drama, social service, student government and athletics. (Courtesy, SLC Archives)



"Miss Betty," transported students three times a day to Bronxville's Hotel Gramatan (another of William Lawrence's entrepreneurial ventures) for meals. On the whole, spirits were high, and both students and administrators had the sense that they were pioneering a new educational path.⁴¹

As classes opened, the faculty and administration initiated Sarah Lawrence's innovative curriculum. Students took only three year-long classes, and attended each class once a week. Each instructor's syllabus contained a list of fifteen "goals"; to move from one to the next, the student had to pass a test on the subject matter that the goal covered. Exceptional students would finish all fifteen goals in the course of the year. There was no pressure to finish, however, and instructors encouraged each student to work at her own pace.⁴²

In addition to the unusual structure of the classes, the Sarah Lawrence curriculum was unique in that there were no majors and no core curriculum requirements to fulfill. Although they were required to submit a weekly written report on their studies to their don, or advisor, the students did not receive grades on the work they completed. The lack of grades was intended to eliminate competition and encourage the individual student to develop a sense of intellectual curiosity.

Within the first few weeks of the semester, Sarah Lawrence students also had their first experiences with a second component of the college's curriculum: group activities. A student could choose from a list of activities that included student government, religious and social service, fencing and other athletics, choral music, publications, orchestra, drawing and dramatics.⁴³ Once she selected an activity, she was required to attend weekly two-hour seminars and participate in "laboratory" work in which she performed the activity. Faculty "referees" supervised and monitored each student's progress, and gave intermittent progress reports to the administration. Rooted in the educational theories of the Bradford Program, the aims of the group activities were to develop initiative and skill, to detect and cultivate powers of leadership in individual students, to give instruction in the fundamental principles underlying the activity, and to contribute to the enrichment of the college.⁴⁴

The final component of the curriculum encountered



SLC students create line drawings from a live model in an art class in the early 1930s. From its inception, the college encouraged training in the fine arts and included many art classes in its formal curriculum. (Courtesy, SLC Archives)



William Lawrence had envisioned that SLC would be a "college where especial attention is given to the training of the body as well as the mind" through its sports program, and fencing was among the many popular athletic activities offered. Here students display their épées under the watchful eye of Captain McPherson. (Courtesy, SLC Archives)

by students within the first weeks of school was the cultivation of leisure. The administration set aside an hour and a half after lunch each day for students to work on hobbies or activities. In order to chart their

progress, the school required students to keep journals noting what they accomplished each day. The purpose of this requirement was to "graduate women who have experienced the value of leisure and whose varied interests insure the profitable use of whatever leisure time shall be theirs."⁴⁵ It is interesting to note that although the curriculum upheld the school's progressive, individualistic principles, the structured nature of the group activities and leisure time harkened back to William Van Duzer Lawrence's original, more conventional vision for the school. The student rules and regulations also reflected these conventions. The college required students to register before leaving campus and to have chaperones with them whenever they went into New York City. Smoking was not allowed, and no student was permitted to "motor" after dark without a

chaperone or special permission from the administration.⁴⁶ These restrictions seemed to contradict the liberal ideology of a school that championed the freedom of the student to develop as an individual in the classroom, and a change in the administration's attitude toward student social activities was inevitable. As Serepta Bowman Terletzsky, an early member of the Sarah Lawrence faculty, related in 1933:

Freedom from social rules and regulations has gradually developed as customs of society change, and especially in a progressive college a static attitude in respect to regulations was not only illogical but impossible.⁴⁷

Over time, Sarah Lawrence College loosened, and eventually eliminated, these social restrictions.

Within a few years of Sarah Lawrence's opening, the administration also eliminated the regulations governing group activities and leisure time. This was due in part to the change in the college leadership when Constance Warren replaced Marion Coats as President in 1929. More importantly, however, the abolition of restrictions resulted from a fuller realization of the ideals of progressive education. As Sarah Lawrence College evolved from its early traditional framework and became comfortable with its increasingly progressive ideology, the president, trustees, and faculty were able to embrace more fully the innovative notions that were at the college's core.

