



The Chautauqua Moment

Protestants, Progressives, and the Culture of Modern Liberalism

ANDREW C. RIESER

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Modern Liberalism*

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For Matthew

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The Chautauqua Moment

Introduction:
Chautauqua's Liberal Creed

He who does not know Chautauqua does not know America.
—Frank Bohn

The story of my initial involvement with Chautauqua rarely fails to disappoint. I have no childhood or adolescent tales to spin, no early romance to relate, and no familial connection to help the reader make sense of my personal stake in the subject. Chautauqua's attraction to me was scholarly in the truest sense. As a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin, I found all aspects of U.S. social, cultural, and religious history interesting, and I was loath to specialize in any one field. The Chautauqua movement, with its many and far-reaching branches, allowed me to pursue all of these subdisciplines at the same time. Indeed, Chautauqua's ambitions epitomized my own discomfort with academic overspecialization. Compared to other institutions of the Social Gospel, Chautauqua had received scant critical attention from academic scholars. It seemed like the perfect match.

When I began exploring the subject, and discussing it with anyone who cared, an interesting pattern emerged. While nonacademic friends were quite familiar with Chautauqua, few of my academic colleagues had ever heard of it. The word itself produced quizzical stares. More than one mistook it for a "topic in Indian history." Others asked for it to be spelled, as if visualizing the word might jog something loose from the synaptic archives. "How interesting—sounds French." It became clear that, whatever its intrinsic merits as a subject of study, it would take some doing to establish it as a bona fide topic for a professionally trained historian. My capsule summaries did not help much. Every time I used terms like "popular education," "middle class," and "Protestantism," I seemed to drift further and further from the brisk trade winds of academia.

More disturbing still, the movement appeared to lack human conflict—widely considered to be a key ingredient for good storytelling. Be-

ginning with the first summer encampment on the shores of Chautauqua Lake in western New York in 1874, and in the reading circles and educational assemblies that flourished in the following decades, Chautauquans created a comfortably familiar world in which the “other”—impoverished coal workers or black sharecroppers, for instance—rarely made an appearance. Without social conflict, it would be hard to offer any insight into the \$64,000 challenge of cultural history: to locate meanings, attitudes, and values “within a particular equilibrium of social relations,” as the eminent British scholar E. P. Thompson once put it.¹ At times I empathized with William James’s wish for an elopement or an Armenian massacre, anything to break the Elysian harmony. What does one say about a movement that had few enemies and that everyone seemed to like?

More troubling still, I had difficulty in finding critical work on the subject. Chautauqua seemed to possess an uncanny ability to evade scholarly attention. It generally appeared in intellectual histories only by accident, when it intersected with topics that scholars considered more sexy.² And although some prominent academic historians had devoted whole articles or chapters to the subject, it had never received the official tincture of academic approval in the form of a dedicated, book-length, critical narrative.³ Considering the importance of the institution to millions of Americans, it was an extraordinary oversight, one that I was eager to remedy. In 1991 historian Louise Stevenson averred that “until a contemporary cultural historian recognizes the richness of the Chautauqua movement as a subject,” readers would have to consult the available works, “each of which presents a fragmentary picture.”⁴ Determined to be that historian, I plowed ahead.

I might have heeded the warning of Theodore Morrison, whose gracefully written *Chautauqua: A Center for Education, Religion, and the Arts in America* (1974) was for many years the most comprehensive narrative in print. “Only an encyclopedia with an ample corps of contributors,” he cautioned, “could trace in full the local and cultural history” of Chautauqua’s myriad offshoots.⁵ Fortunately, I soon uncovered my own virtual corps of contributors—the hundreds of studies on selected aspects of the Chautauqua movement written over the last seventy years. From 1930 to the time of this writing, at least 120 journal articles, chapters, and monographs have appeared on the original Chautauqua assembly in western New York, the independent assemblies and reading circles it inspired, and the for-profit “circuit Chautauquas”—traveling, commercialized versions of the original educational assemblies—that flourished in the 1910s and 1920s. A

still greater volume of work belongs in the category of senior theses, master's theses, and dissertations. During this same period, U.S. universities produced no fewer than ninety-five degree-qualifying theses on the movement.⁶

Few of these studies were ever published. Most focused on narrow slices of Chautauqua's history: an entire master's thesis on one assembly, for example, or a dissertation devoted solely to *The Chautauquan* magazine, the official organ of the original assembly. To make matters more confusing, the subject had all but disappeared into a deep chasm between local and institutional history. The hundreds of town and county histories in which Chautauqua made an appearance focused on local concerns, not the wider movement. On the other hand, some of the general histories of the movement focused chiefly on the "mother" assembly on Chautauqua Lake.⁷ Some of these were written by insiders with sentimental ties to the assembly and, thus, fell into a celebratory vein. Also problematic were the chatty memoirs of ex-circuit Chautauqua performers, some of which condensed or slighted the movement's genesis as a center for religion and education.⁸ Surveying this tangled mess, I despaired of ever finding a coherent story, let alone a unifying theme.⁹

Hundreds of towns across the country experienced a Chautauqua moment in the late nineteenth century. That much I knew. But how and why? In the absence of critical treatment, commentators often resorted by default to Whiggish clichés about the ever-upward progress of national letters. Many identified self-culture—that is, adult self-betterment through learning—as a uniquely American trait, a legacy of the acquisitive individualism of the hardy Yankee and pioneer spirit of the western settler. Compared with the lyceums and mechanics' clubs of old, Chautauqua—so the argument went—did a better job of satiating the ambitious American's thirst for useful knowledge. Chautauqua's Pierian Spring was like an oasis in the cultural desert, according to historian John Noffsinger, who wrote in 1926 that it served "to save the village and township of the American interior from utter boredom."¹⁰

What I call the Vacuum Theory—that is, that Chautauqua filled the vacuum caused by the absence of educational options—gained even wider currency as the twentieth century progressed. In his path-breaking work *The Growth of American Thought* (1943), historian Merle Curti attributed Chautauqua's popularity to the "yearning of rural dwellers for inspiration."¹¹ But this logic did not satisfy me. From the perspective of a media-

saturated Internet culture, it is all too easy to interpret the pre-Electrolux age as a cultural vacuum. Moreover, the Vacuum Theory's tendency to use the words *thirst* or *hunger* rested on dubious assumptions of human nature and made biological what was really a cultural construct. The self-culture impulse embodied by Chautauquans was bound up in middle-class efforts to exert cultural authority.¹² Closer inspection reveals self-culture to be a hotly contested practice with political implications, a seemingly stable concept given new meanings as it buffeted the winds of industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and state formation.

My challenge, therefore, was both narrative and interpretive. First, I would need to stitch together the various parts of the movement into a coherent whole. This would be difficult enough. The movement defied easy summation. A bewildering diversity of views emanated from Chautauqua's lecture halls, literature groups, and publications. There were reactionaries and radicals, patriarchs and feminists. The platform was nominally religious, yet it was also shot through with secular desires and commercialism. Listing those activities in all their minute detail would only make the past seem *more* cluttered than before, while turning Theodore Morrison's warning about the encyclopedic nature of the topic into prophecy. The movement seemed to reinvent itself from decade to decade. Both the somnolent Sunday school assembly of 1874 and the vaudevillian circuit troupes of the 1920s bore the Chautauqua name, as do the radio revues and traveling historical pageants of today—in essence, piling new confusions atop old ones.

Second, I would need to place the story in an interpretive framework, one that located the movement's particular brand of cultural expression, as E. P. Thompson recommended, within an equilibrium of social relations. Wide brush strokes about general trends would not add much to the picture. Nor would much good come from abstractions about the "American character." Chautauqua was not merely a passive response to universal human needs or a fixed truth outside the stream of history. Rather, it was a vehicle by which these trends were rationalized and given meaning. The movement was enmeshed in a dense thicket of material and ideological relations. Exemplars of useful knowledge faced tensions and conflicts among groups—workers, clubwomen, ministers, and millionaires—whose criteria for what made knowledge "useful" differed widely. Thus, Chautauqua's rise and fall reveals much about the historical experience of some middle-class Americans in the sixty years after the Civil War.

Let me offer some qualifications. No book will please everyone. I have tried to provide a balanced rendering of the movement's past. However, this book's main goals are interpretive. Those seeking a retelling of Chautauqua lore may be frustrated by the presence of so much fussing over nuances of analysis. Others may find the discussion of certain key figures to be too skimpy or captious, while too much attention is given to seemingly unimportant figures. This is intentional. This book is as much a history of an institution as it is a social history of its rank-and-file participants. The experience of unheralded activists, guests, and club members reveals much about what Chautauqua was and what it was not. Still others will find too little discussion of content. A virtually infinite number of views were expressed under the Chautauqua banner from 1874 to 1920. Reflecting my personal and scholarly interests, my content analysis focuses on race and gender. But whole books could (and should) be written about the articles, novels, lectures, poems, plays, and songs that I leave out. Finally, people familiar with the extant Chautauqua Institution in New York will perhaps yearn for more explanation of the familiar. Much more could be said, both laudatory and critical, about the place that it has become. Although I do not explicitly address this topic until the concluding chapter, astute readers will notice, reflected here and there, the flickering shadows of current debates about the institution's future.

On the other hand, readers seeking context and analysis will probably find too much storytelling in the chapters that follow. They are advised to look at the footnotes, where much of the theoretical banter has been consigned. Ultimately, this book tells the story of a historical moment—the Chautauqua moment—in which powerful political, religious, intellectual, and economic forces collided to create a unique institution. Chautauqua was neither a college nor a summer resort nor a religious assembly. It was, however, a composite of all of these, completely derivative yet brilliantly innovative. A close examination of the Chautauqua moment, I suggest, will help us better understand the contested hegemony of a demographic whose exercise of authority, submerged in the murky waters of the mainstream, often escapes detection: the native-born, white, Protestant middle classes. It will also help us understand the rise of modern liberalism, the new way of envisioning an individual's relationship to society that began to take hold among middling sorts after the Civil War.

All historians struggle with *presentism*, the sin of allowing present concerns to shape or distort our depiction of history. The past is, after all, an-

other country, and it ought to be narrated on its own terms. But in this regard few historians are sinless, and I make no claims here. Again and again, I returned to a theme as central to U.S. political culture now as it was then: the struggle to achieve a truly participatory democracy in an age of yawning structural inequality. Chautauquans between 1874 and 1920, I realized, were just as reluctant as middle-class folk of recent times to openly discuss the corporate domination of public life, the spiritual quandaries of prosperity, and the persistence of racial inequality. Might Chautauqua's flaws offer insights into the origins of modern political culture? The question I began to ask of Chautauqua might well be asked of the United States in general: how could something that trumpeted democracy be so undemocratic in practice?

On the surface, it seemed like a paradox. While Chautauqua embraced participatory democracy, it left undemocratic traditions within and without it untouched. From its inception, Chautauqua threw open its doors to a diversity of white Protestant voices and envisioned a "platform broad enough for all to stand upon. . . ." ¹³ But Chautauqua's vaunted tolerance faltered outside the boundaries of ecumenical Protestantism. Debate about the desirability of allowing Roman Catholic immigrants continued long after such ethnic groups had created their own versions of "Americanism." And while Chautauquans were no more racist than their contemporaries, they unwittingly used their racial status to preserve social privileges denied to black Americans. Chautauqua also depended on the support given to it by a racially privileged group of politically active clubwomen, for whom whiteness served as a vehicle for heightened public visibility. Chautauqua's tolerant ethos built bridges across ethnic and gender differences that once separated Americans. But it subsumed those differences under a racialized definition of middle-class citizenship that—in a society growing more segregated and imperialistic by the day—did not strike me as very democratic.

Chautauqua was not an impartial forum for democratic discourse, I realized. Rather, within its alleged neutrality was a subtle message, waiting to be decoded and placed in historical context. At the moment of Chautauqua's founding in the mid-1870s, the end of the Civil War had brought a new round of hostilities over northern Reconstruction and the South's refusal to establish biracial democracy. For northerners, the successful mobilization of resources during the Civil War advanced the supposition that a large central government could protect individual rights while promoting economic and moral progress. The war had helped to reorient democratic thought

from a focus on republican virtue and individual liberty to a growing preoccupation with the role of large, impersonal organizations—like a centralized state or a corporate conglomerate—in a democratic society. Rapid industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and labor violence brought a specter of class warfare in the 1870s, touching off another wave of middle-class anxiety about the preservation of social order. The effort to cope with this crisis gave rise to the political philosophy we call modern liberalism.

An important qualification: modern liberalism should not be confused with the older and, in some respects, opposing school of thought called “classical liberalism.” Classical liberal theorists of the seventeenth century opposed the divine right of kings and redefined civil society as a voluntary social contract made between rational individuals in a state of nature. While the two philosophies shared a belief in personal rights and liberties, modern liberals averred that in an age of organizational complexity, individual opportunities were best protected by a utilitarian state acting on behalf of the public good. In the United States, the story of modern liberalism begins at the end of the Civil War. Postbellum liberal reformers, mostly elites concerned about violence between labor and capital, began to question *laissez-faire* assumptions. During the Progressive Era of the early twentieth century, reformers sharpened the departure from classical liberalism.¹⁴ Government emerged as the benevolent agent of individual liberties against *laissez-faire* capitalism run amuck. Thus, the states passed laws shielding children from labor exploitation and small business from unfair monopolies. For men like John Dewey and Walter Lippmann, a new science of administrative efficiency would replace the closed frontier as a guarantee of perpetual progress.

Liberalism is a contested idea, of course, and the scholarship and social criticism that plumbs its depths is vast. An exhaustive etymology or intellectual history of liberal philosophy is beyond the scope of this work.¹⁵ Nor do I systematically trace its evolution in electoral politics. My main concern is the political culture that helped to make it appealing to an increasing number of nonelites. Our general query about democracy, therefore, can be restated more specifically: how and why did so many middle-class Americans between 1874 and 1920 come to sympathize with the victims of capitalism and accept the proposition that certain social goods and relations should be protected from the market? The widened scope of state power (and the power of nonprofit institutions like Chautauqua that served public purposes approved by the state) may have seemed a necessary response

to corporate monopoly and corruption. But like civil-service reform and temperance in the nineteenth century, the Progressive reforms of the twentieth necessitated government mechanisms, such as city commissions, that were removed from democratic accountability. Or did they reconcile themselves to the organizational revolution all on their own?

To anyone who has visited the extant Chautauqua Institution in western New York State, with its armies of school teachers attending lectures on the humanities, the argument that Chautauqua was a middle-class movement that contributed to modern liberalism will not come as much of a surprise. Nor does this aspect of my argument depart significantly from the conclusions of others who have studied middle-class cultures at the turn of the century. But the word *creed* in the title of this introduction hints at a more provocative claim. It is there to correct what I see as a shortcoming in the existing scholarship. All too often, historians have adopted the perspective of urban cosmopolitans and elite critics like William James and Walter Lippmann as somehow representative of a revolution in middle-class thinking between 1880 and 1920.¹⁶ Many historians have cast the middle class against a backdrop of systemic modernization: that is, the collapse of nineteenth-century agrarian values before the rise of “an aggressive, optimistic, new middle class” of technocratic managers, whose climb to power mirrored the shift from *Gemeinschaft* (natural will, oriented to the collectivity) to *Gesellschaft* (rational will and individualism) theorized by late-nineteenth-century sociologists Max Weber and Emile Durkheim.¹⁷

Being well acquainted with this school of thought, and finding much of it convincing on a theoretical level, I fully expected to find evidence of the emergent “new” middle class within the confines of Chautauqua. But if this new middle class existed, I could find very little evidence of it—or, at least, the new middle class seemed very much like the old. Instead of a cadre of professional managers asserting technocratic authority over large, impersonal institutions, I saw compromises between ministers, boosters, and religiously minded laypeople give meaning to public space. Instead of seeing New Age philosophies and the therapeutic ethos as a victory for consumerism, I saw a majority of church-going Protestants and Catholics allowing for a diversity of spiritual expression with a still nominally Christian moral oeuvre.¹⁸ Instead of the tentacles of a corporate-dominated secular state, I saw the *liberal creed*, a civic religion of progress rooted deeply in Victorian morality that accepted an enlarged presence of government and its subsidiaries to counterbalance the corporate manipulation of private desire.¹⁹

Would the real middle class please stand up? I was pretty sure that I hadn't mislabeled my Chautauquans as middle class. Rather than assume secularization, and base my conclusions on that assumption, I decided to use Chautauqua as a window into the intersection of religion and political culture in modern America. The changing relationship between religion and politics, I discovered, provided important insights into the cultural conditions within which modern liberalism took root and flourished. Students of the *fin de siècle* middle class have much to learn in this regard from historians of religion. Reports of the death of religious conviction, they remind us, have been greatly exaggerated.

Take, for example, the Social Gospel. Amidst the industrial squalor produced by the devastating recessions of 1873 and 1893, advocates of the Social Gospel had provided middle-class men and women a chance to display a Christian charity toward the victims of urbanization. When Rev. Josiah Strong wrote "that Christ came not only to save individual souls, but society," he expressed the growing tendency among Protestant clergymen, intellectuals, and reformers: concern for society was becoming an indissoluble ingredient of faith. Despite Rev. Washington Gladden's famous mantra—that the kingdom of God would arrive by way of city hall—Social Gospelers generally preferred the church, school, and benevolent society as the means of popularizing Jane Addams's vision of "Christendom," a civic society imbued with Protestant principles embodied "not in a sect, but in society itself."²⁰ They proposed no radical restructuring of society. Optimistic to a fault, they relied on settlement houses and other charities to promote a flowering of individual conscience and responsibility.

The failure of the Social Gospel to make good on its promises of social renewal—or worse, according to historian Susan Curtis, its eventual degeneration into a provider of goods and services barely distinguishable from for-profit commerce—did not necessarily correlate to the decline of religion. "Out in America's heartland," as historian Laurence Moore has observed, "religion seemed healthy by all external signs." During the early twentieth century Protestant denominations attracted the newly assimilated and upwardly mobile, while in the cities, Roman Catholic churches swelled with new immigrants from eastern and southern Europe. The Fundamentalist schism attracted legions of urban working-class and rural conservatives. Radio church services competed with parishes, but the automobile placed more churches in commuting distance.²¹ In the largest cities, where consumer aesthetics and corporate thinking dominated, Christian

denominations either held steady or flourished. Historian Jon Butler has suggested that the late-nineteenth-century spiritual crisis “transfixed only effete and unimportant intellectuals and that the age of the new American city should be best known for a remarkable advance in institutional religious commitment.”²²

If so, the question around which studies of the middle-class experience have traditionally revolved—what happened when the cultural authority of the nineteenth-century Protestant elite declined?—addresses the experience of urban elites while ignoring ordinary, nonelite (especially rural) middle-class Americans. The question more likely to elicit new knowledge of the culture of the middle class is: why did the American middle classes remain so religious? Traditional religion and the organizational revolution converged most directly in the proliferating numbers of middle-class voluntary associations and reform societies. Adorned with churchly titles such as the Salvation Army, Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), and Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), these institutions stubbornly refused to shed their divine missions while reshaping Christian brotherhood and sisterhood to meet the needs of modern bureaucracies.²³ The erasure and redrawing of the boundaries separating the sacred and secular realms—and not simply absorption of the one into the other—helped shape the meaning of *middle class* between 1874 and 1920.

If Chautauquans were at all representative of middle-class thinking—and I argue that few groups were better situated to make that claim—then the middling sorts were more ambivalent about the organizational revolution than scholars have suggested. On the one hand, Chautauqua helped spread the gospel of organizational efficiency and render it in a language acceptable to rural Americans. On the other hand, liberal thought did not pass through Chautauqua circles and assemblies unmodified. In manifold ways—insisting that public life conform to Protestant moral standards, carving bourgeois aesthetics into the landscape, and forcing municipalities to acknowledge middle-class leisure—Chautauqua’s boosters demanded that government be made responsive to the needs of the middle-class citizen. They helped create, in other words, an illusion of public consensus within which modern liberalism flourished. Chautauqua helps us understand the process by which a mild critique of corporate capitalism—strong enough to punish ethical excess and moral corruption, weak enough to ensure its reproduction—spread among white middle-class Americans.

Careful readers will notice the pervasiveness of place throughout this volume. Like most middle-class Protestants, Chautauquans believed that

they could demonstrate their fitness for authority through the tasteful display of clothes, houses, and other commodities. Hence, no analysis of Chautauqua would be complete without attending to what anthropologist Clifford Geertz has called the “historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols.” As much as any speech, book, or article, Chautauqua’s landscape helped shape its occupants’ social and political world-views. The Chautauqua experience, therefore, was an encounter with ideas in a discrete visual, auditory, and olfactory environment.²⁴ In the first chapter, I trace Chautauqua’s origins in the Methodist camp meeting, paying particular attention to the elders’ fear, ambivalence, and finally grudging acceptance of better-funded railroad companies, retail interests, and expanding municipalities. Even before the advent of Chautauqua in 1874, I argue, the elders had charted a course from denominational enclave to church-founded, ecumenical institutions of leisure.

Chautauqua’s great innovation, argues chapter 2, was to link the time-honored rituals of democracy with a new middle-class fad: the summer vacation. Like the secular resorts, Chautauqua helped make leisure and tourism essential components of middle-class life. Unlike the resorts, however, Chautauqua translated the new leisure impulse into a template for permanent suburban communities whose residents—reliant as they were on municipal services and zoning boards to preserve their pastoral utopias—became liberals almost by default. Chapter 3, which looks at the lives of four Chautauqua pioneers, shifts the focus from places to ideas. The conservative Victorians who founded the movement were suspicious of popular democracy. However, they were powerless to prevent immigrants and other non-Protestants from appropriating aspects of the movement for their own purposes. By the turn of the century, the Chautauqua idea had shaken loose from its narrow parochial origins and had gone far to achieving the ideal of a free and open democratic platform—a place where people of different faiths and backgrounds gathered to observe the sacred rites of civic debate.

As we will see in chapter 4, Chautauqua’s model of ecumenical tolerance and middle-class leisure provided a bridge across the barriers of language and religion between ethnic whites. However, Chautauqua’s ethnic inclusivity belied its *de facto* racial exclusivity. Chautauqua’s failure to more meaningfully address race, I suggest, dramatized a weakness that continued to bedevil liberal thought until the 1960s. As we see in chapter 5’s study of the reading-club branch of the movement—the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle—white women skillfully used their access to the legal and financial architecture of power as members of the white middle class to

shape Progressive politics in the early twentieth century. Despite their success in breaking down the “separate spheres” ideology so cherished by John Heyl Vincent, the assembly’s cofounder, Chautauqua began to lose its role as a leader of modern liberal thought in the 1890s. As we see in chapter 6, corporations and municipalities gradually took over many of the functions it the assembly once provided privately. In addition, young men and women began to seek new avenues of political and spiritual expression. Chautauqua’s sons and daughters did not always follow in their parents’ footsteps.

Chapter 6 also addresses Chautauqua’s declining reputation among some members of the intellectual avant garde. Two decades after William James bemoaned the absence of strenuous intellectualism at the assembly, literary modernists like Sinclair Lewis and H. L. Mencken—who used “chautauquan” as a pejorative, a synonym for hayseed ignorance—equated the movement with bigotry and boosterism. The liberal creed also fared poorly in the rural South. There, Democrats, who never forgave the federal government for its Reconstruction intrusions, remained wary of liberal reform. On matters of central importance to Chautauquans, such as women’s suffrage and public school reform, white middling sorts in the South had markedly less success than their northern counterparts. It is not coincidental that Chautauqua penetrated everywhere except for the ex-Confederate states, where it never really caught on—the suburban Atlanta assembly founded by New South advocate Henry Grady being the exception that proves the rule.

Chapter 7 explores the Chautauqua movement’s descent during the Progressive Era. Sensing the dechristianizing trend in public life, leaders of the “mother” assembly redefined the institution as a training ground for the principles of citizenship in a liberal state. It worked, at first. But a number of better-funded institutions had reached the same conclusion. During the Progressive Era, Chautauqua sacrificed its leadership position to the new professionals of citizenship training: high school teachers, social workers, corporate Americanizers, university extension schools, and adult educators. Meanwhile, the circles and assemblies languished, victims of the Liberal/Fundamentalist split in U.S. Protestantism, the popularity of the traveling tent shows, and the success of the very corporate and governmental institutions that Chautauqua had once promoted. By 1920, the tent show—in essence, a commercialized distortion of assembly—was taking over, making the movement’s decline painfully obvious. The liberal creed had run its course, and the Chautauqua movement was over.

The decline of the Chautauqua movement has sometimes been construed as evidence of “secularization.” The reality, I think, is more complicated. Chautauquans did not abandon their religions. Rather, confident that the liberal state had been mobilized to serve moral ends, they increasingly channeled religion to the private sphere of home and family. As the assemblies unloaded some of their civic functions onto local governments, their public spaces were up for grabs. The sacred public space of the assembly—upon which women’s groups had staked a claim—was broken up into smaller parcels for private consumption. By the 1920s, Victorian femininity had lost some of its cachet, and Chautauquans had relegated a host of formerly public concerns to the private sphere. In Chautauqua’s decline, therefore, we see the contours of domestic life in the age of consumerism.

It is true that the consumer mentality that Chautauquans allowed to dominate their public culture helped secure their status in the class system. But let us not be too hard on the *petit bourgeoisie* of yore. Reducing Chautauquans to mere protectors of class privilege, I think, captures only part of their significance. Their liberal creed had spawned a secular liberalism that would define a significant part of national politics for much of the twentieth century. Between 1890 and 1920, much of what the Social Gospellers envisioned had been made law, including civil service reform, consumer protection, antitrust enforcement, compulsory school attendance, anti-vice protection, urban beautification, and prohibition. While we criticize the pluralistically religious middle classes of the early twentieth century for inviting corporate hegemony, we should also give them credit for envisioning new—if flawed—ways of sustaining democratic ideals in the consumer age. For those who still believe that the great middling masses can be moved by reason, these ideals are worth preserving.

The Chautauqua ideal still holds undeniable appeal as an antidote to the coarsening of public culture in a consumer society. Its charming aesthetic continues to inspire visions of improved urban and suburban spaces. Its faith in religious tolerance, self-culture, informed citizenship, and the free exchange of ideas has not lost its salience. These are noble ideas, too important to take for granted. Indeed, while the original Chautauqua in New York enjoyed a renaissance at the end of the twentieth century, some wondered if prosperity had blinded the community to its original mission. The town became gentrified and depopulated, with real estate and rental prices soaring beyond the reach of the ordinary middle-class Americans who once flocked to it. Some feared that the place was becoming an “As-

penized” upper-class enclave and that its famous summer program in the arts and humanities would be inaccessible to all but the most affluent. Was this a crisis to be solved by Chautauqua’s democratic tradition? Or was this a sign that democracy itself had failed?

What follows is a historical exploration of one genuine, but flawed, effort to embody the liberal tradition in the United States.

*I. An American Forum:
Methodist Camp Meetings and the Rise of
Social Christianity*

History is the revelation of Providence.
—John Heyl Vincent

I begin with one of Chautauqua's foremost historical puzzles. How did it come to originate in Chautauqua County? This sparsely settled corner of westernmost New York State, bifurcated by a slender, meandering lake, has long struck observers as an unlikely birthplace for a major national cultural movement. Seeking to explain its germination there, commentators often compared Chautauqua to the settlements of religious dissenters and utopians dotting central and western New York throughout the nineteenth century, such as the Mormons, Oneida communitarians, German communists, evangelical revivalists, and Lily Dale Spiritualists. By this reading, Chautauqua was the latest perturbation in a long line of religious awakenings. The revivals followed waves of westward-migrating New Englanders as they moved through the Mohawk River Valley along the Erie Canal from Albany to Buffalo and beyond. The effort to reconcile the contradictions of their new social experiences, linked with the economic dislocations of the Erie Canal, uprooted them from old ways and unleashed a spiritual creativity manifested in unorthodox beliefs, lifestyles, and patterns of governance. The success of circuit-riding preachers, in particular, gave the region its reputation as the "burned-over district."¹

The theory is appealing in many ways, evoking as it does the image of Chautauquans as heirs of a vibrant tradition of frontier democracy and religious dissent. Certainly, western New York saw more than its share of utopian and evangelical activity. Before the Erie Canal was built, western New York was separated from New York City, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh by the rolling Allegheny Mountains, arranged in longitudinal trenches so wide that it is still difficult to find travel routes across them. French voyagers used the river system only briefly to link the more valuable territories to the north (Canada) and to the southwest (the Ohio River Valley). And

while the Erie Canal (1824) figured importantly in the economic growth of the region, one must remember that the canal ended in Buffalo, fifty miles northeast of Chautauqua Lake. By the middle of the century, the economic dislocations that spurred Charles G. Finney's outdoor revivals mainly affected the cities and towns along the canal. The urban hinterland of these boomtowns extended only so far. Chautauqua Lake, for example, was outside the corridor of wealth spurred by the canal, leaving Chautauqua County perennially on the margins of prosperity.

