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Elizabeth Harrison and Her Contribution to the Kindergarten Movement in Chicago, 1880-1920

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ELIZABETH HARRISON
AND HER CONTRIBUTION TO THE
KINDERGARTEN MOVEMENT IN CHICAGO, 1880-1920

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PREFACE

Elizabeth Harrison, a well known leader in the Chicago Kindergarten Movement, first gained international attention through her writing of books. Her second and most successful book, *A Study of Child Nature: From a Kindergarten Standpoint* written in 1895, sold over fifty editions and was translated in eight languages. Her speaking and writing ability brought her to the forefront of the kindergarten movement in the United States in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Harrison was the first to organize a mothers' convocation which attracted well over a thousand participants. These convocations consisted primarily of mothers but some fathers were also present. Their audience came from all socio-economic levels from cities and towns across the United States. The success of the three convocations organized by Harrison eventually led to the Parent-Teacher Association that is still viable today.

Elizabeth Harrison devoted forty-three years of her life promoting Froebel's Kindergarten principles. In the course of her career she made numerous contributions to the kindergarten movement not only in Chicago but across the United States. Of her many contributions, the kindergarten

training school, opened by her in 1886, still exists today as National Louis University in Evanston, Illinois. Despite her many accomplishments it was somewhat surprising to find only several articles written on someone of her prominence. The absence of a comprehensive study on someone who made such strides in the kindergarten movement did not seem fitting. So, in an attempt to pay tribute to someone who contributed to the growth of this educational movement and to begin to fill the paucity of literature in this area, this dissertation is written.

This dissertation traces Elizabeth Harrison's influence on the national and international kindergarten movement through her writing and crusades. It also analyzes the motivational factors that caused Harrison to embark on a career as a kindergartner (term used in the nineteenth century to denote a trainer of kindergarten children and teachers). It examines the conditions present in the United States and Chicago that made the kindergarten a welcome change in childhood education. The following questions were addressed by the researcher: 1. What religious, political, social, and economic motivations caused Harrison to enter kindergarten work? 2. What were her ideas on kindergarten education? 3. What were the nature and effect of her work in Chicago? 4. What is her significance in the history of education? Answering the preceding questions became the

focus of this work.

It is the thesis of this study that Elizabeth Harrison made valuable contributions to the promotion of the kindergarten in the United States and Chicago. Harrison's publications as well as unpublished documents were examined to ascertain information that would not only help provide a better understanding of Harrison but to answer the questions at the core of this study. The research method used in compiling the information for the study was the historical procedure.

Elizabeth Harrison's courage and determination were pivotal to her success in the Chicago kindergarten arena. Being an outsider she dared to do the unheard of, and after doing so gained acceptance and later the recognition that was due her. It was those unheard of things that made her kindergarten training school the largest and most reputable in the United States during the early twentieth century.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation exists because of the support and or cooperation of a number of individuals and institutions. It is at this time that I would like to acknowledge them for their role in this study.

A special expression of gratitude is extended to the members of my dissertation committee--especially to Dr. Gerald L. Gutek, director of this thesis, for his timely return of chapters, editorial skills, advice, and words of encouragement. I am also deeply grateful to Father Walter Krolikowski Ph.D., and Dr. Joan K. Smith for their scholarly assistance.

I want to thank my husband, Walter, and my mother, Persephone who along with family and friends were there during this endeavor with their words of support, limitless affection, patience and understanding.

Unfortunately, all of my supporters were not able to see the culmination of their impetus. So, I am taking this time to remember my deceased grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Roosevelt Ingram, my aunt, Eula M. Adams, and Dr. Willaim R. Clarke M.D. for instilling in me the need for an education.

A very special thanks goes to Dr. Joyce Aiko Hieshima for her editorial assistance and friendship. A heartfelt thanks is also extended to Dr. Cynthia Felton for her unceasing motivation and professional expertise.

In addition to my family and friends I want to thank Dr. Frank Lucente Jr., my former district superintendent, for insisting that I do this and my boss Stuart Gold for his patience and sensitivity.

Finally, I would like to thank the staff and volunteers at the National Louis University Library and the Special Collections Department at the Davenport Public Library for the service they so warmly provided.

DEDICATION

To the two most important people in my life:
my mother, Persephone Allen and my
husband, Walter Branch Jr.

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CHAPTER I

ELIZABETH HARRISON THE WOMAN

It has long been an accepted practice to examine one's background to determine what factors were present or absent in the molding of that person's character. It was that practice that prompted such theorists as John Amos Komensky (1592-1670), Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1776-1827) and many others to examine more closely the relationship between one's genealogy and environment in the building of character. That relationship has been studied for countless years and is still paramount in the fields of psychology and education in the twentieth century.

As a kindergartner, Elizabeth Harrison, for forty-three years, provided guidance to mothers on the rearing of their children.[1] Given the importance of proper training and environment on the formation of character, it is only fitting that this chapter examine the circumstances that helped to make Elizabeth Harrison the woman she later

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[1] During the nineteenth century the term "kindergartner" was used to denote a person who either taught kindergarten children or trained their teachers. Throughout this paper the term "kindergartner" will be used in that manner.

became. This chapter will chronicle the life of Elizabeth Harrison-- from her ancestry, through childhood and the beginning of her insatiable quest for knowledge to adulthood when she decided to embark on a kindergarten career.

Family Background

Elizabeth Harrison was a product of English ancestry. Her fraternal ancestors can be traced back to Chappawanise, England. Her forefathers settled in the United States prior to the Revolutionary War. They initially settled in Virginia in 1699, and in 1782 some migrated to Kentucky.[2] Isaac Webb Harrison, Elizabeth's father, was born into a family of successful merchants and land speculators. Some of his most notable relatives included: Benjamin Harrison a Virginia delegate to the Continental Congress from 1774-1778. Benjamin Harrison was also one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, his son, William Henry Harrison, and great-grandson, Benjamin Harrison, later became two of our country's presidents. In addition to other notable relatives, Isaac Webb Harrison was related to General Harrison of Cromwell's Army.[3]

Harrison's maternal ancestors also traced back to England. They too migrated to the United States before the

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[2] Edwin Herbert Lewis, *In Memoriam Elizabeth Harrison 1849-1927* (n.p.) (n.d), p.21.

[3] Helen Marshall, "Elizabeth Harrison Pioneer Woman Teacher" *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin* 8 (June 1942): 9.

Revolutionary War. Her maternal forefathers also initially settled in Virginia prior to the eventual resettling of the family in Kentucky. The early death of Harrison's maternal grandmother resulted in the loss of much of the maternal family history. Harrison's mother, Elizabeth Thompson Bullock, kept what information was available on her maternal family history recorded on paper in her Bible. When she died it was misplaced, and the information was never recovered. Harrison's mother was proud of her ancestral background, but Harrison found it difficult to understand why. Harrison expressed her feelings in the statement: "She was rather proud of her ancestors, though just what they did that counted for anything of especial value I do not know."[4] Harrison's mother's father, Judge Garland Bullock, was a judge of the Circuit Court of Carroll County, Kentucky. According to Harrison, her mother recalled that the only information available on Judge Bullock's ancestry was that it could be traced back to Georgia.

Elizabeth Harrison's grandparents were pioneers who moved from Virginia to Kentucky during the days when Indian attacks were very common. Judge Bullock and his family lived in Gallatin County, Kentucky until 1776 when Carroll County was formed by taking a portion of the territory that

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[4] Elizabeth Harrison, *Sketches Along Life's Road*, ed. C.S. Bailey, (Boston: The Stratford Company, 1930), 1.

once was Gallatin County.[5] Judge Bullock bequeathed his daughter, Elizabeth Thompson Bullock, his spacious and beautiful home that included rich farm land overlooking the Ohio River in Carroll County, Kentucky.[6] Harrison's mother and father resided in that home for the first nine years of their marriage. During that time, her father, Isaac Webb Harrison, worked in the town of Carrollton, Kentucky as a dry-goods merchant. In 1849 Isaac's business suffered a financial crisis which made it necessary to sell the family home and its furnishings. Mr. Harrison, along with his wife and their three children, relocated to a small village called Athens, Kentucky.

Approximately three months following their move to Athens, on 1 September 1849 Elizabeth Harrison was born during a cholera epidemic. Shortly, after Harrison's birth her mother and two older sisters (Mary and Sarah called Lillie) were stricken with cholera. Because of the severity of the epidemic there was a shortage of nurses and even of untrained women to assist the sick and their families. The Harrisons entrusted the household duties as well as the care of a new born baby and their four year old son, George, to a young black girl. According to Harrison her mother saw the cholera as a testing of her faith; she also recalled that

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[5] United States Census Report for Gallatin County, Kentucky 1830.

[6] *Sketches*, 1.

her mother prayed that her life be spared for the sake of her children.[7] Miraculously, Harrison's mother and two sisters survived the cholera epidemic, and following their recovery Mrs. Harrison vowed to help other mothers in need. Mrs. Harrison holding true to her promise helped not only the ill in the community but anyone who needed it.

It appears that some of Harrison's ancestors were very successful and influential not only in their communities but across the country as well. While it is apparent that some of the distant lineage had leadership qualities it has not been established that Isaac Webb Harrison communicated or had a close relationship with those relatives.

Childhood

Several months following Elizabeth Harrison's birth and the recovery of the family members who had been stricken with cholera, the Harrison's moved to Midway, Woodford County, Kentucky. Midway, while larger than Athens, was still considered a small town with a population of about three thousand. The nearest large town was Lexington which was known for its good schools. Harrison later recalled that the schools created an atmosphere of culture which was uncommon in many other towns in Kentucky.[8] The Harrison family lived in Midway for seven years. Recalling her time

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[7] Ibid., 2.

[8] Ibid., 3.

there Harrison wrote: "It was a care-free, happy life for us children."[9] It was there that Harrison spent a great deal of time taking part in out-door dramatic play activities, which she would later utilize in her profession. In 1856, Mr. Harrison was faced with yet another failed business venture. Aside from business woes, a growing family and the expense of sending the two oldest children to school (schools were not free), it became necessary for the Harrison's once again to rely on their pioneering spirit.

Mr. Harrison accepted an offer of a large tract of undeveloped land in and around Davenport, Iowa.[10] In 1856 the family moved north to Davenport, Scott County, Iowa located across the Mississippi River from Rock Island, Illinois and some three hundred fifty miles above St. Louis, Missouri by way of the river.[11] Harrison recalling the move wrote:

> Davenport was a much larger town than Midway, and our new home was surrounded by streets and other homes occupied by strangers, quite in contrast to friendly Midway, the beautiful blue-grass region filled with well-tended orchards, green fields, and meadow lands.[12]

The family also took with them Aunt Ginny, an ex-slave

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[9] Ibid., 3.

[10] Ibid., 3.

[11] Harry E. Downer, *History of Davenport and Scott County Iowa, vol. 1,* (Chicago: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1910), 686.

[12] *Sketches*, 3-4.

who had previously belonged to Isaac's parents (Harrison's grandparents). Aunt Ginny served as a nanny to Isaac shortly after his birth. Aunt Ginny remained with Isaac's parents until his mother gave up housekeeping. After moving into the home of Elizabeth Harrison's parents, Aunt Ginny was instrumental in assisting Mrs. Harrison with household duties and the rearing of the children. Giving her account of Aunt Ginny's move, Harrison wrote:

> When my grandmother gave up housekeeping, Aunt Ginny came to live with us. She ruled supreme in the kitchen and was chief ally to our mother in the not easy task of training a group of headstrong, active youngsters in the dignity of manners and standards of morals which the family tradition demanded. . . . I think she loved us, in her way, as devotedly as did our mother; only her standards were different. That we the daughters of the house should grow up courteous and attractive-looking and marry men of quality was all she asked of the Lord for us; and as to our brothers, the one idea she held before them was that they should grow up gentlemen and not let Mis' Liz ever be ashamed of them.[13]

Later, Aunt Ginny's poor health and eventual death affected every member of the family, especially Harrison's brother, George, who like his father had a close relationship with Aunt Ginny.

Mr. Harrison's job as a land agent required him to spend much of his time away from home, which Elizabeth Harrison felt exactly suited him. Although the business had its ups and downs, Harrison recalled:

> If times were good, we lived lavishly. If times were bad, my mother economized but at all times we set a lavish table and at all times entertained friends and

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[13] Ibid., 7-8.

relatives for visits for any duration of time.[14] Needless to say, the Harrison's southern hospitality made their home one of the social centers of the town. Mrs. Harrison was described by Elizabeth Harrison as a kindred-loving, home-keeping woman. Mrs. Harrison was very proud of her station in life and held herself aloof from "people with common manners."[15] She was influenced by one's manners more than one's wealth or lack of it. Harrison recalled that her mother was kind and helpful to the very poor because of her religious nature.

The Harrisons' Episcopal faith was an important part of their children's upbringing. The children were drilled on church catechism and read scriptures or verses from the Bible daily. At the tender age of nine, Harrison had memorized at least two hundred verses. On Sundays the family attended a mission chapel near their home.

The outdoor dramatic plays that the Harrison children had taken part in while in Midway were reduced to playing with paper dolls in an unfurnished play-room in Davenport. During the winters in Davenport, the children participated in winter sports such as snow balling and coasting down the hill on which they lived. Harrison enjoyed the outdoor activities that she later attributed to her "freedom of

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[14] Ibid., 4.

[15] Ibid., 4.

body" or flexibility which allowed her to take part in the games of kindergarten. She recalled that:

> The deep winter snows of this new climate were a ceaseless delight to us children, and we were allowed to enjoy all the sports that the snow suggested. Snow-balling was an unending source of attraction and a most invigorating exercise for a motor-minded set of children; I think, as a whole, we would be classed under that head. The long hills of the town afforded excellent coasting exercise of the most daring kind. Our home stood on a hill which was five blocks long, and at the foot of it was a railway crossing. The long, swift descent of this hill and the quick turning to one side to avoid the railway track undoubtedly developed alertness of mind as well as increased circulation of the blood. . . .From April till late in the Fall we were never without some kind of wholesome out-of-door exercise. Summer brought swimming lessons and boat rides on the Mississippi.[16]

Besides the outdoor activities, Harrison also enjoyed reading which had always been a source of entertainment for the entire family. Her cousin Sallie, who lived in Missouri, made such an impression on Harrison with her oral reading during her visits that she too became an excellent reader. Describing her introduction to reading at the age of five going on six Harrison wrote:

> I especially recall one gloomy winter day when I was sitting at my mother's feet playing with my doll. My mother was sewing and Cousin Sallie was reading aloud one of Shakespeare's plays. As I recall those long-ago years, it seems to me that my mother was always sewing and Cousin Sallie was always reading aloud; or Cousin Sallie was sewing and my mother was reading aloud. There were five children and the negro servants to be clothed, and at the time all garments were made by hand. Sewing machines came into our family later. Of course, there was much reading aloud that did not interest me. Walter Scott was at his zenith at that time; Dickens and

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[16] *Sketches*, 6.

> Thackeray were coming rapidly to the front, and a number of other mid-Victorian stars, of whom I knew little and cared less. But Shakespeare seemed to be the favorite in our household; at least I remember more distinctly Cousin Sallie's dramatic way of reading the plays.

She further wrote:

> What so entranced me was the way in which Cousin Sallie changed her voice to that of a big, burly man whenever Sir John spoke. I recall my mother smiling at the swagger way in which Cousin Sallie played the part of "Old Sir John," then saying to her, "Sallie, stop your nonsense and read on." I remember Cousin Sallie replying, "How can I read it any other way? That is the way he talks." Then they both laughed, and I resolved that I would read that story just as soon as I could. My heart had begun hungering for more knowledge, all unconscious of the fact that hunger of this kind would never cease.[17]

Harrison referred to the characters in *The Bible* and her favorite Shakespearian plays or stories as her invisible friends. She would imagine various characters in different situations and imitate them. Describing a Biblical imaginary friend she later wrote:

> . . . Of these, Moses was my special friend. He had lived in palaces with kings and princes; yet he had given up all that splendor to help his old mother and father and their relatives. He had stretched out his arm and the waters of the sea had divided at his command, and he had talked face to face with God! It was all extraordinary, so wonderful! I often planned the long talks I would have with him when I got to Heaven, the questions I would ask him and how I would have him retell some of his amazing experiences. There was never any doubt in my mind as to the friendship between us.[18]

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[17] Ibid., 13.

[18] Ibid., 17.

Quest For Knowledge

Harrison first attended school in Davenport at the age of eight. She could not remember when she learned to read but it was before she started school. At the age of thirteen Harrison successfully passed the high school entrance examination for a superior high school course conducted by William Kissell, the first county superintendent of public schools.[19] The *Acht und Vierziger* German Scholarship was predominant in the superior high school course.[20] Davenport had, if not the first, one of the first free public schools in Scott County. Starting in 1850, the public school was supported by public taxation.[21]

Harrison's father promised her he would send her to college if she performed equally as well on the final high school examination. Harrison was so excited and eager to get started with high school that she made plans to study during the summer to get a head start on the coming year's work. However, fate and the family doctor decided differently.

The doctor was concerned about Harrison's physical condition which he described as "frail and undersized for

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[19] Downer, *History of Davenport and Scott County*, 713.

[20] *Lewis, 21.*

[21] Downer, 713.

her age."[22] The doctor advised her parents to take her out of school for a year in the hope that her health might improve. Harrison and her parents arrived at a compromise; instead of missing a year of school she was sent to visit her cousin Sallie for the summer of 1862.

Harrison later said: "We spent a summer of unlimited freedom, almost living out of doors, and learning soon to gallop for miles bare-back over country roads on horses with merely a rope bridle." That visit also afforded Harrison the opportunity to observe the ways of the "old south." In recalling some of her experiences in Missouri, Harrison mentioned: "Usually a little seven-year old darky rode with one or the other of us for the purpose of opening or shutting the gates that led on the new highway or into private lanes of neighboring farms."[23] The abolition of slavery had not been proclaimed during her visit, and the relationship of master and servant remained as it had been for fifty years or longer. Harrison saw no hint that things were about to change, however, change did occur. Its impact on Sallie's family caused Harrison to think that slavery was as much a curse on the master as it was on the slave. The lives of the master and the slave were altered forever.

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[22] *Sketches*, 27.

[23] Ibid., 27.

When Elizabeth Harrison returned home from Cousin Sallie's, her family found she had gained several pounds and grown perceptibly taller. She was more eager than ever to begin her first year in high school knowing it would be difficult. The first two years in high school proved to be as rudimentary as elementary school had been. Harrison was disappointed that no supplemental readers or books were provided or research required. She also felt there had been no room for personal opinions in the classroom. Harrison recalled: "I think it must have been inborn hunger for knowledge that carried us through the drill and grind of our work; even in high school it was the same."[24] Prior to the last two years in high school Harrison felt that school was a duty to be carried out until a science teacher changed her outlook on science and education forever.

Elizabeth Harrison credited James Hamlin, a science teacher, with changing her view of school. He required her to perform the technical tasks of that day; making him unlike any other teacher Harrison had known during that time. She said: "All other teaching was from the appointed textbooks, lessons to be learned and recited."[25] Hamlin inspired Harrison with his enthusiastic teaching style which

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[24] Ibid., 21.

[25] Ibid., 21.

reflected his joy of teaching. Harrison stated that:

> It is to this teacher, James Hamlin, I owe my lasting interest in the marvelous progress which science has made and is still making. I did not realize at that time the great value this awakening of interest in science would be to me in my future life work.[26]

Years later Harrison used her interest in science books to provide a needed break from the weary necessary reading of reports and reprints of new theories in pedagogy. She would return to her necessary reading refreshed and eager to carry on.

Harrison successfully passed the final high school examination with honors. Recalling the excitement of her accomplishment she later wrote:

> I worked hard and steadily all through my high-school course, oftentimes beyond my bodily strength. At the close of my senior year I stood one hundred per cent in all of my studies, the only member of the class who did, although there were two classmates ahead of me in native ability; thus I fulfilled the conditions on which I was promised college, again the folly of my over-work manifested itself, and my mother, backed by the doctor, decided that my college course must be deferred a year. But the next year my father had certain financial losses, not serious, but enough to make him feel that the college expenses must again be postponed.[27]

It was difficult, but Harrison managed to relinquish the idea of going to college. She choose instead to throw herself into the life about her. During that year at home she worked, as a favor to her mother, at a new Young Men

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[26] *Sketches*, 23.

[27] Ibid., 29-30

Christian Association in Davenport which was opened in 1867. Recalling the experience as a valuable one she wrote:

> It taught me how to find out what interested others and to adjust ourselves to the social order when it was right that we should do so. It taught me how to commingle with many kinds of people, and, later, as a teacher, how to relieve a shy student of embarrassment.[28]

Early Adulthood

In 1875 Elizabeth Harrison was faced with the loss of her mother who became ill and suddenly died within a few days. Due to the quickness of her mother's illness, Harrison found that there was barely time to send for her brother, George, who was away on business and her two sisters, along with their families. Following Mrs. Harrison's death, Elizabeth Harrison was not only faced with trying to handle her own grief but her father's as well.

In spite of her sorrow during this time, Harrison was active in both the social and civic life of rapidly growing Davenport. Mr. Harrison still mourning the loss of his wife no longer felt their home was a real home in spite of the fact that Elizabeth Harrison was doing all she could to make it more homelike. Regardless of her efforts her father was still very lonely, restless and unhappy. After several years of discussion, it was decided that they would rent their home including the furnishings for what was supposed

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[28] Ibid., 31.

to have been for the winter; however, Harrison stated: "My father insisted that it was a temporary arrangement, and that we could, if we wished, return in the spring; but deep down in my heart I knew that it was the breaking up of the old life."[29]

Following their move from the family home, Mr. Harrison became a resident in one of the downtown hotels while Elizabeth Harrison went to live with her older sister, Mary Russell Knisely, called Mollie, and her family in Marshalltown, Iowa. Harrison found herself filled with despair and sorrow during that time which she referred to later as a dark period in her life. She spent much of her time confined to the home caring for Mary's children and helping with household duties. Harrison later recalled that: "These added to my heaviness of heart which has not let life bridge over the void that came with my mother's death. . ."[30]

Harrison's brother George asked her and Mary to accompany him to the Philadelphia Centennial which was being covered in the local newspapers.[31] Harrison agreed to go but only after being urged by her sisters Sarah (Lillie) and Mary (Mollie). Aside from the Centennial being covered in

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[29] Ibid., 33.

[30] Ibid., 37-38.

[31] *Democrat News* (Davenport), 5 December 1876.

the paper, Harrison also received letters from a friend, Nellie Alexander a kindergartner in Chicago, who also wrote about the event taking place in Philadelphia.[32]

That trip quite possibly can be credited with stimulating Harrison's hunger for knowledge and exposing her to the world of art. Harrison got a great deal of enjoyment from the largest assortment of art ever displayed in one setting in the United States. Following her trip to Philadelphia, Harrison was no longer content with her life in Marshalltown. Harrison found herself going through the motions of life not knowing what she wanted to do.

Fortunately for Elizabeth Harrison and the kindergarten movement in 1879 she received a letter from an invalid girlhood friend, Kate Richardson, who currently lived in a suburb of Chicago with her millionaire husband and children. In the letter Richardson urged her to come to Chicago at once to look into a new system of education that had so impressed her. Mrs. Richardson informed Harrison that she believed the "new education" better known as the kindergarten was destined to revolutionize the world. Mrs. Richardson, determined not to let Harrison say no, sent

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[32] Nellie Alexander to Elizabeth Harrison, TL, (n.d.), Elizabeth Harrison Correspondence To and From File, Archives National Louis University, Evanston.

urgent letters repeatedly for months.[33] Harrison's growing dissatisfaction with her life in Marshalltown and her curiosity about the "new education" convinced her to visit Mrs. Richardson in Chicago and to investigate the new educational system with which she was so fascinated.