Mutiny on Board: Changes in the College Administration

From the perspective of the individual student, the academic year of 1928-1929 was a success, and many thrived in the experimental curriculum. Unfortunately, many members of the faculty and administration did not have the same positive experience. Marion Coats was, it seems, a demanding employer; following the end of the first academic year, only half of the faculty remained at Sarah Lawrence, citing issues with Coats' rigidity in carrying out her vision for the school.⁴⁸ Although individualism was valued in the students, many faculty members felt that Coats not only stifled their own individuality but also allowed them little chance to participate in the shaping of the college program and ideology.⁴⁹

The faculty was not alone in its difficulties with

President Coats. Henry MacCracken was waging his own battles with her about the nature of the Sarah Lawrence-Vassar affiliation. In Coats' eyes, the Vassar faculty and trustees had assumed too much control of the college's educational policy. Coats also felt that Vassar should automatically grant advanced standing to Sarah Lawrence students seeking a higher college degree.⁵⁰ These issues led to a personal dispute between Coats and MacCracken over who had true control of Sarah Lawrence.

Tension between Coats and MacCracken escalated throughout the spring of 1929, and on July 17, 1929, the newly married Marion Coats Graves officially announced her resignation. She later wrote to Constance Warren, her successor, that Henry MacCracken had forced her to resign. Aware of this accusation, MacCracken sent Warren his own account of the matter:

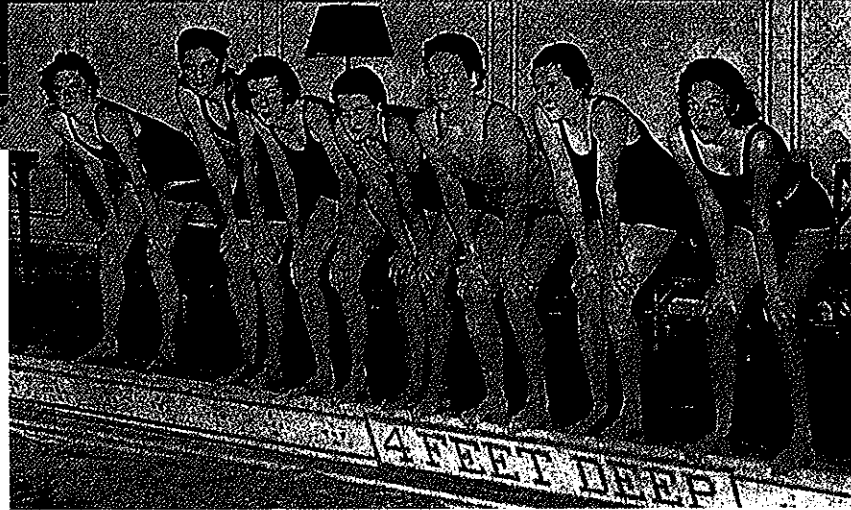
When the Vassar faculty refused to be bullied, she thereupon broke off all relations with Vassar without consulting me and in an official manner. Her resignation ensued, not upon its being asked, but because she was unwilling to face the situation which would have resulted from my own resignation from the Board. Far from my forcing her resignation, it was she who up to that point was forcing mine. That is the exact and literal truth of the situation.⁵¹

Regardless of how events leading to her resignation were interpreted, Marion Coats did indeed resign, and the fledgling college lost its first president. Coats brought true vision to the position, and between 1924 and 1929 laid the foundation for the curriculum, campus, and faculty, much of which would last for years to come. Unfortunately her overbearing personality prevented her from fully realizing her vision of the ideal college in her tenure at Sarah Lawrence. As president, Coats had proved her dedication to progressive education by implementing a curriculum centered on the individual. Yet the numerous restrictions she placed upon her faculty and students showed that she had not fully shed some of the traditional expectations of women's behavior that she shared with Lawrence. As a consequence, Coats helped form a college divided by a tension between conservative social mores and progressive educational values.