All this changed in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Second Industrial Revolution would transform patterns of life in rural western New York. The expansion of Buffalo in the 1850s, for example, spoiled the splendid isolation of a German commune called Ebenezer; threatened by the growing burg, in 1855 the residents moved to Iowa and reincorporated as the Amana Society. As the old privacy-seekers sought new frontiers in the West, economic growth brought bourgeois settlers into the Southern Tier. When the oil fields that enriched parts of the Pennsylvania Alleghenies mysteriously stopped at the state border, residents around Chautauqua Lake decided to exploit an alternative natural resource: tourism. The railroad reached Jamestown in 1860, opening the lake to legions of middle-class vacationers, amusement-park goers, and day-trippers. The railroad, the emergence of local manufacturing, and the rise of middle-class tourism infused the county with new revenues and linked it to the larger web of urban markets and institutions.

By the emergence of the Chautauqua assembly in the 1870s, the Second Industrial Revolution that transformed Chautauqua County's economy was already well under way. Thus, few direct connections can be drawn between Chautauqua and these instances of theological radicalism. Chautauqua was not the fruit of utopian schemes; quite the opposite, its emergence signaled the end of the boomtown instability upon which earlier revivalists had thrived. The isolation that had once attracted utopians was long gone. Indeed, to many of Chautauqua's middle-class boosters, revivalism and utopianism lived on in collective memory as quaint folkways of the frontier pioneers, whose hardships paved the way for a new era of national expansion, bourgeois prosperity, and Christian civilization. Chautauqua's Protestant heritage, in other words, is also its bourgeois heritage. How these two traditions became intermingled, and what this tells us about the rise of the liberal creed, is the more important riddle of Chautauqua's past.

Finding Chautauqua Lake on a map is not hard. Simply trace the long western arm of New York State (the "southern tier") until you almost reach Pennsylvania. The county of interest to us is the one farthest west, bounded by Pennsylvania to the west and south and Lake Erie to the north. Ohio is only fifty miles away, making this wedge-shaped far corner of New York a meeting place of East and West, mountain and plains, land and water. It is where the Allegheny Mountains of central New York State flatten into a giant plateau of Devonian shale and sandstone, one thousand feet above the flat, fertile lowlands along Lake Erie. Chautauqua Lake, only eight miles from Lake Erie, rests high on this plateau. Even on cloudy days, one is afforded commanding views of Lake Erie in the distance from the escarpment north of Chautauqua. On clear days, Canada is visible on the horizon.

About twenty thousand years ago, Chautauqua Lake was only a river. Water from the streams and springs of the Alleghenies flowed down from the highlands into the Great Lakes watershed. During the Ice Age, a glacial moraine blocked the river's northern flow, forming a natural reservoir seventeen miles long. Water filled the valley and spilled south into a system of streams meandering through the glacially irregular topography of the southern tier, widening into the Conewango, which met the still larger Allegheny River with its twisting oxbows, its banks taller and wider as it flowed south. The Allegheny River emptied into the Ohio River at what is presently Pittsburgh. From its commanding plateau at 1,300 feet above sea level, water from Chautauqua Lake drained downhill all the way to the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico.²

The geological accident that diverted Chautauqua's waters south also ensured the lake's value to the French and English colonists of North America. Throughout the 1600s French voyageurs and Jesuit missionaries alike sought a waterway linking their forts on Lake Ontario to the vast natural resources of the Ohio River Valley. Chautauqua Lake served the purpose admirably. The French canoed down the Niagara River, portaged around Niagara Falls into Lake Erie, and set in at a small natural port called Barcelona. There, they portaged uphill on a well-worn Native American trail, hacking and widening as they went, to the northern end of Chautauqua Lake. It took a day to paddle the length of the lake. At the southern end was a shallow stream. Navigating carefully, they needed only a week to reach Fort Machault (present-day Franklin, Pennsylvania); two more weeks would bring them to the walls of Fort Duquesne (Pittsburgh), with final destinations hundreds of miles into the heart of the continent.

It was with full knowledge of the value of this route to the interior that France sent an expeditionary force in 1749 led by Pierre Joseph Celoron de Bienville. The Native Americans and the French had long used the Barcelona-Chautauqua portage. Celoron's journey from Lachine, Canada, to Ohio—famous for the six identical plates he buried along the way proclaiming France's sovereignty over the trans-Appalachian territory—was the first time Chautauqua had been claimed in the name of a European empire. France's tenure was brief. During the Seven Years War, the French used the route to supply their forts on the Ohio River. The territory came under the English crown in 1763 only to pass to the newly independent United States twenty years later. Robert Morris of Philadelphia purchased the land in 1791 and sold it in parcels to the Holland Land Company, which then distributed it to settlers. When the Fair Point Camp Meeting Association bought title in 1870 to what would several years later become the first Chautauqua assembly, it purchased land from one of these settlers.³

The name "Chautauqua" reflects the overlapping Native American, French, and English claims on this land. Remains of Paleolithic peoples dating from as early as 6,000 B.C.E. have been found in Chautauqua County. The Erie tribe held sway until they were ousted in the 1650s by a band of Onondaga (Iroquois), armed by the French. As was their standard practice, the French used Native American place names on their maps, usually with somewhat Gallic spellings. The word has been traced to cognates in four languages with similar meanings: *cha-da'-gweb* in Seneca, *cha-da'-qua* in Onondaga and Cayuga, *cha-ta'-qua* in Tuscarora, and *ja-da'-qua* in Mohawk, all meaning, roughly, "lake where fish come from." *National Geographic* postulated other meanings, including "a foggy place," "where the fish was taken out," "place where a child was washed away," and "a bag tied in the middle"—the latter a reference to the hourglass shape of the lake. The anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan, paraphrasing a Seneca chief, defined the word, perhaps with some humor, as the "place where one was lost." Multiple origins and translations may explain the various spellings of its root-words, including *Tjadokoin* and *Jadaghqua*. Most likely, Algonquin-speaking Native American guides from Canada, accompanying French traders as they explored the area in the early 1700s, gave the lake a formal name that the French subsequently spelled "Chautaugue," the spelling given on an 1804 map commissioned by the Holland Land Company. By the 1850s, the "ghue" had been replaced by the more recognizably French spelling that stands today.⁴

In the nineteenth century, the riverways were put to new commercial use as power for manufacturing and industry. Rolling hills of white pine enticed many of the county's first white settlers, mostly Pennsylvania Germans and Yankees and Scotch-Irish from New England. Four large sawmills sent lumber downriver into the Midwest along the same water paths used by Celoron's expedition. To the north, along the Lake Erie shore, lay a flat shelf of land, with soil nourished in the spring by snowmelt and during the summer by the moist air coming off the lake. The hardy Concord grape flourished there, and by the 1890s, the Welch Grape Juice Company of Westfield was producing hundreds of thousands of gallons of juice a year.

Meanwhile, Jamestown, on the southern end of the lake, emerged as the county's industrial center. Swedish settlers had already established a foothold as furniture makers and artisans. By 1920, they owned most of Jamestown's forty furniture factories. Industrial growth in Jamestown transformed patterns of work and leisure all along the lake. Railroad lines were laid into the interior of the county, opening the lake to visitors from cities in New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. The Kent House in Lakewood was a grand hotel in the Victorian style serving a wealthier, urban clientele, while several amusement parks (including one named, probably to the chagrin of the French, Celoron Park) provided Jamestown's working class with inexpensive entertainment for a Sunday afternoon. The new traffic in leisure created public places as sharply segregated by class and religion as any parlor club.

Consistent with the new receptivity toward leisure within the mainline denominations, Protestant ministers led the effort to provide wholesome outlets for their parishioners. The Methodists of Jamestown had long used Fair Point, a peninsula on the northern end of the lake, for church picnics and socials. In 1871 they sought to establish a permanent "camp meeting" at Fair Point. Indeed, when the founders of the first Chautauqua assembly visited Chautauqua Lake two years later to look for a suitable location for their summer retreat for Sunday school teachers, they found a small but thriving community of Victorian cottages nestled around a preacher's stand. Large crowds gathered to hear preaching in the best evangelical tradition. "Fair Point" would soon be renamed the "Chautauqua assembly"—some visitors from afar were confusing "Fair Point" with "Freeport"—and thus, via a Methodist camp meeting, a French-spelled Native American place name was adopted as the title of a national movement of Protestant

uplift and self-education. But unlike the great stands of white pine that had fueled the furniture industry, the camp meeting had been imported from elsewhere.

Camp Meetings and Terra Spiritualis

Accounts differ as to the date and location of the first permanent camp meeting, although the problem may be one of semantics; there is some confusion about how to distinguish camp meetings from the spontaneous outdoor revivals pioneered by George Whitefield and the Wesleys in the early and mid-eighteenth century, and those led by James B. Finley and others in the early nineteenth century. If *revival* means “a more or less spontaneous religious gathering” and *camp meeting* “an independent institution organized to stage a series of ongoing revivals in a single location,” it is easy to trace the first camp meetings to Methodist revivals in the South in the 1790s. Most accounts locate the camp meeting’s eruption onto the American scene in the hills of Tennessee and Kentucky between 1799 and 1801. The story usually includes an ecumenical twist: Presbyterian James McGready and Methodist William Penn Chandler joined forces in an interdenominational, interstate revival on the banks of the Gasper River (or Red River). Contemporaries credited the McGready revival with spurring a tidal wave of weeklong meetings throughout the upper South, the Chesapeake, and the Northeast. The storm surge touched ground at the Methodists’ General Conference of 1800 in Baltimore, and by 1817 it had reached Fredonia, New York, just twenty miles from Chautauqua Lake. By the 1820s, hundreds of these camp meetings were being held across the country.⁵

Although the Presbyterians and Baptists joined the initial camp meeting trend, only the Methodists incorporated the concept as a part of their organizational structure. Here is a bit of a paradox: how did the denomination with the most stratified church organization inherit the radically egalitarian camp meeting tradition? In a stroke of administrative genius, the “high church of evangelism” merged camp meeting revivals into its complex hierarchy. It was the first sustainable revival in U.S. history. The camp meetings served as way stations for an expanding network of roving administrators (bishops and elders), as well as popular itinerant preachers such as Francis Asbury and Lorenzo Dow. Like advance men on a campaign trail, camp meeting organizers advertised, made arrangements for

use of a piece of land, and provided free food and shelter to the VIPs. In addition, the camp meeting system guaranteed a steady stream of work for the church's foot soldiers: the certified preachers, class leaders, exhorters, and lay pastors. The system mobilized the lay volunteers while ensuring that preachers would retain their franchise on Methodism.⁶

It proved a brilliant proselytizing strategy. The camp meetings showcased the church's most powerful weapon in the crusade for converts: charismatic preachers. By no coincidence, the one sect to continue the camp meeting tradition throughout the century also became America's largest Protestant denomination. "Nothing else has half the influence to increase their denomination, as these meetings," wrote one observer in 1825.⁷ The camp meeting's colorful preachers even emerged as stock characters in popular literature. In *The Story of a Country Town*, novelist E. W. Howe's fictional preacher—based on Howe's father—was a blunt-nosed revivalist whose sermons described the torment of hell far more often than the ecstasy of heaven. Sinners could not escape detection for long. If a particular individual refused to repent publicly, lay exhorters went to the house of the sinner and staged all-night prayer vigils. If that did not work, they resorted to more aggressive tactics. Howe wrote of one woman seen running from the cornfields "shouting and going on like mad," followed by a mob of marching, singing Methodists.⁸

What did the camp meetings look like? Landscape historian J. B. Jackson found camp meeting sites remarkable only for their dullness. Flat and austere, they lacked the grand tableaux of majestic mountain landscapes favored by fashionable hotels and romantic artists.⁹ Instead, camp meetings stressed the spirituality of their private spaces. The camp meeting, with its typical leafy enclosure, formed an interior space where guests could reflect on the divine presence in Nature, apprehend God's immanence, monitor their internal states of grace, and focus without distraction on the journey to salvation. Approaching the Bergen Camp Ground in western New York by horseback, newspaper editor Horatio Beach first noticed the "rich and varied agricultural scenery" of the countryside and the "heavy timber" around the campground. Passing the horse and carriage stalls, travelers disappeared into a "beautiful primeval forest . . . God's cathedral," as Galusha Anderson described it. Entering the "leafy arches of pendant limbs," the traveler discovered an uneven grid of streets bordered by tents, eating halls, and, in the later camp meetings, cottages and administrative buildings. The praying circle formed the ceremonial inner sanctum; it con-

sisted of a preacher's stand, usually facing north so that the audience would not have to look directly into the sun, ringed by rows of wooden benches arranged to give the preachers and hearers full view of each other.¹⁰

How would the camp be decorated? The Methodists, true to their creed, referred to scriptural accounts of wilderness worship. In these matters, the Book was surprisingly explicit. To commemorate the Israelites' forty-year odyssey through the desert, instructed Leviticus 23:41–42, in the seventh month, "Ye shall dwell in booths [tents] seven days, all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths." Deuteronomy 16:13 called for a "feast of tabernacles seven days, after thou has gathered in thy corn and thy wine"—indicating that the term "seventh month" in Leviticus could be taken to mean July or August, or whenever the crops were laid by. Nehemiah 8:14–18 adds that the "booths" of the faithful should be constructed of palm fronds. (American camp meetings made do with garlands of pine and ivy.) The names given to geographical features within and around the camp grounds suggest their debt to Scripture: hills became Mount Moriah, streams were redubbed Jordan. If the grounds lacked Old Testament land forms, sometimes it was necessary to build them. "The Bible stories of Israelites at the wells had particular significance for us," recalled a guest at the Yarmouth Camp Meeting on Cape Cod. "Numerous pumps were scattered through the grove."¹¹ The camp's otherworldly symbolism contributed to a sense of radical dislocation. Looking for evidence of God's presence, visitors found "Him" in every storm, insect, animal, rock, and tree.

Politically, these early camp meetings embodied the contradictions of the antebellum era. Deuteronomy 16:14 instructed penitents to bring daughters, servants, "the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow" to the feast of tabernacles. John Wesley's doctrine of "entire sanctification," although a matter of theological debate, infused yet more egalitarianism into the camp circle. Camp meeting architecture confirmed Wesley's mantra that no man or woman was incapable of perfection, redemption, and salvation. The remoteness of the camp grounds symbolized the evangelical suspicion of clerical privilege and reenacted Old Testament stories of a covenanted people fleeing from a corrupt regime. Such fantasies neatly overlapped with classical democratic motifs, such as the radial-concentric design, which invited access to the tabernacle, or prayer circle. The hub-and-spoke radial design symbolized the anti-elitism, passion for equality, and radical communitarianism often associated with Jacksonian democracy.



FIGURE 1.1 The open-air tabernacle and preacher's stand at Fair Point, New York, circa 1874, site of the present-day Miller Park. The poles in the center aisle held lanterns and torches for night services. Within a year, the lots ringing the prayer center would jump tenfold in value. (Courtesy of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York)

In 1875 the architects of a campground in Lancaster, Ohio, copied the general plan of Indianapolis, Indiana, originally inspired by Pierre Charles L'Enfant's Washington, D.C., and replicated by hundreds of county seats and state capital buildings across the country—a central square with eight spokes radiating from its corners and midpoints.¹²

Inside the camp grounds penitents engaged in what one historian called “intense, ritually generated, and usually brief human interconnection.”¹³ The austere conditions they endured blurred caste distinctions between rich and poor, preacher and penitent, and—on rare occasions—white and black.¹⁴ The practice of holding prayer sessions in family tents took ministers out of the loop and opened spiritual leadership opportunities to laypeople, including women, children, and servants. Indeed, little of what happened at antebellum camp meetings could be said to be consistent with the emerging capitalist order. Employers wanted reasonable men in full control of their minds and bodies; but at camp meetings, men were encouraged to relinquish both to the Holy Spirit. Consistent with the Methodists’ historical opposition to spirits, there was no drinking allowed; but if an employer were to witness a man writhing on the ground in spiritual ecstasy—metaphorically intoxicated with the Holy Spirit—he might have wondered which was worse.¹⁵

The camp meetings also challenged the prevailing sexual politics of the white, antebellum middle class. The vigorous physical activity, including leaping, swaying, bowing, and falling—in conjunction with implicitly sexual language, such as the “Love Feast” and accounts of being overwhelmed or filled by the Holy Spirit—evoked fears of unleashed sexuality and a general breakdown in moral order. Opponents of the camp meetings pounced on the sexual issue, accusing preachers of promiscuity. “More than once I saw a young neck encircled by a reverend arm,” observed English visitor Frances Trollope disapprovingly.¹⁶ Moreover, the camp grounds were quasi-public places, subject to unauthorized contacts between otherwise segregated genders, races, and classes. In the woods, ministers and town fathers found their authority somewhat diminished.¹⁷

Diminished, but certainly not eradicated. Through rigid scheduling, surveillance, and a host of prohibitions against drinking, smoking, profanity, huckstering, soliciting, and loitering, the elders kept tight control over these all-but-loosened inhibitions. State charters designed for religious assemblies allowed for legitimate police enforcement and punishment. At most, the transience of camp life allowed guests to act out radical individualism in ways that could never be replicated in society. Camp life may have been a masquerade ball on the cheap, a chance to weed out the impostors who “passed as genteel,” as historian Karen Halttunen put it, from the truly cultured gentlemen “deserving of the higher social plane to which they aspired.”¹⁸ Many camp meetings, especially in New England, reserved lots

bordering the prayer circle for “Society Tents,” big canopies erected by prominent families or parishes, some big enough to house organs and century-old family pews, thus etching class lines indelibly into the sacred soil. And to speak of camp meetings in the South and Chesapeake is to speak of separate but unequal revivals, with enslaved black people conducting their own ceremonies behind the platform.¹⁹

The Jacksonian camp meetings jolted guests into an altered spiritual consciousness by removing them from the familiar patterns of home and placing them in an otherworldly religious landscape—a *terra spiritualis*. Revivalism had become a ritualized departure from normal life. The camp meetings invoked raw human nature and, by taming it, dramatized the righteousness of the Protestant moral order. Like Jacksonian democracy itself, the white male-defined public culture of the camp meetings celebrated popular democracy while maintaining tight control over its boundaries, limiting its revolutionary potential, holding guests to strict standards of moral behavior, and, ultimately, fostering qualities valued by an emerging industrial economy.²⁰ More important for our story of Chautauqua, the problem faced by the early camp meetings—how to balance ecstatic spirituality and industrial sobriety—did not go away. Indeed, the issue became more acute in the 1850s and thereafter, when camp meetings began to emulate secular vacation resorts. If earlier camp meetings denied the comforts of home, later ones did their best to make the camp grounds as homey as possible.

Never on Sunday

In literature, hymnody, and popular culture, the family hearth had emerged as the organizing principle and focus of Victorian life by the 1850s. From the camp meeting perspective, joining the exaltation of home and family as a refuge from the ills of urban life was not enough. A new era of cheaper train tickets and hotels had dawned. To meet the raised expectations of its middle-class clientele, the re-envisioned camp meeting would have to provide a home as cozy and virtuous—or perhaps more so—than that which the visitor left behind. Churchmen, gesturing to the sensibilities of women and children, felt the need to apologize for the discomforts that had once gone unquestioned. “Ten o’clock is a late hour for closing religious service,” excused one minister at the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting in New Jer-

sey. "But circumstances justify and sometimes demand a departure from the rigidly regular course."²¹

Not everyone approved of the new comforts. Dyed-in-the-wool revivalists had grudgingly acknowledged many changes, including the relocation of camp grounds closer to railroad lines, heightened attention to vacation comforts, children's programming, and the appearance of health fads, like the water and fresh-air cures. But for some, the new and improved camp meeting had come to exemplify the spiritual entropy it had been intended to reverse. Rev. John Heyl Vincent, one-time circuit rider and a future cofounder of Chautauqua, sensed the change during a visit to the Wesleyan Grove camp ground in 1858. By all accounts, it was a lackluster season. Vincent damned the meeting with faint praise: while it was "exceedingly pleasant and harmonious," it was also "considered to be less spiritual than usual." Nostalgia for the "old time" camp meeting betrayed apprehensions for the present. The early meetings were "regarded as seasons of special religious effort . . . characterized by earnest, concentrated effort and intense zeal on the part of both preachers and people," reflected an Indiana pastor some years later, as opposed to the "health resorts" the camp meetings had subsequently become.²²

Discomfort with the modernization of the camp meeting produced theological, political, and generational conflict, often pitting younger Methodists against older, more conservative brethren. Elders increasingly found themselves in the role of carping reactionaries to the "progressive" relaxation of strict Sabbatarianism. While acknowledging the need to modernize assemblies to better compete with the secular hotels and new amusements, they drew the line at the Sabbath. Between 1850 and 1880 tensions at scores of camp meetings erupted in heated debates over the running of passenger trains on Sundays. At issue was clerical control over sacred time and space and the clergy's discomfort with the camp grounds' growing dependence on a network of corporate and municipal entities. In case after case, railroad executives, expanding town governments, and retail interests prevailed in opening the gates to trains and people on the Sabbath, pushing the camp meeting further from its denominational roots and contributing to the rise of an ecumenical camp meeting movement—led by the assembly at Fair Point, on Chautauqua Lake—in the 1870s.

Some overmatched camp meeting directors never warmed to the idea of linking their destiny to the whims of a corporation. And profit estimates, not piety alone, motivated the railroad executives. But the railroad man-

agers themselves knew of the camp meetings, and some were regular visitors; they could make money and serve a divine cause at the same time. More important, the camp meetings had no choice but to accept railroads into the *terra spiritualis*. Railroads had ushered in a new age of middle-class tourism. In an effort to compete with the secular hotels (themselves usually creations of the railroads), camp meeting directors embarked on an ambitious project to modernize the assemblies.

There was much to do. Getting to the old Eastham camp ground on Cape Cod, for example, required an effort of biblical proportions. Parishioners took a carriage to the Old Colony road to Barnstable, transferred to the ferry to Eastham, rowed ashore until the boat ran aground in the tidal flats, hoisted their clothes, books, cooking gear, and elderly relatives onto an amphibious wagon, and splashed to shore through three feet of water until they reached solid ground, at which point they unloaded their baggage and walked a mile to the grove.²³ When the steel rail came to Cape Cod in 1863, the camp ground leaders promptly abandoned Eastham for Yarmouth, at that point the terminus of the Old Colony Railroad. Guests found the commute to Yarmouth much easier than the watery wagon ride to Eastham. They needed only to unload their bags at the railroad station, where guests enjoyed the services of a station master, a ticket window, a waiting room, a telegraph operator, a baggage master, and a large baggage room. From the station, visitors walked only a few hundred yards to their tents or cottages.²⁴

If the message was not clear already, it would be soon for the 150 or so camp meetings in operation by the 1880s: without a railroad connection, your camp meeting would not last long.²⁵ The railroad made some communities more attractive than others as potential camp ground locations. Most camp meetings founded after midcentury benefited from nearby passenger rail service. By late century, those not located on railways, with the exception of those serviced by ferry such as Wesleyan Grove, had either moved or perished. Out of necessity, the Methodists formed a partnership with railroad executives and invited railroads into the religious landscape. In so doing, they helped shape the aesthetics and economy of a modernizing countryside.

Camp meetings ensured their proximity to railroads in three ways: 1) by selecting original sites adjacent to railways; 2) by moving pre-existing camp grounds to towns with rail service; or 3) convincing a railroad company to build a spur out to the camp grounds. Camp meetings after mid-

century rarely strayed more than ten miles from the railway grid. A pretty spot, preferably on a lake, was also an important consideration.²⁶ Eager to spur passenger traffic along little-used lines, railroad executives enticed isolated camp grounds with tempting offers of cash support and free land. Camp meeting trustees and railroad men quickly recognized the benefits of cooperation. In a scene repeated scores of times in the 1870s and 1880s, the Connecticut River Railroad (later the Boston & Maine) selflessly offered \$1,000 cash and a percentage of all excursion tickets sold to the Springfield District Camp Meeting Association—if it would agree to relocate to Hatfield, along its main line. In other instances, the railroads financed things the camps could not afford, like new auditoriums, water systems, and fancy railroad stations.²⁷ From the railroad's perspective, patronage made good sense. The investment of a little seed money and a parcel of worthless land offered as enticement for relocation could generate significant revenues for years.

Camp meetings could be prickly business partners. Drawing lines in the sand, the elders staked their claim over the sacred realms of place (the assembly grounds) and time (Sunday) and warned the railroad not to step out of its territory. Concerns about Sabbath-keeping in America are as old as the first European settlement, but the new demands of industrial production brought new pressures to bear on the one day of the week on which everyone was supposed to refrain from work. In the 1820s and 1830s Sabbatarian organizations in the eastern states formed to protest the Sunday running of canal, packet, and steam ships. In the 1840s and 1850s Sabbatarians joined forces with nativists to prevent new German and Irish Catholic arrivals from using public parks for their traditional Sunday social gatherings. Sunday closings also reflected an elitist disdain for working-class culture and leisure, an attempt to keep workers and immigrants at the margins of public culture. In the latter years of the century, the battle over sacred time reached new heights in fights over Sunday access to municipal parks, private streetcars, museums, and world's fairs, in each case pitting labor organizations and Democratic politicians against pro-business Republicans. Local municipalities, meanwhile, took matters into their own hands with a rash of "blue laws" prohibiting a range of activities on Sunday, including talking too loudly and loitering.²⁸

Battles over Sabbath-keeping at camp meetings divided Methodists from railroad executives, Methodists from local merchants, and Methodists among themselves. The railroads' clacking wheels and piercing wails, not to

mention the tens of thousands pouring into the grounds for a Sunday afternoon service, threatened the camp meeting's claim as a bucolic refuge from city life (indeed, even city folks in the nineteenth century were beginning to find the railroads' presence objectionable).²⁹ Opposition to Sunday trains varied in intensity, as did the railroads' responses. Some assemblies, like the Laurel Park camp ground in Northampton, Massachusetts—which adopted a Chautauqua assembly in 1887—never abandoned their moratoriums on Sunday trains.³⁰ Others, fearing internecine conflict, compromised. Fearing a deluge of visitors eager to hear a hawkish Republican speaker one Sunday in 1860, the elders of the Des Plains Camp Ground outside Chicago asked the Chicago and North Western Railroad not to run trains to the grounds. The railroad refused, and thousands poured into the grounds to hear the rousing speech. Bad feelings caused by this incident simmered for years, bubbling up again in the late 1860s, when antitrain Chicago preachers were again defeated by the local pro-train brethren.³¹

The combatants in a similar debate at the Acton Camp Meeting Association in Acton, Indiana, arrived at a still more creative solution—essentially, a compromise to redefine the grounds as a site for an early experiment in welfare capitalism. In 1870 the association's business meeting resolved that “the running of trains to and from the camp ground on the Sabbath day, is not only a clear violation of God's commandment, but is also productive of much evil influence in every community.” The treasurer, certain the resolution spelled financial doom, promptly resigned. A committee of negotiators met with representatives from the Illinois, Chicago & Louisville (IC&L) Railroad, but neither side would budge. The trains continued to run on time. In 1873, after threatening several times to sell the grounds and leave, the association made a deal with the IC&L. The railroad agreed to discontinue Sunday trains for a period of twenty years, to donate ten cents of every ticket to the camp, to “co-operate” in keeping the camp free of liquor, and to furnish free passes to the members of the camp meeting committee to attend its annual meeting. The association gave the company and its employees free use of the camp ground and pavilion for Sunday school picnics and “all other moral gatherings.”³²

Another Sabbatarian issue, that of Sunday admittance, involved similar renegotiations and compromises and aligned the elders in closer partnership with corporate and municipal interests. At first glance, the notion of forbidding Sunday admittance to walk-in penitents—potential converts, no less—seems counterintuitive. But the camp meetings had become sum-

mer enclaves for thousands of tent and cottage dwellers. Many of these part-time residents recognized the need to prevent rowdy interlopers from ruining their repose on the Sabbath. To justify shutting out potential converts on the Sabbath, camp meeting directors defended the exclusion as a sign of the camp's progression from a crude revival to a well-ordered community. Like those concerning Sunday trains, debates over admittance preoccupied camp meetings throughout the second half of the century. The Lancaster, Ohio, camp ground managed to postpone the issue until the early 1890s. On 7 April 1892 members of the conference debated the gate issue furiously for an entire afternoon. The vote went to a ballot, with 138 voting "open" and 24 "closed." Reporters dashed off to deliver their copy as soon as the result came in—suggesting the importance of the outcome to the retail interests of the surrounding towns.³³

Gate fees also sparked heated debate. As the camp meetings grew in size and complexity, so too did their need for revenue. Initially, camp meetings relied on voluntary donations. One encampment made sure that money talked in membership meetings, offering "one vote for each \$25 so paid."³⁴ But as the example of the Lakeside, Ohio, camp ground suggests, such a policy proved inadequate to finance expansion. In 1874 the camp ground received barely enough in contributions to cover expenses for that year. With improvements such as the hotel and steamer charters increasing outlays, the trustees soon began searching for more reliable sources of income. When the company formed to run the hotel exhausted its stock trust and assumed a \$10,000 loan to avoid bankruptcy, the Lakeside organization expanded its offerings to include a Sunday School Assembly and a Chautauqua encampment. Gate fees were introduced that year to pay for it all.