Following her visit to Chicago in June, Harrison decided to apply for admission in Mrs. Alice H. Putnam's Kindergarten Training School. Harrison wrote a letter to Jean Carpenter, a friend, telling her of her family's reaction to her decision:

> . . . I told you in my last letter how strenuously my sisters opposed my going out into the world to earn my living, and with it my independence. They used every argument they could against my going, the chief one being my uncertain health. Dire were the predictions of my returning to them within two or three months, with a long siege of illness ahead of me. I answered most of their lesser arguments. To this last I could only say: "I can but try. If I come back broken down, you will have to nurse me through it and forgive me. It seems to me the only right thing to do."
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> At last they sent for Brother George to come talk the matter over with me. You know how I love him and how much influence he has always had with me. He came, and all Sunday afternoon we talked together. He took the ground that no woman in our family had ever been obliged to earn wages, and that he was more than willing to support me the rest of my life. He told me that if I did not wish to live in a married sister's home, I could live where I chose and he would pay my board. . . . After pacing up and down, up and down the floor, in keen mental distress while arguing the case, he stopped in front of me and said, "If you will, you will, I suppose, and I cannot stop you." Then came my painful confession: "I will have to borrow the money from you, George." He answered, "Oh, of course, I will furnish you the money

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[33] Sketch written on Miss Harrison for the Chicago Worlds Fair 1893. author unknown (Archives National Louis University: Evanston)

if you feel that you must go.[34]

After much deliberation on the part of Elizabeth Harrison's sisters and her brother George, they reluctantly gave her their blessings. In addition to his blessing George gave Harrison some initial financial support to embark into what would become her life work.

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[34] *Sketches*, 45.

CHAPTER II

THE KINDERGARTEN MOVEMENT 1837-1879

The "new education" that attracted the attention of Elizabeth Harrison's friends was gradually being talked about across the United States. This chapter will trace the "new education," better known as the kindergarten, from its inception in Germany during the nineteenth century to its eventual development into a kindergarten movement throughout the world, specifically in the United States and Chicago. It will also examine the conditions that existed in Chicago which provided an environment conducive to the spread of the kindergarten movement.

Kindergarten from Concept to Practice

Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852), a German born educator and philosopher, developed and introduced the Kindergarten (translated as the Child's Garden) in the German village of Blankenburg, between 1830 and 1840.[1] After having taught for many years, he like other German educators became heavily influenced by the philosophical idealism of the

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[1] Gerald L. Gutek, *A History of the Western Educational Experience*, (Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc., 1972), 225.

nineteenth-century. Following two years of study under Pestalozzi (from 1808 to 1810), he saw where some changes were needed in the training of young children. While Froebel accepted the central principles of Pestalozzi's object teaching, he became an advocate of educational reform. Froebel believed that Pestalozzi's method lacked a sufficiently developed philosophical base. Froebel, thus, planned to develop such a philosophical grounding. According to Lilly, "Unlike, Pestalozzi, Froebel was searching for a means to unite the child's soul with the faculties of reason, feeling, volition, and perception."[2] Froebel felt that the sense-dominated theories of Pestalozzi had stopped far short of achieving that spiritual objective. According to Shapiro, he also contended that: "Pestalozzi takes man existing only in his appearance on earth." Froebel wrote, "but I take man in his eternal being, in his eternal existence."[3] Hailman wrote: "Pestalozzi has the piety of the heart, while Froebel has also the piety of the

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[2] Irene M. Lilley, *Friedrich Froebel: A Selection from His Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 31-32.

[3] Michael S. Shapiro, *Child's Garden: The Kindergarten Movement from Froebel to Dewey* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983), 20. Citing Friedrich Froebel, trans, and ed. Emile Michaelis and H. Keatley Moore "Autobiography of Friedrich Froebel," (Syracuse, N.Y.: W. W. Bardeen, 1908), 55.

intellect, which sees God as the principal truth.[4]

Froebel recognized a correlation between the evolution of natural forms and the stages of the child's growth, and with that in mind he divided the process of early education between birth and age six into discrete stages of physical and mental development--infancy, early childhood, and childhood. He also devised various educational exercises related to each stage. Each exercise was designed to stimulate the child's realization that all things are connected, and that God unites it all. Froebel felt that the child was essentially good by nature and that he was a bundle of possibilities from birth.

Froebel felt a new educational institution was needed to address the problems he observed in the early training of the child. He feared that the child's parents would be unable to "check and deny" the child's "disorganized impulses," and at the same time cultivate his inner good nature in the loving home environment. But on the other hand, he felt that the child was not ready for the passive obedience the existing school discipline required. Froebel believed that early education required an institution especially suited to a childhood filled with wealth, abundance and vigor in its inner and outer life. In his attempt to rectify the problem he considered several social

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[4] Friedrich Froebel, *The Education of Man*, trans. William N. Hailmann (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1899) IX.

institutions as remedies for the young child's dilemma: the older day nurseries, orphanages and the utopian outdoor schemes advocated by followers of Rousseau. Froebel, having once been in charge of a school and orphanage, was cited by Shapiro as having said that he rejected the "limited, defensive, and negative action of a custodial institution" in favor of a "large educating and developing one." He sought to protect the child from the restraints of the custodial institution and the dangers of nature in the raw.

Froebel searched for an institution that would offer a fostering of family-life through "self-instruction, self-education, and self-cultivation of mankind."[5] He ultimately decided to create a new social institution of education--one that would accommodate the child midway between infancy and childhood. The institution was designed to bring together for the first time the home and the school as well as nature and society. Froebel, while opening the institution in 1837, did not call his new creation the Kindergarten or Child's Garden until 1840. The institution sought to provide an environment where the child could play with the same freedom afforded to him in his home. However, that play was organized, supervised and interpreted by a person with the spirit of the mother but with an insight ordinarily not possessed by the mother. The institution was also

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[5] Ibid., 22.

unusual in that: (a) it provided an environment in which the child could congregate with his peers outside the restraints of the home and school; (b) the kindergarten's garden-like atmosphere protected the child from the corrupt influences of society and the dangers of raw nature; and (c) the curriculum included such things as: play, music, art and the use of "gifts and occupations."

Gutek described the gifts as follows:

> They were objects whose form was fixed, such as cubes, spheres and cylinders. These basic kindergarten materials, in his view, have a special power to awaken the child's process of conceptualization and lead him to recognize ultimate truths.[6]

When the child was developmentally ready he proceeded to the next category of activities. The highest category of activities was called the "occupations." Gutek wrote:

> "Occupations," which were Froebel's second category of instructional materials, referred to activities with certain specified malleable materials. Unlike the gifts, whose form was fixed, these were materials whose form changed with use, such as clay, sand, cardboard, and mud.[7]

The activities associated with the "occupations" represented the work performed in the home by the child's family. Angeline Brooks stated that: "In all their work with the gifts and occupations the children of the kindergarten are

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[6] Gutek, *A History of the Western Educational Experience*, 229.

[7] Ibid., 229.

taught to apply 'The law of unity.'"[8] Besides the curriculum the kindergarten was also grounded on Froebel's belief that women would play a vital role in his new educational institution.

Froebel felt that women had become less involved with rearing their children. He believed that women from diverse backgrounds had arrived at the same misfortune; that of poor child management. In an open letter to the women of Germany, Froebel complained against the "shameful ill-management of children," which he attributed to "ignorance, perversity, distortion, and even absence of womanly child-loving sensibility."[9] To train women in his principles of childrearing and early education first in Germany and then worldwide was Froebel's self-proclaimed mission.

Froebel always exhibited an interest in bringing his kindergarten to the United States. He felt that America offered an ideal opportunity for the establishment of the kindergarten training institutes. Froebel believed American women recognized their roles as mothers and teachers more so than women of other nations. According to Shapiro, as early as 1826 Froebel wrote:

> We must emigrate to the country that offers all the conditions for the existence of a genuine human family

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[8] Angeline Brooks and others, *The Kindergarten and The School*, (Springfield, Mass.: Milton Bradley Co., 1886), 69.

[9] *Froebel's Letters on the Kindergarten*, ed. Emilie Michaelis and H. Keatley Moore (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co., 1891), 63.

> life which renders the development of pure humanity possible, where such a life is at least sought and can freely develop.[10]

Froebel, like other educational thinkers of nineteenth century Europe, continued to speculate about the immense possibilities of the New World. In his plans America was seen as the ideal place where he would promote the universal "regeneration of mankind." Even after his kindergarten was met with opposition and reluctance in Germany, he remained hopeful that things would be better. Around 1843 the audience in Germany became more respectful of Froebel's ideas, and he, like Pestalozzi before him, had visitors coming to observe his practices on early education. Unfortunately, coupled with the Revolution of 1848 and the conservative backlash aimed at all liberal social-educational movements, that hope was soon diminished. In 1851, the Prussian Government banned kindergartens as an arm of the socialist movement. The unsuccessful attempt of his conservative followers to have the ban rescinded meant an end to the kindergarten movement in Germany. According to Shapiro, Froebel, disappointed with the failure of his kindergarten in Germany, wrote:

> If they will not recognize and support my cause in my fatherland, I will go to America where a new life is unfolding itself and [the] new education of man

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[10] Shapiro, 27.

corresponding with it will find footing.[11]

Friedrich Froebel died before he could see the fruition of his dream for the kindergarten. Even though the kindergarten was only marginally received in his homeland of Germany, Froebel had envisioned that it would be well received and promoted in the United States. Froebel failed to realize several of his dreams:

1. seeing his kindergarten flourish in his homeland
2. visiting the often talked about United States
3. seeing his kindergarten become a success in America as he had envisioned.

Friedrich Froebel died on 21 June 1852.

The Kindergarten Movement in the U.S.

After the Revolution of 1848, many Germans immigrated to the United States bringing with them Froebel's kindergarten concept. The first to immigrate following the Revolution were Germans of culture and influence. Some had become familiar with the principles of Froebel's kindergarten while in their homeland of Germany. When the Germans arrived in the United States, they found themselves in a country whose educational ideal was undergoing a transformation. After the 1830s, most Americans were in general agreement about the aims of early childhood education. Shapiro said that:

The primary objective of all American education was to

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[11] Ibid., 27.

> provide for the spiritual salvation of the individual and for the continuity and moral order of society.

Later, however, the Americans began to question their aims for early education. Shapiro stated that:

> Though Americans in the decades before the Civil War could agree about the aims of early education, there was no consensus about the concepts that defined its method and content.[12]

The United States was not just undergoing a transformation in its educational ideals; it was also in the midst of undergoing many changes resulting from the increased numbers of immigrants coming from various countries. Changes were either needed or underway in the areas of industry, transportation, communication and economy. The threat of war so consumed their thoughts that other changes or conflicts were seen as minor.

The first kindergartens in the United States were found in the private homes and schools of Germans. The first successful kindergarten was held in the Watertown, Wisconsin, home of Margarethe Schurz in 1855. Mrs. Schurz, one of Froebel's former students, had been very active in kindergarten activities in Germany prior to her marriage. According to Shapiro, the kindergarten she established in her home was originally a family kindergarten; where the Schurzes' primary concern was to see that their children

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[12] Shapiro, 1.

retained their German cultural heritage.[13]

According to Vandewalker, the second kindergarten was opened in 1858 by Miss Caroline Louise Frankenburg in Columbus, Ohio.[14] Between 1850 and 1860 the Germans established private bilingual schools in the larger cities where significant numbers of their fellow countrymen had settled. The most noted cities included: New York City, Hoboken, Detroit, Milwaukee, Louisville, and several others. Vandewalker later stated that:

> It was these schools, based upon the principles of the new education, which at that time had found little or no recognition in the United States, that the kindergarten in the United States had its real origin.[15]

According to Shapiro, shortly following Froebel's death, German educators, such as Adolf Douai, William Nicholas Hailmann, and John Kraus, came to America hoping to pursue careers in education. Only a few of the German educators who arrived in the United States at that time had been direct disciples of Froebel. The vast majority of those educators had spent most of their careers in the gymnasia and universities of Germany. They came to America

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[13] Michael S. Shapiro, *Child's Garden: The Kindergarten Movement from Froebel to Dewey* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983), 30-31 citing Carl Schurz to Margarethe Schurz, July 8, 1867, quoted in "Intimate Letters of Carl Schurz" p. 382-383.

[14] Vandewalker, *The Kindergarten in American Education* (New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1971), 13.

[15] Ibid., 12.

seeking the freedom of the United States where they could experiment with kindergarten reforms in the flourishing German-American academies. Hailmann, after arriving in America and noting the marked difference between the roles of American and German women, paraphrased Froebel by saying:

> Here, more than elsewhere, family education is entrusted to women; here, more than elsewhere, the adaptation of the females to the calling of teacher, particularly in elementary education, is recognized.[16]

The interest of several American educators in the kindergarten resulted in the gradual awakening of Americans to its unique principles. The first two American educators to promote the kindergarten were Henry Barnard and Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, the sister-in-law of Horace Mann who was known as the father of the Common School Movement.

Barnard became interested in the kindergarten while visiting England in 1854 to attend an International Exhibit of Educational Systems. During his visit to England, Barnard attended lectures conducted by Baroness Von Marenholz-Buelow, Froebel's foremost disciple. Upon Barnard's return to the United States, he gave the governor of Connecticut a report on the educational exhibition in which he focused primarily on the kindergarten. Also, according to Vandewalker, Barnard wrote an article about the Kindergarten materials displayed at the exhibit. The article was published in 1856 in the *American Journal of*

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[16] Shapiro, 30.

Education of which he was an editor; it was, according to Vandewalker, the first article on the kindergarten printed in the United States.[17]

Elizabeth Palmer Peabody at the age of fifty-five, who had always been active in various causes, credited Barnard's article with arousing her interest in the kindergarten. In 1859 Peabody's interest in the kindergarten deepened when she read an article in the *Christian Examiner*. During the same year, she had a chance encounter with Mrs. Schurz and her young daughter at a social gathering. The behavior of Mrs. Schurz's daughter so impressed Peabody that she questioned Mrs. Schurz about her training. Peabody was convinced after learning that Mrs. Schurz used the kindergarten method in her training that all children needed access to kindergartens.[18] Following her accidental meeting with Schurz, Peabody's interest grew more intense, and she was determined to learn more about Froebel and the kindergarten. In 1860 she opened the first English-speaking kindergarten in Boston. Peabody's continued interest in the kindergarten prompted her to champion its cause by lecturing and writing articles on Froebel's kindergarten. She was later referred to as the apostle of the kindergarten movement in the United States. According to Snyder, Peabody

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[17] Vandewalker, 14.

[18] Ibid., 15-16.

had expected the children in the kindergarten to behave like Mrs. Schurz's daughter; however, after seven years she grew dissatisfied with the effects of the kindergarten on the children. In 1867 Peabody traveled to Europe in search of the "true" kindergarten.[19]

According to Snyder, Peabody, while visiting kindergartens in Europe, spoke to various Froebelian-trained kindergartners and requested that some of them come to the United States to promote the "true" kindergarten. Madame Matilde Kriege, Baroness Marenholtz-Buelow's first student, along with her daughter, Alma, immigrated to the United States hoping to make their living as kindergartners. According to Shapiro, the Kriege's initially opened a kindergarten in New York; however, they found themselves faced with prejudice against the German kindergarten. After realizing they would not be able to make a living there, they moved to Boston. Shapiro and Snyder had conflicting accounts of the Krieges' arrival in the United States and their involvement in the kindergartens. Snyder wrote:

> Accordingly, Elizabeth invited Matilde Kriege, an outstanding student at the Seminary, and her daughter, Alma, to go to Boston and become part of the Pinckney Street kindergarten staff. Encouraged by the Baroness and armed with a letter of introduction from Elizabeth to her sister Mary, in charge while Elizabeth was away,

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[19] Snyder, *Dauntless Women in Childhood Education 1856-1931* (Washington, D.C.: Association for Childhood Education International, 1972), 45.

the Krieges left for America immediately.[20]

The Krieges' went to Boston to work in Peabody's school which was being run by her sister Mary Mann in her absence. In a short period of time Peabody and Mann relinquished the school to the Krieges' whom they felt could better develop the kindergarten, because they were "the true exponents of the Froebelian principles."[21] In 1868 the Krieges added a training school to the kindergarten which was the first kindergarten training school in the United States.[22] Approximately two years later, Maria Boelte, who had been trained by Froebel's widow, also immigrated to America at the advice of Peabody.

In 1872 after arriving in New York, Boelte was hired to teach the Froebelian practices to young ladies in a female seminary known as Haines School. While Boelte felt the first year was not successful, as many as 130 students and teachers were trained. In October 1873, the newly married Boelte (who had married professor John Kraus, also an advocate of the kindergarten) opened a new kindergarten training school, called the New York Normal Training School, in New York City. The new institution also contained a model kindergarten and it conducted Adjoining Classes

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[20] Ibid., 46.

[21] Snyder, 47.

[22] Ibid., 46.

(training mothers who wanted to use the Froebelian principles at home) which were open to the public. The New York Normal School was cited as being the most successful kindergarten training school in the United States during the 1870s.[23]

The Americans, while unsure of their early educational practices, saw the kindergarten's goals and methods as being too radically different from the ones that existed in the United States. So different, that its immediate acceptance was unobtainable. Vandewalker identified the differences between the Froebelian view of education and the American view as follows:

> They [Froebelians] substituted activity for the prevailing repression, and insisted upon the child's right to himself and to happiness during the educational process. They emphasized the importance of early childhood, and made an ideal mother the standard for the teacher. They recognized the value of beauty as a factor in education, and by means of music, plants, and pictures in the kindergarten they revealed the barrenness of the old-time schoolroom. By their sympathetic interpretation of childhood, their exaltation of motherhood, their enthusiasm for humanity, and their intense moral earnestness they carried conviction to the educational world.[24]

Gradually, the German-American institutions began to adopt the kindergarten. According to Vandewalker, in 1861 Dr. Douai's school in Newark, New Jersey was the first

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[23] Shapiro, 34-38.

[24] Vandewalker, 2.

German-American institution to include the kindergarten.[25] Another kindergarten was opened in Hoboken, New Jersey, at the same time as Douai's adoption of the kindergarten in his school. Then, approximately three years later two more kindergartens were established in New York City. In 1864, Mrs. Louise Pollack opened a kindergarten in West Newton, Massachusetts. Dr. Hailmann, president of the German-English Academy in Louisville, Kentucky, adopted the kindergarten into his institution, and in 1869 the German-English Academy of Detroit also did the same. Fifteen years after Mrs. Schurz opened the first German-American kindergarten in the United States ten or more kindergartens had been established in German speaking Communities in various cities. While, the kindergarten was experiencing growth and success in German-American institutions, it failed to attract the attention of American educators.

According to Vandewalker, the kindergarten movement occurred in two periods: the period of introduction and extension. The first began with the opening of the first German-American kindergarten in 1855 and ended after the Philadelphia Exposition in 1876. Vandewalker further stated that:

> The first period divides itself naturally into the period of the German kindergarten, from 1855 to about 1870,-- and the period from 1870-1880 or there-abouts when the kindergarten was accepted by Americans as an institution adapted to American conditions and American

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[25] Ibid., 13.

needs.[26]

She called the second period the period of extension which she felt fell into two subdivisions. The first from 1880 to 1890-- when the kindergarten was accepted with relatively little question; the second from 1890 until 1908 when a more critical attitude had set in, and a reconstruction of its theory and practice was demanded. [27]

With the advent of kindergarten training schools and the availability of trained kindergartners, kindergartens multiplied rapidly. The rapid expansion of the kindergarten movement began in 1873 in St. Louis under the leadership of Miss Susan E. Blow, a local convert to Froebelianism. According to Shapiro, St. Louis was the second-fastest growing city in the West. The city's immigrant population swelled between 1860 and 1870, absorbing large numbers of Germans. The German population supported the local neighborhood kindergartens at first and then later provided a base of popular support for the introduction of the kindergarten in public schools.

Susan Elizabeth Blow was born on 7 June 1843 in St. Louis, Missouri. Her parents were Henry Taylor and Minerva Grimsley Blow. Susan's father was a southern unionist and a leader in St. Louis business and politics. He served on the

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[26] Ibid., 9.

[27] Ibid., 9-10.

Missouri State Senate, recruited troops for the union army; served as minister to Venezuela and later to Brazil. According to Snyder, the Blows spared no expense in the education of their daughter. Susan was tutored at an early age by her governess in French and religion; later she studied at a small boys school (run by a local minister) where she and her friend were the only girls. Susan Blow then attended a girls' school founded by her father, until she left to attend school at Miss Haines's school in New York City which was a typical secondary school for the daughters of the well-to-do.[28] Susan and her parents lived in Brazil during the time her father served as minister to Brazil. The Blows traveled to Germany after leaving Brazil and remained there until 1871; while in Germany, Susan decided to learn more about the kindergarten that she had heard Elizabeth Peabody was promoting. She visited various kindergartens and collected Froebelian material to study. Susan was eager to try the kindergarten principles herself. As luck would have it, she was presented an opportunity to do so when she returned home to St. Louis.

William T. Harris, the St. Louis School Superintendent and friend to Susan Blow, was considering establishing an experimental "play school" or kindergarten in one of the St. Louis schools. According to Shapiro, Harris in looking for

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[28] Snyder, 51.

a remedy to poor school attendance of working class children, felt a "play school" or kindergarten might serve as the transition between the home and school which in turn might help reunite society.[29] Susan Blow hearing of Harris's plan applied to teach the kindergarten. According to Snyder, she was given permission to do so if she attended training under Kraus-Boelte in New York. Susan attended training classes for the fall and winter sessions in 1872-1873. Blow returned to St. Louis and taught the kindergarten which was considered such a success that the kindergarten experiment in the public schools prospered and attracted the first large American following in the United States.[30]

The Kindergarten Movement in Chicago 1875-1879

The gradual acceptance and growth of the kindergarten in various cities across the United States prompted several ladies in Chicago to found kindergartens. This section of the chapter will examine the social, political and economic conditions present in Chicago prior to the kindergarten movement.

Like many cities across the United States, Chicago was undergoing many changes due to the large numbers of

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[29] Shapiro, 50.

[30] Ibid., 45-46.

immigrants settling there. Pierce referred to some immigrants as being untutored in American traditions and language.[31] In 1871 following the "Chicago Fire," Chicago was busy rebuilding the areas destroyed by fire. The fire made Chicago known across the globe and aid poured in from individuals and countries; some of which were close and others as far away as China.

Chicago was a proverbial "hotbed," as tensions between the "Native American Stock" and the foreigners mounted as the foreigners became dissatisfied with lower pay and a lack of jobs. Educated Germans became the leaders of dissatisfied groups. Mayor Joseph Medill became embroiled in a dispute between the temperance protagonists and the voters of foreign extraction when he sought to close saloons on Sundays. The Germans, along with other immigrants, felt they were being targeted because of their love for beer. Mayor Medill's stance cost him his re-election bid, when a member of the People's Party won because of his liberal policies. The new Mayor, Harvey D. Colvin, reopened the saloons on Sundays. According to Lewis, the reformers said: "The foreigners want to dictate to us and force their lower standards upon our civilization."[32]

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[31] Bessie Louise Pierce, *A History of Chicago: Volume III The Rise Of A Modern City 1871-1893*, 300.

[32] Lloyd Lewis and Henry Justin Smith, *Chicago: The History of Its Reputation* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1929), 147.