Navigating in Calmer Waters: The Presidency of Constance Warren

Constance Warren was inaugurated as Sarah Lawrence College's second president in November 1929. A graduate of Vassar, Warren had spent the past eleven years at Pine Manor Junior College in Wellesley, Massachusetts, as a teacher and administrator.⁵² MacCracken offered her the position at Sarah Lawrence because of her connection to Vassar and her experience as a junior college educator. In her sixteen years as president of Sarah Lawrence, she was a positive leadership force. Unlike Coats, Warren was an administrator who allowed other faculty members to lead without becoming jealous of their authority. She was a woman

Constance Warren, president of Sarah Lawrence from 1929 to 1945, believed that the college should change "its basic emphasis from training in scholarship to the development of the individual through as many channels as are fruitful to her." In response, one newspaper quipped: "Students are to follow their natural inclinations in their studies. . . which will utterly dumbfound the dusty old pedagogues." Warren's promotion of an individualized educational model and her innovative curriculum structure are still at the core of the college's philosophy today. (Courtesy, SLC Archives)



Fulfilling their requirements in group activities and leisure, SLC students participated in the Sheffield String Ensemble, where they learned "important symphonies"; the Art Club, where they could create and discuss art with others of "congenial" abilities and interests; and the swim team, where they vowed to "inflict revenge" on opponents who defeated them. (Courtesy, SLC Archives)

well suited to the task of convincing both fellow educators and parents that Sarah Lawrence College was a serious experiment in education.⁵³

Immediately following her inauguration, the largest issue facing Warren was the question of the Sarah Lawrence-Vassar affiliation. Since this had been the source of great tension between Marion Coats and Henry MacCracken, and was one of the causes of Coats' estrangement from the faculty and trustees, MacCracken was unsure that "the present affiliation is necessary or even expedient to continue."⁵⁴ Once Warren assumed the presidency, she and MacCracken agreed that Vassar and Sarah Lawrence should carry the affiliation to the extent of its five-year term.⁵⁵

formulate classes that were interdisciplinary in scope so that they might gain a "more realistic understanding of the complexities of our world."⁵⁶



Women in the Symposium Club read Plato aloud to each other and held debates; members of the Riding Club rode, jumped, and drilled their horses and were said to "go for polo enthusiastically"; and groups of student skiers cheerfully headed for the slopes whenever there was sufficient snow. (Courtesy, SLC Archives)



Having resolved the Vassar issue for the time being, Warren turned her full attention to the student body and the further development of a progressive curriculum. Warren had faith in the don tutorial system, and strove to make it more effective for both faculty and students. To further this goal, she restructured the course selection process and required that students participate in week-long conferences with the faculty to devise a syllabus that would best suit their interests. Warren and the faculty encouraged the student body to

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This concern with making education relevant and applicable to the world beyond academia underlay Warren's vision for Sarah Lawrence. Warren believed that students learned not only from books, but also "through seeing, through hearing, through doing." As a result, she encouraged students to use their time outside the classroom to participate in community service. They also conducted sociological surveys in the communities surrounding the college.⁵⁷

Warren hoped to prepare students even more fully for the world beyond Westlands by increasing the socioeconomic diversity of the student body. She revamped the admissions process and initiated a financial aid program to create a student body that would more closely reflect the heterogeneous nature of society. By increasing student diversity, Warren also hoped to prove to schools across the nation that they could carry out successful educational innovations regardless of the economic backgrounds of their students.⁵⁸

Of all of Warren's reforms, however, the most significant was her transformation of Sarah Lawrence from a junior college to a four-year institution capable of

Among the many student activities encouraged by the college were campus publications: the *Campus*, a weekly newspaper; the *Keynote*, a quarterly magazine; and the *Yearbook*, an annual project of the senior class. According to the 1931-1932 yearbook: "Unlike the editorial staff[s] at most college[s]...the actual responsibility for all publications rests with the students." Shown here is the 1932 editorial staff of the *Campus*. (Courtesy, SLC Archives)

granting a bachelor of arts degree. The idea first occurred to Warren when students approached her and expressed their interest in furthering their education at Sarah Lawrence.⁵⁹ She agreed to pursue the issue.