Back in Cape Cod, financial losses compelled the Yarmouth Association to charge ten cents a day, children free, starting in 1886.³⁵ The fee angered locals long accustomed to free access; some accused the Methodists of speculation. As one irate Yarmouth guest put it: "I'll never pay to go to Heaven." Arguments almost came to blows. But more often, middle-class guests accepted the fee as the price of membership in an ever-more-exclusive club. The trustee of a camp meeting in Lancaster, Ohio, believed that the fee made each guest "feel a measure of joint ownership in the institution."³⁶ The fee offended evangelical sensibilities, but its benefits were soon clear. The fee limited entry to the "best people," widening the gulf between the respectable guests and the rude interlopers, liquor salesmen, and confidence men who lurked at the perimeter.

Guests also viewed the fee as a means of rewarding their ministers with time off. At camp meetings, Methodist ministers in the late nineteenth century expressed their emerging self-consciousness as a profession. For many, the strategy of exempting ministers and their families from the gate fee and providing free room and board was not enough. Some objected to the expectation that they should preach on demand as an unreasonable impingement on their vacation time, rejecting the “senseless ideas of a free gospel” implied in the revivalist model in favor of a more corporate model of professional privilege.³⁷ The deepening concerns for clerical authority within the camp ground reflected the changing basis of social authority among mainstream Protestant ministers. The reliance on forceful personalities like Lorenzo Dow and Charles G. Finney raised the bar for all future clergy; they too would need to rely on character, wit, and intellectual acuity to keep the flock together. By forging partnerships with the railroads, ministers at postbellum camp meetings preserved their social and political potency—especially in nonurban areas, where, as James Bryce later wrote, “the pastor is better educated and more enlightened than the average member of his flock, and becomes a leader in works of beneficence.”³⁸

Finally, camp meetings after 1850 were forced to rearrange their relationships with surrounding municipalities. Covenants granted by state legislatures empowered the camps to control concessions and outlaw liquor sales within a radius of one mile. But as the camps grew into summer colonies, statutes such as these became harder to enforce. As orders for tents, carriages, hotels, contractors, and restaurants flowed out of the grounds, markets in adjacent towns expanded, retailers flourished, and the population and political power of those towns grew. The camp grounds soon became targets for annexation campaigns. Annexation threatened to end the exemption from taxes, guaranteed by the associations’ nonprofit legal status, enjoyed by cottage owners for decades. State, county, and town governments closed the loophole, forcing tough decisions.³⁹ As with the Sunday trains and admittance debates, the relationship between the religious trusteeship of the camp grounds and the encroaching municipal entities evolved through a process of negotiation. Rising land values enticed real estate speculators and encouraged cottagers to form associations to protect their interests.

The Methodist clerics’ decision to accept machines in the wilderness calls into question a central trope in scholarship on the Social Gospel. Historian Jon Butler has summarized this historiographical convention suc-

cinctly: “the city acted and the Protestants reacted.”⁴⁰ The Methodist camp meetings did not simply react to the modern world—they helped shape it. Far from punchless critics or passive victims of economic modernization, the Methodist camp meetings altered patterns of railroad construction and promoted economic growth in the surrounding communities, demonstrating historian Daniel Walker Howe’s theory that nineteenth-century evangelical religion “was an engine driving rational change, a force for modernization.” An examination of the relationship between camp meetings and their corporate partners reveals how social Christian principles penetrated modern institutions.⁴¹

The Chautauqua moment began as the body politic surged with activist impulses. The politics of Reconstruction had unleashed a zeal for political reform; nativist fears of Catholic immigration, on the rise since the 1840s, spurred interdenominational cooperation in public and religious education; and rapid industrialization and urban poverty forced religious men and women to reconsider the obligations of citizenship. Hence, even before religious leaders like Vincent, Walter Rauschenbusch, and Washington Gladden articulated the Social Gospel in their sermons and books, a concatenation of material and cultural forces had forced Protestant camp meeting-goers to acknowledge new interpretations of the Sabbath and open up their denominational enclaves to outsiders. Far from simply acting in response to economic and political developments, therefore, religious men and women were themselves agents of modernity.

From Far Points to Fair Point

The point should be clear by now. The elders had not gone looking for the Social Gospel. Social Christianity had found them. Over the course of the nineteenth century, railroads, expanding municipalities, and retail interests pushed open the camp meeting gates. Modernizing the camp meeting did not obliterate its religious motives or functions but reoriented it from the individual to the social, from denominational gatherings to church-founded public institutions of leisure.⁴² By midcentury, Chautauqua’s foundations had already been established. Chautauqua’s notable contribution to the modern camp meeting was to add an educational mission. This, too, it got from a source in the ecumenical Protestant mainstream: the Sunday school movement.

The “Holiness” crusade of the 1850s and 1860s accelerated the social turn of the camp meeting. Those years saw a revival of John Wesley’s principle of “entire sanctification.” Inspired by the Enlightenment’s optimistic view of social perfectibility, but rejecting the Calvinists’ reliance on reason for a more sentimental gospel of the heart, Wesley encouraged believers to surrender their pride, anger, lust, and self-will in preparation for God’s saving grace. Having cleansed these “corruptions” from the heart, the “perfect Christian”—for it was impossible to be “half a Christian”—was “so far perfect as not to commit sin.” Perfect in their flawed humanity, sanctified Christians achieved a state of unearthly grace in which they prayed “without ceasing.”⁴³ The Holiness Revival swept through northern cities in the late 1850s. During the period of moral militancy following the Civil War, the Holiness Revival reignited in rural areas, assuming institutional form with the founding of the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness by William Osbourne and John Inskip in 1867. The Holiness doctrine came under fire during the height of the Social Gospel in the 1890s and is identified by some historians as the genesis of Pentecostalism.⁴⁴

Although it evoked an earlier revival tradition, the Holiness Revival would be slowed by the more powerful pull of domesticity in Victorian thought. Some middle-class Methodists would not be persuaded to abandon hearth and home for a week in the woods. More, the Holiness Revival further loosened camp meetings from their moorings in denominational politics and church bureaucracy. The National Camp Meeting Association, fueled by its founders’ ambitions, accelerated the trend toward interdenominational assemblies. Its official meetings in Vineland, New Jersey (1867), Manheim, Pennsylvania (1868), and Round Lake, New York (1869), though organized by Methodists, were billed as interdenominational.⁴⁵ In addition, some fourteen meetings organized under the aegis of Inskip’s association between 1867 and 1872 soft-pedaled their dependence on church administration and advertised themselves as “national” assemblies.⁴⁶

An independent development in U.S. Protestantism—the ecumenical campaign to reform Sunday school education—further fueled the concept of a *camp meeting institute*, as opposed to a sectarian camp ground. The Sunday school movement was North America’s first national, ecumenical reform movement. Founded as the First-Day Society in 1791 in Philadelphia and renamed in 1824, the American Sunday School Union (ASSU) aimed through its many tracts and journals to “plant a Sunday-school wherever there is a population.”⁴⁷ Although the ASSU was ecumenical, Sunday school

work continued along denominational lines until the rise of state-level conventions in the 1850s. In January 1857, during the height of the Methodists' Holiness Revival, hundreds of people met in Albany, New York, for the New York Sunday School Teachers' Association; by 1865, similar gatherings were common in most northern states.⁴⁸ Sunday school standardization flourished on the northern home front, when all aspects of private and public life were recalibrated to meet the needs of the wartime state. The 1863 convention in Wisconsin, for example, asked all branches to report the "number of scholars in the army."⁴⁹

Generally speaking, the elders in charge of the Methodist camp meetings welcomed Sunday school warriors as kindred spirits. If the elders had lost control over Sunday trains and admittance, at least they could contribute to the growth of the Sunday schools. Sunday school programming seemed consistent with ecumenical trends already in full bloom: modernized facilities, emerging partnerships with the secular powers, relaxed Sabbath-keeping and an embrace of leisure, and the spread of an optimistic theology of "holiness." Importantly, the idea of fusing the camp meeting with the Sunday school association did not belong to the founders of Chautauqua alone. The first proposal came in 1870, four years before the first Chautauqua assembly. Silas Farmer of Detroit, in an April article in the *Sunday School Journal*, envisioned a "camp-meeting institute" where teaching methods could be cultivated and spread to the general public.⁵⁰

Chautauqua is often examined *sui generis*; but I believe that it is more accurately viewed as the first and most famous of an institutional genus that sprang to life in the 1870s. Between 1874 and 1882 at least seven summer encampments devoted to Sunday school teacher training—including Chautauqua—arose in the Northeast, Midwest, and South.⁵¹ They exhibited some of the structural elements and all of the moral urgency normally associated with Chautauqua. For example, the Sunday School Association of Pennsylvania, founded a year *prior* to Chautauqua's first season, pledged in its constitution to support "the general interests of Christian education . . . Biblical and Scientific knowledge, art, music, language, and general literature. . . ." In the summer of 1875 an allied group calling itself the Cumberland County Sabbath School Association of Pennsylvania encamped at Williams Grove, near Carlisle. Delegates from Protestant parishes twenty miles distant arrived on a mission of deadly seriousness: to report on the number of teachers and pupils taught, average attendance, expenses, and contributions of their Sunday schools.⁵² The children of

Pennsylvania, feared one minister attending a later assembly, had been led to the “disregard of religion.” Wrote another, “In many instances our public schools are nothing less than fountain heads from which flow continual streams of pollution and sin.”⁵³

By the mid-1870s, many middle-class Protestants hoped to do their part to promote the good works of the Sunday school movement. True to the cult of domesticity, they wanted a wholesome, homey place in which to rest from the worries of a competitive capitalist society. And true to the industrial work ethic, they wanted to satisfy both impulses in the most efficient manner possible. Thus to return to the small Methodist camp meeting in western New York. Nowhere did the ecumenical camp meeting institute flourish as on the shores of Chautauqua Lake. At Fair Point, the various developments charted so far—dependence on railroads, ecumenical impulses within the camp meetings, Sunday school reform, and the rise of middle-class tourism—converged syncretically to produce a new institution. One Fair Point minister was not far off base when he boasted that the camp meeting idea’s “most full and complete development may be seen at Fair Point.”⁵⁴

Methodist minister Homer H. Moore of Jamestown had visited the Holiness encampment at nearby Round Lake in the late 1860s. Impressed, he began building support for something similar on the shores of Chautauqua Lake. “Hitherto,” opined Moore’s fellow minister T. Guy of Mayville in an 1870 article in *The Chautauqua Democrat*, “this beautiful lake has been isolated to such a degree the pleasure-loving, health-seeking people of our large cities, New York, Buffalo, Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Erie, etc., are not generally aware that . . . [the lake] may be an unsurpassed if not an unsurpassable place of summer resort.” Guy begged “rich men of our church” to help the campaign for a camp meeting. Alonzo Kent, a Jamestown banker and frequent benefactor of the Methodist church, heeded the call. A committee of four, with Kent serving as treasurer, selected and purchased fifty acres of lakefront from Stephen Hunt for \$10,000. The Chautauqua Lake Camp Meeting Association, a nonprofit institution under state law with an official board of trustees, assumed title. The parcel, called Fair Point, a spit of land and its two adjacent bays about four miles from the northern end of the lake, was already familiar to Methodists as a destination for church outings. “It will be an enchanting spot,” promised the *Jamestown Journal* in 1871, “and consecrated as it will be to holy uses it will be the center and source of the deepest and

most sacred attachments. May it never be profaned by irreverent interruption or inharmony of any kind. . . .”⁵⁵

“Inharmony” is a loaded word. Early-nineteenth-century revivalists had depended on *inharmony* as a central proselytizing tactic. The early camp meetings had taken on all comers; the power of the revival was, in many ways, dependent on the *inharmony* of the proceedings, as the conventions of the outside world clashed with the camp ground’s otherworldly rituals of surrender. But for the Chautauqua Lake Camp Meeting Association at Fair Point in the early 1870s, the avoidance of *inharmony* meant something quite different. The word *inharmony*, as used here, derived from the coded lexicon of middle-class identity. Fair Point sought harmony with the amenities of the outside world. The “old style camp-meeting was a short, sharp and quick onslaught upon the powers of darkness,” explained Moore. The “crude” camp grounds of old had come to “possess the refinement and the comforts of a pleasant home society,” he observed. “These changes from the primitive camp-meetings have been the inevitable result of the growth of society in this young, growing country. . . . As a consequence, the elements of recreation and social life have become a permanent characteristic of the camp.” In its graded streets, concessions, and hotels, Fair Point offered a facsimile of the conveniences enjoyed by the area’s small-town professionals in their everyday lives.⁵⁶

Significantly, the idea for a Sunday school teachers’ retreat at Fair Point hatched first in the mind of a Methodist layperson, the Akron-based industrialist and Sunday school patron Lewis Miller. Uncomfortable with the emotionalism of the camp meetings and frustrated with the lack of physical space for the Sunday school sessions, Miller decided to use the former as a physical template for the latter. At a Holiness meeting in August 1872, Miller found himself in deep conversation with his friends Kate Patterson Bruch and Lydia Patterson Kitt, both teachers at his Canton Sunday school. (The three were “sitting apart from the body of worshippers,” according to a 1925 account, suggesting they viewed the proceedings with some skepticism.) In the first of many instances of women’s importance to the Chautauqua movement, the two women critiqued Miller’s notion of a Sunday school camp meeting and encouraged him to follow up on it.⁵⁷

The year before, Bruch and Mrs. Jacob Miller (the wife of Lewis Miller’s brother) had visited a small camp meeting on the western shore of Chautauqua Lake called Fair Point. They had been so enchanted with the place, in fact, that they purchased the spot upon which their tent had stood

(lot 16, the site of the present Miller cottage). Bruch recommended to Miller that he look into the Chautauqua site. In Akron in 1872 Miller received a visit from his friend Rev. John Heyl Vincent, already well known in Methodist circles as an educational reformer and editor of the church's *Sunday School Journal*. Miller pitched the idea of an association at Fair Point. Vincent initially feared that the enterprise would quickly reflect its camp meeting stamp. Unwilling to launch the enterprise without Vincent as the head of the Department of Instruction, Miller continued to work on his friend, and in 1873 Vincent agreed to visit the site. They arranged to lease the grounds for the following August. In 1874 the Sunday School Union of the Methodist Church christened the new assembly as the Sunday School Teacher's Assembly on Chautauqua Lake.⁵⁸

Even the name suggests the ambitions of its founders. No local affair like the Cumberland County encampment, this was to be the national headquarters for progressive forces in the Sunday School Movement, backed by the church's imprimatur, Vincent's reputation, and Miller's deep pockets. Vincent used his publications to advertise the event. One blurb from the well-known evangelist T. DeWitt Talmadge announced that it would be the "grandest religious picnic ever held." To Vincent's delight, thousands of visitors from twenty-five states poured into the little Fair Point camp ground. Among them were Presbyterians, Baptists, and Congregationalists—including Talmadge, who hoped that "breath of the pinewoods or a wrestle with the waters would put an end to everything like a morbid religion." Armies of note-taking pupils overwhelmed the two-week lecture series. Talks on Bible history, geography, and pedagogy (for example, "Language and Illustration in Teaching") outnumbered sermons by nearly three to one. At the end of the assembly, Vincent offered a symbolic diploma to those who could pass a written examination. At the end of the five-hour exam—20 quit the marathon test in frustration—152 prospective Sunday school teachers had qualified for their "degrees."⁵⁹

Under the rubric of religious education, Miller and Vincent's Sunday school teacher's assembly infiltrated the camp grounds subtly, seductively, "so quietly," Moore wrote in 1878, "as to almost escape observation till the work was done."⁶⁰ Elders found it hard to object to the new regime. Its idealistic intent and cultivating effects matched well the torpor of postbellum camp meeting life, with its hushed rituals, reflective walks by the lake, and early bedtimes, the night silence interrupted only by the drone of the cicadas or the hoot of an owl. In camp meetings across the northeast, popu-

lar lectures blended unobtrusively into the camp meeting format. Many of the famous and well-established camp meetings preserved their denominational affiliations, adding educational fare but segregating it from the rest of the program. The enormous camp grounds at Ocean Grove, New Jersey (1869), and Lakeside, Ohio (1877), typified this approach.⁶¹ Wesleyan Grove on Martha's Vineyard and the Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire advertised their Chautauqua reading clubs as a service to their guests but preserved their religious agenda.⁶²

The trajectory of the Hedding Camp Meeting in Epping, New Hampshire, is indicative of the slippery slope of religious education. Methodists founded it in 1863 in the denominational format, naming it after Elijah Hedding, the legendary circuit rider; in 1886 it was reorganized as a Summer School Assembly under the interdenominational Dover District Ministerial Association; it adopted a Chautauqua assembly format the following year. Again, the association ran its educational fare for three weeks while holding its camp meeting on a separate week.⁶³ The South Framington Camp Meeting Association in South Framington, Massachusetts, simply renamed itself the New England Chautauqua in 1880. By 1890, the grounds featured Baptist and Congregational parishes, as well as a Methodist church. If the elders insisted on traditional divisions of sacred and secular time, they had irrevocably opened up the space of camp meeting to the spirit of liberal ecumenicism.⁶⁴ Between 1874 and 1899 at least twenty-two major camp meetings fundamentally reinvented themselves from revival grounds to providers of religious education in the Chautauqua format pioneered by Miller and Vincent.⁶⁵

Meanwhile, at Fair Point, what was once a sleepy camp ground became a beehive of activity. Its energies were concentrated on the outdoor amphitheater—really a simple preacher's stand and some rough benches—just fifty yards from the lakeshore. Vincent led his evening "covenant services" there. The trees were festooned with lanterns and flags, and as dusk fell, torches were lit, bathing the entire grove in an exotic glow of flickering yellow.⁶⁶ Around the grove stood a few simple cottages in a sea of tents. While some stayed in nearby hotels, most visitors slept in tents and dined in what Jesse L. Hurlbut described as "a long tabernacle of rough, unpainted boards, with a leaky roof, and backless benches where the feeders sat around tables covered with oilcloth." When it rained, the "D.D.'s, LL.D.'s, professors and plain people" squeezed shoulder to shoulder to avoid the dripping from above. A building spree soon hedged the praying circle in

cottages. The famous muckraker Ida B. Tarbell, who spent many youthful summers visiting with her family from Titusville, Pennsylvania, recalled the constant drone of hammers and saws, busily at work to construct “flimsy cottages” for a summer’s stay. In the next two decades, workmen would continue their hard work, building auditoriums, lecture halls, gymnasiums, chapels, and meeting houses for every major Protestant sect, and even a museum and a library.⁶⁷

Moore observed that “Fair Point is the best side of the world in miniature.” But the new assembly imported only certain aspects of the outside world. Camp meetings had long employed various aesthetic strategies to make guests feel as if they had special access to the divine. The original Chautauqua in New York made some of these design elements an integral part of the new educational assembly. Following the example of the Round Lake, New York, camp meeting, Chautauqua built the Park of Palestine, a 120 by 75-foot scale model of the Holy Land, with the beach serving as the desert, the lake as the Mediterranean Sea, a ditch in the middle as the Jordan River, and various burms representing the mountains Moriah, Zion, Ebal, and Gerizim. Model cities were added in 1888. Sunday school teachers used the Park of Palestine to teach ancient geography. As these processions made their way through the Holy Land, their solemn demeanor contrasted sharply with the more leisurely pace of life on the beach just yards away from Jerusalem. Assembly lore held that “soil from the Holy Land itself had been spread upon the park,” further reinforcing participants’ sense of having entered a faraway and exotic place.⁶⁸

As if to guarantee aesthetic harmony through exclusion, not everyone would be able to afford Fair Point’s motifs. Two decades earlier, B. W. Gorham’s *Camp Meeting Manual* had advised rigid zoning standards for religious camp grounds. Log cabins, in particular, would give the wrong impression to potential visitors, as they were calculated to “excite a class of low and ludicrous ideas, since they give the spectator rather the idea of a huddle of Irish rail-road shanties than of a worshipping people ‘dwelling in the goodly tents of Jacob.’ *Numb.* 24:5.”⁶⁹ Rising land prices made it clear that Fair Point had made no such mistake. Desirable lots immediately adjacent to the old preacher’s stand were initially auctioned off at \$100 apiece. By 1875, prices had skyrocketed; just one-fifth of a lot in the less-desirable second tier from the auditorium went for \$250.⁷⁰ By 1878, the assembly at Fair Point had boosted the economy of the lake towns, especially Mayville to the north and Jamestown to the south. The assembly had “doubled the

travel and commerce of the lake,” according to Moore, and “largely increased the value of real estate in all that section of the county, redeemed it from isolation and loneliness, and made it central, beautiful and attractive.”

In their negotiations with the railroads, few camp meetings could dictate terms. But the original Chautauqua was a different story. By the time the railroad arrived on that side of the lake, the assembly had grown powerful, and the balance of power had tipped in its favor. At first, steel rails barely skirted the northern and southern tips of the lake, reaching Westfield in the 1850s and Jamestown in 1860. Those travelers destined for the heart of the county had to transfer to carriages, hacks, or the enormous steamers that plied the lake waters: the *City of New York*, *City of Cleveland*, and *City of Cincinnati* (which sank at the Chautauqua pier in 1908), along with the more modestly titled *Josie* and *Mayville* and the fabulously ornate *Jamestown*. In the 1880s railroad tracks appeared on Chautauqua’s doorstep. The Buffalo, Pittsburgh and Western built a spur from Mayville into the heart of the old Fair Point grounds in 1881. The summer city had expanded by that point. The lakefront had become too valuable to waste on train sheds, and cottage-dwellers objected to the noise and ruined view. The trustees strengthened their bargaining position in any future negotiations by asking the state legislature for help. In an act that helped codify and institutionalize middle-class leisure, on 17 May 1886 the New York State Legislature passed Chapter 403, which prohibited any railroad from building a railway through the grounds of the assembly without first procuring the consent of a majority of the board of trustees.⁷¹

With the railroads tamed, Chautauqua was free to regulate the Sabbath. Vincent closed the gates on Sunday, a decision that caused “considerable indignation,” according to his colleague R. M. Warren. Closing the gates cast out the “mob of Sabbath-breakers” who “cared nothing about sermons, exhortations, or prayers, but roamed over the grounds, a lawless, good-natured crowd, who had paid for the show and were bound to enjoy it in their own way.”⁷² Chautauqua also barred steamers from docking on the Sabbath. On the first day of the moratorium, the assembly constables had to warn off a steamer that insisted on landing. The prohibition remained in force until the *City of Cincinnati* ran aground in 1908; lest the hundreds aboard be stranded until Monday morning, the assembly granted an exception. The exception soon became the rule. Smaller Chautauqua assemblies found their options much more limited. The assembly on Long Island skirted the issue by arranging a late Saturday and early Monday



FIGURE 1.2 Biggest on the lake was the four-decked *City of Jamestown*, rebuilt in 1878 from the *Nettie Fox*. Circa 1895. (Courtesy of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York)

steamer “for the convenience of business men and others.”⁷³ Other assemblies fared worse. In Mt. Gretna, Pennsylvania, the issue sparked a nasty quarrel. After some loud resignations, the assembly board of trustees voted in 1895 to accept Sunday trains.⁷⁴

The Chautauqua assembly controlled public behavior on the other six days of the week as well. According to his assistant Rev. Jesse L. Hurlbut, Vincent initially worried that “the plan would be thought of as merely another camp meeting with its emotional extravagances.” Vincent was “repelled” by the “neglect of the reasoning and thinking faculties” and feared that “the crowd called together on a camp meeting would not represent the sober, sane, thoughtful element in church life.”⁷⁵ To tame the anarchic populism of the camp meeting, Vincent gripped the reins of public life. Upon assuming control of Fair Point in 1874, he instituted a series of restrictive laws—more important, he enforced them. The gate fee, in particular, “raised a storm of indignation all around the lake.” Local ministers

“could not comprehend why *they* should buy a ticket for entrance to the holy ground!”⁷⁶ Owners of cottages, in particular, bristled at having to pay for the right to live in their houses and devised ingenious methods to evade the toll, including smuggling people in carriages, jumping the fence, going around the fence by boat, and creatively defining the word “family” as it was used in the term “family ticket.” Chautauqua’s officials, constantly refining their rules and enforcement techniques, stayed no more than one step behind such tactics. The Chautauqua assembly soon featured a “great fence” around its perimeter and hired a gatekeeper “who was expert in sizing-up human nature.”⁷⁷

While the entrance toll ensured financial health, it also gave rise to an atmosphere of surveillance and conformism. The ominously named Department of Order, using powers granted by the state legislature, claimed both private and public authority; that is, its deputies enjoyed *de jure* police powers in enforcing the institution’s private rules, including the prohibition of liquor, mandatory quiet times, and the forcible expulsion of free-loaders. In 1886 the New York State Legislature extended the power to appoint and maintain a police force to any charitable, literary, scientific, or otherwise religious organization. Empowered *in loco civilis*, the Department of Order could deputize its officers under the state’s oath of service, use that authority to arrest anyone breaking the institution’s rules, and bring them “before a magistrate having jurisdiction of the offence [*sic*].” Justices of the peace could not simply dismiss the charge as an internal matter. The legislature instructed them to treat institutional infractions as they would cases committed within their normal purview. Chautauqua’s police force never devolved into a paramilitary unit, like the famous hired guns of industrial magnates, the Pinkerton National Detective Agency. But the institution took full advantage of its sweeping authority, taking custody of anyone caught in violation of its extralegal standards of moral behavior—especially drunkenness, cussing, and other “breaches of the peace”—as well as its rules for pecuniary self-interest—such as trespassing, ticket-forging, or huckstering.⁷⁸

One did not have to break a law to be arrested and tossed out on one’s ear. To incur the wrath of the deputies, one needed only to interrupt a lecture to reach out to high heaven, shout the glory of God’s name, and call forth the sinners to be saved. The active suppression of a certain type of religious expression distinguished Chautauqua most sharply from its institutional antecedent. During one of the first assemblies, a revivalist appeared



FIGURE 1.3 Meeting of the Chautauqua Lake Sunday School Assembly, circa 1876. (Courtesy of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York)

in the auditorium one Sunday morning with a box of song books. Some “elderly sisters” who had “mourned much over the fact that there was no anxious-seat adopted by the Assembly, and not much shouting, were greatly excited.” He gathered some friends and began singing; the party soon swelled to three hundred, and the chorus grew raucous. Vincent—often noted for his booming voice and commanding presence—stormed on

stage to disperse the crowd. "This meeting is not on the program, nor appointed by the authorities, and it cannot be held," he averred. "No meeting of any kind can be held without the order of the authorities."⁷⁹

Chautauqua gave voice to Methodists who viewed camp meeting conversions with some skepticism and hoped to elevate church life to a higher intellectual plane. But these instances of religious rebellion suggest that not everyone agreed with Vincent's decision to suppress revivalism. One of the original ministers at Fair Point complained in 1878 that "we have put everything into such shape as to exclude all effort for the immediate salvation of souls. . . . This aspect of the Assembly has created much inquiry and some murmuring."⁸⁰

Despite these rumblings, Vincent's formula prevailed. In the tightly controlled confines of the Chautauqua assembly, exuberance for personal salvation would be channeled—whether by subtle urging or outright coercion—into a missionary zeal for social progress and reform. By the 1890s, revivalist Sam Jones had emerged as a quaint reminder of the camp meeting, a spectacle, an oddity of old-time religion. One newspaper reporter found him "rambling in the extreme"; his ranting performances struck another as "vulgar. . . . People go to hear him from the fact that it is something new to hear slang from the pulpit, to hear members of the audience demeaned and denounced and called liars, old hogs and rascals."⁸¹ Jones's excesses made a farce of the camp meeting tradition and confirmed the turn to social Christianity—and Vincent knew it. The sociologist Richard T. Ely later observed, "Although Dr. Herbert B. Adams and I were too sophisticated to appreciate the homely wisdom of Sam Jones' lectures, Bishop Vincent realized that they had a universal appeal."⁸² By banishing revivalism and then exhibiting its absurd extreme, Chautauqua took its first and most important step toward the realization of an ideal deeply rooted in social Christianity, an ideal in which religion formed the basis of social progress and all secular activities were redefined as exaltations of the Divine.

Conclusion

Long accustomed to existing on the periphery of prosperity, Chautauqua County had given birth to the national movement that would bear its name. Chautauqua's swift ascension into the national spotlight had much to do with cofounder John Heyl Vincent's brilliance at public relations. Because

of his stature in both the Methodist Church and the Sunday School Movement, the 1874 meeting received praiseful reporting in the religious press. Attention from the newspapers came the following year when President Ulysses S. Grant, Vincent's parishioner from his Galena, Illinois, days, visited the assembly. The event secured Chautauqua's national reputation as a congenial site for the reforming impulses of postwar, northern Protestantism.

The following year Chautauqua tapped into the spin created by the centennial celebrations in Philadelphia. Vincent expanded the session from two to three weeks and chose science as the assembly's theme in 1876. Chautauqua's "Scientific Congress" included demonstrations in astronomy, chemistry, and botany, all conducted with the watchful approval of the assembled ministers. Isabella ("Pansy") Alden's *Four Girls at Chautauqua* (1876), in which four young women's encounters with intellectual and spiritual enlightenment at Chautauqua produced salutary effects in their hometowns, sold widely. And in 1878 Vincent inaugurated the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle (CLSC), a national, home-based reading program designed to emulate a four-year college degree. As one minister later would lament, these other courses of study "soon threw the Sunday-school courses quite into the shade."⁸³ By the 1880s, Chautauqua had evolved into the foremost institutional expression of the self-culture impulse. Its eight-week summer program gave visibility to Social Gospel-minded academics, politicians, preachers, prohibitionists, and reformers.