In 1874, Chicago's problems escalated setting the tone for change. As many as 25,000 arrests were made by the police, the bulk of those arrested were jobless tradesmen and laborers. Squads of police stood at Chicago depots turning the vagrants and job hunters away. Problems of corruption were also alleged in Chicago's politics. Pierce in discussing the politics of Chicago wrote:

> Graft in the county administration was even more flagrant than in the city government. Disclosures of chicanery in 1874 were followed by others of the county "ring" in 1876 and succeeding years. The rebuilt County Court House, openly called "a thief's monument," along with the failure of purveyors of the County Hospital in 1877 to deliver goods for which payment was made, and the frequent practice of short-weighing goods sold- these and similar evidences made the term "politician" one of reproach."[33]

The social, political and economic conditions in Chicago were crying out for reform.

The schools in Chicago were also having difficulty during that time. According to Pierce, the Chicago Fire deprived as many as 10,000 children of schools to attend. Fifteen buildings used as schools were destroyed by the fire, affecting nearly a third of the children enrolled in school. In 1873, the school system was made up of a high school (the Central High School), a normal school, district schools, grammar schools, and independent primary schools. Many of the Chicago teachers were products of the local school system as normal-school graduates, as cadets

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[33] Pierce, 348.

assisting teachers in the overcrowded sections of the city, and as apprentices directly from high school. There were many teachers who were only temporarily interested in teaching.[34] The condition of the Chicago schools prompted some parents to seek alternatives or remedies to the problems.

One parent's quest for a solution to her child's early education led to the introduction of the kindergarten in Chicago. In 1874 the kindergarten movement claimed yet another city. Approximately, a year following its expansion to St. Louis it took hold in Chicago. The Kindergarten movement in Chicago was pioneered by Mrs. Alice H. Putnam. Putnam was born Alice Harvey Whiting in Chicago on 18 January 1841. Her parents were William Loring and Mary Starr Whiting. Mr. Whiting, her father, was a wealthy Chicago merchant. The Whiting family were members of Chicago's cultural elite whose standards in matters of civics and life were high. Alice, the Whitings' youngest daughter, was educated privately at home and at the Dearborn Seminary. According to Newell, Alice's heart and activities were centered in Chicago. She watched Chicago grow from a small village to a powerful big city sprawling over the

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[34] Ibid., 382.

prairies.[35] Always interested in music, Alice enjoyed singing as a child; later she became involved in promoting the musical development of the city. Alice married Joseph Robie Putnam on 20 May 1868, who also was active in the city's social circles.

Alice Putnam's growing concern for her children's education made her want to learn more about Elizabeth Peabody's kindergarten work in the East. Fortunately, in 1870 Putnam learned that Elizabeth Peabody had been invited to speak before the Society of Superintendents and Principals in Chicago. Peabody spoke on the topic of "The Genuine Kindergarten Versus Ignorant Attempts At It."[36] According to Snyder, Putnam was so fascinated by the lecture that she became a student; studying first under Susan Blow who had just began her work in St. Louis and then with Kraus-Boeltes. After completing her studies in 1873, she began a mother's club consisting of a small group of parents and teachers. The club met for the intensive study of Froebel's philosophy and to discuss his book entitled

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[35] Bertha Payne Newell, "Alice H. Putnam 1841-1919" chap. in *Pioneers of The Kindergarten in America*, Authorized by the International Kindergarten Union, Prepared by the Committee of Nineteen, New York and London: The Century Co., 1924, 204.

[36] Kindergarten Centennial Research Committee, "The Kindergarten Centennial 1837-1937: Contribution of the Chicago Area to the Development of the Kindergarten In America," *Kindergarten Centennial Research Committee Bulletin*, 1937, 1.

"Mother Play".

The success of the mother's club brought about the growth of kindergarten associations, kindergartens and kindergarten training centers. Alice Putnam opened the first kindergarten in the Loring School in 1874. On 20 April 1876 approximately three months following its establishment a philanthropic organization called the Chicago Woman's Club conducted a symposium on the kindergarten. It also briefly sponsored a free kindergarten in the city during the 1870s.[37] According to the *Kindergarten Centennial Bulletin,* in June of 1876, Mrs. E. W. Blatchford, a member of the mother's club, who had seen the uplifting influence the kindergarten had on poor children established the first free kindergarten in the city as a memorial to her child. The free kindergarten was located in Dwight L. Moody's Evangelical Church. According to Newell, Putnam went to Columbus Ohio to study under Mrs. Odgen, taking her eldest daughter with her.[38] Mrs. Odgen later came to Chicago to conduct a class in Kindergarten Principles and Methods. Before leaving, Odgen persuaded Putnam to continue the classes after she returned to Ohio. "The Pioneer Training School of The West" was taken over by

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[37] Shapiro, 98. While The Chicago Woman's Club was the original name of the philanthropic organization some of the later club minutes and manuscripts referred to the organization as The Chicago Women's Club.

[38] Newell, 206.

Putnam and the mother's club. The Froebel Society, one of the organizations founded by Putnam, and the mother's club changed their name to the Chicago Froebel Association which became the new name for Chicago's first kindergarten training school on 2 October 1876.

Coinciding with the growth of the kindergarten movement in Chicago and elsewhere, a world's fair was underway in 1876 in Philadelphia, celebrating the hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The fair, called the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, was the largest and most successful fair held during the United States' first hundred years. The fair grounds covered two hundred and thirty-six acres, and there was a building to represent each state. Approximately, fifty foreign nations sent exhibits to represent their countries. One hundred and sixty seven buildings housed the exhibits.[39]

In keeping with the Centennial theme of "Progress," the latest in technological, industrial, and educational innovations were on display. Working models of new machines such as the continuous printing press, the self-binding reaper, the typewriter, the telephone, the refrigerator car, and Thomas Edison's duplex telegraph were displayed.

American Froebelians hoped that the Centennial would be a perfect opportunity to expose more Americans to the

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[39] *World Book Encyclopedia*, 1979 ed., s.v. "Centennial Exposition."

kindergarten. Five separate kindergarten exhibits were on display at the Centennial. The Woman's Planning Committee with the cooperation of the Froebelians installed a working kindergarten in the woman's schoolhouse illustrating the latest trend in early education. There was also a St. Louis version of the kindergarten on display; Susan Blow conducted classes herself during June and July. Elizabeth Peabody was affiliated with the most successful kindergarten exhibit known as the "Centennial Kindergarten." The Centennial Kindergarten was unlike the others in that it was a working kindergarten where orphan children were taught by Miss Ruth Burritt, a trained kindergartner. The other two kindergarten exhibits were conducted by businessmen marketing educational products and materials to be used in kindergartens. Milton Bradley exhibited objects such as those for the "gifts and occupations" while, Ernst Steiger's exhibit included items such as globes, maps, planetariums and books.[40]

Many visitors attending the Centennial saw for the first time a large collection of art work. According to Harrison, there was a building devoted entirely to art. The building's rooms were filled with French, Flemish, and English masterpieces; some Italian treasures were also

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[40] Shapiro, 71.

displayed.[41] Art was also displayed in several of the kindergarten exhibits. Vandewalker wrote:

> The lessons of the Philadelphia Exposition, at which the meaning of the art and industrial elements in education was first revealed to the American teachers, had been taken to heart, and the result of the awakening it had occasioned had been the attempted enrichment of the elementary curriculum by the addition of subjects frequently termed "fads," -- music, drawing, manual training, nature study, and physical culture. The fact that these subjects constituted an organic part of the kindergarten awaken an interest in that institution on the part of many who had thus far given it but little attention.[42]

The Kindergarten Movement was gaining momentum across the United States. Many Americans were adopting Froebel's Kindergarten principles for various reasons; but whatever the reason they saw it as a solution to some of the problems in society.

In 1879, Elizabeth Harrison boarded a train that took her to Chicago, where she entered kindergarten training under Mrs. Alice H. Putnam. The following chapter will trace Harrison's involvement in the Chicago Kindergarten Movement from her training to her eventual retirement in 1920 as president of the National Kindergarten and Elementary College.

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[41] Elizabeth Harrison, *Sketches Along Life's Road*, ed. C.S. Bailey, (Boston: The Stratford Company, 1930), 40.

[42] Vandewalker, 23-24.

CHAPTER III

ELIZABETH HARRISON'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE CHICAGO KINDERGARTEN MOVEMENT 1879-1920

The growing momentum taking place in the kindergarten movement across the country was gradually being felt in Chicago. Although still in its germinal stage in Chicago, it was quietly taking root. The word was being spread by mothers whose interest in or approval of the kindergarten caused them to convince others of its worth. Harrison entered the Chicago kindergarten arena at a time when only four kindergartens were reported by the Bureau of Education as being operational in the city. According to the same report, three kindergarten training classes existed, one of which was Mrs. Alice H. Putnam's under whom Harrison would study.[1] This chapter will focus on Harrison's involvement in the Chicago Kindergarten Movement. It will examine the external forces that influenced and made her, if not the most, one of the most important leaders in Chicago's Kindergarten Movement. Chapter III will chronicle Harrison's career beginning with her journey to Chicago;

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[1] Department of Interior, Bureau of Education, *Report of the Commissioner of Education for The Year 1886-87*, by N.H.R. Dawson, Commissioner (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1888), 471-491.

proceeding through her early training; continuing her quest for knowledge; taking initiatives and concluding with her working toward the promotion of the kindergarten and her dreams for this "new education" in America.

Off to Chicago

In September of 1879, Elizabeth Harrison, at the age of thirty, boarded the train leaving her home in Marshalltown, Iowa for Chicago, Illinois. Once there, she would begin kindergarten training under the direction of Alice H. Putnam. This would be the second time she had traveled to Chicago and been apart from her family. Unlike before, this time she would be "on her own" indefinitely. It was uncommon during that time for females, especially from elite southern families like Harrison's, to leave home to pursue a career on which their livelihood would depend. While she would use the initial financial support given to her by her brother George, Harrison sought to be self-supporting. She did not want to depend on George nor her sisters, who had their own families, for future financial assistance while in Chicago.

In June 1879, Harrison, acting on the repeated requests of Kate Richardson, a childhood friend who was living in a Chicago suburb with her millionaire husband and children, visited Chicago to investigate the "new education" that had

so impressed Richardson.[2] In an article, Harrison was quoted as having said: "I came, more to satisfy my dearly beloved, and unfortunate friend than because I had any idea of taking up teaching as a profession."[3] In Chicago, Harrison and Kate made several visits to Mrs. Putnam's kindergarten, which Kate's daughter attended, and read Herbert Spencer's "Education."[4] After returning home, Harrison eagerly sent her application for admission to Mrs. Putnam's kindergarten training class. Having been accepted, she was now on her way to prepare for what would become her life's work. Harrison in describing her trip wrote:

> I took the day coach. It was about half filled with passengers sleeping in all sorts of uncomfortable positions. One or two looked up, yawned, and dropped to sleep again. Soon the rhythmic chug, chug of the wheels began to chant, "No home! no home! alone! no home! no home!" and they kept up the dolorous wail. I must have dropped into a doze before morning. I was aroused by fellow-passengers beginning to stir. I turned to watch them as one after another rose and stretched his cramped body, while some of them exchanged greetings. Now and then I still heard the chant, "No home! no home! alone! alone!" and I shall probably hear it many times in the days that are to come.[5]

Having safely arrived in Chicago, Harrison found her way to the home of Mrs. Alida Washburn, a friend of her

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[2] "Obituary for O.W. Richardson" *Chicago Tribune*, 3 January 1912

[3] "Miss Harrison And The Kindergarten College", *Kindergarten Magazine* 5, no.10 (June 1893): 739.

[4] Ibid., 739.

[5] Elizabeth Harrison, *Sketches Along Life's Road*, ed. C.S. Bailey, (Boston: The Stratford Company, 1930), 45.

deceased mother, who operated a boarding house. Harrison identified Mrs. Washburn as a member of the blue-blooded Knickerbocker family of New York. Alone with her husband, Mrs. Washburn had moved to Davenport and resided in a large home until Mr. Washburn's failing health forced them to move south before settling in Chicago. Harrison contacted Mrs. Washburn before leaving Marshalltown, requesting permission to board with her while undergoing kindergarten training. Harrison told Kate, in a letter, that in an effort to economize, she asked Mrs. Washburn to provide her with the most economical facilities possible. Mrs. Washburn, complying with her wishes, arranged for Harrison to share the small first floor bedroom of her twenty-one year old daughter, Anna. Harrison who had been unaccustomed to living in such close quarters found herself also having to share a bed, closet, and wash-bowl. However, she looked upon it as a necessary sacrifice. In describing the situation Harrison wrote:

> I am to have the unique experience of keeping my collars, gloves, handkerchiefs, and lighter underwear in a big pasteboard box under the bed. The rest of my belongings will remain in my trunk in the basement trunk-room. But what matter? I will so adjust myself to these little inconveniences. I am with friendly, clean-lived people; besides, I am here to be of service in this great world of ours.[6]

Settled into what would be her home while undergoing

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[6] Elizabeth Harrison, unpublished chapter in manuscript, *Sketches Along Life's Road* (Archives, National Louis University, Evanston, Illinois)

kindergarten training in Chicago, Harrison was ready to learn more about the kindergarten so often referred to as "The New Education."

Early Training Under Alice H. Putnam

In a letter to her sister Mary called Mollie, Harrison described her first day of kindergarten training. She recalled that there were only four students present including herself. Two of the girls were from Chicago and the other from southern Illinois. The kindergarten training classes were conducted in Mrs. Putnam's home. Harrison recalled that the student's initial schedule required them to spend the mornings visiting the three kindergartens associated with the training course to observe the work with the children; later in the course they would plan lessons for and instruct a group of children. The students were also required to attend lessons three afternoons a week from two to five o'clock from Mrs. Putnam.

The three kindergartens associated with the course were: Mrs. Putnam's connected with a private school where Mrs. Stella Dyer Loring was principal; Mrs. E.W. Blatchford's held in her north side home conducted by Miss Anna Howe; and an independent enterprise conducted by Miss Josephine Jarvis at an undisclosed location. Mrs. Putnam informed the students that she would later assign them to one of the kindergartens for the duration of the course.

Needless to say, Harrison had hoped to be assigned to Putnam's kindergarten because she felt she would benefit more under her direction. She also wanted to be assigned there because of its close proximity to Mrs. Washburn's which would save her the expense of street-car fare. Harrison was further relieved to learn that the books and pamphlets needed for the course would be loan to them by Mrs. Putnam and would not have to be purchased with money from an already tight budget. Harrison's first impression of Putnam as told to her sister was:

> Mrs. Putnam seems most earnest, and I am sure that she wants to help us in every way that she can. She thinks that this new way of developing one's children through comradeship with other children, through plays, games, songs, stories, and simple hand-work, will have wonderful results in the future life of the world.[7]

As fate would have it, Harrison was later assigned to Mrs. Putnam's kindergarten at the Loring School, where two of Putnam's three daughters attended. The Loring School at 2535 S. Prairie Avenue was, according to Pierce's *History of Chicago*, located on the most exclusive street in the city during that time. Prairie Avenue was home to the wealthy--the most notable being: Marshall Field, Philip D. Armour, George M. Pullman and William G. Hibbard.[8] So, it is no wonder that the children who attended the Loring School were

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[7] Ibid., 48.

[8] Bessie Louise Pierce, *A History of Chicago: Volume III The Rise of A Modern City 1871-1893*, 59.

those of the city's elite.

Elizabeth Harrison was so busy in the months that followed that she spent little time outside the boarding house. That is, unless it had something to do with the kindergarten training course. In a letter to her sister in March 1880, she wrote:

> Mrs. Putnam asked me to go home with her for luncheon today that we might talk over some new work which we are introducing. Except my Sunday visit to the dear Crawfords, this is the first Chicago home I have entered as a guest since coming to the city last September. And now it is March. You may rest assured I accepted Mrs. Putnam's invitation with alacrity. I cannot begin to tell you how much I miss the social life of our past. I am deeply grateful that when I am not at my work, I am with such a kind, friendly family as is Mrs. Washburn's. My work-a-day life, however, absorbs most of my time and thought. Each day grows more interesting than the one before.[9]

Harrison also mentioned to Mollie that while the other students complained of the work as being hard, she felt it was an unceasing delight.

During her kindergarten training, Harrison took numerous notes daily. Extracts from her notebook indicate what kinds of things were taught or emphasized. Harrison wrote:

> The kindergarten system is called "The New Education," because it is the first organized plan for the harmonious development of the physical, mental, and moral nature of the child. The child needs the companionship of his equals in age and ability. The adult cannot furnish this kind of companionship. The kindergarten supplies it. The purpose of the kindergarten is both to keep away from the child harmful influences and to supply him with helpful

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[9] Ibid., 48-49.

influences.

Do not crowd the child. When he is ready for new knowledge, he will ask for it.

The chief purpose of the kindergarten material is to provide simple and durable toys in which color, form, and movement are reduced to their elementary manifestations in order that through the use of them the child may learn to observe like qualities in other objects about him.

Do not thrust your ideas upon a child when he has ideas of his own which he is endeavoring to express. Guard and guide manifested impulses rather than start new ones.

Do not check a child's physical activities unless they encroach upon the rights of another child or lead in a wrong direction.[10]

In the later half of the 1800s, only a few books or pamphlets were available in English on the kindergarten. Harrison credited Dr. William Hailman and Dr. Henry Barnard with the translation of Froebel's *Education of Man* and the compilation of papers written by various authors on Froebel and the kindergarten. While working as a kindergartner in Chicago, Josephine Jarvis began to translate some of Froebel's writings. While only a few books had been written on the scientific and sympathetic training of children, Elizabeth believed that none of them dealt with the psychological study of child life. However, the information covered was so startlingly new that it commanded the attention of the intelligentsia.[11]

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[10] Harrison, *Sketches*, 53.

[11] Ibid., 52-53.

Completing the kindergarten training course of thirty-six weeks, Elizabeth Harrison received not only a diploma but a certificate to train kindergartners in 1880. In addition to the unexpected certificate, Harrison was also surprised to receive an invitation from Mrs. Putnam to return the following year as her paid assistant in the kindergarten at the Loring School. She would receive a salary of forty dollars a month, which meant that Harrison would have to continue to economize. That fact, however, did not deter Harrison from accepting Mrs. Putnam's offer.

A Continuing Quest for Knowledge

Elizabeth Harrison was always an inquisitive child who wanted to learn all she could about something that interested her. As an adult she retained her thirst for wisdom. Harrison was not one to be satisfied with merely learning just enough to get by; she wanted to know everything there was to know about a subject that commanded her attention. This continuing quest for knowledge about the kindergarten would eventually take her across the United States and abroad to Europe in search of answers.

Harrison was not only eager to begin her career as a kindergartner at the Loring School but, also, to do her best. Knowing that she needed further preparation to carry on the work of the kindergarten, Harrison made every effort to learn as much as possible. She knew that if she wanted

to have lessons in clay modeling and drawing, as well as, other arts that she would have to economize in order to pay the fees for such lessons. Harrison had become accustomed to economizing, and it would not be difficult for her to do so once again. She would continue to walk whenever possible, carry her lunch in a brown bag, buy inexpensive cotton gloves, and inexpensive shoes costing as little as, three and a half dollars. Just as before, Harrison considered the minor inconvenience a necessary sacrifice to become worthy of her profession.

Harrison enjoyed working with the children at the Loring kindergarten so much that the enthusiasm she displayed for what she had learned was very often contagious. An example of that enthusiasm took place soon after Harrison began working. Her excitement following a nature study exercise, in which she showed her children a caterpillar that evolved into a butterfly, not only captivated the children's interest but others around as well. Harrison, speaking to Mrs. Kendall a wealthy widow, recalled the caterpillar experience, making a case for its use with children living in the city. She did so with so much emotion that Mrs. Kendall became impressed with the benefits of nature study in the kindergarten for all children-- not just those who lived in the city but those on the farms as well. Mrs. Kendall, having been brought up on a farm herself, felt that the kindergarten and nature study

should be introduced to mothers living in the country. After pondering the benefits of such a program, Mrs. Kendall later approached Harrison with an offer that would require her to quit her position at the Loring School to accompany her to farm districts in Illinois to promote the new idea of education. While the offer was tempting, Harrison declined it because she feared the traveling would be too taxing on her frail health.[12]

During the time Elizabeth Harrison was embarking on her career as a kindergartner, growth was taking place in the Chicago Kindergarten Movement. In October 1880, a public meeting was called, bringing together a large number of people to discuss the value, desirability, and feasibility of free kindergartens in Chicago. A working committee of public spirited men and women was named to organize a permanent association to provide free kindergartens and a normal training school. The committee was divided into two separate organizations, The Chicago Free Kindergarten Association and the Chicago Froebel Association. Each committee would concentrate on one specific area-- either the free kindergartens or the normal training school.[13] The kindergarten was gradually becoming a concept known by the

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[12] Ibid., 54-55.

[13] Alice H. Putnam and The Froebel Association, "Evolution of The Kindergarten Idea In Chicago", *Kindergarten Magazine* 5, no.10 (June 1893), 731.

general populace. More and more of the city's elite found themselves not only learning more about the kindergarten but becoming involved in the movement.

During the middle of her second year of teaching, a mother who had spent many of her mornings at the school observing or assisting Harrison suggested that she go to St. Louis to observe Miss Susan Blow's interpretation of the kindergarten. The mother told Harrison that Susan Blow was Froebel's most profound student in America. Aware of Blow's success in St. Louis, Harrison decided that she, like Putnam before her, must go to see the model kindergartner she was hearing so much about. Harrison vowed to save every dollar she could to finance her trip to St. Louis. On 16 April 1881 after saving twenty-five dollars, Harrison journeyed to St. Louis to spend her two week vacation attending Miss Blow's lecture and visiting her kindergarten.

Recalling her experience at Susan Blow's lectures which were held every Saturday at the Eades Kindergarten in St. Louis, Harrison wrote:

> When I entered the room I was surprised to see about two hundred women seated in small kindergarten chairs on either side of tables which extended across two sides of the large double room. A foreign-looking man was just closing a lesson on Herodotus. As nearly as I could understand his subject, he was describing the early-race historian's commingling of sense-perception and imagination. I quietly slipped into a chair and awaited the coming of Miss Blow. The lecture soon ended, and I found the speaker was Dr. Denton J. Snider, the famous Shakespearian scholar. There were a few minutes of talk and chatter among the students; then a hurried whisper, "Miss Blow has come." And in a moment more all were seated and the room was quiet.

> I leaned eagerly forward to catch sight of one of the world's great educators. My heart thrilled at the thought that I was in her presence. She entered in a swift imperious way and nodded to three or four members of her class who sat nearest to her. She took her seat at the head of one of the long tables and began to remove her gloves before I could get a good look at her. She was small in stature, with slight, well-rounded, and graceful figure, a refined and keenly intellectual face, light brown hair and expressive blue eyes. She was altogether attractive and distinguished in appearance. Her first words were: "There is no need for any waste of time. Is there? Well, let's begin our lesson." She gave a quick look around the table; however, she did not wait for any remarks to be made, but began speaking at once. . . .

And describing Miss Blow's lecture, Harrison wrote:

> The lesson that morning was on the "Grass Mowing Song" in the *Mother Play* book. I am not able to give you an adequate idea of what it meant to me. I had never heard anything which could compare with it. Miss Blow spoke rapidly, but there was not the slightest hesitation for the exact word she wanted. Thought swept on to still greater thought. . . . The hour was ended. She closed her book at which she had not looked throughout the lesson. I had forgotten where I was, forgotten everything, in fact, save the mighty world of thought into which she had carried me.[14]

While the room was being cleared, Harrison presented Miss Blow with her letter of introduction from Mrs. Putnam. After reading the letter, Miss Blow invited Harrison to visit the kindergarten to see what was being done with the children. Before the end of her two week stay, Harrison was determined to return as soon as possible to St. Louis to study under Miss Blow.