The expiration of Sarah Lawrence College's provisional charter in 1931 provided Warren with the perfect opportunity to make this a reality. The Regents of the University of the State of New York had granted Sarah Lawrence a provisional charter in December 1926 with the understanding that when the five-year term expired the Regents would review the school and its experimental educational program. Following this evaluation, they would determine whether Sarah Lawrence had been successful in its aims, and whether it merited an absolute charter. Rather than apply to the

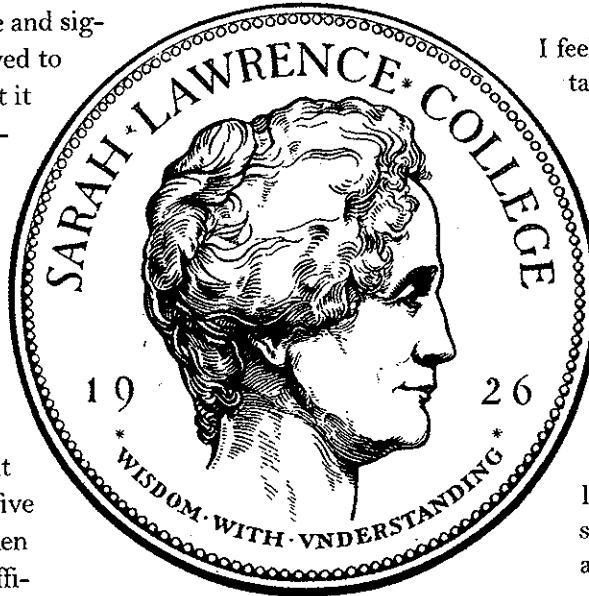
Regents as a junior college, Warren made the bold decision to apply as a four-year college.⁶⁰ The Regents proved amenable to the idea, and on September 10, 1931, they granted an absolute charter to the Sarah Lawrence College for Women.⁶¹

The granting of this charter assured the future of Sarah Lawrence College and signified that the college had proved to the Regents and the nation that it was a solid educational institution. As a result, when the formal affiliation between Sarah Lawrence and Vassar came up for evaluation in 1932, the trustees of Sarah Lawrence decided to terminate the relationship. The affiliation with Vassar had served Sarah Lawrence well, providing it with able faculty members, five trustees (including MacCracken as chairman), and financial officers to assist the college in its formative years. Having obtained a permanent charter and successfully weathered four academic years, Sarah Lawrence proved that it was ready to stand on its own.

By loosening its ties to Vassar, Sarah Lawrence freed itself further from its more conservative roots. Throughout the five-year affiliation, the Vassar faculty and trustees had urged Coats and Warren to operate their new program within the traditional bounds of the private women's colleges, specifically regarding the curriculum, faculty-president relations, and student regulations. With the termination of the Vassar affiliation, Sarah Lawrence was free to continue its journey independently.

Henry MacCracken remained as chairman of the Sarah Lawrence Board of Trustees despite the official termination of the Vassar affiliation. In 1936, however, after many years of faithful service, MacCracken decided to retire. From his initial musings with Lawrence in 1924 to his retirement in 1936, he had been the one

constant figure shaping and guiding Sarah Lawrence College, and he had always been the primary connection between William Van Duzer Lawrence, Vassar College, the Sarah Lawrence presidents, and the trustees. It was with pride, hope, and a touch of sadness that he bid the college farewell:



When Sarah Lawrence College was granted a provisional charter on December 9, 1926, it became the first junior college in New York State. The school's seal, designed by artist Violet Oakley, commemorates that 1926 event. Beneath a classical profile of Sarah Lawrence, for whom the college was named, is the school's motto, "Wisdom With Understanding."

I feel like the pilot who has helped to take the ship out of the harbor, and down the tortuous channel of its first years, into the open sea. The noise and din of its first launching are over. The ship has found itself. It can meet its own fortune. The wind is fresh and keen. There is a suggestion of adventure ahead, a tang of distance, an invitation to confront an ever beckoning horizon. If I were younger, if I believed in life tenure for such pilots, I should be tempted to make the voyage with you.