Chautauqua's Phoenix-like rise from the camp meeting quickly became part of the institution's mystique, a teleological narrative of austere simplicity giving way to refinement and progress. Suggested an 1898 flyer, Chautauqua's cottages, "survivals of earlier primitive days," had been remodeled to the point of Victorian perfection and barely resembled the "crude camp-meeting affairs of old." At the Chautauqua assemblies, reflected Paul M. Pearson, the "emotional spree" of the "old-time shouting religious fervor" had been replaced with "an active Christian spirit" and "educational advantages."⁸⁴ Chautauqua's success in western New York, it is traditionally thought, radiated outward and inspired similar revolutions in hundreds of communities nationwide. Chautauqua would establish "the harmonization of all denominations as Christians," according to Thomas DeWitt Talmadge. "I charge Chautauqua with this mission."⁸⁵

Vincent and Miller did not invent the respectable resort nor the camp meeting institute. Rather, Chautauqua was the most innovative and suc-

cessful of a genus of like-minded institutions arising at about the same time. Its special contribution to social Christianity was to give it material and aesthetic form. If Chautauquans had their way, no longer would the sacred be experienced in places far removed from the prosaic workings of community life—rather, all social activities, including leisure and education, were sacred. “The schoolhouse should be God’s house,” insisted Vincent.⁸⁶ It was fashioned from the raw material of existing mythological landscapes, some sacred and some secular, each deeply rooted in U.S. culture and paired with cherished narratives: the camp meeting and the Old Testament, the New England village and the democratic tradition, the college campus and classical Western philosophy. These landscapes—both dramatically in success and subtly in failure—helped institutionalize middle-class identities and give shape to the emerging liberal creed.

2. *The Never-ending Vacation: Boosters, Tourists, and the Fantasyscape of Chautauqua*

Chautauqua assumes the proportions of a city with the noise and dirt omitted.
—Railroad promotional pamphlet

Knowledge unused for the good of others is more vain than unused gold.
—Motto of the Chautauqua Assembly at Ottawa, Kansas

The success of Vincent and Miller in New York inspired numerous imitators. In the twenty-five years after the inaugural assembly, stories spread about the little camp meeting that made it big. Scores of independent Chautauqua assemblies emerged in towns and small cities from Maine to Texas to California. By century's turn, more than one hundred towns had held assemblies patterned after the original. At least twenty-two of these were, as the original, established on preexisting religious camp meeting grounds. These assemblies eclipsed their predecessors in depth and scale. Crude encampments of three hundred people grew into massive, railroad-sponsored resorts with hotels and auditoriums seating thousands. While the 140 or so operating Methodist camp meetings in 1889 were mainly in the mid-Atlantic region, with scattered camps in New England and the South, the Chautauqua Movement reached into every region. And while the camp meetings derived their support from sectarian enclaves, Chautauqua's ecumenism allowed it to draw upon the pooled resources of what Vincent called the "thoughtful element in church life" of every community.¹

In the 1880s and 1890s hundreds of thousands of white, native-born middling sorts experienced their own Chautauqua moment. Chautauqua's upsurge embodied a wider development: the appearance of the summer vacation as a defining ritual of middle-class life in the United States. Leisure (in an industrial age, defined as voluntary activity during the temporary cessation of work) and tourism (leisure requiring travel away from home) had long been features of elite life in both Europe and the United States. To make the summer vacation palatable to their target audience, Vincent and Miller would have to overcome both theological objections to slothfulness—one of the Seven Deadly Sins, after all—and amplify the positive outlook of postbellum Protestantism expressed so well in T. DeWitt Talmadge's

“gospel of good cheer.”² Chautauqua would also have to contend with the populist aversion to the aristocratic elitism associated with tourism. Chautauqua met all of these objections. Vincent and Miller made summer vacation acceptable by turning it into an occasion for cultural and spiritual renewal.

The turn to leisure made good financial sense. To ensure Chautauqua’s viability during the depression of 1873–1879, the founders made a virtue out of necessity. They agreed that the campus could profitably hold two types of guests, those who came for cultivation and those who came for amusement. The masses, Vincent acknowledged, “needed some other attraction to bring them to our Assembly.” Their “financial support” would make “our more radical work” possible, he insisted. Moreover, Vincent believed the indolent could be coaxed into enlightenment once inside the gates. The “quickenings and awakenings which come from great ideas” would “gradually improve their tastes and ideas. . . .”³ “Work and play are sandwiched at Chautauqua,” insisted R. M. Warren in 1878.⁴ In Chautauqua’s heavily qualified evocations of leisure, therefore, the value of rest lay not in its ephemeral pleasure but in its end product. Situating itself in opposition to the wasteful indolence of both the idle rich and the corrupted poor, Chautauqua made the industrial work ethic its guiding philosophy.

Some Chautauquans imagined themselves at the cusp of an epochal transformation in human history, one that they would be foolish to ignore. Modern prosperity had bequeathed the summer vacation. But the vacation was both a blessing and a curse. Spent properly, leisure time would enable spiritual growth; used unwisely, free time would produce only mental dissipation and moral decline. Chautauqua advertising was full of broadly stated rationales, often portraying the summer vacation as a “natural” development in human biological and social evolution. Some prescribed rest as a moral and civic duty: “Vacation must be regarded as one of the duties of man at this stage of our social development,” insisted J. Max Hark, who founded a Chautauqua assembly in Pennsylvania. “It is his duty to his human nature,” he continued, “to take the strain off his overtaxed powers. . . . A blessed institution is the summer vacation.”⁵ The Chautauqua leisure model gave clerical sanction to the summer vacation and helped make it a defining ritual of middle-class life.

This has not gone unnoticed by historians. The paradoxes of industrial

leisure are expressed well in the title of Cindy Aron's recent book, which prominently features Chautauqua: *Working at Play*. Historians have also examined urban parks and nature tourism during the nineteenth century. From them, we know how the "middle landscape" trope, so common in artistic and poetic renderings of the American landscape, shaped and gave meaning to recreational spaces. As the urban elite fled the immigrant city, they sought refuge not in untamed nature but in the pastoral purity of the American countryside, reminiscent as it was of a simpler, preindustrial era.⁶ These notions exerted a powerful influence on Chautauqua's "middle landscape of the middle class," as historian Thomas J. Schlereth has called it.⁷ Finally, cultural historians in recent decades have expanded our knowledge of the role of constructed leisure landscapes, like the 1893 Columbian Exposition's "White City" and Coney Island, in normalizing deeply contested notions of U.S. racial and ethnic identity. In sum, this scholarship has shown that the vacation is not a "natural" event but a contested cultural practice, often imposed from above and imbued with the values of those in authority.

The view presented here builds upon these critiques of American tourism and leisure. To move beyond the portrayal of tourism as the visitor's encounter with a collective national identity, I revisit historian Earl Pomeroy's observation, made many years ago, that the "real function of the tourist was to prepare for the settler."⁸ I argue that the host, more than the visitor, shaped the assembly into an imagined community. From its inception, the assemblies gave physical form to the sort of differentiated communal life sought by elite visionaries of the suburb.⁹ Set apart from downtown on lakes or rivers, the land possessed utility infrastructure, transportation facilities, and a reputation for wholesomeness. The assemblies, with roads and lots already platted, landscaped, and subdivided, were valuable residential properties; as they grew, so too did development pressure from real estate interests. Many assemblies were colonized by summer cottagers and permanent, year-round residents.

There is no doubt that Coney Island, the White City, and the Chautauqua assemblies were all imaginative flights of fancy into a stylized utopian ideal. But they were also experimental efforts to apply middle-class leisure styles to the building of sustainable communities. In this way, the assemblies prefigured the tourist destinations associated with post-World War II America, such as Vail, Las Vegas, and Orlando—places that used

imaginative vacation landscapes as the templates for permanent communities. The experience of tourism illuminates the process by which temporary leisure spaces were transformed into permanent expressions of the idea of community in a liberal state. The independent assemblies linked the leisure landscapes of the nineteenth century—encrusted with all of its class and racial biases—with the suburban landscape of the twentieth.¹⁰

That land developers should covet the assemblies is not surprising. Chautauqua's model of leisure and the movement to the suburbs both derived from the same romantic, "back to nature" longings in Victorian culture. From the first months of Fair Point, a whiff of real estate speculation hung about the Chautauqua movement. One historian went so far as to conclude that the "amalgamation of the Chautauqua idea and the real-estate motive" was the main reason for its success.¹¹ If railroad executives, ministers, and boosters gave the Chautauqua assembly its pastoral vision, land developers carved that vision into the physical landscape. The assemblies' appeal to white, Protestant, middling sorts ensured that these suburban spaces would remain free of undesirable outsiders and, thus, would retain their resale value. In the end, land developers created blueprints for white, bourgeois enclaves oriented around Chautauqua's liberal creed. Haphazardly, and as often through failure as success, communitarian impulses deeply rooted in the Protestant revival tradition and shot through with expectations of class prerogative found their way into the suburban ideal.

Thus, as Chautauquans struggled to balance capitalist acquisitiveness and democratic opportunity, the landscapes they created embodied the contradictions of modern liberalism. To transform the assembly's fantasy into the suburb's reality required ever-more complex institutional and municipal arrangements in the areas of annexation, taxation, and zoning. Residents of these places by the 1910s had come to accept the benevolent intervention of a whole slew of public and quasipublic institutions. The story of the independent Chautauqua assemblies, therefore, tells something about the aesthetic context wherein ideas about modern liberalism heard from the Chautauqua podium, and explained in the pages of *Forum* and *Nation*, resonated with its target middle-class audience. In their haste to make the good life represented by a Chautauqua vacation permanent, suburb-bound Americans had taken a giant step closer to a wider acceptance of administered democracy.

Sizing the Independent Assembly Movement

Chautauqua must be viewed as a major tourist phenomenon in the final quarter of the century. It could not claim high-society clientele like those that frequented Saratoga, New York, or Newport, Rhode Island. The opinion-shapers of New York did not normally attend a Chautauqua assembly in Indiana. But in sheer numbers, the visitors at assemblies across the country over the course of the summer compared favorably with the total attendance at Coney Island in New York City. Daily attendance at individual assemblies, of course, varied with the popularity of the programming and the weather. As few as five hundred could pass through the gates on a rainy weekday; for a William Jennings Bryan speech, crowds of more than five thousand were not unusual. Over a two to four week summer session, total annual attendance ranged from 8,000 in 1886 for the fledgling Cumberland Valley Sabbath School Association in Pennsylvania; to 50,000 for a larger assembly, like the one at Mountain Lake Park, Maryland; to more than 150,000 for the original assembly.¹² During the 1880s and 1890s some seventy assemblies received visits from a total of more than a half million people annually.

How many independent Chautauqua assemblies were there? In the 1870s and 1880s the “mother Chautauqua” (an oft-used phrase of the time) in western New York welcomed each new assembly like a proud, if somewhat critical, parent. John Heyl Vincent estimated thirty in existence in 1885, raising the number to fifty in 1891. While indicative of Chautauqua’s success, these assemblies, Vincent noted carefully, “sustain no organic relation to the original Chautauqua. . . . For any shortcomings of these independent assemblies Chautauqua should not be held responsible.”¹³ Throughout the 1880s and 1890s reports of the numbers of assemblies varied. While a reporter in 1890 claimed forty-two in existence, the Glen Echo Assembly, founded that year, counted itself as the fifty-third assembly.¹⁴ The next year, novelist John Habberton perceived “forty or fifty” such gatherings; meanwhile, social scientist W. W. Willoughby compiled a list of sixty-eight.¹⁵ A disparity emerged again in 1895, when journalist Ida Tarbell counted fifty-four assemblies and sociologist Stephen B. Weeks arrived at the figure of fifty-nine.¹⁶

My research built on this vast body of local histories, published articles, and unpublished theses on independent assemblies.¹⁷ Tracing the

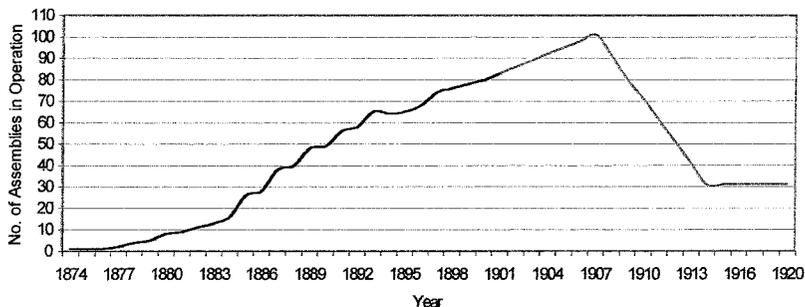


FIGURE 2.1 Independent Chautauqua Assemblies by Year, 1874–1899 (Estimated 1900–1920). (Source: See appendix A.)

paper trails left by these offshoots entailed some detective work and a great deal of traveling. Over a period of five years I visited more than forty town libraries, church archives, university archives, and state and county historical societies in sixteen states. This study arrived at figures somewhat more conservative than those of observers and subsequent historians. The number of assembly start-ups peaked in 1885 and reached a lower plateau thereafter. The total number of operating assemblies skyrocketed from 8 to 49 between 1880 and 1890, then rose steadily; by 1899, 78 assemblies were in operation, a figure that would rise to about 100 by 1907 (see figure 2.1). A total of 101 assemblies, including the original, operated in the United States at one time or another before 1900.

Of the 101 pre-1900 assemblies, 51 were located in the Midwest, 23 in the Northeast, 16 in the South, and 11 in the Rocky Mountains and Pacific West. Figures 2.2 through 2.5 show the general pattern of spatial diffusion in four chronological periods from 1874 to 1899. Figure 2.5 shows the trend toward a concentration of new assemblies in the Midwest beginning in 1895. The later assemblies were smaller, produced fewer records, and became less institutionally distinct as they became more dependent on programming determined by the lecture bureaus that ran the “circuit” Chautauqua system after 1904—more on this story in chapter 7. In addition, many of the 101 pre-1900 assemblies survived into the next century; thus, as this narrative moves forward, the longer trajectory of these confirmed assemblies puts broader trends in the Chautauqua movement in sharper relief.

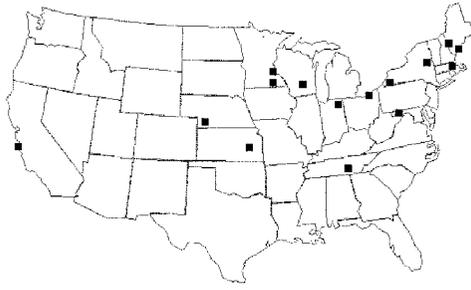


FIGURE 2.2 Location of Independent Chautauqua Assemblies Founded 1874–1884.



FIGURE 2.3 Location of Independent Chautauqua Assemblies Founded 1885–1889.

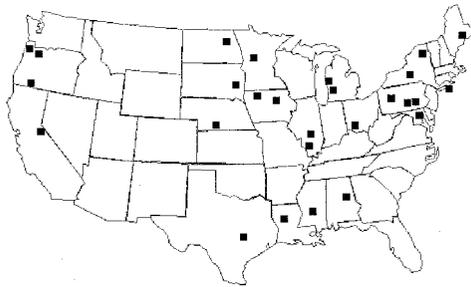


FIGURE 2.4 Location of Independent Chautauqua Assemblies Founded 1890–1894.

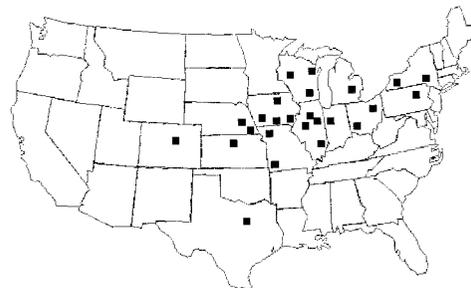


FIGURE 2.5 Location of Independent Chautauqua Assemblies Founded 1895–1899.

Nature Worship and Stealth Cosmopolitanism

One thing is clear: the independent assembly was a rural, or suburban, phenomenon. No assemblies took root inside the municipal limits of New York, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Detroit, Atlanta, Minneapolis, Seattle, or Cleveland—although assemblies could be found within eighty miles of each of these cities. The industrial cityscape, apparently, clashed with the pastoral aesthetic sought by Chautauquans. Only eight of the pre-1900 assemblies could be said to be located within cities, all of modest size and rarely the largest in the state.¹⁸ To more closely emulate the pastoral ideal, founders made sure to locate their assemblies in an undeveloped sector, park, or outlying suburb. The principals of the Colorado Lake Chautauqua Association in Austin, Texas, for example, envisioned their assembly as a negation of the adjacent cityscape. While the air of Austin was “more or less contaminated,” the air at their “Haven of Rest” a few miles away on Lake Travis was “always pure, fresh and invigorating.” The fact that Lake Travis was an artificial reservoir makes the Austin group’s celebration of the assembly’s “natural” advantages and implied transcendence from the cityscape all the more striking.¹⁹

In assembly promotional rhetoric, nature worship and anti-urbanism were linked under a powerful Victorian discourse of health and disease. Independent assemblies laid claim to the latest medical trends and popular fads, including the water cure, climate cure, bicycling, and Delsarte voice exercises.²⁰ At least nine major Chautauqua assemblies were built on, or were adopted as an added attraction by, preexisting health spas, with the legacy often permanently inscribed in their names (for example, Siloam Springs, Arkansas).²¹ According to one laboratory report, the water from a spring adjacent to the New Piasa, Illinois, assembly “will be of value to those in whom elimination is deficient.” In other cases, assemblies built their own hot spring baths or purchased and improved nearby spa facilities. Those assemblies without hot springs on the grounds extolled the healthful qualities of their air and water, sometimes printing quotations from biologists to argue the case. The pines of the White Mountains, insisted the assembly in Hedding, New Hampshire, “fill the air with healing balm.” From 1880 on, the original assembly billed itself as a “sanitarium.”²²

There was more than a whiff of anti-urbanism in Chautauqua’s promotional language. As critics of the late-nineteenth-century industrial city

juxtaposed the natural purity against urban artifice with ever-stronger terms—Henry Adams once described the industrial city as a place of “impenetrable darkness” lit only by the “weird gloom” of “volcanic craters”—Chautauquans found themselves on the correct side of an unbalanced moral dichotomy.²³ Their advertising rhetoric often overlapped with that of the industrial city’s more vocal and sophisticated critics.

Albert S. Cook, a philologist and ally of Chautauqua, fully exploited this privileged rhetorical position in an 1895 essay for *Forum*. Amidst a devastating depression the previous spring, laborers at the Pullman Palace Car Company near Chicago suffered a one-quarter reduction in wages. Thousands joined Eugene V. Debs’s American Railway Union and quit their jobs, sparking a general railroad strike. For two weeks that summer, railroad service in the western United States was disrupted while pitched battles ensued between strikers and federal troops in the Chicago railroad yards. Cook, well aware of events in Chicago, compared “the artificial conditions of city life” with “the holy calm of Nature” at Chautauqua, with “the rippling lake, the cooling winds, the rustle of foliage, the glimpses of blue sky between waving trees as one looked away from a lecturer out through the open sides of hall or amphitheater.” Cook’s contrast between Chicago and Chautauqua devolved quickly into a poorly veiled expression of discomfort with the “dangerous classes” of immigrants. “In the one, dissension,” he continued; “in the other, harmony. In the one, strife over material things; in the other, the distribution, in a hundred forms, of the Bread of Life. . . . The spirit which animates Chautauqua must be our salvation from the demon of anarchy.”²⁴

Despite its ambition to reach an urban audience, the independent assembly generally attracted rural middling sorts—in other words, people who were likely to share Cook’s fear of anarchy. Few of its day-trippers and vacationers hailed from big cities. A hotel registry at the Lakeside, Ohio, assembly in 1886 revealed twenty names, all listing Ohio addresses.²⁵ Even the original assembly in New York, with a stature that one might expect would attract city types, catered primarily to a locale clientele. Of 156 who enrolled their names into a Mayville, New York, hotel registry during the 1884 assembly, *only two* were from New York City.²⁶ On Epworth Heights’s opening day in 1894, a hotel in adjacent Ludington, Michigan, registered twenty-five guests: most listed addresses in nearby towns (including six from Ludington itself), and only two came from Chicago.²⁷ As assemblies



FIGURE 2.6 Chautauqua revealed its aspiration to compete with secular resorts when it unveiled this grand hotel in 1881. The Hotel Athenaeum incorporated Second Empire and Italianate styles. Even the choice of name—Athenaeum—revealed an effort to reach up the social scale. The word had long been associated in New England with the upper-class library and reading club, Boston Athenaeum, founded in 1807. (Courtesy of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York)

proliferated in the upper Midwest in the late 1890s, the trickle of city folk dried up. Guests at the assembly in Clinton, Illinois, in 1903 came from “a radius of about thirty miles.”²⁸ Industrial laborers were rare at Chautauqua assemblies. Special “Labor and Capital” days usually pitted one of the former versus an army of the latter.

The mixture of health talk and anti-urbanist rhetoric helped shape Chautauqua’s considerable tourist appeal. But if the strategy was meant to attract urban visitors to places like Carlisle, Pennsylvania, Crete, Nebraska, and Marinette, Wisconsin, it failed. City folk, with a plethora of entertainment options from which to choose closer to home, generally summured elsewhere. If the assemblies’ guests were already rural or suburban, and knew of the countryside’s healthful airs, why bash cities?

Within Chautauqua's anti-urban mentality is a hidden cosmopolitanism. Anti-urbanism in Chautauqua's literature spoke to two different constituencies: tourists, the potential consumers of Chautauqua's product, for whom health talk and anti-urbanist rhetoric formed powerful rationales for bourgeois leisure styles; and local assembly volunteers, generally residents of towns or small cities for whom anti-urbanism expressed deeper fears of obsolescence in an urban age. For the former, language casting Chautauqua as an alternative to the city raised expectations, signaled the management's ambition to succeed, and tantalized with the prospect of rubbing shoulders with a cosmopolitan crowd escaping "the tumult and excitement of city life."²⁹ In essence, the assemblies laid claim to a discourse that urban reformers—especially those calling for more green spaces, parks, and improved sanitation—had for decades treated as their own dominion. A hidden cosmopolitan message went out to the latter audience, as well. All the talk about big cities suggested the possibility that their small town was on the verge of becoming the region's next metropole. The assembly would help grow the economy of the town, "bring the Chautauqua home," and form "a most powerful auxiliary to the influences for good"—all without jeopardizing its pastoral self-image.³⁰

Better Than a Mill: The Booster's Chautauqua

For many rural Chautauquans, the urban threat went far beyond aesthetics and health fads. Chautauqua's conversion into a symbol of civic pride and a revenue-producing venture for small-town entrepreneurs was in part the product of destabilizing boom/bust cycles in the late-nineteenth-century rural economy. With the increasing sophistication of corporate investment, ownership, and finance in the final three decades of the nineteenth century, small towns, even those hundreds of miles from any metropolis, were forced to share control over the use of their land, rivers, and roadways. Midwestern farmers, for instance, grew increasingly nervous about their dependence on the volatile Chicago grain market. Beyond unemployment and falling prices, falling population levels throughout the Mississippi Valley dramatized the appearance of economic decay in small-town America. Fearful that their villages were being engulfed by an urban empire, small-town boosters searched frantically for new ways to consolidate their communities.³¹

As the city threatened to remake the countryside in its own image, boosters searched for ways to reverse the resulting loss of prestige and population. Tourism appealed to many as a source of new investment and permanent settlers. Installing a Chautauqua assembly was in many ways the perfect compromise between another church (provident but parasitical) and a secular resort or industrial factory (lucrative but, in the anti-urbanist tradition, morally objectionable). “The newspapers of Austin have talked much of cotton mills,” noted one Austin journalist in 1893, intoning a Jeffersonian distaste for heavy industry and implying that Chautauqua was more in keeping with the preferred industries of husbandry, agriculture, and domestic production. The proposal set forth by the Chautauqua advocates, “in its bearing upon the commercial, the moral, the intellectual life of Austin, *would be incomparably better than any mill*” (emphasis mine).³²

Historians define *booster* as a member of the elite strata most active in fostering a community’s economic and cultural progress. Boosters marshaled the human and financial capital of the community for philanthropic, educational, religious, and commercial causes. As agents of class authority, they helped select the standards of behavior and belief by which fellow community members more clearly understood their inclusion in—or exclusion from—the ranks of middle-class respectability. In the West, especially, boosters promoted the concept of the “urban frontier,” an evolutionary mythology of community building parallel to Frederick Jackson Turner’s frontier theory of social evolution: the engine of American democracy was its independent, ambitious, wide-awake towns (essentially, civic versions of the Turnerian frontiersman). Journalists propagated the urban frontier by reiterating the booster’s outlandish predictions—every small town, it seemed, was favored by Providence to become the next urban giant.³³

Boosters heard about Chautauqua in a variety of ways. In a highly mobile society, texts and people dispersed over space and time: a *Chautauqua Assembly Herald* left on a train seat, a “Pansy” novel spotted in a bookseller’s window, a conversation about the assembly overheard and remembered. Vincent and Miller ran a decentralized organization, only loosely supervising an expanding network of dedicated volunteers. Chautauqua enthusiasts like the composer and pianist W. F. Sherwin and the minister and Sunday school reformer J. A. Worden bore witness to Chautauqua by word of mouth. Sherwin, Chautauqua’s first musical director, personally oversaw the founding of several branch assemblies. Worden went west in 1878 to become superintendent of the Clear Lake Chautauqua Association in Clear

Lake, Iowa.³⁴ In the 1880s Jesse L. Hurlbut (1843–1930), a towering institutional figure and author of a best-selling Sunday school text *The Story of the Bible* (1904), traveled to the suburbs of Atlanta to encourage the nascent assembly there.³⁵ Several established figures in the original assembly lent their expertise to help the new winter Chautauqua located in De Funiak Springs, Florida, including Hurlbut, C. C. Case, and the novelist Isabella “Pansy” Alden.

Converts to the cause made frequent pilgrimages to the “mother Chautauqua” and returned with valuable practical knowledge and messages of inspiration. In 1882 members of a Chautauqua reading circle in Cleveland, Ohio, listened in rapt attention as a recent visitor to Chautauqua gave an “interesting account of the doings at Chautauqua, its pleasures and profits,” including a description of its various institutions and buildings. One Illinois minister had barely unpacked his bags from such a visit in 1885 when he found himself the guest of honor at the local reading circle.³⁶ Personal ties were behind at least two Iowa assemblies: after a visit to the “mother Chautauqua” in 1876, O. J. Fullerton returned home to Waterloo, Iowa, determined to replicate it there, an ambition realized fifteen years later. And the business manager at the Burlington, Iowa, assembly, John C. Minton, grew up six miles from Chautauqua Lake and fondly recalled visiting the original assembly as a child.³⁷

As the social web expanded, talent and information flowed back and forth between hub and spoke, and sometimes from one spoke to the next, with remarkable speed. In 1889 Cincinnati-based Chautauquan J. L. Shearer noted approvingly the emergence of a new assembly in San Marcos, Texas, and promised John Heyl Vincent’s office to use his connections in that area to “see that it will not go astray.”³⁸ One year, the San Marcos, Texas, assembly returned the favor: its founder and first superintendent, minister M. H. DuBose, served as principal of a Chautauqua reading group in Redondo Beach, California.³⁹ A town’s Chautauqua moment, therefore, sprang from various sources: a recent Chautauqua visitor’s word, a reading circle’s enthusiasm, a minister’s ambition, or a merchant’s eagerness to improve sales during the long days of July, considered by one booster as “a dull month in the mercantile business.”⁴⁰

Chautauqua’s administrative structure was simple but required cooperation from many levels of town governance. The procedure sometimes began when farsighted city councils acted to save a desirable plot of land from private development and preserve it as a city park. The town of

Waseca, Minnesota, did just that in 1883. Local entrepreneurs built a hotel near Maplewood Hill Park. To attract paying guests, they led the campaign for a Chautauqua assembly, founded in 1884.⁴¹ Some city governments commissioned panels, as Council Bluffs, Iowa, did in 1889. Others, like Winfield, Kansas, organized a bond issue to purchase land for the assembly.⁴² More commonly, well-connected citizens organized themselves into private syndicates. Five or six trustees signed papers of incorporation filed with the state. The trustees in turn presided over a panel of advisers organized in special committees responsible for the grounds, programming, or finances.

The legal innovation of incorporation had long protected investors from liability in cases of managerial fraud or bankruptcy. Assembly trustees, as officers of a nonprofit corporation, enjoyed similar protections. However, these volunteers exposed themselves to financial risk in other ways, usually by co-signing bank loans or purchasing stock for ventures that subsequently failed. The assembly raised investment capital through open sales of stock, usually \$10 a share for a projected total of \$5,000 to \$20,000 for the assembly itself, with building projects sometimes requiring additional stock auctions. These stocks paid no dividends; rather, they entitled the stock owners to perks, including breaks on season tickets, leases on land parcels for their tents or cottages, and the satisfaction of having discharged a civic duty.