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[14] Harrison, *Sketches*, 61-63.

Once home, Harrison's main concern was to find a way to pay for training under Miss Blow. She did not want to ask her family for fear they would think it silly that she wanted to spend more money preparing herself to play with children; especially, when she already had a position at a "pleasant school" in Chicago. According to Harrison, there were few choices in the way of earning money for her training. For during that time, respectable women either earned money teaching or sewing. Since summer was swiftly approaching, Harrison realized that she would have to do something soon. She had already been informed that her services would be needed at the Loring School the next year and that if she chose not to go her friends would be disappointed. Recalling her decision Harrison wrote: "After having satisfied my conscience about the matter, I ignored the protests of my friends, resigned my position in Chicago, and opened a summer kindergarten in Marshalltown, my sister's home town." [15] The kindergarten in Marshalltown was Harrison's first venture as a kindergarten director, a fact which caused her some nervousness. However, Harrison felt she was better prepared than many kindergartners who only had three weeks of summer institute.

Harrison rented the most attractive church parlor in Marshalltown and set the guidelines for operation before she

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[15] Ibid., 65.

opened the doors of her kindergarten. Twenty children were selected to attend the kindergarten. That venture succeeded in not only providing her with the much needed money for her to study under Blow but served as a catalyst for the implementation of the kindergarten in Marshalltown's public schools three years later. Her only regret was that the kindergarten attracted so many visitors daily that it became distracting to her and the children.

On 2 January 1882 after saving two hundred and fifty dollars to pay for six months of study under Miss Blow, Harrison began a beginners' class. She was sent to one of the leading kindergartens in St. Louis to do her practice work. According to Harrison, Blow in a very short time allowed her to take the second year's course with the first. Miss Blow also invited Harrison to attend her class, referred to as the E.E. Class, designed for "Extra Excellent directors" which she eagerly accepted. While studying under Blow, Harrison saw something taking place in the kindergarten that caused her some concern. In describing the public kindergarten to which she was assigned, Harrison wrote:

> In the kindergarten to which I was assigned, there was a chasm between the primary grade and the kindergarten. This may have created a spirit of bravado on the part of Miss Blow's followers as a reaction to the contempt shown by most of the elementary teachers for "such foolishness." Be that as it may, the result was a tentative clinging to the law and excessive use of mathematical materials. This started a reaction that brought in all sorts of non-educative experiments and crude and inartistic materials, which produce trivial

> and uninteresting results. Of these the children tired as they had tired of the excessive mathematical materials. These experiments ignored the fundamental conditions of Froebel's "Law of Development," namely that through the creative use of the materials which surround him, the child should learn by his own hand -work, as well as by excursions and dramatic play, to interpret the life about him and to realize little by little that "In all things there lives and reigns an eternal law." [16]

Harrison worked with unrelenting zeal to complete the two-year course in six months. During that time, she also found time in her busy schedule to take art lessons. Due to her heavy day schedule, Mr. Halsey Ives, the director of the St. Louis Art Museum, agreed to give her twenty private lessons in the evenings. Toward the end of her stay in St. Louis, Harrison was offered a position as a director for an afternoon kindergarten there. She declined the offer for several reasons. First, she had received an offer earlier from a superintendent of the Iowa Public Schools to conduct a morning kindergarten in Iowa which paid more money than that offered in St. Louis. Secondly, she was unhappy over some of the things she observed in the St. Louis kindergartens. Finally, Harrison saw her position in Iowa as an opportunity to experiment with the new theory she had learned while studying under Miss Blow. Unfortunately, after arriving in Iowa, Harrison learned that she would be conducting two half-time kindergartens which she felt would not be sufficient for the children. According to Harrison,

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[16] Ibid., 70-72.

Mrs. Loring finding herself in a dilemma as well requested Harrison to take over Mrs. Putnam's position at the school in Chicago. Mrs. Putnam had resigned her position at the Loring School to begin another church-related kindergarten. Harrison accepted the position, which paid seven hundred fifty dollars a year, but only after Mrs. Loring agreed to let Harrison leave a substitute in charge during the second half of the year so she could receive training in New York under the renowned, Maria Boelte and her husband John Kraus.

After returning to the Loring School, Harrison failed to provide a written account for the period prior to her departure to New York. The absence of a written account suggests that she carried out her duties with few, if any, problems. As pointed out by Snyder, Harrison faithfully kept a diary while studying with Mrs. Kraus-Boelte. It was noted that few gaps appeared in the diary from 8 January to 26 April 1883. However, following that period, her time was severely limited causing Harrison to neglect her diary to some degree. While she made attempts to keep up her diary, the entries were not as frequent or well written as her previous entries.[17] Citing a page from Harrison's diary, Snyder wrote:

> Remaining notes jotted on loose sheets of paper and since lost. Left New York May 28 all work completed, all abstracts handed in- entire year's work done in

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[17] Harrison kept her journals or diaries in bound tablets some of which are present at the National Louis University Archives in Evanston.

5 months working 12 or 14 hours a day.[18]

Snyder further found that some of the entries in Harrison's diary provided a glimpse of the prevailing German-dominated kindergarten training that existed during the 1880s. Many of Harrison's notes dealt with training activities such as: slat-weaving and lacing, stick laying, sewing cards, paper folding consisting of 728 forms (which began January 24 and completed March 16), lentils, rings, stringing seeds, pasting and sticking pins in peas to make canes, pen or rolling pins. "Training" was truly a well chosen word. In addition to her notes on "play" and "stories," she mentioned the classes taught by Mr. Kraus which consisted of the half-hour German lessons, marching and gymnastics. Reflecting on the repetitiveness in kindergarten training during that time Snyder wrote: " How irksome it must have been to repeat so much of what she had done in her former training and so much in this training that was repetitious and mechanical!"[19]

The following school year after her training in New York, Harrison returned to the Loring School as a full fledged kindergartner. She began her life's work in Chicago which would later serve as her professional home base. Harrison was ardent to utilize her ideas and those of

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[18] Snyder, *Dauntless Women in Childhood Education 1856-1931* (Washington,D.C.: Association for Childhood Education International, 1972), 137.

[19] Ibid., 138.

others to improve or advance the kindergarten. The success of those ideas could be attributed to the fact that Harrison not only initiated them but exhibited the determination necessary to see them through at a time when others would have become discouraged and given up.

Taking Initiative

In Autumn of 1883 following her training in New York, Harrison was not only busy resettling in her position at the Loring School, but also eager to resume her work in the kindergarten cause. Elizabeth Harrison was continually possessed by the determination to find a way to become worthy of her work as a kindergartner. The fact that she had been trained in the chief kindergarten centers of the United States could be credited with providing the enthusiasm Harrison exhibited for her vocation. An example of that enthusiasm was evident when Harrison recognized there was a need for a club that would bring together all of Chicago's kindergartners. Recalling that period she later wrote:

> I had a strong conviction that the kindergarten cause could be forwarded to much more satisfactory and helpful ends if the Chicago kindergartners would come together in a club and co-operate in the great movement. I felt we could secure help from specialists in this or that line of study through lectures. I consulted with Mrs. Putnam on the subject, and we arranged for a meeting to form this club. Every kindergartner in Chicago, twenty in all, responded and joined the club. Our meetings were held each Saturday morning from nine o'clock until twelve; often they lasted over the noon hour. Several members had been trained in eastern training schools,

but they had not studied Froebel's *Mother Play*.[20]

Harrison was not only elected president of the Kindergarten Club, but agreed to the request that she present a course on the study of instincts of young children. Harrison conducted the course for five of the six years she served as the Kindergarten Club's president. She retained the presidency until other duties and interests, which will be discussed later, made it necessary that the presidency be passed on to Mrs. Putnam. Mrs. Putnam's initial and continuing support helped to attract and keep the city's kindergartners actively involved in the club during its first nine years. In addition to Harrison's course, a three-year course in vocal music was taught by Eleanor Smith, who had also taught in Alice Putnam's training class in 1881. Mrs. Elizabeth Underhill also offered a course on the building instincts of mankind, which focused on the architecture of the world.

The Kindergarten Club performed a valuable service bringing the kindergartens and the elementary departments of the public school together, by starting school gardens, stimulating hand-work, organizing storytelling clubs, and arguing for less crowded rooms with fewer children to a teacher. Each of the kindergartners promoted the cause in her own way. Mrs. Putnam continued her training work but

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[20] Harrison, *Sketches*, 92.

used her influence to persuade wealthy women to establish church and mission kindergartens. Miss Eva B. Whitmore who was in charge of the Free Kindergarten Association kindergarten demonstrated in a constructive way the value of the kindergarten in poverty stricken districts of the city. Miss Mary Boomer who later married and became Mrs. Mary Boomer Page, took charge of the work in social settlements. Miss Nellie Alexander conducted a kindergarten and what was then called the "connecting class" in a large private school. Miss Annie Bryan placed emphasis on the better physical culture of the child in her mission kindergartens and later in her training work. Miss Bertha Payne, later Mrs. Bertha Payne Newell, undertook elementary grade work to demonstrate the value of the kindergarten principles throughout the entire period of childhood.[21] The Kindergarten Club became one of the recognized groups in Chicago's society. When the International Kindergarten Union was organized, the Chicago Kindergarten Club became an active branch of that organization.

Elizabeth Harrison was not satisfied with merely carrying on the kindergarten program at the Loring School or presiding over the Kindergarten Club. She sought to incorporate elements she felt missing in Chicago kindergartens. In October 1884, Harrison requested

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[21] Ibid., 93-94.

permission from Mrs. Loring to invite kindergarten mothers to attend a meeting for mothers. Harrison felt that the kindergarten work could not be done successfully with the children until their mothers were willing to cooperate completely with the kindergarten program. Harrison discussed her plans for a mothers' club with several friends, noting their reactions she wrote:

> It took courage for me to decide to undertake a class for mothers in the study of truer and deeper significance of the kindergarten. But the decision once made, I hesitated no longer and laid my plans before several friends. One or two mildly encouraged it, but most of them laughed at it as a bit of over-enthusiasm on my part. One dearly-loved friend said, "of all foolish dreams this one seems to be the most foolish. What woman who has actually given birth to a child would listen to you for five minutes--you, an unmarried, childless woman?" However, my conviction that there were certain truths and definite facts in this plan for early education which would help mothers in their home life to more clearly understand their children, spurred me on.[22]

Approximately twenty-one mothers were sent invitations while, unfortunately, only two attended the class. Harrison fought to conceal her disappointment as she delivered the speech she had hoped to present to fifteen or twenty mothers. Recalling the reactions of the mothers when she later asked them to attend some of the classes, Harrison wrote: "When I broached the subject, some of them promised to come but did not keep their promise. Some frankly

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[22] Ibid., 105.

admitted that they were too busy with other matters."[23] It was not a surprise to learn that Harrison followed through on what she termed as "my experiment." She continued to hold the classes for over a year and in most cases they were only attended by two mothers and three young ladies. Harrison did not let the poor reception of her classes keep her from providing what she felt was needed by the mothers of children in her kindergarten. Recounting the experience Harrison later wrote:

> So the two mothers and I went bravely on. A little later three young girls joined the group. There were no charges for my time. Such an idea as earning money by charging for educating mothers had not entered into my plans. All I wanted was help in guiding the children aright, both in the school and the home.[24]

Elizabeth Harrison was never one for working continuously on one project until its completion but was always involved in several projects simultaneously. Even while conducting classes for mothers, she was still actively involved with the Kindergarten Club and other kindergarten related activities.

Feeling herself a part of the growing life of Chicago, Harrison began a free class in Froebel's *Mother Play* in a mission kindergarten located on the second floor of a "dingy old building" in what she called the "dismal part of the

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[23] Ibid., 106.

[24] Ibid., 107.

city."[25] She invited all interested kindergartners to attend but only six or eight young ladies attended. Harrison received great personal satisfaction from her first attempt at working with the less fortunate. The opportunity to share her knowledge acquired since her initial training, which she referred to as the great "thought-world", with these young ladies added to her satisfaction. Harrison recalled this as the beginning of much more significant work. She requested the help of Mrs. Treat and Miss Locke to assist her in some of the classes. Harrison met and became friends with Lucretia Willard Treat in 1881. They had met in St. Louis, where Treat also was undergoing kindergarten training under Miss Blow's direction. Mrs. Threat later moved to Chicago and worked in her cousin's private school, prior to her employment at the Loring School. In Harrison's attempt to reach the poor it was surprising to see that she chose to work with young female adults, while most kindergartners chose to work with poor children.

In April 1885, a mother attended the Mothers' Class for the first time and was so impressed with Harrison's lesson on the song of "The Flower Basket" (from Froebel's "Mutter und Kose-Lieder") that she introduced herself to her. Her name was Mrs. John N. Crouse and her son was in the primary

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[25] Ibid., 97.

grade at the Loring School. According to Harrison, Mrs. Crouse stated at the close of class: "A hundred mothers ought to have heard what you said this afternoon." She paused, but in a moment added, "They shall hear it."[26] That was the first genuine encouraging support Harrison had received from a mother, and it gave her reason to hope that more mothers would join the class.

Mrs. Crouse, using her contacts and social position as the wife of a well known dentist, organizer and president of the Dental Protective Association of the U.S., persuaded more mothers to attend the mother's classes.[27] In the week following her conversation with Harrison, Mrs. Crouse eagerly recruited every mother in her church to attend a mother's class she had planned with Harrison's consent. Mrs. Crouse was granted permission to hold a mothers' class in her church's parlor the following week. Harrison was visibly moved when she entered the two parlors of the church to see that both were comfortably filled with women waiting to hear her speak. She later recalled the event saying:

> I came near having stage fright. I began my talk standing, but my knees were trembling so I had to ask for a chair, and the rest of my somewhat embarrassed discourse was given in a sitting posture with my hands nervously twisting my handkerchief into a rope, and

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[26] Ibid., 93-107.

[27] "Obituary for Dr. John N. Crouse" *Chicago Tribune*, 18 January 1914

untwisting it again.[28]

At the conclusion of the lecture, Mrs. Crouse announced that a class would be formed to meet in the church parlors every afternoon for the next week. She not only asked the mothers to join the class but to pay two dollars and fifty-cents for the course. Mrs. Crouse announced that half of the proceeds would be given to the Ladies Aid Society and half to Miss Harrison. Harrison was completely surprised by the announcement. Harrison was shocked to find that forty-five women had joined the class, and that she would receive sixty dollars for their membership. The continued support of Mrs. Crouse along with the positive reaction of the mothers brought about further growth of the mother's class.

Harrison was so impressed with Dr. Denton J. Snider's lecture in 1881 on "Herodotus" in St. Louis that she hoped to someday persuade him to come to Chicago to speak. However, she realized to ask him to speak before a small audience would not only insult him but embarrass her. In 1885 two years after the Kindergarten Club was organized, Harrison saw an opportunity to have Dr. Snider address the members of the club and the mothers from her mothers' class. Unfortunately she could only attract a group of twenty mothers which was considerably smaller than his St. Louis audience. The Kindergarten Club's Building Instincts course

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[28] Harrison, *Sketches*, 108.

taught by Mrs. Elizabeth Underhill was replaced later in the year by Dr. Snider's course of lectures on "The Spiritual Interpretation of the Iliad." Harrison and Mrs. Treat felt that Dr. Snider's lectures were appropriate because the great literature of the world portrayed the same thought that Froebel expressed in his philosophy of education. That thought was that the essential truths of all time were identical, and that prophet, priest, and poet had from time to time uttered, each in his own way, the message of God to man. They consequently felt that the insight into the nature of man, which made the Froebel Kindergarten of so much value, was identical with the insight which had made Homer the great poet of all time.[29] Although it took two years for Harrison and Mrs. Treat to arrange a class of twenty for Dr. Snider, his lectures were credited with arousing the general enthusiasm of the mothers in attendance.

Elizabeth Harrison received numerous invitations from across the city to speak at various private schools and church organizations throughout the 1885 and 1886 school year. The mothers' classes also attracted many young ladies interested in the class in which Harrison based its study upon "Die Mutter und Kose-Lieder" (Mother Play). Five regular courses for mothers were given which attracted seven

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[29] "Miss Harrison And The Kindergarten College", *Kindergarten Magazine* 5, no.10 (June 1893): 740-741.

hundred and thirty-four members. Classes were also conducted in neighboring suburbs. As a result of Harrison's and Dr. Snider's appeal, the mothers' classes slowly began to attract not only more mothers but young ladies interested in teaching kindergarten.

In the spring of 1886, ill health forced Harrison to take time from her busy schedule to recuperate. She journeyed to Europe that summer leaving Mrs. Treat and Miss Mary Foster in charge of the mothers' class. It was not long, however, before Harrison's continuing quest for knowledge about the kindergarten drew her to investigate the kindergartens of Belgium and France.

Promoting the Kindergarten

Harrison's efforts did much to promote the kindergarten in not only Chicago but across the United States. She had not anticipated the impact her actions would have on the kindergarten movement. However, once she realized the degree of influence she had, Harrison began to utilize it to further the kindergarten's cause.

In August of 1886, a well rested and invigorated Elizabeth Harrison returned to America and Chicago. After having traveled over historic grounds, she returned to her kindergarten work with increased enthusiasm. In the later part of Septmber the mothers' class resumed for the new session this time; however, Harrison had included a

kindergarten training class as well. This marked the beginning of Harrison's career as a trainer of kindergartners. Recalling this period of time, she remarked: "This was an active year, as I had also my kindergarten and what had developed into a regular training class of young girls at the Loring School, then known as the Miss Harrison Training Class."[30]

So, what started out as simply a mothers' course grew into a class for teachers and before long had been organized into a training class for teachers and mothers, with the Loring School serving as the site for observation and practice. Mrs. Treat served as Harrison's assistant teacher in the training class. Approximately a dozen mothers attended the classes for a period of time, but none of them took a complete course. Seeking a way to have mothers complete a course in the Mother's Class, Harrison approached them to commit to a complete lecture course by Dr. Snider.

Harrison was finally able to enroll twenty young mothers she knew to guarantee a class for Dr. Snider in the interpretation of great literature. The course was comprised of twenty lessons, two per a week, beginning with Homer's *Iliad*. Harrison won approval for the students to become regular associate members of the Chicago Kindergarten Club at the conclusion of the course. She felt that while

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[30] Ibid., 109.

these added members considerably increased its financial possibilities they did not alter the club's purpose in any way.

Between 1886 and 1887, there were thirty-nine kindergartens in the city and nine in its neighboring suburbs.[31] The kindergarten was no longer unheard of. It was touching all segments of society in Chicago. While Mrs. Crouse assisted Harrison in the training class during 1886, she did not join her in partnership until 1887. That spring, Mrs. Crouse urged Harrison to accept an invitation from Mrs. Emma H. Beebe of Geneva, Illinois, to deliver a course of lectures on "Die Mutter und Kose-Lieder" to mothers.[32] Reluctantly, Harrison accepted the invitation. She, however, was unsure of her power to interest mothers whom she did not know and whose children she had not taught. After completing the successful lectures in Geneva, Harrison returned to Chicago filled with high hopes for the kindergarten cause. After Mrs. Crouse and Harrison became partners, the name of the training classes were changed from Miss Harrison's Training Class to The Chicago Kindergarten Training School. Mrs. Crouse eagerly set out to organize a

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[31] *Report of the Commissioner of Education for The Year 1886-87*, by N.H.R. Dawson, Commissioner. Department of Interior Bureau of Education (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1888), 471-491.

[32] "Miss Harrison And The Kindergarten College", *Kindergarten Magazine* 5, no.10 (June 1893): 742.

mothers' class distinct from the training class.

The following April and May in 1887 Dr. Snider was once again called to give a course of lectures before the Kindergarten Club on Homer's "Odyssey." Just as before, the lectures sparked more interest in the kindergarten, not only by mothers, but the general public as well. Harrison, reflecting back, felt that those lectures at the Kindergarten Club may well have marked the beginning of Dr. Snider's literary classes in Chicago, which later grew into the "Chicago Literary Schools."

Harrison received confirmation that she had become a valuable member of society when she was accepted as a member of The Chicago Women's Club on 27 September 1887. The Chicago Women's Club formerly known as The Chicago Woman's Club was comprised of women from Chicago's elite and intelligentsia. As often happens in the affluent sector of society, Harrison had to be nominated and sponsored for membership in the Chicago Women's Club.[33] Ironically, the following month Harrison requested the use of one of the club's rooms where Dr. Denton J. Snider was to conduct a class on the works of Dante and her request for the room was

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[33] Emma E. Marewau, "Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors, September 28, 1887," DS by Mareau as recording secretary, Chicago Women's Club, Special Collections, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Il. Folder March 9, 1887- June 27, 1888,

denied with no explanation given in the meeting's minutes.[34]

By Fall of 1887, the training school had grown rapidly making it necessary to concentrate all mothers' classes at a central location. The manager of the Art Institute located on Van Buren and Michigan which, according to Harrison was still in its "embryonic stage", was eager to rent the lower level assembly hall to Harrison and Mrs. Crouse. Mrs. Treat was given charge of the gift and occupation work, while Harrison took the games and "Mutter und Kose-Lieder" along with her morning kindergarten and training class. Classes were held two mornings a week. One morning was devoted to the first year class of mothers while the following morning was set aside for mothers in their second year of classes.

The Bureau of Education report shows that Mrs. Treat left the Loring School for an opportunity to conduct the kindergarten in Mrs. Martin's School. Now that all the work was being conducted in one location, Harrison was freed from the long laborious rides across the city and its neighboring suburbs to hold classes. In 1889, she made use of the time saved by accepting an invitation to give two courses of lectures in Milwaukee. The two fifteen- week courses consisted of an evening course for public-school teachers

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[34] Emma E. Marewau, "Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors, October 12, 1887," DS by Mareau as recording secretary, Chicago Women's Club, Special Collections, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Il. Folder March 9, 1887- June 27, 1888

and a morning course for mothers. Harrison, recalling her trips to Milwaukee, wrote:

> One day each week after eleven-thirty o'clock I left my kindergarten in care of my assistant, had an early luncheon, met my training class from one to two-thirty, and took the three o'clock train for Milwaukee, arriving at six. From seven-thirty to nine-thirty I met with two hundred teachers for games, stories, and handwork. They were an earnest and enthusiastic class and often detained me after the period was ended.[35]

In Milwaukee, Harrison met with three hundred mothers to study from Froebel's *Mothers' Play*. While Harrison found her lectures were at times physically taxing, she was grateful for the opportunity to deliver them.

The money Harrison earned from her two classes, in addition to what she earned from the Chicago classes, was enough to help keep the training school operational. According to Harrison, the training school's bank account was often dangerously low. The success of Harrison's lectures and mothers' classes kept her in high demand. The demands for Harrison's lectures enabled her and Mrs. Crouse to maintain the high standards they had set for their work. According to Harrison, due to the popularity of her lectures, the leading local Chicago newspapers began regular reporting of her Wednesday morning lectures to mothers. Of course, those reports contributed to the general reputation of the school and also helped to promote not only the Chicago Kindergarten Training School but the kindergarten

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[35] Harrison, *Sketches*, 110.

cause as well.