But the pilot's duty is to take the ship out of the harbor, and that duty is done. *Vogue la galère!* Speed the ship!⁶²

Sailing Toward the Future

The founding of Sarah Lawrence College occurred at a time of transition in both American culture and education. As William Van Duzer Lawrence and Henry Noble MacCracken worked to define their fledgling college, they inadvertently wrestled with some of the key issues of the 1920s, especially those related to gender, education, and the place of women within modern society. The difficulty the two men had in addressing these issues revealed not only the friction between social conservatism and experimental education, but also the tension in their differing approaches to the establishment of the college. On the progressive side, both Lawrence and MacCracken believed that education should emphasize the development of a socially conscious individual, and that experimental educational forms such as the junior college were necessary to

address the changing place of higher education within American society. On the conservative side, Lawrence believed that women's education should reflect and perpetuate separate gender spheres and traditional notions of womanhood.

Sarah Lawrence College, however, was not alone in experiencing this tension, for the struggle between progressivism and conservatism reverberated throughout all of American society during the 1920s and 1930s, especially regarding women.⁶³ Sarah Lawrence College's parallel difficulties in defining the nature of the modern educated woman indicate that the college was both a product and mirror of the society that created it. Although society would take decades to define the nature of modern womanhood, by the 1930s Sarah Lawrence had embraced a liberal model for women and education. By encouraging students to develop their potential as individuals and to think independently, Sarah Lawrence produced students who challenged existing modes of thought, including gender roles. The success of Sarah Lawrence College was due in no small part to the dedication and hard work of its founders: leaders, educators – and dreamers. Those at the helm may have changed during its formative years, but through their combined efforts, the Sarah Lawrence College ship had found a steady course, and it would continue to sail forward toward the “ever beckoning horizon” of progressive education for women.

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NOTES

1 William Van Duzer Lawrence to Henry Noble MacCracken, 14 August 1924, Sarah Lawrence College Archives (SLCA), Box: Early History to 1927, folder 1924.

2 Ibid.

3 William Van Duzer Lawrence, “Diary,” Winter 1921, as quoted in Anna Lawrence Bisland, *Lawrence-Bates-Van Duzer Genealogies* (Privately published: 1932), 208.

4 Lucia Meigs Andrews, *Sketches of Lawrence Enterprises, 1888-1934* (Bronxville, NY: Lawrence Management, Inc., 1984), 208.

5 William Van Duzer Lawrence, “Proposed: Lawrence College,

Bronxville, N.Y., A Junior College and Preparatory School for Girls,” 1925 (SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. 1925).

6 The connection between women's education and the upholding of the separate spheres ideology dated back to the Troy Female Seminary, the first institution for women's education founded by Emma Willard in 1821. The primary educational goal of the Troy Female Seminary was to educate women for motherhood and to train them as teachers. As such, it upheld traditional conceptions of what was proper for women, and worked to reinforce the notion that men and women each had separate “spheres” within society. Anne Firror Scott, “The Ever-Widening Circle: The Diffusion of Feminist Values from the Troy Female Seminary, 1822-1872,” *The Social History of American Education*, ed. B. Edward McClellan and William J. Reese (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 137-39.

The private liberal arts colleges for women founded in the second half of the nineteenth century (i.e. Vassar, Wellesley, Bryn Mawr, Radcliffe) also promoted the separate spheres ideology, specifically by segregating women and encouraging women to see the world in distinctly gendered terms. Barbara Miller Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 47. See also Carl N. Degler, *At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 8-9, 26-29.

7 John Dewey first became prominent at the turn of the nineteenth century with the publishing of an educational treatise entitled *The School and Society* (1899), and was in many ways the father of the progressive education movement. Believing that education was critical to social reform, Dewey advocated making education more applicable and relevant to society by redefining the curriculum to include vocational subjects. In addition, Dewey believed that education needed to cultivate the individual, as “a progressive society counts individual variations as precious since it finds in them the means of its own growth.” By educating each individual and making education relevant to the real world, society and culture would be redefined and improved and democracy would become a reality. Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 118-26. Also, John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: MacMillan and Company, 1916), 357.

Through the efforts of the Progressive Education Association (PEA) and other educational groups, progressive educational theories were put into practice across the country. Although it was initially concerned with the application of progressive education at the elementary and secondary school levels, by the 1910s and 1920s progressive education spread to institutions of higher learning. Thanks to the influence of the PEA, many public and private colleges began to adopt curricula which placed greater emphasis on the individual student and recognized the power of education to effect social change. In addition, educators and progressives began to experiment with new forms of higher education. Louis T. Benezet, *General Education in the Progressive College* (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1943), v.