The example of Beatrice, Nebraska, is illustrative. In 1888 five men formed a syndicate, purchased a wooded tract southeast of town just across the Blue River, and petitioned the Beatrice Board of Trade (that is, the chamber of commerce) to sponsor a Chautauqua assembly. The Board of Trade produced \$1,500 for the venture, and an association with \$50,000 capital stock was incorporated. The prosperous W. D. Nichols, a forty-eight-year-old dealer of farm implements, born in Canada, led the syndicate. The 1880 census shows Nichols living on Sixth Street in Beatrice proper. It was a neighborhood of middling sorts, including doctors and other merchants. Though situated somewhere in the middle of Beatrice's upper strata, Nichols elected not to take the top position on the assembly's board of trustees. The syndicate instead enlisted Bishop J. P. Newman of Omaha to serve as the assembly's president and S. D. Roberts of Lincoln as vice president. Just as John Heyl Vincent's presence shaped sacred purposes into modern forms at the original assembly, so too would men of the cloth lead the Beatrice assembly. The selection of Newman and Roberts also re-

flected shrewd strategizing. Both ministers were located at a distance, ensuring that authority over the daily affairs of the assembly would remain in the hands of Beatrice boosters.⁴³

If the clergymen who stewarded the assemblies knew about the wheeling and dealing of lands adjacent to the assembly, they rarely spoke out against it. Besides, reasoned many ministers, the assemblies would act as a powerful force for temperance. An assembly could serve as an island of abstinence in a wet town. In this regard, assemblies served as testing grounds for Progressive reform. Several state legislatures, beginning in the 1850s, passed special laws to give camp meetings the legal power to enforce their prohibition against alcohol. New York passed no fewer than nine laws and amendments giving state sanction to local practices of surveillance, enforcement, and punishment at Chautauqua assemblies.⁴⁴ The state of Minnesota gave the same sort of mastership to the Mahtomedi Chautauqua Assembly near St. Paul. Any person violating the association's by-laws—not all of which overlapped with county law—would “be tried before a justice of the peace of Washington county.” Bathing nude on the assembly beach, for example, would be punished by a fine of five dollars or five days imprisonment in the county jail; any cottage or tent renter refusing to let the association police enter his or her residence was subject to twice that penalty; and those caught in possession of spirits received a punishment twice again as harsh.⁴⁵ By empowering assemblies to prevent hooliganism, the nineteenth-century state extended the moral protections associated with middle-class tourism into the community at large.

While many elements combined to produce a Chautauqua moment, merchants formed the most powerful single socio-economic catalyst for a new assembly. “This Chautauqua is a big thing for Shelbyville,” said one Hillsboro, Illinois, journalist, enviously referring to the county seat fifteen miles away; “we don't know of anything that will bring more money into a town than a gathering of this kind.”⁴⁶ In a practice that might, under later standards of business ethics, be considered a conflict of interest, merchants commonly served as trustees or as committee chairs responsible for coordinating the acquisition of material in their area of commercial specialty. For example, the Northampton, Massachusetts, bookseller S. E. Bridgman quietly advertised in the local assembly's programs that he had all the books used by the CLSC in stock—Bridgman also served on the assembly's board of trustees.⁴⁷ As passenger railroad lines and interurban streetcars began investing more heavily in resorts in the late 1880s and 1890s, dramatic ex-



FIGURE 2.7 Entrance to Shelbyville Chautauqua Assembly, Shelbyville, Illinois, circa 1909. (*Shelby County Historical and Genealogical Society*)

amples of nepotism became more common. John M. Bramlette, on the Transportation Committee for the Kalamazoo (Michigan) Chautauqua Assembly, was also the director of the Michigan United Railways Company, which owned both the connecting streetcar line and the amusement park from which the assembly leased its space.⁴⁸

Many people were swayed by the example of Jamestown, the original assembly's largest neighbor. The founding of the original assembly in 1874 supplemented tourism and retail to Jamestown's thriving industrial, agricultural, and extractive economy. News of its fortune attracted interest nationwide. Inspired by fables of great riches, one town in Florida sent a representative to interview the shopkeepers of Jamestown. Chautauqua, concluded the agent, "is a 'gold mine.'"⁴⁹ In 1890 the founders of the Glen Echo assembly near Washington, D.C., singled out Jamestown as the model for this economic strategy. Jamestown "has thriven under the Chautauqua impulse more than any other place . . .

Its stores for general merchandise have risen from those of a small country town to mercantile establishments that would embellish even the city of Washington. In the month of June of every year, great steamboat loads of furniture, groceries, and general supplies pass up the lake to the grounds of the assembly, while trains of laden freight cars reach the station at Mayville, destined for the same point.

According to the Jamestown mythology, treasures awaited hard-working merchants in assembly towns. Boosters cited the experience of "a grocer of Jamestown": in 1882 he took \$8,000 of orders; by 1890, he was taking a cash business of \$30,000 during the eight-week summer session. The assembly, apparently, attracted the quality clientele valued by retailers—"there are no dead-beats and no bad debts among the Chautauquans." If Jamestown could do it, surely Glen Echo could as well.⁵⁰

Potential profits were immense. A Madison, Wisconsin, journalist took obvious pleasure in calculating the amount of money poured into the city's economy by assembly guests: \$1,000 per day. Some assemblies maintained tight control over assembly commerce, prohibiting outside vendors from delivering their wares to guests inside while awarding concessions to selected retailers, butchers, restaurateurs, and hotel managers.⁵¹ Christened the official tent contractor for the Boulder, Colorado, assembly, the Col-

orado Tent and Awning Company gleefully announced what was described as the largest order for tents ever placed with a western factory. Assemblies poured hundreds of dollars a year into the coffers of selected newspapers. In every camp ground or assembly town, as the profits grew, so did the pressure on assembly managers to open the field to free-market competition. Profits enjoyed by anointed subcontractors at the tightly controlled Pitman Grove, New Jersey, camp ground were substantial. It surprised no one, therefore, when in 1893 a grocer named F. S. Dodd, frustrated by the prohibition against bringing wares in from the outside, rammed his pushcart through the gates and ran over one of the Pitman Grove police officers.⁵²

Merchants also banded together to do battle with their competitors in neighboring towns. In this regard, assemblies evinced the mercenary side of civic pride.⁵³ All parties involved knew that Chautauqua assemblies were portable legal entities and could be pried away by boosters elsewhere. During the late 1880s and early 1890s competition for assemblies often devolved into bidding wars not unlike those common for contemporary sports franchises, giving proof to the *Forum's* lament that "every town and city is doing its best to stifle its smaller neighbors."⁵⁴ In 1889 the boosters of Georgetown successfully wrested the Texas Chautauqua Assembly from the boosters of San Marcos.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, behind-the-scenes maneuvering for the right to host the Chautauqua Assembly of Southern California soon spilled into the pages of the *Los Angeles Times*. One observer called it a "war to the knife, and the knife to the hilt."⁵⁶ Two years earlier the assembly had been enticed to resettle in Long Beach, on the site of a Methodist camp meeting, by the utility company's offer of cut-rate land parcels. In 1889 a resort consortium in Redondo Beach stole the assembly with an even more enticing gambit: 600 free acres and \$7,500 cash. The Long Beach Chautauquans, disgruntled, filed a lawsuit for the return of certain assets they thought belonged to them and began their own Long Beach Chautauqua assembly.⁵⁷

In addition to stealing assemblies from other towns, active boosters could wrest control from the associations that sponsored them. Boulder, Colorado's, boosters did just that. Seeking relief from the Texas summer, the Texas Teachers Association in September 1897 sought a location for their annual retreat along Colorado's Front Range. After visits to Denver and Colorado Springs, a delegation including University of Texas president G. F. Winston met with a committee of Boulder's best. All three cities had offered financial packages and incentives, but Boulder's scenic attractions



FIGURE 2.8 Fought's Stand at the Shelbyville Chautauqua Assembly, 1913. (*Shelby County Historical and Genealogical Society*)

and status as a university town won the day. The Texas-Colorado Chautauqua Association was incorporated in 1897 under the laws of the state of Texas, and a bond referendum passed the following year.

Within months, however, the Colorado/Texas coalition began to crumble. Boulderians grumbled that five of nine members of the board of directors resided in Texas and insisted that meetings be held there. Board member Mayor Crockett Ricketts recalled traveling hundreds of miles to attend business that took "less than an hour." Ricketts also resented the Texans' expectation that they be housed and fed for the duration of their visits. The people of Boulder, argued Mayor Ricketts in 1926, "who furnished most of the patronage" and "did the greater share of the work," deserved greater representation in the running of the assembly. By 1899, moreover, the assembly had taken on thousands of dollars of debt. Convinced they could do better, in October 1900 Boulder boosters purchased the Texans' share of the debt, secured donations from the railroad for a "guarantee fund" for the support of daily operations, and reorganized the association under local control. In June of the following year the old board of directors met to transfer their rights to the new Colorado Chautauqua

Association. Boulder had successfully wrested control of the Chautauqua from the Texans.⁵⁸

Chautauqua boosters were, by and large, a successful bunch. Of the 101 assemblies founded before the turn of the century, fully 44, including Boulder, were located in towns or small cities that were, or would eventually become, county seats or state capitals. But their constant movement back and forth across lines we might putatively define as secular and sacred suggests that Chautauqua's boosters did not fit the stereotype of the hucksterish business club leader, concerned only about power grabs and bottom lines. Sanctimonious but not insincere, assembly boosters sought a middle course between pastoralism and progress: between unprofitable probity on the one hand and immoral excesses of greed and luxury on the other. Their vision of progress was geared to the social. Commercial motives were embraced so long as they remained within circumscribed boundaries and assumed a supporting role in a larger vision of civic progress. The entrance fees were not for the "personal profit" of the organizers, insisted one assembly, but would be "devoted to building up the enterprise and beautifying the grounds." The Lake Bluff, Illinois, assembly brochure added this defensive note: "There is positively no personal speculation or real estate ring connected with this enterprise." Had anyone said there was?⁵⁹ To reduce their efforts for cultural progress to the logic of capitalism or to dismiss them as hucksters is to misread both the intent and outcome of Chautauqua. Chautauqua boosters projected a discrete vision of a sacralized civic order into an industrial age.

Railroads Redux

Six years before the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, the railroad town of Rome City, Indiana, constructed its own version of the White City. The 1887 brochure for the Island Park Chautauqua Assembly advertised itself as a perfect synthesis of pastoral purity and urban sophistication. A reader strolling across the assembly grounds would find an "island, some twenty acres in extent" and "naturally beautiful, always fanned by cool breezes, has hills and miniature valleys, romantic nooks, a beautiful beach, and a drive partially surrounding it." Just "a few minutes walk over a bridge and through a shady avenue" would bring the tourist to the "hotels and offices" of the as-

sembly's central business district. Nearby, the visitor would find lecture halls, pavilions, amphitheaters, and mineral springs. Looking southward toward the shore of "Sylvan Lake," one would find the post office and telegraph facility; the railroad station was just out of sight. The Island Park Chautauqua offered more than the perfect vacation spot. At the Chautauqua, promised the brochure, one could enjoy the advantages of isolation in nature without giving up the conveniences of modernity: "Here are opportunities to tent in perfect quiet or in the liveliest streets of the Assembly city." The Island Park Chautauqua appeared to manifest in physical form the middle landscape of literature, the idealized, pastoral alternative to the moral and aesthetic dangers of the emerging urban-industrial order.⁶⁰

The Island Park assembly, for all of its pastoral serenity and seeming transcendence, was a corporate construction. Its relationship to the Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad was essentially one of a company to its subcontractor. The assembly leased its ground from the railroad. Instead of simply charging a reasonable rent and leaving it at that, the railroad formed a complex alliance with its tenant. In exchange for free season passes to the summer program for its employees—a sort of early experiment in welfare capitalism—the G. R. & I. agreed to the following: negligible rent, no Sunday trains, low excursion fares, freedom to manage all concessions, and free rides for assembly directors engaged in official business. In addition, the railroad managed the hotel and restaurant and built the central meeting house. The company also handled advertising. When attendance lagged one year, it hired an artist to paint the flank of a G. R. & I. car with the details of the Chautauqua assembly's summer forum, stocked it with brochures and seven full-time assistants, and shunted the car through every city in Indiana. Attendance for the next season skyrocketed.⁶¹

Rome City may seem an extreme example of symbiosis between assemblies and the steel rails, but it is not. The Chautauqua assemblies' dependence on the railroads was nearly total. Of the nineteenth-century assemblies, almost all were located within a mile of the main tracks or a spur, and most enjoyed financial support from railroad companies in the form of fare discounts and kickbacks, special scheduling, land bequests, cash donations, and station construction. The first independent groups—Ottawa, Kansas (1878), Round Lake, New York (1878), and Pacific Grove, California (1879)—were old Methodist camp meetings that had long since made arrangements with local railroad interests. Few questioned the propriety of

holding the 1883 CLSC commencement ceremony of the Pacific Grove assembly in the “large public parlor of the railroad building.” The Pacific Improvement Company, subsidiary to the Southern Pacific Railroad, ran Pacific Grove as an economical alternative to the Hotel del Monte, the lavish hotel perched on the rocks of Monterey. In the 1880s virtually all of the new assemblies would cut deals with railroads.⁶² “When a railroad company starts out to build up an institution,” mused a journalist in response to the company’s plans to build up the local Chautauqua assembly, “they are in a very good position to do it.”⁶³

If the assemblies relied on the steel rails, the railroads also depended on resort ventures like the Chautauqua assemblies. From the railroads’ point of view, Chautauqua represented an economically and morally sound investment. Even if their involvement was less substantial, railroad executives clearly saw in Chautauqua a low-cost opportunity to expand passenger service on rural routes. In the 1880s the Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad printed a pamphlet series titled “Tourists’ Guide to Summer Homes” that displayed Chautauqua towns quite prominently: Delevan Lake, Wisconsin, for its “good hotels” and “fine drives”; Detroit Lake, Minnesota, for its freedom from “malaria and hay fever”; White Bear Lake, Minnesota, for its fishing; Madison, South Dakota, for the “South Dakota State Chautauqua Assembly, on whose grounds there is a fine hotel and first-class camping spots”; and Clear Lake, Iowa, known for its “Chautauqua of the West.”⁶⁴ (Most assemblies west of the Alleghenies, incidentally, laid claim to the West at one time or another.⁶⁵)

Where the interests of boosters and railway corporations overlapped, personal connections between railroad executives and the assemblies were common. In 1881 Pensacola & Atlantic Railroad Vice President William D. Chipley helped found the assembly at De Funiak, Florida. Still more intimate was the connection between the Mt. Gretna, Pennsylvania, assembly and the railroad and iron tycoon Robert Coleman. At his height in the early 1890s, Coleman owned several iron furnaces, two railroads, twenty-five thousand acres in three counties, a massive Gothic mansion—and a Chautauqua assembly on forty-seven acres along his Cornwall and Lebanon Railroad. Coleman built a baseball diamond on the assembly grounds and insisted on playing first base.⁶⁶ One of the founders of the Glen Park, Colorado, assembly, Rio Grande Railroad executive S. K. Hooper, advertised his employer in the assembly programs. Consistent with a trend toward the

niche marketing of tourist destinations by class, the Rio Grande advertised Glen Park as an affordable version of the railroad's other grand hotels and health resorts up and down the Front Range of Colorado. And A. S. Coylar, president of the North Carolina and St. Louis Railroad, directed the Monteagle, Tennessee, assembly.⁶⁷

The dynamic partnership between the Pere Marquette Railroad and the Epworth Heights, Michigan, assembly is especially illustrative. Like many other railroads in the late nineteenth century, the Pere Marquette Railroad looked to new revenue sources to make up for over-extension and general mismanagement. Born from a merger of three smaller railroads in 1857, the Pere Marquette grew into Michigan's primary lumber carrier. Aided by generous state land and cash grants, the railroad pushed west into the fertile Saginaw Valley. The railroad reached Ludington and its ferry to Milwaukee in 1874, completing a link from the great hinterland north of Chicago to the New York markets of Lake Erie. Profits soared until 1887, the high point of the state's lumber production. After that, overcutting took its toll. In 1886 only 25 billion feet of an original 150 billion feet of white pine remained. Lumber traffic declined by 193,790 tons in 1888 and 65,220 tons in 1889. In the depression years of the 1890s, the torrent of logs slowed to a trickle.⁶⁸

Faced with the end of the white pine harvest and a softening of the agricultural market, railroad officials searched frantically for new sources of revenue.⁶⁹ Michigan railroads found in Chautauqua a perfect suitor. Following the example of the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railway, which had sponsored the Rome City assembly and another, even larger one at Bay View, Michigan, two Pere Marquette executives approached the elders of an annual Methodist camp meeting at Reed City with an offer of cooperation.⁷⁰ The area had been hit hard by the decline in lumber production (nearby Lincoln was by then a ghost town). Desperate for any form of patronage, the boosters of Reed City and Ludington were anxious to talk. The three parties struck a deal in 1893. Under the new plan, the Methodists would move operations to the town of Ludington, expand their program to include a Chautauqua assembly, build a large auditorium and hotel, and plat lots for summer cottages. Pere Marquette agreed to pay \$10,000 over a period of several years to the venture, to transport trustees of the institution for free for fifteen years, to assist in distributing posters, flyers, and circulars, and to post reduced tourist rates to and from Ludington during the summer season.

The Citizens Development Company in Ludington chipped in with land, \$1,000 in cash, and a \$10,000 bond issue. Finally, the Development Company reserved the right to dam the Lincoln River to generate enough electricity to power a proposed street railway. The Epworth Heights Chautauqua Assembly opened in its new auditorium on 18 July 1894, and the special trolley opened on Memorial Day the following year.⁷¹

The dominance of the railroads reminds us that as a cultural commodity, Chautauqua was vulnerable to corporate control. But we should not construe this simply as the capitulation of “island communities” to the bureaucratizing pressures of modern organizations. In the 1880s and 1890s the deepest pockets in the tourist and entertainment industries resided not in Chicago or New York but in the next town or county. Boosters used the assembly to compete with the accumulations of local capital in secular resorts, amusement parks, county fairs, opera houses, and interurban lines. And railroad executives, the allegedly impersonal agents of corporate control, were themselves often enthusiastic supporters of these religious and educational ventures. Independent Chautauqua assemblies in the late nineteenth century exemplified Kathleen Neils Conzen’s observation that rural towns “responded to the transforming pressures of modern life on a parallel trajectory of their own.”⁷²

Magic Lands

The railroad came bearing cash. The booster came bearing land. And the minister came bearing a sense of moral urgency. But who would bring imagination and flair? Who would make the assembly more than an open space with an auditorium? Who would make guests feel as if they had been transported closer to God, to a foreign land, or to a realm of heightened cognition? To ensure the success of the assembly, boosters would have to endow it with the trappings of fantasy and escape. They found inspiration from a wellspring close to home: the Methodist camp meeting. In essence, the assemblies amplified the theatrical elements that had traditionally been a part of the camp meeting show. The preacher’s stand became an amphitheater, lit with torches. The praying circle became the orchestra pit. The preachers became members of the performing cast. And just as the camp meetings sent penitents hurtling back to the age of the Pharisees, so

too would the Chautauqua assembly transport guests into an alternative universe in which, under the cover of uplift and self-improvement, real life could be temporarily suspended.

Part of Chautauqua's great appeal was its status as an exotic fantasy-land. It was necessary to "throw off the ordinary cares and routine of life," according to the assembly in Monteagle, Tennessee, in 1886, to enjoy "healthful recreation. . . ." ⁷³ As if to prove the point, assemblies used various techniques to sever visitors from their daily routine, radically relocating them into "natural" landscapes to evince a recuperative state of mind. The Austin assembly, for example, was sited atop a steep hill, with the footpath accessible only by steamer; the Winfield, Kansas, and Rome City, Indiana, assemblies were located on islands. The entrance to Piasa Chautauqua in Elsah, Illinois, was over a sturdy wooden bridge. The assembly in Georgetown, Texas, "covered with a dense growth of live oak, post oak, and cedar," could be reached only by crossing a slender, suspension footbridge over the San Gabriel River—the river, promised the brochure of 1889, "separates it from the corporate limits of Georgetown" only yards away. ⁷⁴

Following the tradition of churches and cemeteries, assembly front gates reinforced the sense of having arrived in a sacred space. In a reference to the Feast of Tabernacles, some gates were little more than wooden arches. At other assemblies, ersatz combinations of biblical, classical, and European design elements made the effect as exotic as it was spiritual. Hedding, New Hampshire's, planners added lattice woodwork and Gothic spires atop the support posts. ⁷⁵ Others were more elaborate, such as the stone and wrought-iron gates at Glen Echo, Maryland, and Laurel Park, Massachusetts. The arch above the ticket office of the South Framington, Massachusetts, assembly in the 1880s stated its ambitions in large letters: "Freedom by the Truth." ⁷⁶

Those within were subject to an alternative cosmology, according to John Heyl Vincent in his influential *The Chautauqua Movement* (1885). Vincent envisioned a stratified community of chosen insiders and unchosen outsiders. By gaining esoteric knowledge, one achieved successive stages of access to progressively higher sacred spaces, each step conferring a higher level of power and respect. Those who came just for entertainment inhabited the physical realm only; the Earthly Chautauqua consisted of the physical plant itself, including the "outer court" of casual visitors, inhabited by

the “recipients” of Chautauqua’s ephemerality, those interested mainly in the “bonfires, banners, processions, fireworks.” The Circle included all those who pursued the lecture course and CLSC reading material. The Inner Circle included graduates of the CLSC and “advanced students.” At the very center—and here Vincent mixed his spatial metaphors—was the “Upper Chautauqua,” graduates of the Chautauqua College of Liberal Arts, who dwelled in the sacred space beyond the cottages and winding roads, “up under the welcome shadows.” The higher realm belonged to a select few, members of what he called a “fraternity of intellect.”⁷⁷ Initiates of the order passed into “St. Paul’s Grove” in an annual commencement ceremony more elaborate than an average college commencement and approaching Masonic rites in complexity.⁷⁸

Vincent’s Upper Chautauqua may have been a flight of philosophical fancy. But many found it a compelling image. One Louisiana minister compared the assembly in Ruston, Louisiana, to “the garden in which human history began.” The minister argued that “perfection would be realized here. The divine, the ideal, the true, will at last triumph and prevail in human history.” The minister linked Vincent’s Upper Chautauqua, with its implied reference to the Garden of Eden, to the optimistic, postmillennial theology popular among some liberal Protestants in the late nineteenth century. In his vision there was “no temple, no church, but all temples and all churches had become unified, and made the whole earth one grand temple, where the sweet, green groves of the garden combined with the gold-paved streets of the city.” Importantly, the millennial age of peace would begin on the Chautauqua grounds. The minister “paid glowing tribute to the Chautauqua as one of the means leading to the golden age, the ‘One far-off divine event / To which the whole creation moves.’”⁷⁹

With more enthusiasm than understanding, Chautauqua’s boosters faithfully translated this postmillennial mythology into built places, using Vincent’s model. The Upper Chautauqua concept inspired new building and landscape designs that stressed urban density and community. Early Methodist camp meetings, in an effort to maximize access to the preaching stand, had looked to L’Enfant’s hub-and-spoke design of Washington, D.C., resulting in central squares, linear radiating streets, and very small lots—in some assemblies, one had only to lean out of the cottage window to shake hands with one’s neighbor. The Cincinnati Camp Meeting Association in Epworth Heights, Ohio, platted seven hundred lots, each twenty

by forty feet, so small that later residents were obliged to purchase or lease multiple lots to fit their houses.⁸⁰

As the residential needs of the assemblies expanded, and the perceived need for domestic privacy became more acute, the assemblies opted for larger lots in a more organic, parklike design, including winding streets, culs-de-sac, copses, unimproved lots, remote corners, and grottoes. For example, the Mountain Lake Park Association in Maryland hired H. E. Faul, who helped design Druid Hill Park in Baltimore, to design their grounds. Eschewing formal design elements like entrances and boulevards, Faul's plan included meandering paths and arcing streets to accentuate the impression of remoteness.⁸¹ The abandonment of the formal grid signaled the Chautauquans' ambition to emulate the overlapping place mythologies of Christianity and Chautauqua: Heaven, the Garden of Eden, and the Upper Chautauqua. The repudiation of the grid also paralleled a wider suburban impulse: the frustration with the congestion of foreigners and "dangerous" classes clustered in the industrial inner city and the urge to seek a healthier proximity to nature. In the 1880s and 1890s residential areas in the assemblies abandoned the urban grid and adopted meandering, Olmstedian landscapes that would come to typify U.S. suburbs.

Meanwhile, at the center of the assemblies, differentiated and specialized public spaces emerged. At the core of the old camp meeting was a *sanctum sanctorum*—the old preacher's stand. The Chautauqua assembly, however, housed religious, educational, and recreational impulses. Hence, assemblies had not one but several aesthetic foci. The two most prominent architectural icons of Chautauqua were the neoclassical, open-air classroom called the Hall of Philosophy (or Hall in the Grove) and the amphitheater, both probably inspired by Vincent's travels in the East and deep reading in ancient history. These two mythological places would soon emerge as the first and last names of Chautauqua's aesthetic signature, commonly recognizable and frequently imitated.

No structure symbolized Chautauqua better than the Hall of Philosophy. The original Hall of Philosophy was a wall-less, Parthenon-like structure for lectures and concerts, constructed for Vincent's CLSC in 1879 and rebuilt in 1906. If assemblies gave form to Vincent's allegory of ascension to enlightenment, here was the aesthetic pinnacle of the Upper Chautauqua, a place of intellectual and spiritual perfection. Visiting in 1895, Ada Elizabeth Sisson could hardly contain her enthusiasm at visiting this sacred place. This

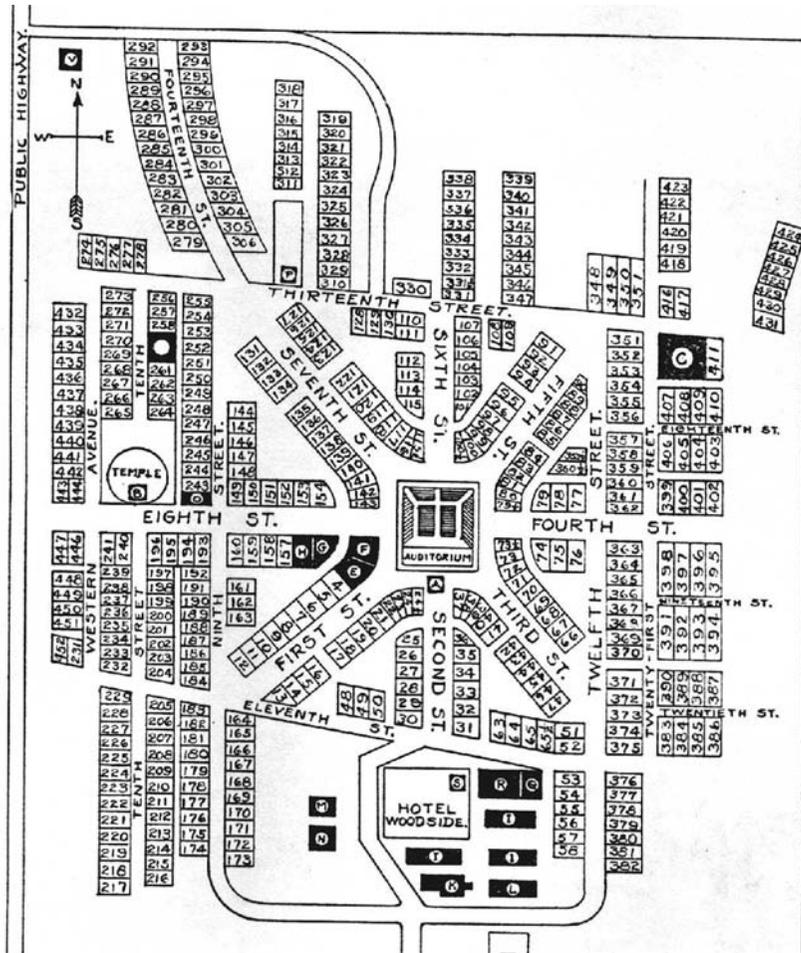
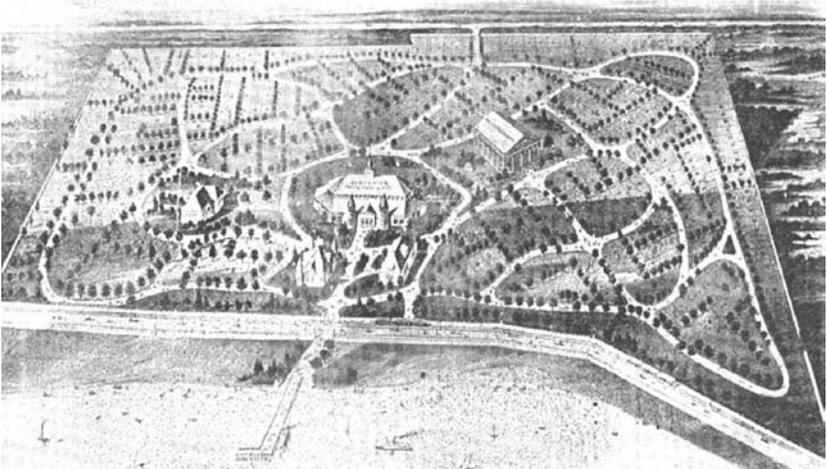


FIGURE 2.9 The Lancaster, Ohio, Methodist camp emulated L'Enfant's design of Washington, D.C. A radial pattern in the center, oriented around the preacher's stand and amphitheater, gives way to a grid format in the outlying residential space. The format served camp meeting purposes adequately: it maximized population density while democratizing access to the sacred enclosure at the center. Chautauqua assemblies, however, would abandon the urban grid altogether in favor of an Olmstedian, natural approach. (Source: John F. Grimes, *The Romance of the American Camp Meeting* [Cincinnati: Caxton Press, 1922], end flap)



FIGURE 2.10 AND FIGURE 2.11 These two Chautauqua assembly plans show the dispersion of the urban radial pattern. A miniature hub and spoke is barely evident in the plan of the assembly at Mahtomedi, Minnesota, above (circa 1887). The St. Paul & Duluth Railroad skirts the assembly grounds to the northeast. The plan of the Marinette, Wisconsin, assembly below lacks any hint of a grid (circa 1897). Meandering streets give way to an amphitheater circle, creating a mild concentric effect. The bird's eye format hid property lines and heightened its bucolic appearance. (Courtesy of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis.)