Another important step in the growth of the kindergarten took place in 1889 when Mrs. Walter Robbins, wife of General Walter R. Robbins, and their only daughter entered the Chicago Kindergarten College previously known as the Chicago kindergarten Training School. General Robbins soon became interested in the kindergarten studies and suggested that he and Harrison talk to the Chicago School Authorities about establishing a kindergarten in the public schools as the best way to awaken the general public's attention to this "new education."

General Robbins and his wife worked behind the scenes to see that a kindergarten became part of the public schools. The General discussed the matter with his intimate friend, Mr. John McClaren, a member of the city school board. Mrs. Robbins went to see the son of A. J. Drexel of Philadelphia, the owner of considerable property on the South Side of Chicago, asking him to fund the first year's experiment, promising him the kindergarten would be called the "Drexel Kindergarten." Mr. Drexel agreed and remained an annual contributor until the kindergarten was taken over

by the Chicago Board of Education.[36]

As Snyder so aptly put it, by Autumn of 1889, though strenuous and complicated, Elizabeth Harrison's life at forty had developed a clear pattern: the training college was established; the Chicago Kindergarten Association was flourishing in its self-improvement program and its influence on the public schools, church and settlement kindergartens; Harrison was in demand as a lecturer; and the mother's program was spreading an increasing broader influence both on the understanding of children and on the culture of Chicago. Then an incident took place that once again sent Harrison in search of more preparation for her life work.

A young woman entered Harrison's kindergarten and introduced herself as a graduate of Frau Schrader's Kindergarten Training Class in Berlin. Frau Schrader was the niece of Froebel who had lived a year and a half in his home while undergoing kindergarten training. Harrison later learned she had also traveled extensively with Baroness von Marenholz-Buelow in Europe to present the kindergarten cause

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[36] Ibid., 96. There appeared to have been a discrepancy between the 1889 date given by Harrison and the 1885 date provided in the "First Annual Report of the Drexel Charity Kindergarten" concerning the establishment of the Drexel Charity Kindergarten. The Report was published in 1887 a full two years prior to the 1889 date given by Harrison.

to crowned-heads and prime ministers[37]. The young lady wanted Harrison to allow her to enter the third year of training work. Reluctantly, Harrison accepted her in her third year training class after several days of talking with her. Because Harrison so highly regarded Frau Schrader's training, she placed her in charge of a small group of children. Harrison was surprised when she observed the children at the sand table arranging flowers in geometric shapes instead of pressing geometric forms in the sand as she had been taught. In block building, Harrison once again observed something different from what she had been taught. Harrison did not approve of the young lady's teaching methods because she felt they would lead to scattered thoughts and would not further the goal that she had been taught to be so important in Chicago, St.Louis and New York.

But, Harrison's persistent scientific attitude and continuing quest for knowledge impelled her to go to Germany to see Froebel's work at the source. She was determined to see if there was a discrepancy in what Froebel intended and what she had been taught. She was accompanied to Germany by Mrs. Crouse and her two sons. They sailed for Europe the first week of June in 1890. Harrison was surprised and delighted to find a formal official letter bearing the United States seal of authority, stating that they were

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[37] The German spelling of Baroness von Marenholz-Buelow's name was Baroness von Marehnolz-Bulow.

visiting Germany in research work concerning new methods of education of young children, and that any courtesy shown to them would be appreciated by the United States Government.[38]

After arriving and settling in their hotel in Berlin, Harrison and Mrs. Crouse visited Frau Schrader's Training School. After observing Frau Schrader's work, they found the student had been correct in her application of it. The children were engaged in all kinds of activities not included in Froebel's occupations. Activities such as: setting the table, washing a dish, feeding and caring for the chickens in the poultry yard, dusting the chairs, setting the room in order, making their own paste for paper work, as well as, their own jelly and preserves. Harrison found much of the teaching to be "extremely utilitarian." She also learned that the children in the kindergarten all lived in the "slum district" and that Frau Schrader had unconsciously substituted reformatory activities for formative ones.[39] Instead of the child learning through self-activity, he or she was being taught skills the teacher deemed important. Needless to say, Harrison being a true believer in Froebel's principles disagreed with what was being done.

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[38] Harrison, *Sketches*, 119.

[39] Ibid., 121.

Before leaving Germany, Harrison and Mrs. Crouse made arrangements to visit Baroness von Marenholz-Buelow, in Dresden. Harrison was eager to meet the author of *Reminiscences of Froebel* whose interpretation of Froebel had helped to make clear how his insight into childhood could be practically applied more than any other book she read, including Froebel's own *The Education of Man*. Harrison spoke of the Baroness as if talking about an idol. Susan Blow had written a letter of introduction in behalf of Miss Harrison and Mrs. Crouse. After arriving at the Baroness's home at five o'clock, they were escorted to a nearby room by the maid.

Left alone in the room, the visitors looked about the room. Harrison was utterly amazed that the Baroness would live in a home with a room that was so "vulgar." The room had artificial ivy leaves sprawled over the walls, the plant itself in a pot of earth; a dilapidated stuffed bird on a dying plant; paper-mache "ornaments" decorating the mantle; pink crepe paper tying back cheap drapes at the window. In Harrison's disillusionment she wrote: "Is this the environment of a noble-souled I have crossed the ocean to meet? Can a woman who is content to live in such sham surroundings be the interpreter of a great soul's message to mankind?" It affected her so because of her feelings about Froebel's true religion. These feelings were revealed when she wrote:

> I had been delivered from the despair and darkness that came from a disbelief in a God, and a doubt of any goodness in human nature, by my study of Froebel's view of true religion. His simple, yet profound explanation of the unity of God and his universe, and his almost instinctive insight into the evidence of the Divine, as well as the animal in human nature, had brought me into acceptance of a religion, infinitely nobler than any that I had known in the past, and it filled my life with rich significance.[40]

To further exasperate the situation, the maid re-entered the room to say that the Baroness was taking her afternoon nap and that they should have written. They were told that the Baroness was unaccustomed to receiving calls from strangers. Mrs. Crouse presented the flowers they had bought and apologized for not indicating the time that they would visit. Harrison recalling her feelings about the incident wrote:

> When we reached our rooms, I threw my hat on the table and flung myself on the bed and burst into tears--passionate tears of bitter disappointment and angry resentment. What right had a woman, who lived in such close pretense, to claim to be the intimate interpreter of the great, strong soul whose ideas were revolutionizing education! I was not accustomed to indulge in tears, and Mrs. Crouse had never seen me give way to my emotions in this way. . . . Mrs. Crouse was, as usual, calm and did what she could to comfort me, but I was angry and disappointed with the whole world.[41]

Mrs. Crouse spent most of that night trying to comfort Harrison. Before retiring for the night, Mrs. Crouse tried to convince her that many of the people she admired had faith in the kindergarten. She also reminded her about the

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[40] Ibid., 124.

[41] Ibid., 124.

success she had experienced with the Mother's Club and how many of them had spoken of the help she had given them.

Following breakfast the next morning, a note was delivered by the hotel maid from the Baroness. The Baroness invited Mrs. Crouse and Harrison to spend from six to eight o'clock each day visiting her in her home during their stay in Dresden. Harrison not only did not want to see the Baroness but wanted to leave for Berlin that evening. Mrs. Crouse convinced Harrison that, out of respect for Susan Blow who had written a letter of introduction for them, they at least had to see her that day. The matter was settled and the ladies went for a drive in the beautiful suburbs. However, Harrison recalled that she failed to enjoy the drive because she felt as if someone she loved dearly had just died.

Mrs. Crouse and Harrison went to the Baroness's home at the appointed time. This time, however, they were escorted to a different room. Harrison recalled: "For a moment I stood confused and astonished at the unexpected charm of the room."[42] Harrison saw the world-renowned woman sitting across the room. She thought the Baroness had one of the most interesting faces she had ever seen. In her attempt to learn why the young lady had conducted the sand modeling and the building blocks lessons differently from the way she had

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[42] Ibid., 127.

been taught, she spoke at length to the Baroness. The Baroness explained that the child grows far more through the development of his own efforts and experiences than through the adult's study of text books. She informed Harrison and Mrs. Crouse that the *Mother Play* merely illustrates some of the fundamental experiences needed by all children but which could be varied according to each child's needs and surroundings.

Baroness von Marenholz-Buelow told Harrison that Froebel's primary concern was for "unity." All the rest of the training was simply an attempt to help the child feel connected with and interested in everything in his environment. Needless to say, the Baroness restored Harrison's faith in Froebel's teachings. According to Harrison, before parting the Baroness's company for the last time, the Baroness took Harrison's hands in hers and said "You have come; I can go now." Harrison wrote: "It was one of the supreme moments of my life."[43]

Upon her return to Chicago, Elizabeth Harrison plunged herself into her work with renewed zeal. However, her visit to Dresden had caused her to alter her attitude towards teaching. She had since decided that great emphasis was needed not only on simplicity but sympathy in dealing with children. As a result of her trip, Harrison recognized that

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[43] Ibid., 130.

kindergarten training students needed a broad cultural background which she then took into account when evaluating prospective students. The work she had previously committed herself to continued to grow and expand. By 1890, the Mother's Classes had grown to become a three- year program in the Chicago Training School. It was at this time that Harrison resigned as president of the Chicago Kindergarten Club. Instead of taking advantage of the free time to rest, Harrison used the time to write the first of her many books. Her books included titles such as: *The Vision of Dante: A Story for Little Children and A Talk to Their Mothers; A Study of Child-Nature: From The Kindergarten Standpoint; In Story-Land; Two Children of The Foothills; Christmas-Tide; Some Silent Teachers; Misunderstood Children: Sketches Taken from Life; Offero, The Giant: A Christmas Eve Story; The Montessori Method And the Kindergarten;* and her autobiography *Sketches Along Life's Road.* Harrison and Mrs. Crouse were very busy keeping up with the growing demands of the Training School, which will be covered in a later chapter.

Harrison became one of the initial members of the International Kindergarten Union (I.K.U.) when it was organized in 1892. It was the first kindergarten organization that included the leading kindergartners from around the world. The organization's primary goals were: 1) To gather and disseminate knowledge of the kindergarten

movement throughout the world, 2) To bring into active co-operation all kindergarten interests, 3) To promote the establishment of kindergartens and 4) To elevate the standard of professional training of the kindergartner. The International Kindergarten Union saw their most pressing concern in 1893 to be to adequately represent the progress the kindergartens had made throughout the country for the Columbian Exposition. So, in addition to working with the I.K.U. in that venture, she was busy assisting Mrs. Crouse and others planning the kindergarten exhibit that would represent the Chicago Kindergarten Club at the exposition.

Despite the fact that Harrison was ill prior to the Columbian Exposition, she was actively involved in planning the kindergarten exhibit for the fair. She eagerly committed herself to all the work associated with the Chicago Kindergarten Club's model kindergarten. The club's kindergarten was just one of many on display and, for that reason, Harrison wanted to make sure their model kindergarten would be among the best. A letter to Mrs. Crouse from Kate Wiggin, a leader in the San Francisco Kindergarten Society and movement, implied that there was a disagreement between Harrison and Wiggin concerning the kindergarten exhibit. Wiggin opened her letter:

> Dear Mrs. Crouse:
> I am sorry that Miss Harrison is ill. I am in the same condition, though with no Mrs. Crouse to defend me from the public. . . . The matter of the active kindergarten exhibit at the World's Fair is indeed a knotty subject. Indeed for many weeks my feeling has

> been that of Miss Harrison, but I confess it does not look so very badly to me since I have talked with the Misses Pingree, Fisher, Stewart, Haven and Mrs Blatchford. Mrs. Blatchford and Mrs. Putnam have always represented the mother side of the kindergarten, and have, I think, been uniformly sweet, conservative, modest and against everything that would tend to degrade the kindergarten. . . . I shall talk it over with Miss Harrison as soon as I can after my arrival, and I shrink even now before the dreadful ordeal of her surprise, wrath, scorn and condemnation. . . . Awaiting , then the awful moment when you and Miss Harrison will take me to task for this negative kind of heresy . . .
>
> Yours, cordially
> Kate D. Wiggin [44]

The disagreement was apparently settled and both continued with their involvement in the kindergarten exhibits at the fair. As alluded to earlier, Harrison's interpretation of Froebel was not open for negotiation.

Harrison was one of many speakers to address the spectators interested in the model kindergartens. She delivered a speech on Symbolism for the Chicago Kindergarten Club's model kindergarten.[45] The Columbian Exposition provided the known kindergartners the opportunity to come together once again to promote the kindergarten. The exposition was so successful that all the succeeding expositions tried to use the Chicago Columbian Exposition as a blue print to emulate.

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[44] Kate Wiggin to Mrs. John N.Crouse, TL, 13 February 1893, Elizabeth Harrison's Kindergarten Manuscript Collection, National Louis University, Evanston.

[45] Nina D. Vandewalker, *The Kindergarten in American Education* (New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1971), 154.

Harrison's work with mothers had been lauded by Susan Blow in a letter dictated to her in May 1893. Believing that Harrison's work with mothers must have been a deep experience for her, Blow conveyed her belief that its influence on mothers would prove also to be far reaching. Blow wrote:

> You have proved so conclusively that mothers' classes can be practical, persistent, and spiritually developing, that no true representative of Froebel's ideas can here after afford to neglect this important phase of his educational work.[46]

Given Harrison's high regard for Miss Blow, it is safe to assume Harrison received a great deal of gratification from Miss Blow's comments. Perhaps Miss Blow's letter provided the reassurance needed by Harrison to continue her work with mothers with renewed zeal.

In the fall of 1894, Harrison and Mrs. Crouse called together the first convocation of mothers to be held in Chicago. They had not expected the overwhelming response the convocation received. Approximately twelve-hundred participants from all over the United States assembled at the convocation which was the first of its kind. While it was advertised as a convocation of mothers, men also attended. The purpose of the convocation was threefold: first, to establish a connection between the mother's

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[46] Susan Blow to Miss Elizabeth Harrison, L, 16 May 1893, Elizabeth Harrison Correspondence To and From File, National Louis University, Evanston.

classes and the Chicago Public Schools; second, to seek strength in numbers; and third, to influence public opinion to awaken a demand for more intelligent work in the homes and co-operation with the schools.

Harrison and Crouse worked feverishly preparing for the big event. They had made arrangements for: speakers, one of whom was Dr. John Dewey; reduced train and hotel rates; coverage in the newspapers; and a site for the convocation. Not only was the three-day convocation unexpectedly attended by males but also by people from all socio-economic groups. Due to the attendance, they had to change the site of the convocation from the college to the large assembly hall in the Methodist Church block. The convocation was considered a success by everyone in attendance, including the reporters who gave it favorable reviews.

Immediately following the mothers' convocation Harrison and Mrs. Crouse began preparations for the second mothers' convocation to be held in Chicago in 1895. With an already busy schedule, Harrison found time to honor requests for lectures at colleges across the country. In an unpublished chapter in the *Sketches Along Life's Road* manuscript entitled "My Breakdown," Harrison characterized this time in her life as "a hurricane of activities."[47] Maintaining

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[47] Elizabeth Harrison, chapter in manuscript, *Sketches Along Life's Road* (Archives, National Louis University, Evanston, Illinois)

such a schedule would have taxed the strongest individual which certainly was not an adequate description of Harrison's delicate health.

Everyone knows that a crescendo must eventually come to a climax. Harrison's came about in the fall of 1895 when she became involved in yet another activity. Besides committing herself to assist in the preparation of a kindergarten convocation to be held in Portland Oregon, she had arranged to speak at eight stops while in route to the convocation. Having stretched her frail health to its limits, Harrison contracted pneumonia and for ten days wavered between life and death. She was so ill that the doctor summoned her sister Mary to her side. When she was well enough to talk, she spent her visits with Mrs. Crouse planning for the next mothers' convention. After the convocation, Mrs. Crouse paid Harrison another visit. This time, however, to inform her that the second convocation was also a success. According to Harrison, all the Chicago newspapers did a fine job reporting the convocation. A month later Harrison's doctor announced she was strong enough to travel at a moderate pace to Pasadena, California, where she was to spend a year recuperating. Approximately six months later, while Harrison had made a remarkable recovery, her doctor insisted that she refrain from

returning to her hectic schedule immediately.[48]

In 1896, at the time of the third convention of mothers, Harrison was living in a log cabin, which she referred to as a shack, located in the foothills of California. Harrison was plagued with recurring attacks of bronchitis, and as a result of that, her doctor advised her to move to southern California where she would be less likely to experience a recurrence of it. During this time Harrison entertained herself by writing articles, books and letters to fellow kindergartners, mothers or students.

Harrison reentered the kindergarten scene in 1897, two full years following the onset of her illness. She had spent that time away recuperating from her bout with pneumonia and thinking of ways to oversee the continued growth of the kindergarten in Chicago and across the United States. Knowing of her frail health, one would have thought she would have curtailed her activities but that would not have been the Elizabeth Harrison we have come to know. Harrison returned to Chicago well rested and ardent to resume her work which included: teaching children, teachers and parents; writing for and about the kindergarten; working with organizations; and her never ending quest for a deeper understanding of life and education.

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[48] Ibid.,

Elizabeth Harrison's work with the International Kindergarten Union and that as co-principal of the Chicago Kindergarten College proved to have been her primary focus between the years 1897 and 1920. Harrison served on six different committees in the International Kindergarten Union (I.K.U.) following its inception in 1892. She was one of the original members of the Committee of Nineteen. The committee was formed in response to a demand by educators and the general public to know more about the purpose and function of kindergartens.[49] In addition to her I.K.U. committee work she served as the second vice-president in 1900.

Snyder characterized Harrison as a Liberal-Conservative kindergartner. As a liberal-conservative Harrison retained her devotion to Froebelian principles but also incorporated scientific principles when they were relevant. Harrison was a natural choice as the I.K.U.'s leader for the Conservative-Liberal subcommittee.[50] The growing dissatisfaction with Froebel's principles by members of the I.K.U.'s Conservative and Liberal committees eventually caused a great deal of dissension among its members. So, while battle lines were being formed, Harrison retained her

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[49] International Kindergarten Union, ed. Lucy Wheelock, *The Kindergarten: Reports of the Committee of Nineteen on the Theory and Practice of the Kindergarten* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913) ix.

[50] Snyder, 158.

firm belief in Froebel's principles and did whatever she could to protect those principles from the corruption she felt was taking place across the United States.

In 1912 the I.K.U., recognizing Harrison's leadership qualities and her prolific writing ability, requested her to travel to Italy to investigate Mme. Montessori and her new technique for educating young children. Harrison accepted the task that required her to stay in Italy for five months observing Montessori and her methods. Utilizing her gift of observation, which she had so often used during her childhood, Harrison wrote a report on Montessori's kindergarten methods. The information contained in the report was significant enough to warrant the United States Bureau of Education to publish the report *The Montessori Method and The Kindergarten* in 1914.

While Elizabeth Harrison's work with the I.K.U. might not be considered by some to be a part of the Chicago Kindergarten Movement, it along with some of her other initiatives transformed kindergarten activities in Chicago into a Chicago Kindergarten Movement. Harrison's accomplishments transcended those of any other Chicago kindergartners because her name and extensive work were known nationally. According to Dozier, although the efforts of Mrs. Alice Putnam, Mrs. E.W. Blatchford and other well known Chicagoans were instrumental in the philanthropic aspect of the kindergarten, it was not considered a

movement. Dozier stated: "While these had a local influence, they did not inaugurate a movement."[51] So, with that in mind it is safe to claim that Elizabeth Harrison's efforts and accomplishments sparked a kindergarten movement in Chicago.

Besides the other kindergarten related activities in which Harrison was involved, her paramount concern was the continued growth and success of the Chicago Kindergarten College. The following chapter will examine Harrison's role as co-principal and later president of the Chicago Kindergarten College, the role played by the college in the Chicago Kindergarten Movement, and the college's metamorphosis from 1886-1920.

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[51] C.P. Dozier, "History of the Kindergarten Movement in the United States; How the Different Centers Arose; What the Kindergarten has Accomplished", *Educational Bi-Monthly* 2 (1907-1908): 353-354.

CHAPTER IV

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF ELIZABETH HARRISON'S TRAINING SCHOOL FROM 1886 TO 1920

Chapter III provided an in-depth examination of Elizabeth Harrison's involvement in the Chicago Kindergarten Movement. At the conclusion of that chapter it was obvious that Harrison's initiatives helped to further the kindergarten cause in not only Chicago but across the United States. Many of her initiatives were incorporated into the general framework of kindergarten education and no longer stand out as unique contributions. However, with many changes, her school has survived the past 105 years.

Chapter IV will examine the metamorphosis of Miss Harrison's Training School from its inception in 1886 to her retirement as the school's president in 1920. The chapter is divided into time periods, referred to as stages: Stage One covers the years from 1886-1906, Stage Two from 1906 to 1914, and Stage Three from 1914 to 1920. Each stage reflects many changes undergone by the training school during the identified time periods. This chapter--examines: 1) those forces which brought about the changes that affected Miss Harrison's Training School and 2) the role played by the school in the Chicago Kindergarten

Movement.

Stage One
(1886-1906)

Though Miss Harrison's Training School is said to have started in 1886, according to Elizabeth, it originally began as a mothers' class in October 1885. Harrison initiated the class because of the growing interest of mothers and perspective kindergartners. She later attributed this interest to the diligent work of Dr. Denton J. Snider and Mrs. John N. Crouse. Dr. Snider's lectures grew in popularity with each of his visits to Chicago. Snider's lectures and Mrs. Crouse's ability to persuade mothers in her social circles to attend meetings to hear Harrison speak were pivotal to her success in Chicago. Shortly, after Harrison began the class she became ill making it necessary for her to leave the new endeavor in the hands of Mrs. Lucretia Treat (her assistant teacher).

During her recuperation in Europe, Harrison visited various kindergartens to see Froebel's work in his homeland. In the Fall of 1886 following her recuperation in Europe, she returned to Chicago where she eagerly prepared for the beginning of the new school year and for the mothers' class in which she had incorporated a kindergarten training class. Harrison held the class in the kindergarten room at the Loring School where she served as director. It is from this

point that the slow metamorphosis of Miss Harrison's Training School can be seen.

It was during this initial stage from 1886 to 1906 that Elizabeth Harrison's Training School experienced the greatest changes. This twenty-year period began with the official start of the training school and concluded with the incorporation of the school under the laws of Illinois as a non-profit organization. Its non-for-profit status necessitated putting a Board of Trustees at the helm.

During the early months of the school's existence, the student body consisted of five young ladies and two mothers. Harrison later recalled that at various times at least a dozen mothers occasionally attended a class but none of them attended long enough to complete a course.[1] Mrs. Crouse was successful in promoting not only the kindergarten but Harrison as well. Harrison suddenly found herself addressing large audiences of women, in which she told them of the greatness of their calling as mothers, prospective mothers and kindergartners. Through the efforts of Mrs. Crouse, Harrison received requests to lecture throughout the Midwest and her public speaking was instrumental in attracting students to the new training school.

According to the Commissioner of Education Report for 1886-1887, four kindergarten training schools were operated

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[1] "Miss Harrison And The Kindergarten College", *Kindergarten Magazine* 5, no.10 (June 1893): 741.

in Chicago. The most popular school was the Normal Class, conducted by The Chicago Free Kindergarten Association with Misses Eva B. Whitmore and Fannie E. Schwedler as directors. Fifty students were enrolled in the fifteen-month course that required no tuition due to philanthropic donations. The second most popular school was The Training Class, conducted by the Chicago Froebel Kindergarten Association under the direction of Mrs. Alice H. Putnam. Twenty students were enrolled in the ten-month course in which a fifty-dollar tuition was required. The third most popular school was The Chicago Training School for Kindergartners under the direction of Elizabeth Harrison. Eighteen students were enrolled in the seven-month course costing fifty dollars in tuition. The smallest enrollment was in The Kindergarten Normal Class under the direction of M. Evelyn Strong. Seven students were enrolled in the one-year course that required one hundred dollars for tuition. The first three schools were reported to have had two instructors while the fourth understandably had only one.[2] Perhaps, the deciding factors involved in the students'

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[2] Department of Interior, Bureau of Education, *Report of the Commissioner of Education for The Year 1886-87*, by N.H.R. Dawson, Commissioner (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1888), 471-491. In the course of this chapter one will see the name of Miss Harrison's School change several times; however, the name given in the report was not found in the volumes of material used for this paper. But who knows what all transpired in those early months of the school's existence?

selection of a school were the length of the course and the amount of the tuition.