8 Elizabeth A. Daniels, *Bridges to the World: Henry Noble MacCracken and Vassar College* (Clinton Corners, NY: College Avenue Press, 1994), 75.

9 Derived from the Greek root meaning “to cause good,” eutherics was an interdisciplinary program that used sciences, arts, and social

sciences to improve the home, society, and environment. Courses included the study of child development, hygiene, nutrition, and the "bacteriology and chemistry of food," all in the interest of integrating science and knowledge with practical action. Daniels, *Bridges to the World*, 130-32. Also, Helen Drusilla Lockwood, "The Meaning of Euthenics: An Essay on Action as a Tool of Knowledge" (Poughkeepsie, NY: Vassar College, January 1929), 13, 23.

10 Daniels, *Bridges to the World*, 138. Also, Solomon, *Company of Educated Women*, 116. Despite the rift that the debate about the euthenics program caused among the faculty, the program was instituted in 1925. In the years that followed the child study program was popular but euthenics was never the success that MacCracken had dreamed it might be.

11 Specifically, middle class women. Colleen McDonough, "The Founding of Sarah Lawrence College: A Case Study of the Contradictions in Progressive Education" (M.A. Thesis, Sarah Lawrence College, 1978), 7.

12 Dorothy M. Brown, *Setting A Course: American Women in the 1920s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), 164.

13 Solomon, *Company of Educated Women*, chap. 6.

14 Soon thereafter private junior colleges began to appear in the West and Midwest. The goal of both private and public junior colleges was to give more attention to the individual student, to provide general education for those who would not go on to higher levels of training, to popularize higher education, and to foster the reorganization of secondary and higher education. Leonard V. Koos, *The Junior-College Movement* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1925), 319-20.

15 The popularity of the public and private junior college model increased throughout the 1910s and 1920s, highlighting the popularization and realization of progressive educational ideals, as well as Americans' increasing demand for higher education and vocational training. Despite the rise in popularity throughout much of the country, the Northeastern states were resistant to accept junior colleges as a legitimate form of higher education. Koos, *The Junior-College Movement*, 11. Also, Frederick Geller to Henry MacCracken, 21 November 1924 (SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. 1924).

16 Lawrence, "Proposed" (SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. 1925).

17 William Van Duzer Lawrence, Last Will and Testament, Section 7, May 1925 (SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. 1925).

18 William Van Duzer Lawrence to Henry Noble MacCracken, 13 July 1925 (SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. 1925).

19 Known as the "Bradford Program," this system stressed the "development of the aesthetic side of the student's character" through a two-year course that emphasized individual academic training, group activities, and the profitable use of leisure time. From "Resigns Place as Bradford Academy Head," *Haverhill Evening Gazette*, 13 December 1926 (SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. 1926).

20 Ibid.

21 Henry Noble MacCracken to William Van Duzer Lawrence, 26 July 1926 (SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. 1926).

22 William Van Duzer Lawrence to Marion Coats, 15 July 1926, *ibid.*

23 Marion Coats to William Van Duzer Lawrence, 20 July 1926, *ibid.*

24 Sarah Lawrence College Board of Trustees, "Proposed Agreement - Sarah Lawrence College and Vassar College," 1927 (SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. 1927).

As a side note, Lawrence, as a businessman, was especially in favor of the affiliation, for it secured his investment. The expansionist businessman in him also envisioned a "chain of Junior colleges reaching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, to be given by cities and towns to Vassar all to be known as Junior Vassars, controlled and managed from the Mother Institution in Poughkeepsie, New York, which would build there the greatest Educational Centre [sic] in the world." William Van Duzer Lawrence to Henry Noble MacCracken, 16 December 1926 (SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. 1926).

25 Dudley B. Lawrence, *Sarah Lawrence College: Early Recollections* (July 1958), 7.

26 *Ibid.*

27 Dudley B. Lawrence, "Mr. Lawrence and Dr. MacCracken Gave Enthusiasm and Devotion to College," *The Campus* (Sarah Lawrence College), 25 January 1927 (3).