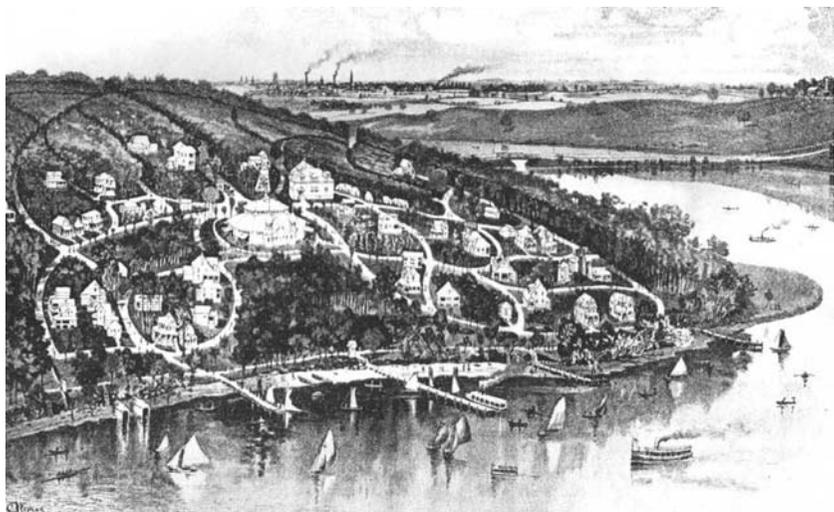


FIGURE 2.12 AND FIGURE 2.13 The bird's eye view of Delevan, Wisconsin, above (circa 1900) includes a bustle of recreational activity in the foreground. The spewing smokestacks symbolize progress, but they are carefully tucked away in the distant background. (*Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wis.*) Below is a map of Chautauqua, New York, from *The Chautauquan* (1900).



building “of which so much has been said and written,” with its “white columns and classically simple roof, gleaming among the stately trees, has a massive appearance that can not fail to impress one.” Wallace Bruce Amsbary read his poetry there in 1911 and felt similarly moved, musing whether “Socrates, or Aristotle—the first Chautauquans—had such an inspiring picture before them to stimulate their thought. . . .”⁸² The expense of building and maintaining a Hall of Philosophy made it impractical for many assemblies. I found evidence of eight built between 1884 and 1898, in addition to the original.⁸³

In Vincent’s imagination, the Hall of Philosophy (home of the Upper Chautauqua) took precedence over the amphitheater (home of neoclassical democracy, where the Lower Chautauquans congregated en masse). But the Hall of Philosophy proved impractical for many smaller assemblies, while an auditorium, big enough to house a large ticket-buying crowd, was a commercial necessity. Hence, most assemblies combined the two functions into one all-purpose structure. Lest anyone question the assembly’s dedication to higher ideals, they called these structures *amphitheaters* (an oval or round structure with tiers of seats, from the Greek *amphitheatron*) rather than *auditoriums* (a building for a large audience, from the Latin *audire*, to hear). The seven-sided Chautauqua building of the Redondo Beach, California, assembly, for example, imparted to one journalist the “suggestion of the Roman amphitheater about the interior.”⁸⁴

At a moment when opera houses and churches strove for ornamentation, these structures were Spartan in design. (One assembly admitted that its auditorium “makes no claims to architectural beauty.”) Many of the early auditoriums were little more than wooden shells intended to keep inclement weather out, sometimes failing even in that. Just twelve months after building their auditorium, the Burlington, Iowa, assembly directors noticed a roof girder buckling, necessitating major repair work. Steel roof construction solved the leaking problem but created a new one—rain pelting the steel shell produced a thunderous din inside, drowning out the speaker. Even in fair weather, comfort proved elusive. Early seating accommodations consisted of crates, barrels, or, in the case of the Iowa boy at an early Chautauqua Lake meeting, a “small round log” and a pile of “dry beech-leaves.” Flat benches were the norm by the 1890s, but most lacked back support. The practice of covering the bare earth with hay, tanbark, or sawdust provided a playground for field mice and ants when dry, germs and fungi when wet.

Open rafters provided an ideal home for bats. By late August, guano and decaying hay, soaked by leaky roofs, added a rich, earthy odor to the interior chamber that the more refined guests must have found too bucolic for comfort. Simplicity of design reflected more than just the limited resources of the association. Chautauqua's tabernacles of culture served as a mnemonic link to the camp meeting vernacular; thus, they harkened to an idealized rustic past while showcasing a progressive present.⁸⁵

Working independently, three architects perfected the design for an inexpensive, sturdy auditorium. Most influential was John Cilley of Lebanon, Pennsylvania, a Union Army veteran who taught himself civil engineering after the war. Cilley designed a one thousand-seat auditorium at Mt. Gretna in 1892 and the spectacular five thousand plus-seat shell at Mountain Lake Park, Maryland, in 1900. The need to dispense with the obstructing center pole created a serious structural problem: the entire weight of the structure pressed down and outward, following the direction of the roof's slope, threatening to collapse the auditorium like a house of cards. While architects of medieval cathedrals had used flying buttresses to distribute that pressure into the earth outside the walls, Cilley borrowed his more modest solution from the vernacular of barn design. Since the invention of the mechanical hay carrier in the 1860s, barn makers had looked for ways to get rid of the center pole, which impeded hay loading. In the 1880s builders began to use triangular trusses to free the interior of obstructions, resulting in the archetypal gambrel roof. Adapting this concept to auditorium design, Cilley installed steel tie-rods to a collector ring suspended in the center of the amphitheater. The tie-rods cinched the waist of the structure tightly, allowing the relatively thin wall supports to hold it up without a center pole or guy wires. Cilley's design for the Mt. Gretna auditorium became standard for midwestern assemblies for the next twenty years.⁸⁶ In 1895 John H. Findorff, a Madison, Wisconsin, carpenter, used a similar design to win the contract for the Coliseum, a five thousand-seat pavilion on the grounds of the Monona Lake Chautauqua assembly in present-day Olin Park.⁸⁷

The amphitheaters became public buildings, of sorts. Prefiguring the ubiquitous community resource center of the twentieth century, the assembly in Northampton, Massachusetts, offered the grounds and auditorium, at reduced gate fees, as a picnic spot for "Sunday Schools, Temperance Societies, Granges and other organizations."⁸⁸ Boosters in Summerfield, Ohio, used direct appeals to community spirit to raise money for their



FIGURE 2.14 The Shelbyville Chautauqua Association auditorium, designed by Chicago architect Morrison H. Vail, was built in 1903 for \$7,500 and seated 5,000. Skylights let in natural light, and sliding doors along the walls could be opened to let crowds or cross breezes into the seating area. Four years earlier, Vail used virtually identical principles in designing the Rock River Assembly amphitheater in Dixon, Illinois. Vail sought and received U.S. patent no. 393,889 for the design on 25 February 1902. Along with the amphitheaters in Chautauqua, New York, and Boulder, Colorado, the Shelbyville Chautauqua auditorium is one of the best preserved in the country and is listed on the National Register of Historic Landmarks. (Photograph by author. Source: “United States Patent Office. Morrison H. Vail of Chicago, Illinois . . . dated February 25, 1902,” [1902], copy in Chautauqua Box, SCH)

Chautauqua auditorium in 1912. The names of the donors to this “monument of great worth” would be “preserved in a suitable tablet which will be part of the building.”⁸⁹ The Chautauqua assemblies were symbolically rich and ritualistic spaces, monumental in their own way, consecrated to noble ends. But unlike public monuments, lots in the residential areas of the Chautauqua assemblies were available for sale or lease. Who, after all, would not wish to live in such a hallowed place?

The Never-ending Vacation: Chautauqua Suburbs

As temporary vacation landscapes, the Chautauqua assemblies performed as small-scale versions of a state fair or national exposition. But the assemblies

differed from the expositions in one crucial respect. While visitors to Chicago's famed White City of 1893 may have fantasized about living there, they knew that they never would. At closing time, they would have to leave the grounds. Chautauqua assemblies, on the other hand, encouraged visitors to carve private space from the public realm. Indeed, the assemblies depended upon revenues from the lease of lots for tents or cottages. Once converted into middle-class residential subdivisions, Chautauqua's fantasy landscape could be enjoyed fifty-two weeks of the year, not just for two months in the summer. In the Chautauqua suburb, the vacation never ended.

The winding streets, platted lots, and public spaces, combined with the mnemonic association with morality and wholesomeness, formed sturdy foundations for a particular type of suburban ideal at the turn of the century. A Chautauqua suburb came to life when a real estate entrepreneur purchased property within or adjacent to the assembly and, building on its existing infrastructure, developed the grounds into a subdivided neighborhood. Marketing these lots was easy: Chautauqua had already fed its clientele a healthy dose of anti-urban rhetoric and pastoral imagery, and women had already been encouraged to view the assembly as their home. The example of De Funiak Springs, Florida, is illustrative.⁹⁰ The De Funiak Springs assembly generated a wave of economic activity in Walton County. Its reputation as the educational center of northern Florida, earned when it won the privilege of hosting the State Normal School in 1887, heightened its appeal as a residence and vacation destination. Between the assembly's founding in 1885 and 1900, the population of De Funiak Springs, Florida, surged from 300 to 1,661. In 1903 Walton County built its first public high school.⁹¹

Assemblies enlisted local real estate interests to survey the land, mark the property lines, and handle the details of construction. These businessmen were more than happy to oblige. However, they did more than just promote, market, and build these assemblies—they transformed them into working neighborhoods.⁹² The investors huddled around (and in) Florida's otherwise nonprofit Chautauquas envisioned orderly, policed, zoned communities. Within months of forming the South Florida Chautauqua Association in Mount Dora in 1887, real estate investors led by Dr. W. P. Henry had platted "Chautauqua City." He reserved the parcel facing the railroad for the Chautauqua grounds. Inside were two hundred lots, twenty-two by eighty feet, for cottages. Henry presented the grounds to the association as a civic whole, a discrete community with clearly delimited public, com-

mercial, and residential space. Bordering the railway and located between two lakes, the new residents of Mount Dora, Chautauquans by default, could not have asked for a more hospitable location.⁹³

Dead assemblies were more hospitable still. An aborted or failed assembly freed developers to reshape the grounds without interference from boosters or ministers. Of the 101 assemblies founded by 1900, about one out of four failed or moved within a few seasons. Developers pounced on the properties left behind.⁹⁴ For example, in 1879 a group of Methodists from the Twin Cities, backed by the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railroad, founded a camp meeting at Tonka Bay on Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota. But the St. Paul contingent objected to the distant location and pulled out of the venture, making the inaugural 1880 Sunday school convention the assembly's last. By 1911, when the Lake Park Hotel (which had operated on the site for three decades) was torn down, frame houses stood on most of the lots platted by the Methodists in 1879. Today, Tonka Bay Village is a quiet Minneapolis suburb.⁹⁵ The growth of Chicago's suburban perimeter engulfed another assembly at Lake Bluff. Methodists had founded this camp meeting on a prime location between the railroad tracks and Lake Michigan. When the assembly folded in the mid-1890s, the lots—once leased—were sold outright to the cottage owners. Lake Bluff is now a well-to-do suburb of Chicago's North Shore.⁹⁶

The cottagers and homeowners who moved in often had strong ties to the original assembly. If some were glad to be free of its restrictions, few wanted to erase Chautauqua from the landscape altogether. Residents of the Lake Bluff neighborhood, for example, afforded a totemic power to what the assembly left behind. When its auditorium and institutional buildings were torn down in 1898, residents used the tabernacle wood to make garden benches that were prized as “relics” of the old assembly.⁹⁷ Elsewhere, homeowners vied for the right to use amphitheater wood—the stuff once used to give Chautauqua's ideals material form—as construction material for their private dwellings. Boards from amphitheaters at the Mahtomedi, Minnesota, Chautauqua assembly north of St. Paul, and the Grimsby Park Methodist assembly in Ontario, Canada, found new use in the construction of new homes.⁹⁸ In Marinette, Wisconsin, the administration building and kindergarten building, legacies of the Chautauqua assembly that operated there from 1897 into the 1910s, were later remodeled as private homes. Enough wood was harvested from the dormitory building to make several cottages in the 1920s.⁹⁹

Through success as well as failure, assembly founders carved the concept of public meeting space into the private, subdivided suburb. When residential neighborhoods engulfed many of the assemblies in the 1910s and 1920s, collective memory often impelled townspeople to preserve the communitarianism inscribed in the physical soil. If left standing, these structures housed concert halls, skating rinks, dance halls, and bowling alleys; others were razed and the ground upon which they stood given over to use either as residential property or as a playground, park, or school. How many Chautauquas became residential suburbs? Of the forty-seven sites I examined, nearly half (twenty) have since become suburban or exurban residential neighborhoods, with the rest either retaining their identity as summer colonies (fourteen) or serving as parks (twelve) or school grounds (one).¹⁰⁰ The assemblies' powerful evocations of remoteness lived on in social memory. Six of them, legally distinguishing themselves as hamlets, villages, or towns, named themselves after their institutional progenitors. Thus, we have Chautauqua, Iowa, a municipal spinoff on what was the Council Bluffs and Omaha assembly; Chautauqua, Illinois (formerly the Elsayh assembly); Chautauqua, South Dakota (formerly Madison); Chautauqua, Washington (Vashon Island); Chautauqua Park, Illinois (Havana); and Chautauqua, Ohio (Franklin).¹⁰¹

The privatization of Chautauqua's public space was a complex and contested process. Residents of Chautauqua suburbs worried about losing the spiritual and aesthetic qualities that had attracted them in the first place. "Shall it become a restricted village," asked one historian of a defunct assembly in Ohio, "an incorporated town, a big country club or recreation park for the use of the general public?"¹⁰² Those hoping to preserve the communal tradition of the assembly ran up against a contravening tradition in U.S. society: an inflexible doctrine of absolute property rights. Cottage-owners' associations sprang up to defend the private interests of these residents, who sought to relax the decidedly unmarketable legal covenants prohibiting drinking, card playing, and music. "The hide-bound laws must be loosened a little," insisted a cottager at a Maryland assembly in 1904. "One's home is his castle and he should govern that household to his liking so far as he does not trample on the laws of God or man."¹⁰³

The private desires of the cottage-owners often brought them directly into conflict with those hoping to keep the Chautauqua spirit alive. To preserve their tax-exempt status and keep down rent and gate fees, owners' associations often resisted internal improvements to the assembly infrastruc-

ture. Some, preferring to pay property taxes rather than submit to the assembly's fees and hidebound regulations, sought annexation from nearby municipalities. Debates could get quite rancorous. One correspondent to the original Chautauqua assembly in 1900 described the Cottage Holders' Organization as "a class of people who have banded themselves together like a pack of pirates to make every dollar they can by taking boarders. . . . I told them," continued the complainant, recounting his comments during a public meeting, "that in my opinion they were a worse class than the Anarchists we had in Chicago, for without the success of the Assembly their property would be absolutely worthless."¹⁰⁴

Strong stuff. We must put it in context. The tensions between the public vision of assembly enthusiasts and private desires of cottagers would grow more acute in the early twentieth century, mostly without regard for the fact that the debate itself was a luxury, a sign that the walls of the neighborhood had risen high enough to contain the struggles to define prosperity. Enjoying Chautauqua's sacred space was a privilege of wealth and whiteness. Its "middle landscape" made the culture of a defined social group—white middling sorts—appear to be universal, to the exclusion of competing ethnic, racial, and religious perspectives. As suburban life merged ever more completely with the consumer ethos of the twentieth century, Chautauqua came to be associated with material status and privilege, as opposed to liberal inclusivity. Ironically, the cottage-owners' associations, while spouting a rhetoric of property rights, enjoyed property values that had been artificially elevated by the presence of an active (or even inactive) assembly. In addition, they found themselves dependent on institutional, municipal, and state authority—especially covenants, zoning, and municipal services—to ensure that the vacation would never end. Chautauqua's liberal creed had anticipated that ordinary middle-class Americans would be forced into the whirlwind of the organizational revolution. That prophecy had come true. Even in failure, Chautauqua's legacy endured.¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

In the first chapter, we visited the Methodist camp meetings and witnessed their evolution into Chautauquas in the late nineteenth century. We saw how these isolated enclaves gave aesthetic form to social Christianity, while inscribing class relations into the landscape. We were reminded that there

was nothing new in the sight of sacred organizations jockeying for advantage in the commercial economy. As historian Laurence Moore has argued, “the culture industry and religion learned from and adjusted to each other.”¹⁰⁶ Chautauqua’s ambition to sacralize everything it touched eased the transition from Methodist orthodoxy to the Social Gospel’s new creed of deeds, action, and civic involvement. The story of the middle-class Methodists between 1850 and 1920, therefore, is not one of self-alienation and secularization but of constantly shifting strategies to preserve the delicate equilibrium between sacred and secular space. Chautauqua’s version of the Social Gospel reassured Americans that they could import many of their religious beliefs into realms often viewed as secular, such as municipal governance, popular entertainment, and the construction of places in which to live.

The independent Chautauqua assembly, seemingly schizophrenic in its ability to house ideals of Protestant uplift and coarse real estate motives under the same roof, reveals much about the changing cultural experience of the middle classes. It shows us how, in Christopher Evans’s terms, “social Christian principles moved beyond churches to interpenetrate larger social-political institutional structures.”¹⁰⁷ According to Emily Raymond in 1885, Chautauqua was a “Mecca” where “many thousand pilgrims” went for “truth and inspiration.” As if to clear up any doubts of God’s immanence in the assembly’s sacred enclosure, the railroad-owned Chautauqua in Rome City, Indiana, featured the “model car,” a scale model of Palestine in plaster of paris, complete with mountains, cities, and rivers, and exhibited permanently on a bright yellow flatbed with the words G.R. & I. RAILROAD COMPANY emblazoned in black letters across the side. If the Holy Land could fit on a railcar, virtually anything was possible.¹⁰⁸ Gradually, almost imperceptibly, Chautauquans remade their vacation haunts into suburban communities, giving their racial, gender, and class assumptions a more subtly permanent form.

If the assemblies and the suburban spaces that followed them cleaved too much to an elitist model of leisure, and if they failed to admit responsibility for making the yawning inequalities of class and race in the United States appear “natural,” they did, at least, force their clientele to consider three fundamental precepts of the liberal creed: first, that modern life had grown too complicated for any individual to master; second, that social progress depended on the application of fixed moral truths derived from a responsible application of monotheistic religious beliefs; and third, that

government would have to be made thoroughly responsive to the needs of the God-fearing, middle-class citizen. In the battle to claim the mantle of “true” citizenship—against the claims of immigrants, African Americans, and workers—Chautauquans had placed themselves at the vital center. Would they insist on keeping it as an exclusive preserve? Or would they share it with others?

3. *Canopy of Culture: Democracy under the Big Tent of Prosperity*

We Study the Words and Works of God.
—Motto of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle

To be strictly religious is also to be patriotic.
—Lithia Springs Chautauqua Assembly

What was the “Chautauqua idea,” and what were its social and political implications? Did it hold promise as a workable model of participatory democracy, or did it simply express the class and racial privileges of its creators? To answer such questions, we must look at the lives of four leaders of the Chautauqua movement, three of them Protestant ministers, all members of the middle or upper classes, and all fervent devotees of the Social Gospel. John Heyl Vincent (1832–1920), along with his partner, industrialist Lewis Miller (1829–1899), presided over the marriage of the camp meeting and the Sunday school; the two men are properly identified as the cofounders of the Chautauqua Movement. Less well known are the contributions of Jasper Douthit (1834–1927), the Unitarian missionary from southern-central Illinois, and the Moravian Rev. J. Max Hark (1849–1930), an early exemplar of “middlebrow culture” in Pennsylvania.

On the surface, these four men would seem an unlikely team. Although the founders probably knew of Douthit and Hark, their bond was professional, not personal, and they did not correspond or socialize. Vincent was born and raised in Alabama, Miller in Ohio, Douthit in Illinois, and Hark in Pennsylvania. Only two, Vincent and Miller, were Methodist. Douthit was raised Baptist, preached Methodism in his early twenties, and by age twenty-eight was an ordained Unitarian; and Hark was a Moravian who spent his retirement in translating church documents from German to English. These individuals are important, in part because of their intrinsic significance to the movement, in part because of what their activities show about Chautauqua’s appeal across lines of region, ethnicity, and denomination. These men traveled very different paths, but their arrival at the gates of Chautauqua signified the allure of the liberal creed among white middling sorts in the North and Midwest.

Despite a heterogeneous appearance, five common characteristics mark these men as Social Gospellers. First, all were concerned Protestants of one sort or another (Hark's Moravians traced their lineage to the fifteenth-century dissenter and martyr Jan Hus, making them Protestants of an older vintage). Although their antipathy to Roman Catholicism varied in intensity, all saw core national and moral values threatened by the influx of Catholic immigrants. Second, although skilled at negotiating modern, impersonal organizations, these men were never completely at ease with urban life. All four grew up in towns or small cities: Tuscaloosa, Alabama (Vincent); Greentown, Ohio (Miller); Shelby County, Illinois (Douthit); and Nazareth, Pennsylvania (Hark). Born between 1829 and 1849, these men found in Chautauqua a pleasant reminder of a pre-urban, antebellum worldview—a romantic vision of the United States in which immigrant Catholics and African Americans existed only on the margins of public culture. Third, as descendants of French, Scots-Irish, and German heritages, they all belonged to European “races” deemed easily assimilable by the New England Yankee elite. Thus, they enjoyed racial prerogatives in an age of sharpened segregation and increasingly jingoistic patriotism. Fourth, all four men recognized the cognitive authority of science but looked to broader explanatory philosophies—including liberal Protestantism, Unitarianism, Social Darwinism, and even mysticism—to preserve their core Christian faith. True religion, repeated John Heyl Vincent frequently, would have nothing to fear from true science.

Finally, all four were Victorians with very definite ideas about how people ought to behave. That college-educated white men aspired to lead the Christian Republic was no coincidence. Vincent, Douthit, and Hark merit classification in that strata of educated, white, mostly northeastern elites of the post-Civil War era known variously in the scholarship as the “Genteel Tradition,” “Best Men,” “Mugwumps,” “moral guardians,” and “liberal reformers.”¹ Vincent in particular sought to emulate the moral virtues thought embodied by upper-class English society, including female piety and gentlemanly continence. Cognizant of the revolutionary potential of shifting moral authority from the church to the individual, they insisted that social order should be maintained by the enlightened governance of society’s “best” people capable of selecting the “best” culture for mass consumption. As Vincent put it, “Let them read the same books” and “observe the same sacred days—days consecrated to the delights of a lofty intellectual and spiritual life.”²

Consistent with the egalitarian undertones of evangelical Christianity, they linked religious faith and democratic progress. “The right of the ballot brings with it the need of general intelligence,” Vincent wrote. Chautauqua would provide the tools for a growing populace to better exercise their rights.³ However, the “best men” were notoriously suspicious of pluralism and popular democracy. For Vincent and his cohorts, democracy did not mean freedom from religious duty or moral order but rested on voluntary allegiance to fixed moral and ethical laws. “There are two freedoms,” insisted Vincent’s fellow Chautauquan Douthit, anticipating Sir Isaiah Berlin, “the false, where a man is free to do what he likes; the true, where a man is free to do what he ought.”⁴ Chautauqua taught respect for superior ideas; so enlightened, a man would see what he *ought* to do. Voting, therefore, was a privilege, not an absolute right. “Too many people vote at present,” claimed Vincent in 1884. Thus, Chautauqua deserves consideration as an example of what historians in the 1970s and 1980s called “social control”—that is, the process by which language and culture are made allies of class authority by making all alternatives to industrial capitalism appear trivial or deviant.⁵

However, if Chautauqua was an attempt to exert social control over women, ethnic out-groups, and racial minorities, it failed. None of Chautauqua’s leaders was ever fully able to define or control the institution he helped create. Ironically, Chautauqua’s inchoate liberalism, its democratic themes, and its claim to respect alternative views (albeit within narrow moral boundaries) resonated with those same “others” that Vincent had hoped to keep on the margins. The liberal creed proved to be a portable concept, quickly appropriated by others, and expandable into a larger claim for ethno-religious pluralism and participatory democracy. In the 1890s Jewish and Roman Catholic groups created their own Chautauqua assemblies, in Philadelphia and Plattsburgh, New York, respectively. By appropriating Chautauqua’s patriotic discourse for themselves, these out-groups rejected exclusive definitions of good citizenship and declared their intent to converge with the mainstream. Meanwhile, some Chautauquans began to accept the Populist and Progressive message of proactive government, organizational complexity, and social responsibility. By the turn of the century, the Chautauqua idea had shaken free of many of its parochial limitations, and its institutional canopy had been unfurled. By the 1890s, any white nonlaborer—even Moravians and Catholics—could enjoy life in the big tent of prosperity.

Lewis Miller: Communitarian Philanthropist

Of the four men, Lewis Miller was the richest and most powerful and, thus, the one whom we might expect would be the most conservative. And yet, he was probably the most liberal. Born in Greentown, Ohio, in 1829, Miller experienced an upbringing conspicuously lacking in the moral coercion that defined Vincent's. Miller's grandfather, a German immigrant who fought for American independence in the Continental Army, settled on a farm in Stark County in northeastern Ohio. By 1850, the family had settled in the village of Greentown, Miller's father having augmented the farm with a cabinetmaker's shop and a whiskey distillery, both of which frequently produced goods for home consumption. Miller's few autobiographical statements painted a nostalgic picture of rural life in Greentown. The only mention of religion was a recollection of a circuit-riding preacher

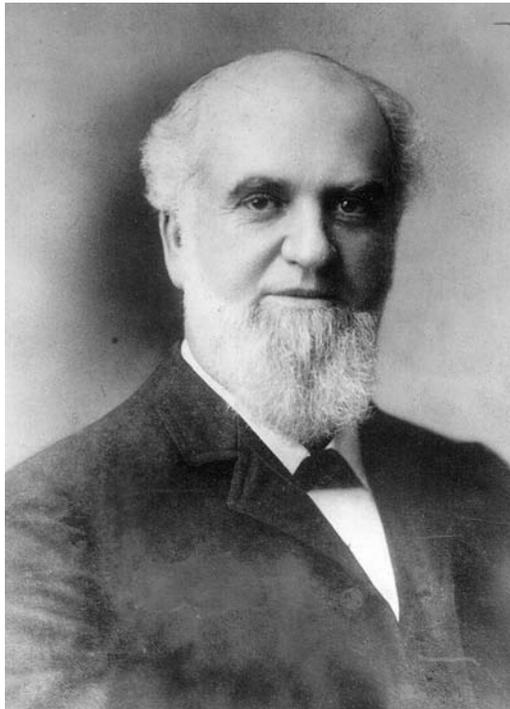


FIGURE 3.1 Lewis Miller, 1899. (Courtesy of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York)

sharing a whiskey toddy with his father in the living room. The Millers converted to Methodism in the 1830s, during a high tide of Methodist circuit-riding activity in northern Ohio. The decision would clearly have attracted the attention of the Millers' German neighbors, generally Lutherans and Catholics; but if the experience was traumatic, Miller kept the memories to himself. In later life, Miller would share Vincent's aversion to the emotional excesses of the revivals, a clue that the boy may not have accepted his family's evangelical faith without some skepticism. There were other sparks of intellectual independence: his performance in Greentown's subscription school was sufficient to merit a position as a teacher in a local public school.⁶

Lewis Miller rejected farming for the riskier vocation of inventor and manufacturer. But unlike those of his fellow Ohioan industrial tinkers, Thomas Alva Edison (Miller's future son-in-law) and Clem Studebaker (the car manufacturer, Miller's childhood friend and future Chautauqua Institution president), Miller's sentimental attachments would lead him back, via a circular path, to farming. After a stint as a plasterer, he accepted a position in the Greentown machinery shop of Cornelius Aultman. There he unleashed his talents on the horse-drawn mechanical mower. Devices he invented to improve the operator's control over the cutter-bar, including a hinge allowing the driver to pull it up before hitting rocks and a balanced drive system to increase stability, required a completely new design. His Buckeye Mower and Reaper was patented in the late 1850s, and by 1864, Aultman, Miller and Company of Akron, Ohio, was producing more than eight thousand mowers, threshers, and wheat binders a year. During the Civil War years, Miller joined the "Squirrel Hunters," a vigilante group organized to defend southern Ohio from Confederate raiders.⁷

While he mobilized for Ohio's defense, Miller was also rising into Akron's cultural elite. Married and living in a large house in Oak Place, Miller ascended to Sunday School Superintendent of the First Methodist Church, president of the school board, and president of the Board of Trustees of the coeducational Mount Union College.⁸ (He later toyed with the idea of a career in politics. Disgruntled with the Republicans for opposing bimetalism, a popular issue among the customers of Buckeye mowers, Miller ran for Congress on the Greenback ticket in 1878. He was defeated soundly by the incumbent, future U.S. President William McKinley, popular among Ohio's Grangers for breaking with his party and voting for the Bland-Allison Act, which authorized limited coinage of silver.⁹)

From his perch atop the sacred, public, and higher educational institutions of Akron, Miller saw ways to bring all three into accord with the needs of an industrial society. The pace of life in the commercial age threatened to render the Enlightenment Man extinct. "The time was when five studies . . . would make such men as Paul and Plato, as Aristotle, as Bacon, as Shakespeare," Lewis later lamented in an 1889 speech, "but what now? The common schools of today have 40 to 50 textbooks that must be mastered. . . . We cannot get the time according to the former plan." At the First Methodist Church, he organized a standard grading system and a normal class to instruct Sunday school teachers. In what would later be considered a violation of church-state separation, the school board member recruited Sunday school teachers from the public schools. At Mount Union, Miller pushed for incorporating agricultural sciences into the curriculum and urged the school to adopt a four-term academic year to make it easier for the sons and daughters of farm families to attend.¹⁰

Miller pounced on the Sunday school with the zeal that only a rich philanthropist with something to prove about human nature could muster. Although more properly a member of the elite than John Heyl Vincent, Miller was far less preoccupied with the Sunday school's role in preserving moral order. His thinking revealed a communitarian, or even utopian, idealism. (Here, Miller may have been inspired by the scores of religious and socialist experiments flourishing in the northern Midwest in the 1830s and 1840s.¹¹) As a Sunday school superintendent in Canton, Ohio, Miller was shocked to find all ages thrown together in dark church basements, in rooms of "low ceiling, often almost filled with furnaces, smoke and heating pipes branching off in every direction around which scholars could easily play peep."¹² Reasoning that Sunday schools needed dedicated buildings, Miller hired architect Jacob B. Snyder to design an open, semicircular central hall, or rotunda, several stories tall; along the perimeter of the arc, hallways extending in a radial pattern away from the main assembly opened into a series of special classrooms and lecture halls. Doors to the classrooms could be left open, bringing the entire building into earshot of a featured lecturer.¹³

The design, which became known as the Akron Plan, debuted at Miller's First Methodist Episcopal Church in Akron, Ohio, in the late 1860s.¹⁴ By then, Miller and Vincent were working on parallel tracks. While Vincent organized a special Sunday school normal college that awarded diplomas to pupils who completed a four-year course of study, Miller was

busy creating a space that would facilitate the Sunday school's sacred mission. In this sense, Miller had created an urban analog to the Methodist camp meeting: a temporary community, organized on a religious principle, built on a Benthamesque, concentric-radial motif and carefully delineating between specialized and public spaces. When Miller met Vincent, he immediately saw how their ideas complemented each other. Miller's communitarian impulse would achieve its fullest expression in the Sunday School Teacher's Assembly in 1874. Chautauqua might be viewed as the Akron Plan writ large—a remote, self-contained community of faith oriented around a post-Enlightenment creed of personal and social redemption through education.