While Harrison credited Mrs. Crouse for assisting her in the training class work during 1886, she was quick to point out that Mrs. Crouse did not officially join her in partnership until Autumn of 1887.[3] One of the first changes made under this new partnership was the school's name. Instead of being known or referred to as Miss Harrison's Training Class, the name was changed to Chicago Kindergarten Training School.

The similarities in Harrison's and Mrs. Crouse's backgrounds made it easy to agree on the school's purpose. They had clear-cut objectives that they felt would lead to the fulfillment of that purpose. Harrison and Mrs. Crouse felt their school's primary objective was to train their students in the use of Froebel's kindergarten principles. However, they also felt they had to provide a broad educational background for their students; that is to say, a heavy emphasis on cultural and social concerns. The co-founders felt that while it was important to train the students in Froebel's kindergarten principles they also wanted the prospective kindergartner to see the child as an individual. From the very beginning of her career Harrison was deeply interested in the individual child and was always

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[3] Elizabeth Harrison, *Sketches Along Life's Road*, ed. C.S. Bailey, (Boston: The Stratford Company, 1930), 110.

seeking to understand his or her behavior. She saw the child as the focal point, the reason for the establishment of the school; children's interests and needs should be considered first when selecting materials, equipment and programs. Harrison sought to communicate to her students the value of the child and the need for kindergartners and student mothers to help improve conditions for all children.

Since Elizabeth Harrison and Mrs. Crouse recognized the value of having kindergarten teachers who possessed a broad educational background, they were determined to help their students attain one. They both shared an interest in the "higher educational life of the city" which basically referred to the cultural and intellectual activities available in Chicago.[4] Even at that time the city had much to offer in the way of the art institute, operas, theaters and concerts, as well as, a series of lectures on literature, history and art. Harrison and Mrs. Crouse relied on their own backgrounds, experiences and knowledge while conducting their classes and lectures to motivate the students to take advantage of the culture the city had to offer. They felt that by exposing the students to such cultural activities not only would the kindergartners benefit but also the children they would someday teach.

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[4] Edna Dean Baker, *An Adventure In Higher Education: A Story of National College Of Education,* (Evanston: Bureau of Publications National College of Education, 1956), 41.

Despite the city's cultural richness, some of its social conditions cried out to the public for humanitarian social reforms. Harrison and Mrs. Crouse considered social reform to be important enough to include it in the school's objectives. They both were sympathetic to the needs of the less fortunate, especially recent immigrants to this country. Using their positions, in society and in schools, they encouraged efforts to establish kindergartens in churches and vacant stores in the city's impoverished neighborhoods. The aesthetic standards set by Elizabeth Harrison and Mrs. Crouse for their training school later proved to be the foundation that made their school unique.

During the early years, the school required only limited financial support. Perhaps, that was due to the fact that the school had few expenses since Harrison conducted the classes herself in the kindergarten room at the Loring School. Initially, she would often use portions of her small salary from the Loring School and income from her speaking engagements to purchase supplies and equipment needed by the training school. Mrs. Crouse, against Harrison's wishes, followed her example in donating her monthly salary of $100.00 to the school for several years. According to Baker, who received the Elizabeth Harrison Scholarship in 1908 and later became the school's president, Mrs. Crouse gave full time to the school's financial management. She was responsible for publicity, the student

recruitment program, the housing of the school, handling of the budget, as well as, the purchasing of supplies and material.[5] When the need did arise Mrs. Crouse solicited gifts and contributions from friends.

Initially the training school experienced a very slow growth in student enrollment. Harrison later attributed this slow growth to the general public's ignorance and skepticism concerning the kindergarten. Among the other factors which may have limited enrollment were: 1) there were few kindergartens in which to work, 2) parents still considered it as child's play rather than early childhood education; parents were skeptical and 3) the time and tuition involved had negative effects on recruitment of students. Gradually, young women who became interested enough in kindergarten work decided to pay for their own training. Due to that fact, Harrison and Mrs. Crouse felt the training school's tuition had to be kept as low as possible to accommodate those young ladies who could not afford to pay more for tuition. Unfortunately, the school would later feel the financial strain caused by the low tuition and a lack of financial support.

In 1888, the Chicago Kindergarten Training School moved to a central location in the basement of the newly established Art Institute of Chicago. Moving to the central

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[5] Ibid., 45.

location meant not only less crowded conditions than what was experienced at the Loring School, but less traveling for Harrison who had to commute across the city and suburbs giving lectures and conducting classes for mothers and prospective kindergartners.

Following their move to the Art Institute, the growing student body had increased to approximately twenty-five students which made it necessary to expand the teaching duties of Harrison's assistant. Mrs. Treat was given charge of the gifts and occupations work, while Harrison took the games and "Mutter und Kose-Lieder". The local newspaper's weekly coverage of the Mothers' Class, held on Wednesdays, aroused the public's interest in Harrison, the kindergarten and the training school. As a result of that interest the school saw an increase in student enrollment and plans to institute a three-year course for mothers were under way. The Chicago Kindergarten Training School was very fortunate to have an active alumnae that supported the school in its endeavors. The alumnae's persistent support in the promotion of the school and their yearly financial gifts were instrumental in the schools continued growth and success.

During 1889 and 1890 the training school worked with several of the newly established social settlement houses in the city. Harrison and Mrs. Crouse used not only their resources but those of the training school to provide

assistance to such organizations. Several settlement houses such as: Hull House, Chicago University Settlement, The Commons and others received some sort of help from the training school. Some accepted student teachers to work in their kindergartens or received supplies donated by either the training school's students or mothers associated with the school who were working in more affluent areas. Harrison and Crouse felt the work the students were doing at the settlement houses was helping immensely to enrich their backgrounds. They were developing knowledge in social sciences, literature, art, music, and in such experimental fields as sociology and psychology.[6] It was also during 1890 that the school implemented the new three-year lecture course for mothers on kindergarten study.

The training school was undergoing a phase of rapid development during the 1890-91 school year. The student population continued to increase in numbers, while at the same time the school expanded its staff and curriculum. In addition to the training of teachers and mothers, the Chicago Kindergarten Training School included the training of nurses. The term "nurse" as used here refers to a nanny or a female who assists in the home care of children rather than a licensed health care person. The staff of the school had grown to fourteen, not including Harrison. According to

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[6] Ibid., 42-43.

a catalog for the 1890-91 school year, the teachers and the positions they held were: Elizabeth Harrison the Principal; Lucretia Willard Treat in charge of Gifts; Emma A. Beebe, assistant in "Mutter und Kose-Lieder"; Grace Fulmer in charge of Occupations; Alice Fitts in charge of Practical Applications of work in Kindergartens, also Assistant Supervisor of Kindergartens; Elizabeth Underhill in charge of English Literature; Mari R. Hofer in charge of Music; Mary J. Jewett in charge of Science Lessons; Fannie Whiting in charge of Delsarte (plays and games); and Mrs. Jane Amy-McKinney, Supervisor of kindergartens. The teachers for the mothers and nurses classes were: Elizabeth Harrison, Lucretia Treat, Emma Beebe, Jane Amy-McKinney, Alice E. Fitts, Grace Fulmer and assistants from the training school alumnae. Lecturers for the school included: Denton J. Snider; George P. Brown; Josephine C. Locke; Leila G. Bedell, M.D.; and Elizabeth Harrison.[7]

In 1901 the training school made several significant changes that touched its core. The first change was the stated purpose of the school. According to the school's catalog for 1891-92, the school's new purpose was, ". . . to give a special needed training to all women who have the care of children, and to others who wish to be aided by the

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[7] Chicago Kindergarten Training School, 1890-1891 Chicago Kindergarten Training School: For Teachers, Mothers, and Nurses (Archives, National Louis University, Evanston, Illinois)

thorough discipline and increased insight which the study of the Kindergarten system gives."[8] To help the school accomplish its purpose more effectively, it was divided into departments. There were six departments: Teachers' Department, Mothers' Department, Nurses' Department, Literary Department, Philanthropic Department and a Special Lecture Course Department. By organizing various departments, the school was becoming more specialized.

The curriculum was also in the process of revision. Many curricular changes reflected the departmentalization in which staff members were assigned according to their particular specialization. Because of financial restrictions and not fitting the new organization plan, some teachers were dropped from the school's staff.

Changes were also made in the assignment of lecturers. They too were assigned according to their areas of specialization. For example, Denton J. Snider conducted lectures in literature. There appeared to have been some controversy regarding his doctoral degree, an honorary degree from Oberlin College awarded in Autumn of 1894. He had been referred to as Dr. Snider until 1891. There is little or no information explaining the change. Dr. Snider

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[8] Chicago Kindergarten Training College, Chicago Kindergarten College, For Teachers, Mothers, and Nurses 1891-1892 (Chicago: Chicago Kindergarten Training College, nd) Archives National Louis University, Evanston. While the school's name has been changed on this catalog the official change did not occur until the subsequent year.

was the author of at least thirty-three books dealing with literature, biography, art, sculpture, music, architecture, and philosophy.[9] In addition, George P. Well lectured on the critical study of English, George P. Brown lectured on psychology, Edward G. Howe lectured on field work in science, Leila G. Bedell on psychology, Mrs. Sarah DeCharm Hibbard lectured on the study of great art, Josephine C. Locke lectured on art in education and finally Harrison lectured on "Mutter und Kose Lieder".[10] It should be noted that the school had "branch classes" offered at various sites in and near the city. Thus dispelling the myth that off campus sites are something innovative.

Another change that took place in 1891 and 1892 was a slight increase in the tuition. The tuition for each of the first two years was $125.00, for the third year $100.00, and the tuition for branch classes was $50.00. Students were required to pay $15.00 for materials and $7.00 for books.[11] Given the student population, it is apparent the tuition was still considered to be rather low for that period of time. There were 1,086 students enrolled in the 1891-92 school year. Of that number 114 were enrolled in the Teachers' Department,

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[9] *Alumnae News* 3, no.2 (Spring 1900), Archives National Louis University, Evanston.

[10] Ibid.,

[11] Ibid.,

725 in the Mothers' Department (most of whom were in the branch classes), and finally 247 were in the Literary Department. During that time, the college also supervised 48 kindergartens of which 23 were private and 25 were free. So, it becomes evident that by 1891 and 1892 the college had taken on a new level of importance in Chicago.[12]

Up to this point the metamorphosis in the school had occurred gradually. However, in 1893 a number of note worthy accomplishments and changes were made by the training school. In the spring of 1893, the Chicago Kindergarten Training School graduated the first group of mothers to enroll in the three-year lecture class in kindergarten study. They were the first mothers in the country to complete such a course in which they received certificates or diplomas which enhanced self-esteem and opened the doors to possible work in kindergartens.

The continued growth of the training school forced the co-founders to locate a facility that would accommodate their growing staff and students. Expressing her feelings about the move to 10 East Van Buren, Harrison later wrote:

> It was with anxious hearts and much hesitancy that Mrs. Crouse and I had signed the first three years lease to the second story of this building fourteen years ago. We had managed up to that time to dove-tail our work into two rooms at the art institute. Slowly and steadily the growing needs of the school made it necessary for us to push into the two front rooms up-stairs. The four back rooms we rented to

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[12] "Miss Harrison and The Kindergarten College", *Kindergarten Magazine* 5, no. 10 (June 1893): 745.

> artists for studios to try to help pay what seemed to us then an enourmous [sic] rent. But the school soon outgrew even these new quarters, and we were compelled to use the back rooms also, and then we gave up altogether the outgrown building and moved into our new larger quarters.[13]

The thriving training school found it necessary to not only seek larger quarters but to employ the help of more teachers as well. Harrison secured the cooperation of some excellent teachers to work with the current staff. One of these teachers was Josephine C. Locke who had previously served on the staff as a lecturer. Locke, who taught art in the public schools, agreed to teach "Appreciation of Harmony, Color and Proportion" in the use of building blocks and in hand-work at the training school. Harrison and Mrs. Crouse in their determination to develop a stronger two-year program decided that only students possessing a good high school education would be accepted in the training school. Once the decision was made the school's name was changed to the Chicago Kindergarten College. Shortly, after the school made the decision to make a high school education a prerequisite, the school implemented a new three-year program for teachers in which graduates with experience were only required to attend a normal year. According to Harrison, their institution was the first kindergarten

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[13] Elizabeth Harrison, "Farewell to Number 10 Van Buren Street Outlook Into the Future" , chapter in manuscript, *Sketches Along Life's Road* (Archives, National Louis University, Evanston, Illinois)

training school to institute such a requirement.[14]

In the years that followed the college quietly continued to undergo metamorphosis. Several noteworthy events occurred in the college's activities. It hosted three successful convocations for mothers.[15] In 1896, the first group of teachers to complete the three-year training class graduated. Two years later in 1898, the college's first Normal Class, a post graduate class consisting of one additional year of training, also graduated. In 1900, the alumnae began the publication of their Alumnae Annual which was later called Alumnae News. Among the contributions of the Alumnae Association were its: 1) financial support, 2) recruitment of new students for the school, 3) providing scholarships, 4) serving as role models to promote the school. One of the most important developments in this stage was the opening of the college's first dormitory in 1901. The dormitory was located at 3715 Langley Avenue and in September of that year twenty-six students were in residence who would have previously resided in boarding houses. In 1905, the first scholarship issued to the school was presented by the Alumnae Association in Miss Harrison's name to commemorate twenty-five years of kindergarten work. The scholarship was to be awarded annually to the most

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[14] Ibid.,

[15] Elizabeth Harrison, *Sketches Along Life's Road*, ed. C.S. Bailey, (Boston: The Stratford Company, 1930), 147-155.

promising student. The alumnae felt the scholarship would pay tribute to Harrison, honor the awardee giving her the incentive to complete the third year of kindergarten class which at that time was considered the senior year.

1906 was a year of noted change. Due to the college's phenomenal growth, it once again faced with over crowded facilities. The college moved to its third location at 1200 S. Michigan across the street from the Illinois Central Station. It occupied the entire top floor of the large building. Also the college adopted Schiller's "Hymn to Joy" as the school song, which was sung to the choral music of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. While the school song is not newsworthy, in and of itself, it does reflect the cultural backgrounds of its founders.

One of the most important changes to occur in this stage of the colleges's existence was its incorporation under the laws of Illinois as a non-profit organization. After incorporation, the school operated under the direction of a Board of Trustees. Prior to this time, the school had been a private institution owned and operated by Elizabeth Harrison and Dr. and Mrs. John N. Crouse. The move was made to assure that the college was never operated for profit and that all proceeds returned to the institution. The school had, from its inception, been run on a shoestring budget forcing the administration and staff to be paid meager

salaries.[16] One of the benefits of becoming a non-profit organization was to lift the enormous burden that had been placed on Mrs. Crouse for the past nineteen years. The move was also an opportunity for even more expansion by the college. The available sources failed to state why or who initiated the move to non-profit status. It leads one to speculate, if such an act could have been initiated by the administrators, staff or forced by some outside party or agency.

The metamorphosis undergone by the training school in stage one had been substantial. Changes occurred in every facet of the school's organization. Those changes occurred in: its administration, purpose, objectives, student enrollment, curriculum, tuition, staff, location, admission's policies, finances and student housing. It is from this point that stage two will trace the changes undergone by the college from 1906 through 1914.

Stage Two
(1906-1914)

The incorporation of the Chicago Kindergarten College as an non-profit organization marked a new departure for the institution. For the first time during its existence, the college was governed by a Board of Trustees instead of its co-founders, Elizabeth Harrison and Mrs. John N. Crouse.

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[16] Edna Dean Baker, *An Adventure In Higher Education: A Story of National College Of Education*, 59-60.

However, the change took place gradually allowing Elizabeth Harrison, Mrs. Rumah Crouse (who preferred to use her husband's name) and Dr. John N. Crouse, her husband, to serve as the Board of Trustees for the first year. The act of incorporation was taken out on 26 October 1906 by Mrs. Crouse, Dr. Crouse and Elizabeth Harrison. Following the incorporation of the college the purpose of the college was revised. According to Baker:

> The object of the corporation (the Chicago Kindergarten College) shall be to conduct and carry out the business of educating women as teachers in the knowledge of kindergarten work, and the theistic philosophy upon which such work was founded, and also to educate mothers in the bringing up of their own children or those under their supervision in accordance with kindergarten principles; also to teach women domestic science and other household arts and sciences which aid in the making of right homes; also to educate women in the training of the healthful and wholesome use of their bodies; also the training of such women as shall elect to work in Sunday schools [sic] in the knowledge of little children and their religious needs, and in other branches, now taught in the Chicago Kindergarten College, which lead [sic] into womanly work in the home, the school, the church and society , which it is proposed to have transferred to the corporation herein sought to be organized.[17]

During the years immediately following the incorporation of the college, the faculty expanded to meet the demands of a growing student body. Twenty-three instructors and lecturers were on staff at the College during the 1906-07 school year. Twenty-one of the instructors taught classes in the Teachers' Department and

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[17] Ibid., 61.

several taught classes in other departments as well. Three instructors taught classes in the Mother's Department while the Home-Making and Sunday School Departments each had four instructors.[18] It is quite evident that the college had made numerous changes in its staff and curriculum.

The Chicago Kindergarten College's Alumnae Association was pleased with the success of the Elizabeth Harrison scholarship. By 1909 three students had received the scholarship and had successfully completed their training. They were Miriam Bricknell who graduated in 1907, Edna Dean Baker in 1908 and Clara Patton in 1909. In 1910 the Alumnae Association presented the college with another scholarship to honor Mrs. John N. Crouse. Citing the dedication speech Baker wrote:

> Mrs. Crouse, we, the Alumnae, want to present to you a slight token of our appreciation of the 25 years of loyal and devoted service that you have given to this college. We have been realizing more and more that without your support and enthusiasm there would never have been a C.K.C., and would not be one today. So this year we have two scholarships and one of them bears your name. . . .[19]

Several years later the Chicago Kindergarten College's reputation and hard work attracted the attention of the National Kindergarten Association. The association was

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[18] Chicago Kindergarten College, *Chicago Kindergarten College 1906-1907*, (Archives, National Louis University, Evanston)

[19] Edna Dean Baker, *An Adventure In Higher Education: A Story of National College Of Education*, 65.

composed of men and women in New York City whose purposes were: 1) to disseminate an understanding of the kindergarten values in the United States and other countries, 2) to assist in the establishing of kindergartens and 3) to help parents and teachers by the publication of articles and pamphlets on early childhood care and education.

The National Kindergarten Association was an educational and philanthropic organization that was organized in 1909. The association was supported by private citizens whose primary interest was to see that adequate kindergarten facilities of the highest character were provided for the four million children left unserved because of a lack of available kindergartens. The Association invited Harrison to New York City in 1911 to discuss the idea of having the college become affiliated with the association. As a result of that meeting a tentative agreement was reached, the papers were drawn and later signed by the Chicago Kindergarten College's Board of Trustees in February of 1912. The National Kindergarten Association thereafter recommended the Chicago Kindergarten College to prospective students and boards, both public and private, who were interested in securing kindergarten teachers for their respective institutions. To reciprocate, the Chicago Kindergarten College was expected to provide the association with assistance, when necessary, in matters involving technological knowledge of the kindergarten and to

render expert criticism of printed material slated for distribution.

Following the college's affiliation with the National Kindergarten Association, its Board Of Trustees-- William Otis Waters, Elizabeth Harrison and John N. Crouse-- filed papers with the Secretary of State in Springfield for the new corporation to be known as the National Kindergarten College. Changing the name of the college made it necessary to install a new Board of Trustees, and unlike the previous board was required to have nine members instead of three. The members selected to serve on the board for the first year were: Elizabeth Harrison, John N. Crouse, William O. Waters, George W. Webster, W.W. Gurley, Belle Woodson, Frances Wetmore, Edna Dean Baker, and Nina Kenagy. The address of the college office at the time of the change was 1200 South Michigan Boulevard, Chicago.[20]

In addition to being the founders of the Chicago Kindergarten College, Harrison and Mrs. Crouse were also responsible for helping to organize a number of kindergarten training schools in various parts of the United States. In several instances the training schools became affiliated with the Chicago Kindergarten College. One of the schools to do so was the Cleveland Kindergarten Training School which was incorporated under the laws of Ohio in 1894.

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[20] Ibid., 67.

Harrison and Mrs. Crouse were invited to the school as consultants and once there they inspected the work of the association. Prior to returning to Chicago they had made the necessary plans to make the Cleveland school a branch of the Chicago Kindergarten College. Mrs. Crouse and Harrison made several trips to Cleveland each year to oversee its operation or as in the case of Harrison to conduct lectures. The school experienced a continuous growth in student enrollment from 1894 through 1910. The school reportedly had 31 students enrolled in their first class in 1894 and by spring of 1910 had graduated approximately 230 students. Thirty-two of the school's graduates later traveled to Chicago where they took an additional year of training in the Normal Class at the Chicago Kindergarten College.[21]

During the course of the college's expansion, there were still skeptics who questioned the value of kindergartens. Many of those skeptics were educators who had their doubts as to the merits of having kindergartens as part of the publicly supported school systems. Because of the stance taken by those educators, the Normal Schools were reluctant to add kindergarten departments to their institutions. Members of the general public who were familiar with the work of kindergartens had either seen it at a day nursery, a settlement or in a private school. So,

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[21] Ibid., 70.

consequently many of them felt it was to either keep the impoverished child off the streets or a luxury for children of the wealthy. Gradually, educators and the public recognized the value of kindergartens not only to the children but also to society. They saw the kindergarten to be the perfect place to enculturate the children while they were still young. The reaction to their new views on the subject could be seen around the country as kindergartens were slowly introduced into the public school systems in many cities.

The steady growth of kindergartens across the country heightened the demand for quality kindergartners. As a result of that demand, Normal Schools that were hesitant before found themselves adding kindergarten departments to their institutions. Suddenly there was a great demand for kindergartners, especially those who had graduated from the National Kindergarten College. Many prominent positions in various institutions were filled by the college's alumnae. In 1909 the Alumnae Association compiled a list of those positions held by their members. The following examples from a list of fifty-three will illustrate the degree of national and international influence the National Kindergarten College possessed during the kindergarten movement. Some of the names and positions listed were:

New York, N.Y. Columbia University
Miss Grace Fulmer- Head of Kindergarten Department
Mrs. Marion B. Langzettel- Kindergarten Extension Lecturer.