28 Marion Coats, "The Sarah Lawrence College" [publicity pamphlet], 1927 (SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. 1927).

29 Marion Coats, "Calendar of Work Planned—July 1927 to July 1928," 1927, *ibid.*

30 *Progressive Education* was the official publication of the Progressive Education Association (PEA). Founded in 1919, the PEA formalized the progressive education movement. During the 1920s, the PEA turned progressive education into a national movement with its calls for individualized education adapted to each student's needs. Specifically, the PEA advocated that teachers allow each student the freedom to develop "naturally." Teachers also needed to be mindful of using teaching tools that would stimulate the interest of all students and show them how to put their knowledge to useful application. Through this process, the teacher would act as a guide for the students, and would improve the overall quality of the educational experience by applying scientific study towards the development of each pupil. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School*, 243-45.

31 Marion Coats, "The Junior College as the Next Step in Progressive Education," *Progressive Education* IV (October-November-December 1927): 271.

32 During the nineteenth century, most students at women's seminaries and private colleges came from the middle class. Upper class women generally did not pursue higher education, but were sent to finishing schools to learn the grace and charm of proper society ladies. Although an increasing number of upper-middle-class women began to attend private women's colleges by the end of the century (indicating the shift within American society towards greater acceptance of women's higher education), the colleges remained bastions of the middle class. Sarah Lawrence College was thus unique in its overt catering to the upper-class student. Solomon, *Company of Educated Women*, 64-71.

33 Marion Coats Correspondence (SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. 1927).

34 Sarah Lawrence College, "Application for Admission, Forms A and B," 1927 (SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. 1927).

35 William Van Duzer Lawrence, "My Profession of Faith, Educationally, and a Letter of Instruction to the Board of Trustees of the Sarah Lawrence Junior College," 1926, 6 (SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. 1926).

36 *Building A Suburban Village: Bronxville, New York, 1898-1998* (Bronxville, NY: Bronxville Centennial Celebration Committee, 1998), 17-18, 34.

37 Marion Coats to Henry Noble MacCracken, 8 January 1927

(SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. 1927). See also (SLCA, Box EH 1927-1934).

38 While there are no statistics as to how many prospective students had applied and how competitive the admissions process was during 1928, it seems that a greater number of women applied than the college could accommodate. This was certainly true in 1929, as MacCracken wrote that "applications for admission continue to exceed the ability of the college to admit applicants." Henry Noble MacCracken, "To the Board of Trustees of Sarah Lawrence College," 8 August 1929 (SLCA, Box EH 1927-1934, f. June-December 1929, MacCracken-Coats correspondence).

39 Betty Blanchard Bower and Artita Zeltner Brooks, "Historically Speaking: The Second of Two Articles on the Beginnings of Sarah Lawrence College," *Sarah Lawrence College Alumni Magazine* 16 (1950): 7, 24.

40 "New College Opens for Girls," *New York Times*, 7 October 1928 (X:13).

41 Bower and Brooks, "Historically Speaking," 24.

42 Marion Coats, "Preliminary Statute of Instruction," September 1927, 5 (SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. 1927).

43 Serepta Bowman Terletzsky, "History of Sarah Lawrence College," 11 April 1933, 5 (SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. SLC histories).

44 Coats, "Preliminary Statute," 8-10 (SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. 1927).

45 "New College Opens for Girls," *New York Times*, 7 October 1928 (X:13).

46 Terletzsky, "History," 4 (SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. SLC histories).

47 Ibid.

48 Henry Noble MacCracken to Constance B. Warren, 4 November 1929 (SLCA, Box EH 1927-1934, f. MacCracken, Coats, Warren 1929 Correspondence.)