Observers frequently remarked on the striking contrasts between the two founders. Vincent, a prolific writer and skilled orator who enjoyed the spotlight, emerged as the public face of Chautauqua. Miller, on the other hand, labored behind the scenes to place Chautauqua on a sound administrative, legal, and financial footing. He arranged for surveying, negotiated with builders, pushed for a gate fee and a fence, and created a bureaucracy to run it all. When funds to pay workers and lecturers were insufficient, contributions from his own accounts would appear in Chautauqua's coffers. Miller's lack of confidence and skill as a public speaker ensured that these accomplishments would receive less recognition. Moreover, while Vincent left an autobiography, a score of books, hundreds of articles and speeches, and letters in the thousands, Miller rarely wrote and produced no memoir. Both men worked hard to keep their conflicts private and to discourage invidious comparisons. "I never like to have my name connected to Chautauqua to the exclusion of his name," Vincent said to applause in 1898. "My prominence as master of the platform has, I sometimes fear, given me a reputation which should be shared by my co-laborer from the very beginning, the Hon. Lewis Miller of Akron, Ohio."¹⁵

Given the nearly perfect contrast of corporate leadership stereotypes—"idea man" versus "nuts and bolts manager"—it was perhaps not surprising that some people would pick sides. Indeed, Miller's opacity invited some to speculate that he, not Vincent, deserved primary credit for founding Chautauqua. The claim is not without some intrinsic merit. It was Miller, not Vincent, who hatched the plan to reshape the camp meeting into a Sunday school assembly; and it took a campaign of persuasion to overcome Vincent's concerns and get him to join in partnership. The institution grew organically in its first years; its survival and development was

at least as much the result of Miller's financial support and administrative skill as of Vincent's vision. Vincent is sometimes credited as the author of the Chautauqua idea because he wrote *The Chautauqua Movement* (1885), a sermonic celebration of spiritual and social redemption through education. But note the date: when Vincent sat down to write *The Chautauqua Movement* in the early 1880s, he needed only to look out his window. The book described a bustling place whose existence could in large part be credited to Miller's creative input and financial generosity.

Interestingly, Sunday school worker R. M. Warren put Lewis Miller first in his 1878 summary of the assembly's short history. Miller was a man of "superior executive ability . . . cool judgment . . . always approachable, always pleasant, always confident. He is the soul of the assembly." Vincent, mentioned second, was described as a prude and an esthete. "He is withal somewhat peculiar . . . everything must be artistic. Roughness, uncouthness, splinters, jagged edges and crookedness are never tolerated by him."¹⁶ Against the preachy Vincent, Miller appealed to Chautauqua visitor Cornelia A. Teal as a model of Christian decorum and restraint: "He never wastes words," she wrote in 1889, somewhat understating the matter.¹⁷ Contributing further to the "cult of Miller" is Neil Baldwin's recent biography of Thomas Edison, who married Miller's daughter Mina. Baldwin unearthed a series of reproachful letters between the Vincents and Millers over an 1896 article titled "John H. Vincent: The Founder of the Chautauqua Movement"—with virtually no mention of Miller—written by Vincent's friend and University of Chicago president William Rainey Harper.¹⁸

This somewhat arcane debate is of most direct interest to those connected to the extant Chautauqua Institution in New York who have a stake in the nuances of reputation within that community. I mention it here in the hope of retrieving these important historical figures from the deeply carved dichotomies—in particular, idealist/pragmatist, religion/market, and sacred/secular—that contemporaries and historians alike created for them. These men, like Chautauqua itself, straddled those binaries. Vincent and Miller shared far more than they did not. Just as Vincent was more than a sermonizer, Miller was more than a manager. He was as enthusiastic as his partner about the message of Protestant uplift, as romantic in theology, and far more idealistic in politics (he favored women's suffrage). Vincent embraced the market just as Miller embraced Protestantism's authority to define social value. The Vincent/Miller union reminds us that Chautauqua was driven by market forces—the marketing of ideas, places, personalities,

books, lectures, sermons, courses, and leisure—from its inception. The consumer culture of the twentieth century changed it only by degrees.

John Heyl Vincent: Chautauqua Patriarch

Of the four men examined here, John Heyl Vincent mostly richly deserved the title of patriarch.¹⁹ Like many of his fellow Victorians, he was deeply committed to the received wisdom of the past, morally inflexible, and retrograde on race issues. Vincent's conservatism almost certainly derived from his childhood among slave-owning Methodists in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The young Vincent seemed immune to the righteous antislavery of many itinerant Methodist preachers. Although he later criticized slavery as "an evil thing in itself," Vincent lacked the indignation that many of his generation expressed as social action. The young Vincent recalled preaching sermons to "the little negroes" with a "hymn book in one hand and a rod in the other."²⁰ Vincent linked the "large leisure" and "elegant social life" enabled by his family's slaves to the benevolent regime of maternal control exerted by his mother, Mary Raser Vincent. The slaves "felt themselves to be part of the family." Masters and mistresses—and, by implication, his parents—expressed "genuine sympathy" to the slaves, so much so that "the lives of the slaves were more secure and happy and reverently religious than if they had been entirely dependent upon themselves."²¹

Vincent clung tenaciously to white bourgeois home life and to the memories of the woman who symbolized it. Mary Raser Vincent appeared in her son's autobiography as a picture of "neatness, frugality, carefulness, hospitality incarnate, and the perfection of self-sacrifice. . . ." Every Sabbath evening, she called her three sons and one daughter (always sickly, she died within a week of her mother's death in early 1852) into her room to "spend a few minutes in a plain, practical talk." There, "seated together among the shadows, she would talk in her tender way about eternity and duty, about our faults as children, her anxiety about us, her intense desire for our salvation." Mrs. Vincent's daily reading included the Bible, monographs on the "second Blessing," and the religious writings of Phoebe Palmer, a New York holiness enthusiast who in *The Promise of the Father* (1859) urged women to assert themselves spiritually.²² From his mother, Vincent learned to equate women's inward spirituality not with protofeminist rebellion but with the sanctification of their domestic sphere.



FIGURE 3.2 Bishop John Heyl Vincent, circa 1900. (Courtesy of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York)

Just as he internalized the racial paternalism of antebellum Alabama, John Heyl Vincent absorbed the contradictory strains of mid-nineteenth-century intellectual discourse. The five-year-old moved with his family to Chillisquaque, Pennsylvania, in 1837, where he worked in his father's country store; they moved soon afterward to Lewisburg so that his father could take a position in a mercantile firm. In Chillisquaque, he devoured the volumes on his family's bookshelf, including Plutarch, Milton, Gibbon, and Shakespeare. In addition, the Unitarian Joseph Priestley, exiled from England in the 1790s, had settled in Northumberland, Pennsylvania, and had attracted a group of followers. Vincent's father became interested in the group. "Although his blood was Huguenotic his sympathies were with the so-called 'liberals' in theology," Vincent later wrote of his father. The peripatetic family coupled holiness with ecumenical tolerance: "Unkind words concerning other denominations were never heard in the home of my childhood."²³

Traumas and terrors hastened Vincent's intellectual maturation. In 1843 his younger brother died and his father returned to Alabama for business reasons. Unsettled, the eleven-year-old fell prey to what he later described as "the severe and gloomy side of religious life," a "reign of fear . . . that was often, very often, terror." Quite literally, Vincent feared the end of the world. In 1831 William Miller, a Baptist farmer from rural New York, prophesied that the Rapture predicted in Revelation would come sometime between March 1843 and March 1844. Vincent was one of thousands, mostly in the Northeast, stricken with anxiety about Judgment Day and its implications for family, community, and country—to say nothing of themselves. "More than once, as a little fellow," Vincent recalled, "I woke from a dreadful dream and found myself in perspiration, with all the terrors of despair in my little trembling soul."²⁴ Vincent had been weaned on the Methodists' doctrine of Holiness, in which penitents actively prepared for their salvation through a process of spiritual cleansing. The revelation that people were not in control of their destiny, and would be redeemed not through love but through violent cataclysm at a time not of their choosing, struck Vincent as both exotic and terrifying. "I dreaded thunderstorms," he wrote. "Most of the time I was sure that if I should die the only place for me would be a place of the very 'blackness of darkness.'"²⁵

Many at the time dismissed the revival as a doctrinal aberration, a view confirmed when William Miller's announced date (and another date after that) came and passed without incident. Except for a small cadre of devoted Millerites—ridiculed in the press for wearing special robes and sleeping on rooftops to speed their ascension into heaven—most were relieved that the world would survive into 1845.²⁶ Vincent's thirteenth year, therefore, began on a note of postmillennial optimism. The torturous obsession with "awful judgments, the terrors of hell," was over. The passing of the Millerite scare freed the boy from his obsession with the "morbid and unreal" and paved the way for postmillennial optimism about society's destiny.²⁷

Vincent's response to the Millerites dramatizes the distinction scholars have drawn between premillennial and postmillennial Protestants. For premillennialists, God alone would choose the time of the Second Coming; final judgment would come swiftly and without warning; and human beings could do nothing to postpone or hasten it. Postmillennialists, on the other hand, downplayed the apocalyptic nature of the end times, stressed the one thousand years of bliss promised in Revelation, and theorized that humankind could demonstrate its fitness for Christ's return by remaking the

world in his image.²⁸ The postmillennial school had no more enthusiastic pupil than the adult John Heyl Vincent. On a psychological level, the passing of the millennial moment of the early 1840s had spared Vincent's soul from premature judgment. Armed with the evangelical passion of his mother and the intellectual curiosity of his father, he would not wait for the millennium passively but would actively seek it by redeeming the social order through a system of educational and cultural reforms.²⁹

Postmillennial theology brought a clarity of purpose that belied the continuing chaos in the adolescent's daily affairs. As a student at the Milton Academy, Vincent learned a "Singing Geography" program, a way of memorizing sacred place names by putting them to music. He taught the system, with his own enhancements, in neighboring towns; his enthusiasm caught the eye of a school principal at a small academy in M'Veytown, Pennsylvania, who offered him a job as an instructor. After his mother's death in 1852, the twenty-year-old left the Chillisquaque farm and entered the ministry. Constant physical displacement and an ever-sharpening intellectual focus marked his next ten years. Following his first assignment, a four-week preaching circuit near Luzerne, Pennsylvania, were pastorates in New Jersey at the City Mission in Newark (where he enrolled, but never finished the degree, in theology at the Newark Wesleyan Institute) and North Belleville.³⁰ In 1859 he was hired by a church in Galena, Illinois, where he befriended a struggling farmer named Ulysses S. Grant; later, he took positions in Rockford and at the Trinity Methodist Church in Chicago. Education formed the basis of his pastoral style. As later related in his autobiography, he believed the minister's responsibilities extended to "the whole matter of education—secular and sacred. . . . The Church is itself a school."³¹

Historians have traced the origins of Vincent's embrace of standardized religious education to diverse sources. Sonja Marie Stewart has interpreted it as a natural extension of his theological studies. Theodore Morrison stressed Vincent's nostalgic effort to recreate his father's work for local libraries in Alabama and Pennsylvania.³² One need not resort to a Freudian model of analysis to see the influence of Vincent's mother. His Chautauqua system of education standardized, rationalized, and otherwise imposed expert (male) authority over home-based pedagogies once left to untrained novices (women). One thing is certain: Vincent's intellect was shaped not by a distrust of authority or an impulse for activism but, rather, by a deep discomfort with chaos (both theological and domestic) and a predilection

for structured categories of knowledge. Throughout his life, Vincent gravitated to broad conceptual frameworks and unifying systems of thought. Pastoring in Illinois, he turned to the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, the eighteenth-century Swedish mystic. Swedenborg's search for a common corpus of laws governing both the spiritual and natural worlds appealed to Americans like Vincent who were torn between their evangelical faith and Enlightenment rationalism.³³

By the outbreak of the Civil War, the southern-born, Pennsylvania-educated, Illinois Methodist had reconstructed himself as a crusader for standardized religious instruction and popular education. In his work on Sunday school reform, we see most clearly his contribution to the wider momentum toward the standardization of American sacred and secular education, a movement most apparent in the emergence of common schools and compulsory education laws in the mid-nineteenth-century industrial North. In this regard, Vincent clearly took inspiration from his school-reform contemporaries Horace Bushnell and George Albert Coe. If Sunday schools were to assume a place alongside public schools as pillars of national public life, first they would have to be made more efficient. Only a coordinated effort could neutralize the "infidels and God-less Germans, as well as Catholic Irish" who were pouring into U.S. cities at midcentury. Sunday-school zealots like Vincent evoked dreams of a Protestant popular front, "well fitted to train a race of God-fearing citizens who are the support and prop of any nation."³⁴

By the late 1860s, churches had woven the Sunday school into the fabric of religious life. Sunday school reformers shifted their efforts to the poor preparation of teachers, cramped and dark classrooms, and lack of a core curriculum. The call for a core curriculum, however, was sure to rankle conservatives in every sect. Each denomination featured its own curriculum, often the product of decades of committee work, zealously defended by religious publishers; in addition, interpretations varied from parish to parish. If the Sunday school was to battle "popery," as some expected, Protestant denominations would need to avoid needless repetition of labor and combine their resources. Through the crusading efforts of Edward Eggleston, John Heyl Vincent, and others, the Methodist Church led the campaign for ecumenical Sunday school institutes and uniform lesson plans.

The Civil War found Vincent traveling widely: first to Europe, Egypt, and Palestine in 1862–63 and, upon his return, to the American South, where he preached to Confederate prisoners and saw two deserters shot in

City Point, Virginia.³⁵ Vincent returned to Chicago in 1865 but was immediately tapped by the Methodist Church to administer its national campaign to improve Sunday school education. Vincent's Sunday school efforts quickly took precedence over his pastoral work. In 1865 he moved to New York to become the General Agent of the Methodist Episcopal Sunday School Union. Two years later the Union chartered a "Normal College," based on Vincent's "seminary Normal Class," a full syllabus spread out over a four-year course of study. The Normal College awarded 520 diplomas in 1868. Vincent proved a naturally gifted editor and marketer. His strategy with religious publications had always been "to put a little more vigor and variety into its pages."³⁶ He was also promoted from Corresponding Secretary of the national, ecumenical Sunday School Union to general editor of its *Sunday School Journal*; in one year, subscriptions skyrocketed from 18,500 to 36,500.³⁷ (Vincent's ascent in the Methodist Church's internal hierarchy reached its apex in 1888, when he was made a bishop.)

More systematic than creative, his own writings were really skillful arrangements of ideas pioneered by others, including the emerging Methodist intelligentsia centered in Chicago of Edward Eggleston, J. L. Hammond, and C. R. Blackall. Vincent compiled the Uniform Lesson, or "Berean Series," which relied heavily on "Lessons for Every Sunday School in the Year," a popular system published by New York publisher and agriculturist Orange Judd and used in northern Methodist parishes in the 1860s. Judd had claimed, boldly but prematurely, that his system was "in accordance with the views of all denominations."³⁸ Well ensconced in church administration, Vincent was better situated to forge consensus. His Berean Series, named for the anonymous teachers of Scripture at Berea who appear in Acts 27:11, consisted of a *Question Book*, a *Lesson Manual*, and articles from Vincent's ambitiously named *The National Sunday School Teacher* (published 1866–1882). Vincent's greatest coup to date came in 1869, when the National Sunday School Convention adopted the Berean Series as its official ecumenical teaching standard.

Vincent, searching for points of entrance into urban society, had coopted the common schools' newest pedagogical techniques and its increasingly pragmatic, child-centered approach to learning. His sing-along geography lesson and other mnemonic devices placed him at the forefront of this emerging trend in U.S. education.³⁹ In addition, the campaign for the International Uniform Lesson System demonstrated Vincent's political skills. At the conventions of 1870 and 1871, denominational suspicions pre-

vailed, and support for the Berean Series collapsed. Shrewdly, Vincent turned to the powerful editors of the major denominational journals for assistance. In August 1871 twenty-nine representatives of Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist Sunday school publishing houses met in New York and voted 26 to 3 to appoint an international committee to compose a Uniform Lesson System. After turbulent negotiations—at one point, Vincent and Eggleston walked out of the negotiating room—the publishers agreed to adopt an amalgam of the leading Sunday school curricula as the standard system. The agreement stipulated which scriptures would form the basis of Sunday school instruction and left interpretations to the individual denominations. The details of the agreement devolved to an interdenominational lesson committee of ten men (five clergy, five laymen) led by Vincent.⁴⁰

With the 1872 agreement in hand, Vincent began looking for a location for a national Sunday school institute. He published *The Sunday School Teachers' Institute* to spur the creation of institutes and wrote a system—always another system—of examination for prospective Sunday school teachers. In 1873, at the urging of his friend Lewis Miller, he visited Fair Point on Chautauqua Lake in western New York; the two men decided to locate their national institute there the following summer. At the first National Sunday School Assembly at Fair Point in 1874, 200 people took certification examinations and 152 received diplomas.⁴¹ Then forty-two years of age, Vincent was secure in his positions and at the height of his powers. He had mastered common school methodologies, harnessed the power of the press, dominated the educational policies of the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, and established himself as a major figure in ecumenical religious education—earning from later historians the sobriquet “evangelist for education.” Chautauqua wove the strands of his persona into a single tapestry. His fear of disorder, patriarchal mindset, zest for learning, staunch anti-Catholicism, and nostalgic longing for the leisure enjoyed as a youth in the slave South all came together on the shores of Chautauqua Lake. Thus, as much as anyone, Vincent deserves credit for the strengths, and blame for the weaknesses, of Chautauqua’s contribution to modern American liberalism.

The Lyceum and Mechanics' Institutes

Vincent’s embrace of neoclassical educational ideals has invited frequent comparisons with the Lyceum, the movement for popular enlightenment

founded by the Millbury, Massachusetts, teacher Josiah Holbrook in 1826. The parallels are obvious. Like Vincent, Holbrook viewed his creation as a national clearinghouse for lecturers in science, art, and history. Like that of Chautauqua, the Lyceum's individualistic doctrine of Enlightenment perfectibility attracted activists for more libraries and better teacher training.⁴² The Lyceum's much-touted *Lycenia* invoked Thomas Jefferson's pre-industrial utopia of educated yeoman farmers, powerfully linking the languages of republican civic order and national destiny. J. F. Hey, a Lyceum leader in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, projected his vision of community destiny nationally in 1836 when he insisted that "something must be done to illuminate the great mass of mind overspreading our land."⁴³

Despite Ralph Waldo Emerson's prediction that the "Lyceum will be the church of future times," the Lyceum had become a mass culture phenomenon by midcentury.⁴⁴ Initially, the Lyceum relied on a craft-oriented, artisanal mode of cultural production. Managers wrote inquiries and made arrangements directly with the desired speakers. With the incorporation of the Redpath Lyceum Bureau in 1842, however, advertising, competitive rates, celebrity speakers, and specialized product categories (for example, Orator, Preacher, Humorist, Explorer) signaled the rise of industrial production techniques and economies of scale in the midcentury culture market. These marketing classifications meant greater dependence on advertising claims and created niche opportunities for speakers with special talents and backgrounds, ensuring steady employment despite lukewarm reviews. As historian Carl Bode has noted, the spread of speakers' bureaus into the Midwest "filled many an eastern wallet" and made small fortunes for stars like Emerson, Henry Ward Beecher, and Mark Twain.⁴⁵

A more frequently overlooked intellectual antecedent of the Chautauqua Movement was the mechanics' institutes. The Franklin Institute, the first in the United States, started as a benevolent extension of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia in 1824. Its success inspired scores of mechanics' institutes across the country in the 1830s and 1840s. The Franklin Institute's industrialist founders viewed mechanics as creative agents in the industrial process and strove to promote enlightened leadership within the community of skilled workers. By their very existence, moreover, the institutes levied an implied critique against the scientific professionalism and formal technical culture arising on college campuses. But the mechanics' institutes did not belong to mechanics. In the marble steps, Ionic columns, and carpeted halls, some mechanics detected a strategy to lure them away from their union or workingmen's party. Founded



FIGURE 3.3 The Chautauqua Assembly of Southern California presented their image of the classical ideal on the cover of their 1890 brochure. (Courtesy of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York)

under the banner of liberal reform, mechanics' institutes on both sides of the Atlantic failed to attract their target audience. By midcentury, both Lyceums and mechanics' institutes were catering to the self-improvement impulses of the urban middle classes.⁴⁶

Instead of linking themselves to these other groups in common brotherhood, Chautauquans tried hard to dissociate themselves from the Lyceum and mechanics' institutes. The former was too commercial and secular, they argued, while the latter focused too much on the vocational aspects of applied science. Indeed, relations between the Lyceum and Chautauqua sometimes grew testy. In 1885, for example, Chautauqua administrator Kate Kimball refused a Redpath request to send its circular along with *The Chautauquan* magazine.⁴⁷ In other instances, Chautauquans projected anxieties about commercialization onto the Lyceum. Deflecting a criticism often levied against his own institution, Chautauqua president Arthur E. Bestor in 1912 characterized the Lyceum as too prone to spectacle and showmanship. The Lyceum was "the older and the more individualistic, the Chautauqua the more original and the more American." While the Lyceum prospered "rather in spite of the Church than in cooperation with it," Chautauqua, insisted Bestor, "always had a religious element, not in a narrow sense but in a broad sense of social responsibility." (Bestor knew of what he spoke. He lectured for the Redpath Lyceum company during the 1910s and was once featured in *The Lyceum News*.)⁴⁸

Chautauquans cast themselves as the more legitimate heirs to the Enlightenment. Explained Vincent's colleague Albert D. Vail, other courses trained "specialists" whereas Chautauqua focused on the "broad humanistic culture of the whole man. . . ."⁴⁹ In this regard, Chautauquans protested too much. Like its two institutional antecedents, Chautauqua's educational ideals were deeply rooted in Enlightenment notions of social perfectibility. Like the mechanics' institutes and Lyceum, Chautauqua offered intellectual fare and tasteful amusement at low cost—the former operating in the winter, mostly in cities, the latter catering to a small-city or rural population. Like the Lyceum, Chautauqua refused to book theater groups until the early 1900s, to avoid offending the Christian sensibilities of its middle-class audience. And most important, like the Lyceum, Chautauqua by century's end had grown increasingly dependent on entertainment packages provided by national lecture bureaus. By 1920, the Lyceum and Chautauqua had battled to a stalemate. Chautauqua's aesthetic and landscape forms had captured the imagination of a suburbanizing middle

class. But the Lyceum's celebrity-oriented lecture fare, pitched for mass consumption to a national market, was quickly becoming the model for middlebrow culture in the United States.

Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle

Vincent had no formal scientific training. But he loved the *idea* of science. Chautauqua need not cede the scientific field to the Lyceum and mechanics' institutes, he insisted. These interests studied science for material and vocational gain; Chautauquans, on the other hand, would study the physical world to better perceive God's creation. At times, Vincent's words sound Transcendental. Confident that "one truth never contradicts another," he perceived science and religion as partners. Education merely "supplements Nature with added lessons, and partial explanations of Divine purposes." "All things secular are under God's governance," he insisted, "and are full of divine meanings." His was a poetic, Romantic, virtually Emersonian worldview. From the axiom that all knowledge is divine, Vincent deduced innumerable applications for Christianity in the modern world. Even science would be "brought to the support of Christianity."⁵⁰ Regarding the scientific and biblical discoveries that had forced some people to rethink the relationship between religion and truth, Vincent remained serenely unperturbed.⁵¹

The transformation from a sectarian enclave to a college-style summer school featuring a liberal, humanistic education occurred at a breakneck pace. In the span of five years, Chautauqua underwent a curricular revolution that many denominational schools took decades to achieve. The Scientific Congress in 1876 threw open the gates to scientific discourse, while the 1877 program, balanced with speakers on temperance, vice suppression, and child abuse, embraced the nascent discipline of social science. In 1878 Vincent expressed his idealism most forcefully through the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle (CLSC), a system of self-education modeled on a four-year reading cycle. More comprehensive in scope and organization than previous reading clubs and literary societies, the CLSC offered a full curriculum, textbooks, structured discussion sessions, and correspondence exams. The CLSC mimicked the formal education process, right down to its elaborate graduation ceremonies and symbolic diploma. Its motto? "We Study the Words and Works of God."

Though not a new idea, the CLSC was remarkable for the institutional framework that sustained it. The CLSC created an ingenious system of spiritual incentive, pedagogical sophistication, and elaborate ritualization to attract students to its four-year reading program. Centrally organized and supported by a battery of staff members, volunteers, and celebrity endorsees (like steel baron Andrew Carnegie and poet William Cullen Bryant), the CLSC attracted hundreds of thousands of students by the turn of the century. By using inexpensive print materials and clever marketing strategies, the CLSC opened wide the doors of college-level liberal arts instruction to hundreds of thousands of people, mostly women, who would not otherwise be able to attend college. Contemporary observers interpreted Chautauqua as “the people’s university” devoted to the “enlightenment of the masses”—in short, a vehicle for the democratization of education.⁵²

Vincent intended the CLSC as both a Sunday school primer and an introduction to humanistic learning for adults. As he concluded, bluntly: “The Church is itself a school.”⁵³ Thus, Vincent assigned a course of reading designed to impart broad mastery of the arts and sciences. His 1882 curriculum included required reading in the history and literature of Greece, England, Russia, Scandinavia, China, Japan, and the United States; Bible history and general religious literature; and scientific studies in geology, astronomy, physiology, and hygiene.⁵⁴ Genuinely eager to extend their appeal and influence into the imperiled inner cities, Chautauquans like Ida Tarbell insisted that the “pursuit of knowledge and culture is independent of all conditions” and created a “leveling effect”; Vincent, that through the CLSC “the long hours of manual labor may be enriched by thought”; and Lewis Miller, that Chautauqua instilled an “equality of consideration, of privileges, and of rights.”⁵⁵ But Chautauqua’s insecurities were also those of the middling sorts. In a letter reprinted in Vincent’s *The Chautauqua Movement*, Lyman Abbott urged Vincent to promote the CLSC among miners, mechanics, and farmers. Transform them into intelligent citizens, he promised, and “you will have done more to put down strikes and labor-riots than an army could.”⁵⁶

On scientific subjects, the CLSC would shine like a beacon of clarity amidst half-truths and exaggeration. Writers for the CLSC, invariably listing their clerical and academic credentials on the title page, reiterated the founder’s mantra: true religion had nothing to fear from true science. Proclaimed an 1879 book on astronomy, “Let the heavens declare the glory of the Divine Mind.” A physiology text from that year remarked on God’s

“inimitable workmanship” in the human form. A biology book of 1880 simply assumed that “the Christian student recognizes the truth that ‘Power Belongeth Unto God.’”⁵⁷ Though sometimes written by marginal scientific practitioners and often ignored by academic scientists, early CLSC books on science fulfilled Vincent’s goal of widening the religious-education curriculum to include natural sciences.