Brooklyn, N.Y. Brooklyn City Normal School
Miss Ruth E. Tappan- Head of Kindergarten Department
Washington, D. C. City Normal School
Miss Helen Gordon- Head of Kindergarten Department
Dubuque, Ia.
Miss Louise Whitney- Supervisor of Kindergarten Department of Public Schools
Kansas City, Mo.
Miss Cora L. English- Supervisor of Public School Kindergartens and Head of Kindergarten Training School
Los Angeles, Calif. State Normal School
Miss Florence Lawson- Head of Kindergarten Department
Sophia, Bulgaria
Miss Elizabeth Clarke- Head of Kindergarten Training School
Alahabad, India Christian College
Miss Jane Cody- Instructor in Christian College
Nagasaki, Japan Kindergarten Training School
Miss Mary Cody- Head of Training School [22]

In 1913 the college was once again faced with the dilemma of overcrowding. The single floor the college occupied on 1200 South Michigan Boulevard could not serve its growing needs. Harrison with Belle Woodson and one or two other faculty members sought the assistance of real estate agents to locate a more suitable site for the college. Harrison and the others were delighted with the prospects of acquiring the use of the Charles Gates estate. The property at 2944 South Michigan was the former home of Charles Gates known as the "Corn King" who took part in

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[22] "Some of the Prominent Positions which have been filled by the Alumnae of the Chicago Kindergarten College" (List was compiled and subsequently published in the spring 1909 *Alumnae News* , Archives, National Louis University, Evanston, Il.)

dominating the Chicago Board of Trade. The estate included three buildings-- the mansion, a three-story brick guest house and a carriage house.

On 1 September 1913 the college's board of trustees agreed to rent the property with an option to buy. The college moved into the spacious quarters using the guest house as part of the dormitory to accommodate the large number of students. The first floor of the guest house was used for offices and the mansion was utilized as classrooms. The student enrollment grew rapidly; the college soon found itself using all the buildings and acquiring space in nearby buildings to serve as dormitories.

Shortly after the start of World War I, the college began to notice a change in the community. The stockyard, located a mile away to the south east, saw a tremendous increase in its volume of business and as a result the stench on a windy day was often unbearable. Aside from the odor it presented another problem which Baker later described:

> . . . During World War I , because of the scarcity of labor, large numbers of Negroes were brought from the deep South, and a grave problem developed involving their struggle for homes and social recognition. . . .These workers were rapidly acquiring possession of much property on Michigan Avenue and nearby streets south and east of the college. It was, therefore, a period of transition. On Michigan Avenue itself, extending from the Loop south, there was an increasing number of automobile display and salesrooms. On the side streets were many small shops including groceries, clothing, drugs, and also repair shops, secondhand shops, and the like. On some of the business streets, the shops were very neat, while on the other streets the stores were

decidedly second class and shoddy.[23]

Besides the change in the community, the college was faced with several other problems related to the war. Those problems and the changes initiated by the college between 1914 and 1920 will be examined in stage three.

Stage Three
(1914-1920)

Like the vast majority of the colleges, the National Kindergarten College experienced a drop in student enrollment during World War I. Many of their students and perspective students had more career opportunities available to them then ever before. Due to the enlistment of men into the armed forces, women were sought to fill jobs and college vacancies that were pivotal to company or institutional survival. While predominately male colleges were barely able to keep their doors open, the National Kindergarten College suffered only a minor reduction in its student enrollment. According to a list of students in the college's 1915-1916 catalog, the enrollment for the 1914-1915 school year was 175 which did not threaten its immediate survival.[24]

Everyone eventually sought to become involved in the

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[23] Edna Dean Baker, *An Adventure In Higher Education: A Story of National College Of Education*, 81.

[24] National Kindergarten College, *National Kindergarten College Catalog 1915-1916*, (Archives, National Louis University, Evanston, Illinois)

war effort in some way and the colleges were no exception. The National Kindergarten College was actively involved in trying to meet the needs of mothers and their children during this time of hardship. The college also joined in the collective efforts of the International Kindergarten Association by rallying the support of kindergarten colleges and training schools across the United States in their numerous war efforts.

During the final years of Elizabeth Harrison's presidency the college made several important changes. The first of which occurred in 1914 when Newton H. Carpenter, executive secretary of the Art Institute, was elected to the college Board of Trustees, where he served as its treasurer. Mr. Carpenter's experience in various matters at the Art Institute proved to be very valuable to the college. He made several helpful suggestions concerning the operation of the college, one of which was the development of a large supporting group which would include the Board of Trustees and other friends, who would: 1) sponsor the college in the community, 2) contribute a sum to its annual support, 3) enlist others in making gifts and 4) carry some responsibility in perpetuating the college as an institution.

The college began a six week Montessori course on 30 June 1915. Miss Harrison and Miss Woodson who studied under Mme. Montessori in Rome conducted the theory classes while

Miss McGorrisk and Miss Winans both graduates of Mme. Montessori were in charge of the observation class of children. The six week experimental course that served as the school's special attraction for that term ended August 8. At least one hundred teachers, representing the United States and Canada, attended the course.[25]

On 6 November 1915 Mrs. John N. Crouse, one of the school's co-founders whose hard work and devotion was instrumental in the school's and Elizabeth Harrison's success, passed away in her home. She served as the college's co-principal for over twenty-five years. She retired when her health no longer permitted her to work. In Baker's tribute to Crouse she made the following statement:

> . . .Mrs. Crouse gave freely and most gladly friends, financial support, time, strength (more strength than any one realized until her magnificent constitution failed) to the needs of the school and the cause abroad as well as at home accepting for many years no compensation for her services. . . .[26]

In 1916 after further investigation into the feasibility of such a plan in an educational institution the Board of Trustees organized a Governing Board of the college. After the by-laws had been drafted, the new

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[25] *News Bulletin National Kindergarten And Elementary College* 3 , (January 1915) Archives National Louis University,Evanston.

[26] Edna Dean Baker,"Mrs. Crouse: An Appreciation ,*News Bulletin National Kindergarten And Elementary College* 4, (January 1916)

organization became the corporate body responsible for the continuance of the National Kindergarten College.

Initially there were two classifications for paying and voting members: active members who paid an annual fee of $5 per person, and life members who paid $100 and were not obligated to pay any additional dues, but in many cases continued to give annually or intermittently. The Governing Board became the legal body of the National Kindergarten College, holding title to all property belonging to the institution and electing trustees who then were delegated the actual management of the college. The president of the college was designated in the by-laws as an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees; thereby, placing the president and the Board of Trustees under the jurisdiction of the Governing Board.

The by-laws delegated the Board of Trustees with the continued responsibility of choosing the president for the college and if a temporary vacancy should exist to appoint an acting president. Within the limitations of the budget and the educational requirements of the organization the president was delegated the responsibility of selecting the staff and members of the faculty. Aside from those responsibilities the Board of Trustees had to transact all matters pertaining to the conduct of the institution, its financial support, and its operation as an educational institution. The Board of Trustees was required to meet

quarterly, in addition to the meeting with the Governing Board for their annual meeting in November.[27]

Prior to Harrison's retirement the Governing Board had grown to include 189 members. The majority of the members were members of the Alumnae Association who though they resided in various cities and countries still felt a commitment to the institution. The Board had become a very influential body with members from not only the alumnae but from the faculty and citizens of Chicago and its suburbs. The members shared an interest in the college, its purpose, it programs and its continued success as an educational institution.

On 5 July 1917, the Board of Trustees took the necessary steps to change the college's name to reflect the growth in their educational program. Once the resolution was made according to the by-laws of the corporation the college legally began to operate under its new name the National Kindergarten and Elementary College. The name was considered by some to be too long and cumbersome and many found that it presented a problem when it was either spoken or written.

The college had always used the public or private kindergartens for which they served as supervisors for observation and practice teaching. However, there was an

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[27] Edna Dean Baker, *An Adventure In Higher Education: A Story of National College Of Education*,90.

increasing need for the college to have its own demonstration school. It was felt by the college that by having its own such school it could demonstrate the use of new materials and could try out new teaching methods. The college staff conducted a demonstration school during the summers of 1916 and 1917, and the freedom it afforded them strengthen their resolve to have one accessible to them during the regular school year. During the 1918-19 school year the college opened its first demonstration school in which there was a kindergarten and a first grade class. The school was located on the second floor of what had previously been the carriage house.

The kindergarten and primary activities in the new demonstration school differed from the traditional kindergarten practices that had been used in the kindergartens. Describing the new teaching method used in the demonstration school Baker wrote:

> The prevailing practice in the traditional kindergarten was to open the day with the "Morning Circle." The children sat on stiff little chairs around a huge circle painted on the floor, while the teacher directed conversation, told stories, and taught songs, usually related to the theme of the day or the week. In Miss Winter's kindergarten, the boys and girls were free as they entered the room to engage individually in self-chosen activities, such as play with blocks, sand, clay, or housekeeping toys. Although the teacher sometimes guided the play, she encouraged the children to do their own thinking.[28]

Approximately a year later, in 1920 Harrison resigned

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[28] Ibid., 97.

her presidency at the college. Never having fully recovered from a severe heart attack, Harrison was not physically present to see the final changes undergone by her college. Knowing how devoted she was to Froebel's kindergarten principles, it is difficult to imagine that she would have wanted to. Following her resignation, she was made president emerita and Edna Dean Baker, a college graduate and acting president, was elected to the presidency of the National Kindergarten and Elementary College. Due to the many changes undergone by the college since its establishment, there is no other word that more accurately describes the first thirty-four years of the National Kindergarten and Elementary College than the word "metamorphosis."

As an aspect of this metamorphosis, Elizabeth Harrison employed all her talents during the course of her kindergarten career. One of her many talents was her ability to communicate to others through her writings. The following chapter will discuss her accomplishments as a writer.

CHAPTER V

ELIZABETH HARRISON THE AUTHOR

Elizabeth Harrison's family was instrumental in providing the stimulus that later enabled her to become a proficient speaker and writer. Her mother and her cousin, Sallie, whose last name was not given, introduced Elizabeth and her siblings to great literature while they were very young children. It was through that introduction, that she came to appreciate language in all its forms. She professed a desire to become a writer at the age of ten. While she was disappointed with her early writing ability, she never abandoned her love of literature and writing. It would be inconceivable to complete this dissertation without discussing Harrison, the writer; thus, this chapter will discuss her role in the kindergarten movement as an author.

Fortunately, for the kindergarten movement Elizabeth Harrison was not only a kindergartner but an enthusiastic speaker and a capable writer. Harrison was an extremely copious note taker which later proved useful in her writing of journals, articles, speeches, reports and books. In her role as an author, Elizabeth Harrison was able to incorporate the two things she loved most-- her love of writing and her love for the kindergarten.

The first of Harrison's publications was a pamphlet, *A List of Books For Children, Recommended From the Kindergarten Standpoint* published in 1889. Since her childhood, she remained steadfast in her belief that children should be exposed to great literature at an early age. Recalling the impact of her own experience, she compiled a list of recommended books with the hope that mothers and teachers would read them to or with their children.

The pamphlet divided the books into five lists, which consisted of two major and three minor lists. The first major list contained titles of nine books that Harrison felt could be read to children. The list included such titles as: *Mother Play and Nursery Song*, by Frederick Froebel; *Nursery Finger Plays*, by Emilie Poulsson and *Aesop's Fables*, by Mary Mapes Dodge. The second major list contained the titles of thirty-seven books that mothers or teachers could read with their children. Harrison differentiated the books in lists one and two by stating that those in the second list which were to be read with children required both the mother's sympathetic and genuine interest in the subject and frequent stops for little talks with the children about what had been read. Harrison selected books which were a combination of classics and modern literature that included such titles as: *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, by Frances Hodges Burnett; *Fairy Tales*, by Hans Christian Andersen; *Child's*

History of England, by Charles Dickens and *True Tales*, by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Besides the major lists there were the three minor lists. The third list included fifteen titles for children on scientific subjects. Among the titles were: *The Story Mother Nature Told*, by Jane Andrews and *Among the Stars*, by Agnes Giberne. Harrison justified the introduction of scientific books:

> Childhood is pre-eminently the period of perception. Hence all books on scientific subjects are helpful, if they are simple enough to aid the child in seeing nature and her marvels. The mother should see to it that the child does not rest in mere perception of the objects of nature, but that he compares and classifies them, and, above all, that he is led to trace a purpose in created things, in order that he may learn to "look through nature up to nature's God."[1]

The fourth list included sixteen titles for mothers and teachers dealing with the study of child-nature. Titles such as: *Emile*, by Jean Jacques Rousseau; *Christian Nurture*, by Horace Bushnell; *Leonard and Gertrude*, by Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and *Conscious Motherhood*, by Emma Marwedel. The fifth and final list included nineteen titles for mothers and teachers on science. Books such as: *Steps in Scientific Knowledge*, by Paul Bert; *Little Folks in Feathers and Furs*, by Olive Thorne Miller; *Principles of Geology*, by Charles Lyell and *Child's Book of Nature*, by Hooker, whose first

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[1] Elizabeth Harrison, *A List of Books For Children, Recommended From the Kindergarten Standpoint*, (n.p. ,1889) (Archives National Louis University, Evanston, Illinois)

name was not listed by Harrison. While there may be some concern that the books were too advanced for kindergarten children, as indicated by the title of the pamphlet, the books were recommended from the kindergarten standpoint of exposing children to great literature and not selected strictly for use with kindergarten children.

Harrison, herself, had not given much thought to becoming a writer since the age of ten. However, the events leading to her first book inspired her to champion the kindergarten cause and promote the proper training of children by her writing. All of Harrison's books were either directly or indirectly related to the kindergarten. Each in its own way was an attempt to lead mothers and their children to a better understanding of Froebel's kindergarten principles.

The first and most successful of Harrison's books was *A Study of Child Nature*, published in December 1890. Harrison credited a publishing company's interest in her lectures and the repeated requests of mothers interested in her interpretation of Froebel's kindergarten principles with inspiring her venture into a new field. Recalling a conversation in Cleveland, Ohio with a representative from a publishing company, Harrison later wrote:

> At the close of a course of lectures given each day successively for a week in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1888, a representative from a publishing company of New York, came to me and said, " I can guarantee you three thousand dollars if you can get these lectures into book form, for our firm." I replied that I was not a writer,

> that much of what I had said in my Cleveland lectures had come spontaneously into mind at the moment of utterance. This was true, although I had carefully prepared my outlines and main arguments.[2]

Upon her return to Chicago Harrison informed Mrs. Crouse of the publication offer. Crouse saw the offer as an opportunity for Harrison to promote the kindergarten, as well as to earn money the college so desperately needed. Mrs. Crouse, from that moment, reminded Harrison of what could be accomplished if she chose to write the book. As news of the offer got around, Harrison was urged by many of the mothers who attended her classes to accept the publishing firm's offer. Even before the offer, Harrison had received numerous letters from mothers, who were unable to attend her lectures, requesting her to consider printing her lectures so they, too, could benefit from her lessons.

In the process of reaching a decision, Harrison experienced a great deal of apprehension. She later explained the reason for her apprehension, when she wrote, "I felt utterly unprepared for authorship, which I held as one of the great callings of mankind."[3] Fortunately, the pleas of Mrs. Crouse, and those who sought her guidance in training their children persuaded Harrison to accept the challenge. She listened to the concerns of mothers and her

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[2] Elizabeth Harrison, *Sketches Along Life's Road*, ed. C.S. Bailey, (Boston: The Stratford Company, 1930), 206.

[3] Ibid., 207.

friends regarding the kindergarten books and materials that were currently available to them. Many of the mothers felt that the kindergarten books were too difficult to read and comprehend for the average mother. They sought a more simplified book that mothers in cities, suburbs and towns could understand. Acting on the advice and suggestions she received, Harrison added a new dimension to her role as a kindergartner.

Despite the earlier assurances of publication, Harrison completed her book only to discover that McClurg and other publishers now did not want to risk publishing an educational book that was so unlike the popular ones of the day. Fortunately, for the kindergarten movement, Harrison and Mrs. Crouse decided to print the *A Study of Child Nature* privately. Three months following the book's release fifteen hundred copies had been sold and the press throughout the country reviewed it favorably.[4]

A Study of Child Nature contained many of the lectures made before mothers and teachers in her classes in Chicago and elsewhere. Elizabeth based her book on her category of instincts which she divided into three major areas: the body, the mind and the soul. Harrison wrote about the instincts and the training of their respective parts for each of the three major areas. Four chapters were devoted

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[4] Ibid., 210.

to the body: the first of which dealt with the instinct of activity or the training of the muscles; the second was on the instincts of investigation or the training of the senses; the third was on the instinct of power or the training of emotions; and the fourth was on the instinct of love or the training of affection. The second major category focused on the mind, to which Harrison devoted three chapters: the first dealt with the instinct of continuity and the training of reason; the second on the instinct of justice or the right and wrong punishments; while the final chapter of this category was on the instinct of recognition and the training of the will. Two chapters were devoted to the final category of the soul. The chapter in this category included the instincts of reverence and the training of worship while the last included the instinct of imitation or the training of faith.

The public's response to the book was not restricted to the United States alone. By 1904, the book had been received abroad in such countries as Japan, Bulgaria, The Philippines, India, and South Africa. Citing a review, Harrison wrote:

> Miss Elizabeth Harrison, the well-known kindergartner of Chicago, has had the good fortune to meet appreciation not only in her own country, but in other lands. Her *Study of Child Nature*, intended primarily as a text-book for kindergarten teachers, has been widely translated. In Japan it has become a home classic among numbers of eagerly progressive Japanese mothers and child students. Translated into Bulgarian it is studied by the theological students of the Presbyterian Mission. Still another translation in the

> mission school at Jerusalem. The book has gone to Manila, Calcutta, and South Africa. The editor of the *Armenian Weekly Journal* published the chapters serially, heading them "Letters from an American Lady," and, because of the widespread interest manifested in the book, the paper became a bi-weekly. However, when the chapter on "Punishment" was reached, in which Miss Harrison makes a plea for natural and judicial rather than retributory punishment, the unfortunate editor was officially warned that publication of the letters must cease. The sultan was unwilling for his subjects to imbibe "American ideas of justice." The book was later translated into Armenian as a whole, the translator spending a year in the United States for that purpose; and it has now a wide circulation there.[5]

In retrospect, the responses toward *A Study of Child Nature* were varied. According to Vandewalker, some critics found it to be overdrawn, lacking in psychological value, and deficient in literary style. It had, however, met the practical needs of many mothers far better than many of the pretentious books on child care that preceded it prior to 1907. The topics, appealing to mothers, were treated in a simple and practical manner. Vandewalker found the book's chief value to be its focus on accentuating the positive side of a child's nature. The book succeeded in acquainting mothers with kindergarten principles, and was considered an excellent vehicle to awaken interest in the study of children.[6]

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[5] Elizabeth Harrison, *Sketches Along Life's Road*, 211.

[6] Nina D. Vandewalker, *The Kindergarten in American Education* (New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1908; repr., 1971), 168-169.

Agnes Snyder, felt that Harrison's book not only lacked a probing of the psychological world of its time, but the whole field of instincts or the controversies that were raging around the theories of theorists such as: John B. Watson, Thorndike and Freud. Snyder felt that Harrison was confident in her own classification as neatly leading the philosophical theory in which she believed. That is, she continued to advocate an education she believed would lead children ultimately to the Divine Unity upon which the Froebelian philosophy was based.[7]

A Study of Child Nature was so widely used as a textbook by mothers' groups and kindergarten training schools that two versions of questions were formulated and published to accompany the book. The first publication of questions was written by Elizabeth Harrison at the request of the Woman's Council and Mothers' Circles of Akron, Ohio in 1897.[8] Dr. L.W. Sackett, a member of the Psychology of Education Department at the University of Texas, was requested by the Congress of Mothers and the Parent-Teacher Associations in 1915 to develop a second compilation of questions. Sackett's set of questions was used by Parent-

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[7] Agnes Snyder, *Dauntless Women in Childhood Education 1856-1931* (Washington, D.C.: Association for Childhood Education International, 1972), 151.

[8] Elizabeth Harrison, *Questions on A Study of Child-Nature* Arranged by the Woman's Council and Mothers' Circles of Akron, Ohio (Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company, 1897)

Teacher Associations and others desiring to study childhood.[9]

Harrison could not have envisioned the long range response her book received over a period of time. By 1942 the book had been translated into eight languages and because of its popularity had reached its fiftieth edition.[10] The fact that the book cost only one dollar may have been a factor in its success. It would seem that it was a small fee for a book that helped so many to understand Froebel's dream for mothers and their children.

Harrison's book, *A Vision of Dante: A Story for Little Children and a Talk to their Mothers* was published in 1894. The purpose of the book was to introduce Dante to children and in the book's preface Harrison told why she felt it was important to do so. Her ability to tell stories in a simple way had helped immensely in making her first book a success but here it took on a new level of difficulty.

To deliver Dante to children in a simple way was anything but simple. Harrison found it necessary to omit the most horrifying incidents in the story and to modify others; while doing so she was able to mingle the sternness of justice with tenderness and love. She realized the

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[9] L.S. Sackett, Ph.D., Study Outlines of Elizabeth Harrison's "Child Nature", *Bulletin of the University of Texas*, (Texas: University of Texas, September 15, 1915)

[10] Helen Marshall, "Elizabeth Harrison Pioneer Woman Teacher" *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin* 8, (June 1942):10.

problems in relating the story to children but felt they should be exposed to this great literary piece which she considered "one of the world's greatest poems" at an early age.

Harrison's next book, *In Story-Land* was published in 1895. The book contained spiritual sermons cleverly disguised as simply told mythical stories that appealed to children. At least eighteen editions of the book were printed.

As a result of Harrison's poor health in 1895, she was forced to rest a year in the Sierra Madre Mountains of Southern California where her fourth book was conceived. The book, *Two Children of the Foothills*, was published two years following her return to Chicago. The book was based on her study of the neighbor's children, a girl and her brother aged four and six, in their native mountain environment. Elizabeth documented the practical use of the kindergarten principles in the children's daily life. This was her first opportunity to apply kindergarten principles with children in such a remote area.

Two Children of the Foothills was read by a number of mothers who, for the first time, got a real sense of how kindergarten principles could be used with their children in their daily lives. The simple story was translated in both Japanese and Swedish. In addition to having the book translated into a Japanese textbook, *Two Little Children of*

the Mountain Top, Harrison was also extremely proud to receive a note requesting permission to translate the book into Swedish.

In 1902, Harrison's book *Christmas-Tide* was published. She wrote the book in the hope that it would help mothers and teachers provide their children with the right Christmas spirit, as well as help them wisely select presents for children. The book contained Harrison's Christmas talks and stories and a reprint of Charles Dickens' *Christmas Carol*.

Misunderstood Children, Harrison's sixth book, was published in 1910. The book's forward consisted of anecdotes of children's behavior (most of which was undesirable) and ways to improve it. Harrison sketched the evolution of religious and philosophical concepts and predicted that psychology would gradually explain man as philosophy and religion had explained God. The advent of modern psychology had questioned too many of Froebel's original kindergarten principles. However, Harrison, one of Froebel's staunchest supporters, credited psychology as having made certain contributions to the understanding of children.[11]

Through the use of psychology, correlations were made in four areas in the understanding of children: 1) heredity and environment; 2) the effect of body conditions upon the

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[11] Vandewalker, 243.

mental condition; 3) the effect of the mind upon the body and 4) the bad effect of either too much license or of too much authoritative control. In the book, Harrison illustrated how neglect of the above concepts would lead to problems. Her suggestions for improving the children's behavior were very often common-sense. Harrison's common-sense treatment elicited criticism from Snyder who wrote:

> Her pronouncements seem naive today in her reliance on the immediate wise word or action to correct what probably would be considered today merely a symptom of a deep-seated condition requiring far more sophisticated handling.[12]

Several years later, Harrison wrote *Offero, The Giant: A Christmas-Eve Story*, published in 1912. The book was a philosophical children's book. The story evolves around a lazy giant who is stimulated to activity when he hears someone say that he should serve the greatest ruler on earth. After serving the governor, emperor and Satan, he decides to serve God. The story ends when the giant becomes the Christ Child after helping a little girl in need. In this book Harrison, once again, incorporated her strong belief in Froebelian principles into a book designed to bring the child closer to Froebel's principles of Divine Unity.