49 Professor Beatrice Bishop voiced the frustrations of the early SLC faculty when she wrote:

"Frankly, I have not sufficient confidence in the integrity of the Administration to feel that the institution as at present administered is a safe medium for the education of students or for the intellectual operations of a Faculty of collegiate grade. This is not a lack of sympathy with the experiment which I think has immense possibilities. It is a direct personal judgement on the character of the person charged with responsibility for its execution. This judgement is based on what I have seen for the past six months. ... I am very sorry that my connection with Sarah Lawrence should be severed at the end of one brief year as the enthusiasm and response of the students in both my courses had started many dreams and projects in my mind about what seemed to be the possibilities of an experiment like the Junior College." Beatrice Bishop to Marion Coats, 11 March 1929 (SLCA, Box EH 1927-1934, f. MacCracken-Coats 1929 Correspondence). Also, Marion Coats, "Report of the President to the Board of Trustees of Sarah Lawrence College" (May 1929) and Henry Noble MacCracken to Prof. Ethel Louise Coe, 15 November 1929 (SLCA, Box EH 1927-1934, f. MacCracken, Coats, Warren 1929 correspondence).

50 MacCracken refused to grant automatic admission to SLC students, citing Vassar's conservative transfer policy. In addition, he saw the relationship between Vassar and SLC merely as one of "trusteeship" - Vassar thus had no obligation to accept SLC students due to the Vassar-SLC affiliation. Henry Noble MacCracken to Marion Coats, 23 April 1929 (SLCA, Box EH 1927-1934, f. MacCracken-Coats January-May 1929 Correspondence).

During the first two years of Sarah Lawrence's operation, all

students desiring to pursue further higher education had to pass exams administered by the Board of Examiners. The members of the Board of Examiners were all educators from top eastern colleges, and they administered tests in different subject areas at the end of the academic year. Since SLC students did not take tests or receive grades, these tests indicated the extent of their education to that point and their academic promise. Secondly, these tests also served to validate the SLC educational program, for they subjected SLC students to the scrutiny of top educators. Constance Warren abolished the Board of Examiners in 1931 in an attempt to make SLC and its progressive education program more independent. See "Sarah Lawrence College: Faculty and Board of Examiners, 1928-1929" (SLCA, Box EH 1927-1934, f. Faculty and Board of Examiners 1928-1929). Also, Constance B. Warren to Harvey Zorbaugh, 30 March 1931 (SLCA, Box EH 1927-1931, f. Faculty and Board of Examiners 1928-1929).

51 Henry Noble MacCracken to Constance B. Warren, 5 November 1929 (SLCA, Box EH 1927-1934, MacCracken, Coats, Warren 1929 Correspondence).

52 "Heads Women's College," *New York Times*, 1 November 1929 (24).

53 Stephen R. Coleman, "To Promote Creativity, Community, and Democracy: The Progressive Colleges of the 1920s and 1930s" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2000), 137.

54 Henry Noble MacCracken to Marion Coats, 23 April 1929 (SLCA, Box EH 1927-1934, f. MacCracken-Coats, January-May 1929 Correspondence).

55 The Sarah Lawrence Board of Trustees first ratified this affiliation in May 1927. Constance B. Warren, President's Report, 9 December 1936 (SLCA, Box EH 1927-1934, f. Vassar Affiliation, 1927-1936).

56 Constance B. Warren, "Sarah Lawrence a Pioneer College Interested in Personal Development," *The Campus*, 25 January 1937 (1).

57 Ibid., (2).

58 Ibid.

59 "Students trained for two years under this plan of more independent and individual work than is usual in college were in increasing numbers requesting the privilege of completing a four-year course here." Constance B. Warren, "Sarah Lawrence College," 22 May 1934 (SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. SLC histories).

60 By applying as a four-year rather than two-year college, Warren eliminated the original reason for the Regents' opposition to granting a provisional charter to the school. Sarah Lawrence, however, would presumably have received the absolute charter regardless of whether or not it was a junior college. Additionally, it must be noted that Sarah Lawrence continued to offer the junior college program for the next few years while simultaneously offering the Bachelor of Arts.

61 Regents of the University of the State of New York, *Absolute Charter of Sarah Lawrence College for Women*, 10 September 1931 (SLCA, Box EH-1927, f. Charter).

62 Henry Noble MacCracken, "Dr. MacCracken Likens College to Ship Now Ready to Endure Tides and Storms," *The Campus*, 25 January 1937 (1).

63 McDonough, "The Founding of Sarah Lawrence College," 7.