Another major accomplishment for Harrison, as a writer, was her report on the work of Maria Montessori which was

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[12] Snyder, 154.

commissioned by the International Kindergarten Union in 1912. The I.K.U. honored Harrison with a request to travel to Italy to conduct a study on the work of Mme. Montessori. Needless to say, Harrison gratefully accepted the assignment. After approximately five months in Italy Harrison submitted a report of her observations which was published by the U.S. Bureau of Education in 1914. P.P. Claxton, then the Commissioner of Education, in his letter of transmittal of the bulletin explained the problems that had arisen due to the differences in Froebel's and Montessori's methods of conducting kindergartens:

> . . . To this end the careful study of Dr. Montessori's work by those who are familiar with the teachings of Froebel and the best practices of the kindergarten can not fail to be helpful. For this reason I recommend that the manuscript transmitted herewith, prepared by Miss Elizabeth Harrison, president of the National Kindergarten College, be published as a bulletin for the Bureau of Education, for distribution among kindergartners and others directly interested in the education of children below the ordinary American school age. Miss Harrison, who has long been identified with the kindergarten movement in America has observed the kindergarten in all of its most important centers, was sent to Rome by the National Kindergarten Association that she might make a thorough study of Dr. Montessori's methods. This manuscript was prepared after a stay of some months in Rome studying with Dr. Montessori and observing in the *Case dei bambini*.[13]

Due to Elizabeth Harrison's power of observation which she developed as a student, her report provided objective

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[13] United States Bureau of Education, *The Montessori Method and The Kindergarten*, by Elizabeth Harrison, United States Bureau of Education Bulletin (Washington D.C.: 1914 no.28), 7.

data on Montessori's procedures. She was careful to keep her personal comments and opinions totally separated from her data.

Harrison openly expressed her views on the prominent aspects of the Montessori method which included: the principle of freedom, didactic material, exercise of the muscles, training of the senses and "the silent game." She approved of the Montessori's emphasis on self-direction expressed in children's freedom to move about a spacious room and outdoors and in the children's own selection of materials with which they wished to work. Harrison questioned the feasibility of such freedom in crowded American classrooms. She agreed that children needed to be freed from adult authority but equally felt that at times they needed such authority and guidance. Harrison commented on Montessori's principle of freedom when she wrote:

> This freedom, Dr. Montessori claims, is absolutely necessary for "auto-education," which is but another name for the watchword of the present-day movement in education, "self-activity" the central thought of the kindergarten, and strongly insisted upon by Herbart, Spencer, Dewey, and other modern educational leaders. It is therefore, no new doctrine; but she had a new method of procedure.[14]

Harrison also approved of the emphasis Montessori placed on the training of the muscles and the senses. She saw a strong similarity between the emphasis Montessori placed on exercising the muscles with the importance Froebel

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[14] Ibid., 14.

gave to muscle training. Harrison even went so far as to suggest that Froebel, in his emphasis on the sense of power that control of the muscles gave children, may have underestimated its physical values. She similarly approved of the importance Montessori placed on the developing of the sense of touch and its application to learning the alphabet through the tracing of sandpaper letters. As much as Harrison approved of developing the senses she disagreed with Montessori on the purpose for doing so.

According to Harrison, Montessori pleaded for the right environment for children because she believed that all "the content of our mind is made up of what we take materially from our surroundings by means of sensation." Harrison further wrote:

> Here we come to a true parting of the ways between Dr. Montessori and the advocates of the kindergarten. Kindergartners agree with the earnest doctor that the education of the power accurately to register sensation is of the greatest possible help to the practice life of the child; they accept that sense perceptions make the good cook, the economical marketer, the successful shopper, the skillful physician, and the accurate scientist. In fact, almost all the great discoveries in the field of science are more or less the results of accuracy of observation and the development of judgement based thereon. Kindergartners agree that there is a higher value in "refining the sense perception" until the individual is saved from the coarse sensual indulgences of the appetites of the body; but all thinking persons must realize that environment alone can not give equal pleasure to all. *The inner self must be reckoned with.*[15]

Harrison appeared intrigued with "the silent game."

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[15] Ibid., 29.

She described how teachers made movements with their bodies in complete silence while the children imitated them. Harrison wrote:

> This silent game, as witnessed by any visitor of these schools, is a remarkable and surprising evidence of the amount of control a little child can gain over his body in the matter of consciously inhibiting its movement. The silence is felt by all in the room, no matter how many visitors may be present. The amount of self-control which this develops in children (some of whom were not over 3 years of age) is marvelous, and no child, so far as I was able to observe, seemed taxed or strained in doing it; in fact, I saw an added expression of placid rest come upon many of their faces.[16]

Summing up the limitations of Montessori's methods, Harrison found: 1) an overemphasis on individual development rather than group training, 2) no place in the curriculum for stories, 3) a lack of material for self-expression and 4) a lack of a definite attitude on religious training. She wrote:

> Notwithstanding the limitations of the present stage of Dr. Montessori's educational method, she has assuredly made a valuable contribution to the better understanding of young children. Had she given us nothing else than her own patient, reverent study of child life, she would place us under a debt of gratitude. As it is, she had given much which every earnest mother and true teacher should know and apply to her work.[17]

Elizabeth Harrison's writing reflected her devotion to great literature and Froebel's kindergarten principles. She was able to weave her love of literature into stories for young and old alike. Harrison provided some insight into

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[16] Ibid., 30.

[17] Ibid., 34.

her writing for children when she wrote:

> In writing my mythical stories, when I wished to describe certain experiences which I thought contained ideals that might be made attractive to children, without the dulling effect of mere moralizing, I turned to the art form of the paramyth which would allow the child to accept the story as simply as a fairy tale, or to feel something of its significance to the degree that he was ready for the teaching. In this way, stories may serve the child from five to ten years of age. Their deeper significance will come to the man or woman of culture. In fact, I have held the attention of audiences of eight hundred to a thousand adults, with one or another of these stories. . . . I feel the importance of meeting and nurturing the demands of children's imagination, as well as their sense-perception and material activities. For out of the imagination have grown all the art and poetry and almost all the sympathy which the spiritual side of life makes beautiful and real. If we tell to a child merely sense-perceived stories we leave him within the narrow bounds of concrete experiences. The great "might be" is left out.[18]

While Harrison debated on whether she should venture into the field of writing she had no idea she would experience the success she did. To see Harrison's accomplishments as an author one need only to look at the impressive list of her publications: *A List of Books for Children Recommended from the Kindergarten Standpoint* (1889), *The Root of the Temperance Question from a Kindergarten Standpoint* (1889), *A Study of Child-Nature from the Kindergarten Standpoint* (1890), *The Influence of the Kindergarten on Modern Civilization* (1891), *Story of*

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[18] Elizabeth Harrison, *Sketches Along Life's Road*, 212-216. Paramyth does not appear in any of the available dictionaries but according to Harrison philologists often used the word to mean myths consciously created.

Christopher Columbus for Little Children (1893), *A Vision of Dante: A Story for Little Children and a Talk to their Mothers*(1894), *In Story Land* (1895), *Two Children of the Foothills* (1900), *Some Silent Teachers* (1903), *The Kindergarten Gifts* (1903), *Bead Stringing, for Public Schools from First to Eight Grades* (1904), *Misunderstood Children:Sketches Taken from Life* (1910), *The Montessori Method and the Kindergarten* (1914), *When Children Err: A Book for Young Mothers* (1916), and the *Unseen Side of Child Life, for the Guardians of Young Children* (1922). In addition to the foregoing publications, Harrison wrote numerous articles for various organizations such as: the International Kindergarten Union, Chicago Woman's Club, the Congress of Mothers and the Parent Teacher Association. Harrison was able to take advantage of the college's publishing department in the publishing of her books and pamphlets; however, that fact should not in any way diminish the importance of her writing. Elizabeth Harrison's writing ability did much to promote the kindergarten movement not only in Chicago and the Midwest but also around the world.

For more than thirty years writing served as the refuge to which Harrison would escape the loneliness she experienced during long periods of illness or retirement. The following pages will chronicle the twilight of Elizabeth Harrison's years and her continued work on behalf of the kindergarten.

EPILOGUE

In 1920, Elizabeth Harrison's poor health forced her to resign her position as president of the National Kindergarten and Elementary College which she had founded in 1876. Her work for and with the Kindergarten Movement had been paramount in her life for nearly forty years. Her immense love for the kindergarten would not let the minor inconvenience of illness keep her from contributing in some way to the kindergarten as long as she was able. Harrison's activities during the years subsequent to her resignation and until her death in 1927 will be chronicled in the remaining pages of this dissertation.

Harrison's health had kept her from her duties at the college for months prior to her resignation. She went away to recuperate from a severe heart attack she had suffered earlier in addition to yet another occurrence of her professed chronic asthma. During these periods of illness and absence Harrison had always communicated with the students and alumnae in person or by writing so, consequently, they became concerned when she had not been heard from for some length of time. The editor of the college's *News Bulletin* requested Harrison who was being

cared for by Belle Woodson, a former student and staff member, to send a letter of New Year greeting to the staff, students and alumnae to be published in the bulletin. Elizabeth's letter was not only very interesting but informative. Setting the stage for her forthcoming retirement, Elizabeth Harrison wrote:

> The Editors of the Bulletin have asked us to write a word of New Year greeting. What a wonderful thing the Mail Service is! Here I am at Citronelle, Alabama, surrounded by sunlit air which is redolent with perfume of the pines and has just a tang of the air from the sea, some thirty miles south of us, but far enough away to lose its fog before it reaches us. And yet-- I can talk with you in Maine, in California, in New York, in Texas, in Minnesota and in Florida. Even in France and China! And have you not greeted me with loving Christmas messages and some of you with dear Christmas letter telling of what you are accomplishing?
>
> With my letter acknowledging these holiday greeting let me give you some of the details of this interesting spot to which I was sent to recruit my strength.
>
> The legend of the village is that ages before the white man came, the Indians brought their sick for the healing that the Great Spirit gave through the Mineral Water found here.
>
> Medical Journals tell of the long and patient searching for the germ of tuberculosis that was made by one of Germany's great scientists, Doctor Koch; then, at last he discovered it, tested his discovery and proclaimed to the world that the dread disease was curable-- and the world laughed him to scorn.
>
> Complications arose-- I know not of what nature; and in his righteous indignation he took the dust of Prussia off his feet and came to America seeking freedom from government interference and the right spot to establish his sanitarium and prove to the world the greatness of his discovery.
>
> The climate, the water, the pine woods of Citronelle attracted him and he settled here and tried to establish a sanitarium for tubercular patients. His life ended in what seemed a failure, but thousands and

thousands of lives have since been saved by his discovery!

Historically the town is mentioned as the place where the last battle of the Civil War was fought.

So you see Miss Woodson and I have legends to dream of, heroic lives to meditate on, historic facts to search out, as well as long quiet days of sunshine and pure air in which to build up and again rejoice that Life means Service and Service means Life.

Yours always with love,
ELIZABETH HARRISON[1]

While Harrison's letter answered some questions the college's faculty, students and alumnae had concerning her health and whereabouts, it raised others. The most important of the questions raised was whether or not Harrison was suffering from tuberculosis? If so, was this the illness she had been plagued with since adolescence? If not, was it safe for Harrison in her delicate health to be exposed to such an illness?

Following Elizabeth's official resignation of her position she became president emerita of the college while a dear and trusted former student, Edna Dean Baker, took over as president. Harrison's health made it necessary for her to reside in warmer climates which meant that information about her during that time was limited. Aside from the occasional information printed in the college *News Bulletin* or the *Alumnae News* one was left to obtain information from

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[1] Elizabeth Harrison, "Letter of New Year greeting," *News Bulletin National Kindergarten And Elementary College* 8, (January 1920), 27.

letters.

Elizabeth Harrison's total commitment to her work in the kindergarten movement made it difficult if not impossible for her to relinquish that commitment upon retirement. Even though her strength continued to fail, denying her the privilege of travel and mobility, she was far from idle. Harrison's twilight years were made rich by her continued interest in music, books, writing, friends and the writing of letters which brought enjoyment to her and those who received the them.

In September of 1922 Harrison wrote a letter to Oma Oliver, a former student of the college. At the time the letter was written, Harrison and Woodson were living in Boerne, Kendall County, Texas a small mountain village. They arrived in the village in early June and had planned to stay until the first of October when they would return to San Antonio for the winter. Harrison commenting on her health wrote:

> . . . I have improved so much since coming south that I do not want to risk a northern winter until perfectly well or at least free from any indications of Asthma. . . .[2]

When Harrison was physically able she made use of the time to write the last two of her books. *The Unseen Side of Child Life* which she dedicated to Belle Woodson (1922) and

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[2] Elizabeth Harrison to Mrs. Oma Grace Oliver, ALS, 8 September 1922, Elizabeth Harrison Correspondence To and From File, Archives National Louis University, Evanston.

her account of her work in the kindergarten movement in *Sketches Along Life's Road* which was published some years after her death.

Elizabeth wrote several letters to Scribe better known at the college as Miss Anne Goodwin Williams, a former student who was currently a member of the college faculty. One of the letters written by Harrison was written 1 December 1922. In that letter she said:

> Dear Scribe,
>
> One year ago today we landed in San Antonio. I was placed in a wheeled chair by a six foot porter and wheeled to a taxi--cab--taken to the Gunter Hotel and put to bed. Therefore I had more than the ordinary mortal to be thankful for yesterday. Notwithstanding the fact that the past ten days have been spent in bed with the doctor in attendance. The oculist has told me that <u>with care</u> my eyes would probably last as long as the rest of my body. Of course his treatment of them was interrupted by my illness. but I am better again. Was up for dinner in the dining room yesterday with Belle. It seemed so forlorn for her to have to eat her meals on a tray beside a sick bed-- so like those long months of 1919-1920. She has never complained and has always been cheering when I have been down-hearted. Another thing for me to be thankful for. But enough of self.
>
> My brother was blind for two years before he died. The doctors said it was nervous exhaustion.
>
> Love to your mother.
>
> Yours with love,
> Elizabeth Harrison[3]

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[3] Elizabeth Harrison to Scribe, Anne Goodwin Williams, TLS, 1 December 1922, Elizabeth Harrison Correspondence To and From File, Archives National Louis University, Evanston.

Prior to the foregoing letter there had been no reference made by Harrison to her brother, George, since 1879. The last time Elizabeth spoke of her brother was just before she left Marshalltown to study under Alice Putnam in Chicago. Harrison rarely made reference to her family. Aside from the letters she wrote to her sister Mary, soon after she began kindergarten training, there was no visible contact with the family until her sister was summoned to her bed side during her illness in 1895.

By 1923 Harrison's eyesight had further deteriorated, and she was only permitted to write short notes instead of the lengthy letters that she was accustomed to writing. In a note written to Anne Williams in April, Harrison was busy writing about her experiences with Baroness Von-Marenholz-Buelow in her book *Sketches Along Life's Road*. She realized the book would have to be rewritten and revised but she wanted to continue working on preparing it for the editor. Commenting on the book Harrison wrote: "At first the idea of writing my professional life seemed absurd and too egotistical to be thought of. But you and Miss Woodson have given me courage. I hope I may do it wisely."[4]

In 1924 Harrison and her companion Woodson made what must have been their first trip north since her illness in

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[4] Elizabeth Harrison to Scribe, Anne Williams, TL, 14 April 1923, Elizabeth Harrison Correspondence To and From File, Archives National Louis University, Evanston.

1919. Harrison wrote a letter to Anne Williams following her and Miss Woodson's trip to New York City and Boston. Commenting on their stay in New York she wrote:

> . . . I made the venture and it was a venture, as I did not know but that I might break down and have a long index--expensive illness. But it has proved a tonic. The first three week we were in New York it rained all day and all night-- but they, my "elder daughters" came with hired cabs, or raincoats and umbrellas and radiant faces-- bringing flowers, so many that our two tiny rooms could not hold them all and some, after a day's enjoying of them had to be sent with our compliments to the hotel office desk. . . .[5]

As Elizabeth's eyesight progressively worsened, she had to further curtail her writing of letters and working on her book. In a letter, which was comprised of short notes, to Anne, Harrison explained:

> . . . In other words, we, Miss Woodson and I, are reviewing and revising my Sketches, hoping to get the book ready for spring trade. She reads the Mss. [sic] aloud for two hours each morning and I criticise [sic] and change, omit or retain, as seems best. Then she types the pages thus revised and I look over my list of changes and omissions for the next sketch. It is slow work and I am sometimes tempted to throw it aside and let the dead pasr [sic] bury its dead. . . .[6]

Harrison's last available letter to Williams was truly an indication of the approaching end. Excerpts from her letter written 4 June 1926 clearly show that Harrison's strength and health were continuing to deteriorate. She

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[5] Elizabeth Harrison to Anne Williams, TL, 20 August 1924, Elizabeth Harrison Correspondence To and From File, Archives National Louis University, Evanston.

[6] Elizabeth Harrison to Anne Williams, TL, 3 November 1925, Elizabeth Harrison Correspondence To and From File, Archives National Louis University, Evanston.

wrote:

> . . .I have not been at all well lately, too listless to do anything but lie in the steamer chair on our screened-in porch if the day is fine or on the chaise-lounge if it is wet and chilly. I gave up all attempt of finishing and condensing my book about the first of March not feeling in the right physical condition to giving it a fitting finale. So-it will not be printed before autumn.
>
> The doctor says all I need is rest-- complete rest. I have been having some trouble with my heart and an attack of my chief foe asthma. It is not seriously dangerous but an added evidence that my physical forces are decreasing.
>
> . . . I am not well enough for us to far [sic] this summer we will probably go to some spot in the Ozarks. It would only have brought disappointment and -- possible -- disaster for me to have attempted to come to Chicago. But I have sent a message for Alumnae Day and will s nd [sic] one to the graduating class for I love every eager graduating class. Memories of the past make each class dear. . . .[7]

An improvement in Harrison's health permitted her and Miss Woodson to spend the summer of 1927 in Boerne, Texas. They resided in an Episcopal Rectory located on top of one of the hills of the village during their visit. In spite of the change of scenery and climate, in August Harrison wrote that she was far from well and had to frequently say to herself-- "He also serves who only stands and waits."[8] Elizabeth's months and years of waiting finally came to an end in October of that year.

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[7] Elizabeth Harrison to Anne Williams, TL, 4 June 1926, Elizabeth Harrison Correspondence To and From File, Archives National Louis University, Evanston

[8] In Memoriam Elizabeth Harrison 1849-1927, np, nd, Archives National Louis University, Evanston.

Elizabeth Harrison died on Monday, 31 October 1927 in San Antonio, Texas. She succumbed to an illness that had plagued her since late childhood. Harrison never recovered from a severe attack of bronchitis and asthma which struck her again earlier that year in January. At her side during the final moments was Miss Belle Woodson, her former student, colleague, friend and companion.

Two funeral services were held for Harrison-- one in San Antonio, Texas and one in her hometown Davenport, Iowa. The service in San Antonio took place on Tuesday, November 1 at five o'clock in the Porter Loring Chapel. The service was conducted by Silvester P. Robertson. Following the service in San Antonio, Miss Woodson accompanied the remains of Miss Harrison to Davenport, Iowa for burial. Elizabeth had spent her childhood and youth in Davenport. The old family home was located a short distance away in Marshalltown, Iowa.

Miss Woodson reached Davenport Thursday night, November 3rd, and Harrison's internment took place the following morning at nine o'clock at Oakdale Cemetery. Harrison was buried on the family lot with her father, Issac Webb Harrison; her mother, Elizabeth Thompson Bullock Harrison; her brothers, George and William O. Harrison.[9] The service was conducted by Reverend Marmaduke Hare, Dean of Trinity

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[9] Oakdale Cemetery Records, Davenport Public Library

Cathedral Davenport. Elizabeth's sister Mrs. Mary Knisely; her niece and husband, Mr. and Mrs. George Adkins of Marshalltown were present at the service along with approximately twenty-four friends and alumnae from Chicago and the college.

In addition to the two funeral services Harrison was honored in two memorial services-- one in Evanston, the college's new home, and the other in Chicago at the headquarters of the Chicago Women's Club. The memorial service sponsored by the college was held on Sunday the 13th of November at the college. Opening the program Edna Dean Baker the college's president said:

> This service is in loving honor of Elizabeth Harrison, the founder and for thirty-three years the president of the National Kindergarten and Elementary college. It is held most fittingly in this beautiful building dedicated to her life work. We meet here today with the thought that we have her spiritual presence always with us and in the spirit of rejoicing for her great life. . . .[10]

Reverend George Craig Stewart, Rector of St. Luke's Parish, and others joined the students at the college memorializing Harrison.

The memorial services held at the Chicago Women's Club on 30 November 1927 was presided over by Mrs. Andrew MacLeish, the club's president. Mrs. Amalie Hofer Jerome gave the tribute, commemorating Elizabeth Harrison's life and her contributions to the kindergarten movement in

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[10] Ibid.,

Chicago. "In Memoriam Elizabeth Harrison 1849-1927" contained some of the many messages of sympathy and deep love that were sent to: the college, Miss Baker and Miss Woodson from hundreds of organizations, friends and alumnae. When word of Harrison's death reached Nina C. Vandewalker, who previously served as a specialist in Kindergarten Education at the Bureau of Education in Washington, D.C., she sent a letter with the following message:

> The news of the passing away of Miss Elizabeth Harrison, and the notice of the memorial service at the college, Nov. 13, have just reached me, and I am writing to tell you that I share in the sense of loss and sorrow that you and thousands of others feel at her passing from this life.
>
> No one who has known Miss Harrison can help realizing how much she has contributed to the better understanding of little children, the enrichment of young womanhood, and the efficiency of motherhood.
>
> Allow me to share with you, her spiritual children, the joy and pride that you must all feel in her nobel life, and her beautiful work.

Also printed in the memorial book was a letter from Lucy Wheelock, a well known kindergartner. She wrote:

> Miss Harrison's message is one the world needs today, the appraisal of true values in education and in life.
>
> Through dead, she yet speaketh [sic]. She will speak to coming generations through her books and through students inspired in the institution she founded.
>
> May we all work together to carry on her torch![11]

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[11] Ibid.,

Elizabeth Harrison touched many lives during her lifetime and due to her work and initiatives will continue to touch more for years to come.

Harrison's concern for the kindergarten prompted her to include in her book's manuscript a final chapter titled, " A Vision of The Yet-To-Be." It was in this chapter that Harrison chronicled the changes that had been made in the education of children. Harrison also discussed the changes that must be made in order to make education and this country the best it can be. It is fitting that this work end with one of Elizabeth Harrison's last contributions to the kindergarten and the world.

> One of the chief joys of my life has been to watch the sweep forward from idea of education as a formal acquisition of material facts and philosophic theories to the more vital work of creative activity and the significance of community responsibility. Many mistakes have been made and are still being made, but the advance has been so great that it is enough to thrill the hearts of all true lovers of childhood.
>
> Surely a great day is dawning, and as one sits in the shadow of accumulating years one believes that this vast awakening must check the greed for wealth which is weakening our nation, because we are supplied with something so much more important than material wealth,--and then one begins to understand these prophetic words: "Nations yet unborn will look to America for help and inspiration."[12]

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[12] Elizabeth Harrison, "A Vision of the Yet-To-Be," chapter in *Sketches Along Life's Road* manuscript, (Archives National Louis University: Evanston, Illinois)

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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