The CLSC also served to soften the blow of Darwinism. Those opposed to Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution held sway on the Chautauqua platform in the late 1870s and 1880s. They included college president and minister Charles H. Fowler, Professor Nathan Sheppard, Methodist Bishop Willard F. Mallalieu, and, most spectacularly, the popular Presbyterian sermonizer T. DeWitt Talmadge, who in 1886 concluded that “all the leading scientists who believe in evolution, without exception the world over, are infidel.”⁵⁸ Talmadge’s vitriolic blast silenced all discussion of evolution for several years. When the issue resurfaced in the early 1890s, as historian James McBeth has observed, the tenor of discussion had shifted dramatically. Some Protestant thinkers at Chautauqua, anticipating the possibility of capitulation, had been preparing a fallback argument: they would retreat to a higher level of abstraction, reinterpreting Scripture as a statement of essential truths subject to varying interpretations. Nothing in the essential principle of evolution, insisted J. Max Hark of the Pennsylvania Chautauqua, contradicted “any of the *essential* facts of the Christian religion.”⁵⁹

Hark’s confidence in Christianity’s ultimate triumph over materialism signaled Chautauqua’s entrance into a wider debate over Social Darwinism. Chautauqua speakers tended to espouse the Social Gospeler’s *soft* Social Darwinism against the *hard* Social Darwinism of sociologist William Graham Sumner and others. Hard Social Darwinists elevated Darwinian evolution to the realm of political philosophy, often deploying it as a critique of social reform and an argument for laissez-faire economics. Soft Social Darwinists, on the other hand, embraced natural selection as a metaphor of progress but insisted that human beings had evolved into an advanced stage of social development; thus, humans were free to pursue social reforms without fear of “weakening” the race. Chautauqua’s liberal creed predisposed it to this latter category. Henry Drummond’s 1893 address “The Ascent of Man,” essentially a capsule summary of sociologist Lester Frank Ward’s book *The Psychic Factors of Civilization*, argued that “Christianity put the finishing touches to the ascent of man.” Jesse L. Hurlbut insisted that



FIGURE 3.4 AND FIGURE 3.5 On the left, a chemistry class at Chautauqua, New York, in the 1890s explores basic chemical reactions in a small laboratory. On the right, a brochure from about 1905 for Reno B. Welbourn, a scientific showman for Lyceum and Chautauqua audiences, illustrates how science shaded into magic and folklore on the Chautauqua platform. Advertising for Welbourn boasted that he could “harness the power of the sun” and knock over a pile of blocks with the “shadow of the lecturer’s hand.” (Courtesy of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York; Redpath Chautauqua Collection, Special Collections Department, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa)

the “overwhelming sentiment of Chautauqua was rejoicing at this harmonizing the most evangelical religion with the most advanced scholarship.”⁶⁰

The CLSC, in other words, put its own spin on science. The argument for a putatively modern outlook, so clear from the writings of progressive educational theorists, was considerably altered en route to the consumer of popular education. At times, it offered the Enlightenment ideal of learning for learning’s sake. At other times, it validated the secular mindset of elites eager to train the populace for a mastery of industrial systems of production. At still other times, it offered magic and superstition as symbolic rebellions from a purely materialistic way of viewing the world. In the early 1900s Chautauqua assemblies often presented technological gadgets as “wondrous inventions,” close cousins of folk mysteries, magic, and miracles. Presentations of the electric light (late 1870s), microscopes and telescopes (1880s), the phonograph (1890s), and the cinemascope and wireless telegraphy (early 1900s) reinforced the model of science as circus spectacle. For example, “science” lecturer Reno B. Welbourn amazed audiences in the 1910s with demonstrations of how “the shadow of the lecturer’s hand knocks down a pile of blocks.”⁶¹ As middle-class men and women faced a society increasingly dominated by huge, unaccountable, and opaque institutions, such fantasies of control were perhaps inevitable.

Jasper Douthit: Chautauqua’s Political Turn

What of society and politics more broadly? The Civil War awakened evangelical Methodists, once reluctant to enter politics, to an underlying moral battle. With the distressing turn of southern Reconstruction, the spectacle of presidential scandals, and the crush of mass immigration, Methodists turned “even more than their predecessors toward political action and the state as an agency of discipline.”⁶² Protestant nativists and Roman Catholic defenders of parochial education had long since locked horns over the difficult educational policy questions surrounding curricula, prayer, patriotism, language instruction, and school financing. Like his friend Ulysses S. Grant, who as president resolved never to appropriate one dollar to the support of sectarian schools, many of Vincent’s generation had already joined the dialogue over education.⁶³ And Chautauqua had emerged as a mecca for pro-Republican reformers and a congenial watering place for sitting Republican presidents. Undoubtedly, Vincent had achieved sufficient stature to assume a prominent role—should he wish it—in the debate.⁶⁴

But Vincent claimed to be neutral in all matters political. He even refused the title of “reformer,” stressing instead the classic themes of individual virtue and character. His rhetoric sometimes deteriorated into a collection of conservative tropes about the uncomplaining endurance of common people. According to Vincent, “kitchen work, farm work, shop work, as well as school work, are divine. . . .” Hence, a virtuous woman, born of low station, may be forced to “serve her inferiors, and treasure the pittance they give her to buy books for her brain-life.” When “crowns are given out,” he predicted, “[a] boot-black may be king.”⁶⁵ Given his southern origins, his opposition to women’s suffrage, and the Republican Party’s occasional wavering on the issue of temperance, we cannot even be sure which party Vincent supported with his vote. In many ways, he typified the inadequacies that have so frustrated historians of the Social Gospel—a naive reliance on individual “character” and a failure to advocate forcefully for a restructuring of material relations.⁶⁶

The Chautauqua Movement revealed the conservative streak that underlay all of his activities. But even if it lacked philosophical depth on scientific questions and failed to argue forcefully for state intervention in economic and political affairs, the Chautauqua idea lent itself to liberal reinterpretations. As we will see, Chautauqua was soon reshaped into a more tolerant platform for the exchange of new insights into social problems and solutions. Men like Jasper Douthit and J. Max Hark transformed Chautauqua into a force for social change; in the process, the liberal creed would assume a new and powerful civic form.

Few people championed Chautauqua with more passion than Jasper Douthit of Shelbyville, Illinois. Unlike Vincent, Douthit never tried to separate religion from politics. Born in 1834, the oldest of eight children in a family of Welsh and Scotch-Irish farmers, Jasper Douthit found in fantasy and adventure stories—including *Robinson Crusoe* and *Life of Davy Crockett*—an alternative to an impoverished and sometimes violent home life. After his alcoholic father was arrested for the family’s protection, sixteen-year-old Douthit ran away from home and found work on an Illinois Central Railroad construction crew near Springfield. He spent his first dollar on a year’s subscription to *Phrenological Journal*. Douthit later downplayed his enthusiasm for the folk science of interpreting personality characteristics from the shape of the human cranium as merely a lesson in “the great importance of self-control and of a sound mind in a sound body.” But this was false modesty: his ambitions to become a professional phrenologist indicated a personality at once rebellious, didactic, and supremely self-confident.⁶⁷



FIGURE 3.6 Jasper Douthit, circa late 1870s. (Courtesy of Edward Boedecker, *Shelbyville, Ill.*)

Upon returning home in his late teens, he promptly rejected his father's religion (Baptist) and vocation (farming) for a career as a Methodist minister. He worked as a janitor to afford his tuition at the Shelbyville Academy and later at Wabash College in Indiana. After a brief stint as an unordained Methodist preacher, Douthit recoiled from Methodism's extremes: the elaborate institutional hierarchy it inherited from the Anglican Church on the one hand, and the reliance on emotional outpourings as evidence of conversion on the other. In 1862 Douthit was ordained as a Unitarian minister. Unitarianism, he later reflected, offered him "perfect freedom to preach" without dictation by "Pope, Synod, or Conference."⁶⁸ After further study at the Meadville Divinity School from 1864 to 1867, he accepted a pastorate in Princeton, Illinois. A well-to-do resident of Shelbyville, county seat of his native Shelby County, offered funds for a church, and in 1876 Douthit returned home to minister it. Douthit consummated

his religious conversion by marrying an authentic Yankee, Emily Lovell of East Abington, Massachusetts. Douthit continued to take holy pilgrimages to New England for the rest of his life.⁶⁹

Unlike Vincent, who viewed slaves as contented domestic helpmeets, Douthit recoiled from slavery. Visiting his mother's family in Texas at the age of nine, Douthit "came to love the negroes, for they were very kind to me. They would gather in their cabins on Sunday and on nights, to hear me read the Bible to them." Douthit "longed to live to help them toward the North Star." An outspoken abolitionist in Copperhead country, Douthit enrolled with the Illinois regulars in 1861, but bad health forced him to turn back before joining his unit. He volunteered as Shelby County's Union enrollment officer during the Civil War and became the target of death threats from proslavery vigilantes. There were close calls. When several Union enrollment officers in southern Illinois were slain, he refused to go armed but changed his clothes often and never rode the same horse twice. One night Confederate sympathizers fired a volley of buckshot through his front door. Douthit survived and emerged from the Civil War confident in his moral approach to politics.⁷⁰

Although his histrionics and truculent personality repulsed some people, many were attracted by his evangelical preaching style, energized as it was by a deep skepticism of denominational orthodoxy combined with a fervent belief in Christ. Here was a preacher who shouted and cried, not to lead individuals to the brink of emotional surrender, but toward a larger vision of social salvation.⁷¹ In essence, the Unitarian had exchanged *orthodoxy* (faith through adherence to traditional belief) for *orthopraxis* (faith through the observance of defined practices). Believing that "a pure heart and righteous living will save a man despite of erroneous opinions," he focused his efforts on etiquette, manners, and character; thus, a right-acting unconverted Jew could be saved while a misbehaving Methodist might not. "True religion consists in living principles," he wrote.⁷² Attracting his scorn were sins against public modesty like cheap literature (he once supported an act of the state legislature that made it illegal to sell to a minor any book or magazine principally made up of criminal behavior). After the John Sullivan prize fight in 1889, he called for laws to outlaw the "deviltry" of pugilism.⁷³

Douthit was the kind of wide-awake Christian that Vincent admired but by temperament could never be. Douthit called for an evangelical fervor of deed, action, and citizenship. "My ideal," he wrote in 1898, "has

been to do for [Shelby County] what Hull House is doing, in perhaps a larger way, for Chicago—make better citizens, sweeter homes, purer lives.”⁷⁴ Douthit’s subordination of orthodoxy to orthopraxis was part of a shift among liberal theologians to abbreviate historical Christianity into “Christian culture.” Indeed, orthopraxis was central to the Social Gospel Movement. Jane Addams of Chicago’s Hull House, so admired by Douthit, also downplayed theological debates, recasting Christianity as a set of universal social, ethical, and hygienic practices by which the residents of an increasingly pluralistic nation could measure their citizenship. This entailed a dramatic expansion of the cleric’s social role. In an October 1880 sermon titled “Purity in Politics,” Douthit drew upon Matthew 10:21 and Philipians 2:27 to argue that “the Christian minister is a man among men” who must “denounce iniquity and oppression wherever and in whomever found.” “[W]e do not want any politics in religion, but we do need a great deal more religion in politics.”⁷⁵

Douthit emerged as Shelby County’s most vociferous prohibitionist. By the 1890s, he had converted his devotional journal *Our Best Words* into an anti-Democratic political rag. To Douthit, the Democratic Party—which dominated Shelby County—embodied the nation’s “dominant spirit” of “ignorance, oppression, bulldozing, demagoguery, sectional hate and race prejudice.”⁷⁶ He worked closely with the Shelby County WCTU for “safe and sane” July 4th celebrations, advertised their meetings in his sheet, pressed city officials to enforce the state law preventing saloons from serving chronically drunk men, and turned his property outside of town into a summer “temperance encampment” (later a Chautauqua assembly). Douthit lashed out against Democratic neighbors, “wet” politicians, and even some fellow Unitarians for suggesting that he was “meddling with politics.” Once, a drunken woman whom Douthit had targeted for rehabilitation attacked his wife.⁷⁷ Given to romantic illusions of himself as a warrior for good in an apocalyptic battle with evil, Douthit spruced his autobiography with stylized anecdotes, really parables, on a consistent theme: the patient churchman who, spurned and oppressed by misguided people, ultimately accepts their apologies and repentance with Christ-like charity.⁷⁸

A personality as large as Douthit’s could never be constrained by a single party. He often attributed the decline of morality to the drive for commerce and profits; here, his stated philosophies coincided with those of Shelby County’s agrarian radicals. He welcomed the 1889 union of the Farmer’s Alliance and Knights of Labor and sold *The Progressive Farmer* out

of his own office. "I have shown more sympathy with [the Populists] than with any single standard party," he once boasted.⁷⁹ Douthit's support for the Populist plank, however, was always secondary to his support of temperance, his constant preoccupation. When Populist stances on prohibition wavered, so too did Douthit. He preferred to lay every slight to farmers and workers at the door of the saloon keepers rather than the railroad monopoly. Hence, the strike at Pullman, Illinois, was to Douthit little more than a rebellion of drunken deserters. He contrasted Eugene Debs, silent on prohibition and therefore complicit in the moral decay of his workers, with that "true friend" of the laborer, Terence V. Powderly.⁸⁰

As his heavily qualified support for Populism suggests, Douthit was at best a qualified critic of industrial capitalism. On the contrary, Douthit's evangelical individualism, stylized victimology, and reduction of faith to orthopraxis brought him into close alignment with the trends toward social order and moral discipline in late-nineteenth-century midwestern bour-



FIGURE 3.7 T. DeWitt Talmadge at Lithia Springs, early 1890s. (*Shelby County Historical and Genealogical Society*)

geois culture. Douthit's fanatical temperance beliefs led to alliances with a profusion of national, middle-class organizations, groups historian K. Austin Kerr has described as adapting "the structure of the departmentalized business firm and its bureaucratic values to temperance work."⁸¹ To his critics, he freely cited his "burnt and blasted" home, his "distressed" childhood, his "loved father crazed and stung to death and a family fortune swallowed up. . . ."⁸² Such dramatic realism resembled the intimate, tell-all style of the national tabloids. Douthit's self-exposure strategy paralleled other popular narratives in turn-of-the-century middle-class culture, all geared toward building "personality" through strategic self-revelation: literary realism, the intimate writing style of tabloid journalism, and the emerging advertising trope of individuation through consumption.

Frustrated by politics, Douthit eventually abandoned his effort to bring salvation by way of city hall. Rebuffed by the voters, he set aside his dream of defeating the old-guard Democrats with a coalition of farmers, Populists, Catholics, immigrants, and African Americans. He turned, instead, to popular culture as a medium for promoting his vision of moral order. Douthit owned one hundred acres of ancestral land featuring a natural spring a mile and a half from the center of Shelbyville. To the chagrin of many farmers who used the spring as a watering hole, Douthit enclosed the property and made the town move the road outside the section lines. Purchasing another one hundred acres, he cleared the underbrush, sheltered the spring, and built a large covered shed to serve as an open-air auditorium.⁸³ Douthit touted his Lithia Springs Temperance Encampment and Chautauqua Assembly as a churchly alternative to the amusement park and saloon. He surely knew of Chautauqua's close association with temperance. It was then well known in antisaloon circles that the origins of the WCTU lay at the first Chautauqua assembly in 1874, when veterans of the massive temperance revival in Ohio that spring, recuperating at the lakeside assembly, met and formed the idea of a national conference of temperance associations.

The Lithia Springs temperance encampment and Chautauqua assembly provided an alternative to the saloons, circuses, and gambling establishments popping up all over southern Illinois. Over the next twenty years, locals paid a gate fee, set up crude tents, and listened to lectures by Frances E. Willard, T. DeWitt Talmadge, and hundreds of others. Scores of other assemblies popped up all over central Illinois. As we will see in more detail in chapter 7, Douthit's shift from partisan politics to middle-class public

culture paralleled a dramatic transformation in the midwestern political scene, as the nineteenth-century partisan hatchets were buried under a wave of enthusiasm for progressive reform and civic progress. During the Progressive Era, Douthit's liberal creed triumphed. But it was a triumph with uncertain implications for the Chautauqua movement.

Joseph Maximilian Hark: Moravian for Middlebrow Culture

Miller, Vincent, and Douthit rhapsodized on the truths contained in literary classics, but not one of them outmatched the sheer enthusiasm for belletristic self-culture displayed by J. Max Hark, the cofounder, with railroad tycoon Robert Coleman, of the Pennsylvania Chautauqua in Mt. Gretna, Pennsylvania. Joseph Maximilian Hark (he would later abbreviate his name to the less recognizably German J. Max Hark) was born in 1849 in Nazareth, Pennsylvania. His father was a medical doctor, a devout Moravian, and a constant reader of English literature and German philosophy. Hark attended Nazareth Hall, received a divinity degree from the Moravian theological seminary in Bethlehem, and spent three years leading the Moravian congregation in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, before taking a prestigious pastorate at the Second Moravian Church in Philadelphia (1876–1881). He returned to Lancaster in 1881 to write, preach, and pursue his social and political interests. His articles appeared in *The Christian Union* and *The Sunday School Times*. He also translated stories, poems, and Native American lore from German to English.⁸⁴ Like Vincent and Douthit, Hark gravitated to liberal biblical criticism, not for scholarly reasons but because of a deep discomfort with intellectual turmoil and a resulting preference for mystical abstraction. Liberal biblical criticism freed Hark, as it did Vincent and Douthit, to expand the minister's role into the secular realm. He joined a wide array of local voluntary associations, including the Lancaster County Historical Society, Pennsylvania-German Society, Lancaster County Forestry Association, and Cliosophic Club.⁸⁵

Hark's elevation to editor-in-chief of *The Moravian* in 1881 amplified his social pulpit. The wide boundaries of Moravian theology gave him freedom to roam, and thus Hark never felt the need to follow Douthit's example of shopping around for a sufficiently liberal denomination. But Hark's social ministry did produce moments of conflict with more conservative Moravians. Hark's controversial editorial "Soul-Fasting" during Lent in



FIGURE 3.8 J. Max Hark, circa 1885. (Courtesy of Moravian Archive, Bethlehem, Pa.)

1883 included several passages consistent with the Social Gospellers' effort to link Christian orthodoxy to a social and political orthopraxis. Lamentations for Christ's sufferings were worse than useless, he preached, unless accompanied by a change in character and behavior. The true Christian "must be of the same mind with Him," and "the heroism of His life and death must be the fundamental elements of our character." Christ's "absolute unselfishness" must pervade "all our thoughts and words and deeds . . . characterizing our whole walk and conversation."⁸⁶

Hark's invocation of Christ's flesh and blood, the "motive and spirit of the Saviour's passion," was never intended as a denial of his intrinsic divinity and perfection; nevertheless, the looseness of the language opened Hark to criticism from F. F. Hagen, an iconoclastic and perhaps unstable Moravian minister from Philadelphia. Hagen formally charged Hark with heresy, and when the Provincial Elder's Conference (PEC) failed to respond quickly, Hagen went over its head to the international Moravian church in Berthelsdorf, Germany. At one point, Hark was called before the

PEC to be cautioned for making “public utterances which were liable to be misunderstood.” The PEC generally viewed Hark as the aggrieved party in the dispute, which finally ended in May 1886 when the PEC agreed to take no further notice of Hagen’s “unmeasured” attacks.⁸⁷ Although preserved in good standing with the church, Hark did not always feel comfortable within the boundaries of orthodoxy. In July 1885 Hark resigned from his position as editor of *The Moravian*, citing “a constant feeling of restraint.”⁸⁸

Hark did not enumerate the issues in his resignation letter. But upon leaving *The Moravian*, he immediately sought out venues that would let him explore cultural and political subjects. Hark pursued the hidden continuities of evolution and Christianity in his book *The Unity of the Truth in Christianity and Evolution* (1888). And through his association with institutions like the Cliosophic Club, a literary group “numbering in its membership the college faculty and the leading professional men and scholars of the city,” Hark overcame a Moravian distaste for partisan politics and threw himself full-bore into a world of reform-oriented Republicans. Non-Moravians in Lancaster appreciated “his broadly catholic spirit”; one reviewer noted “that he has as many friends and admirers among non-church-goers and among Jews and Catholics, as among Protestant Christians.”⁸⁹

The word *assimilation* inadequately describes J. Max Hark’s embrace of these bourgeois conventions. As an elite figure in the Moravian community, Hark possessed the authority to select, interpret, and represent Yankee customs to his (still partially German-speaking) coreligionists. Although published in English only, his remarkable ecumenical magazine *Christian Culture: A Local Interdenominational Journal, Religious, Literary and Social* spoke differently to its Yankee and German audiences. On the one hand, his editorials, at once pious and political, staked a Moravian claim on urban reform, territory traditionally associated with Social Gospellers in the mainline denominations. He called for new parks and better sanitation one month, more church attendance and moral observance the next. On the other hand, he presented a narrative of upward social mobility, reminding his fellow Moravians of the refined qualities, by the 1890s as much German middle-class as Yankee middle-class, that distinguished them from more recent European arrivals. Until every citizen of Lancaster began putting the “greater good and happiness of the community” before selfish gain, the town would not experience the boom it desired. Progress, in other words, depended on piety.⁹⁰

Hark, like many self-proclaimed reading experts, was in part inspired by the Platonic ideal of the enlightened citizen, well educated on all topics. In a world increasingly ruled by rigid industrial concepts of time, these manual-writers argued, people would have to get the most from their leisure time if they wished to approach this ideal. Hark observed a simple rule: "Assume the world's judgment of literary classics to be right." The Bible, Homer, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Molière, Goethe, Thucydides, Livy, Tacitus, Gibbon, Plato, Bacon, Locke, Kant, and Spencer appeared on most experts' lists. As for literature itself, the editors of *The Pennsylvania Chautauquan* recommended a standard canon, not dissimilar from what Vincent recommended to readers of the CLSC, ignoring Melville in favor of Thackeray, Dickens, G. Elliot, Blackmore, Hawthorne, Poe, and Cooper. The editors even gave advice about to whom to turn for more advice: James Baldwin's *The Book-Lover, a Guide to the Best Reading* (described as "sunshiny and suggestive") or Thomas Carlyle's *On the Choice of Books*.⁹¹

Given Hark's interest in self-culture, it seemed only a matter of time before he discovered Chautauqua. In 1891 he formed a committee consisting of ministers and laymen from the Lancaster area, meeting on 24 September 1891 to initiate the formation of an assembly. They filed incorporation papers, drew up bylaws, and offered stock to the community. Hark, through *Christian Culture*, acted as advertiser, devoting a whole page of editorial text in the October issue to the new venture. On 6 January 1892 the stockholders met in Lebanon to endorse their constitution and elect a board—Hark was elected chancellor. By March, the grounds committee had begun work on the property, forty-seven acres atop Mt. Gretna leased from the owner of the amusement grounds and the railroad line that served it, iron mogul Robert Coleman. By April, Hark and the editors changed the title of their paper to *Christian Culture: Official Organ of the Pennsylvania Chautauqua*. By July, Hark owned one of the first seven cottages on the property and had helped put together an educational program for July of that year, organized into the departments of Biblical Science, Natural History, Pedagogy, and Music. He became the editor of the reformed *The Pennsylvania Chautauqua Magazine and Christian Culture*, which debuted in October.⁹²

Hark's work rate on behalf of Chautauqua peaked in 1893. Inspired by the Chautauqua University Extension, a plan devised in 1888 to link assemblies to local colleges, Hark inaugurated the Chautauqua Extension Center (CEC), a system of correspondence study, held year-round and uti-

lizing the physical plant of the assembly as its headquarters. He hoped this would produce the “best results by the use of the best means,” avoiding the decline into “popular lectures” so typical of other attempts to promote useful knowledge; too often, he warned, such programs were geared toward “amusement, and which too often are but a string of anecdotes and jokes dramatically delivered.”⁹³ The editors claimed two successes in 1893: a Chautauqua Extension Center had formed in Middletown in Dauphin County under the leadership of some interested clergy. The subject of that year’s seminar surely interested the German-American community: American history. Another CEC formed in Lebanon, “the progressive city which from the first has manifested a commendable and practical interest in the Pennsylvania Chautauqua and all its work.”⁹⁴

Although these institutions continued to thrive, Hark’s work on Chautauqua ended abruptly in late 1893 when he left Lancaster to become the principal of the Moravian School for Ladies at Bethlehem. On his departure, the city fathers published an elaborate festschrift. “His removal is a loss to our city,” lamented W. U. Hensel, attorney general of Pennsylvania. The job as school principal may very well have come to him because of the “administrative ability of high order” he showed with the Pennsylvania Chautauqua. Until that time, his management was limited to church and editorial work. With the Chautauqua, he could boast new laurels as a manager of an institution of learning. He also showed a remarkable ability to incorporate what he saw as the best of two extremes for use in his social ministry. While some conservative Moravians saw him as too liberal, almost heretical, Robert B. Risk, Esq., the young editor of the *Lancaster Daily Examiner*, praised him as “a wise compromise breakwater between the dead past and the too radical present of certain thinkers. . . .” Risk’s encomium continued:

He wisely saw long ago that the future must be met half-way; that the preacher of to-day could not fulfill his mission by addressing the emotions, defending dogma, or even by the routine work of pastoral labors, but must speak to the intellect, now throbbing and pondering as never before, as the science of the day and broad generalizations of philosophy are sweeping the strings of the mind with the restless winds of thought. . . . [He has] encouraged the timid and aided the weak to think with less superstition of the dead past and less dread upon the revolutionary present.⁹⁵

As Risk's glowing tribute suggests, Hark embodied historian David D. Hall's characterization of the Victorian educator as a "most conservative sort of revolutionary" whose activities "flowed from a sense of their own firm social placement in the middle class."⁹⁶ Having beaten back a challenge from a church brother who thought he had gone too far, Hark stood at the forward cusp of the Social Gospel among the Moravians of Pennsylvania. This deep affinity for the values and institutions of his social class relegated competing affiliations to region, ethnic group, and denomination to the sideline. Through Chautauqua, Miller, Vincent, Douthit, and Hark outwardly expressed their faith in the liberal creed. Far from passively reacting to modernity, these men reshaped their pastoral practice into a philosophy of self-culture that was at once idealistic and market-savvy. Their abiding class consciousness would converge ever more sharply with central currents in turn-of-the-century American life, ensuring Chautauqua's continuing potency in middle-class culture—even among Catholics.

Catholics Respond

That Chautauqua's critics in the 1890s included Roman Catholics should not come as a surprise. Vincent was a notorious nativist. In a virulent anti-women's suffrage diatribe at Chautauqua in 1884, Vincent raised the specter of popish domination: "Too many people vote at present . . . Romish authority which now dictates Patrick's vote, would control Bridget's."⁹⁷ To make matters worse, Catholics were excluded from Vincent's hand-picked Counselors, the committee that selected books for Chautauqua's reading circle and correspondence course, the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle (CLSC). And frequent CLSC author Luther Tracy Townsend was a noted anti-Catholic. In 1892, addressing a group of Boston Methodists, he decried "Jesuitical influences on the secular press."⁹⁸ The CLSC made no special effort to recruit Catholics, so few enrolled. According to statistics kept by CLSC director Kate Kimball, between 1882 and 1891 only .6 percent of the membership identified itself as Catholic.⁹⁹

Catholic concerns about Chautauqua centered on the CLSC. Many of the early CLSC selections were deeply sectarian. Reflecting Vincent's influence, CLSC books from 1878 to 1884 could be described as Sunday school primers for confirmed Protestants.¹⁰⁰ While the small fraction of

Catholics is not surprising, the gender composition of Catholic CLSC members is quite unusual. Men accounted for less than a quarter of the CLSC membership nationwide. However, they comprised nearly two-thirds of the Catholic CLSC membership. The CLSC clearly struck a chord with the educational aspirations of some Catholic men. Some Catholic leaders suspected Vincent of ulterior motives.¹⁰¹ “We are not in love with the Chautauqua superficialities,” wrote one editorialist to *The Catholic World* in 1891, “but we appreciate the wisdom of the Methodists in wishing to make their position stronger than it was by attracting their young people by the surest baits in our age . . . an easy road to culture.” The Methodists had recognized “the barrenness of modern religious opinions” and offered “other attractions” to keep young men and women under their wing.¹⁰²

Catholic fears that Chautauqua was a stealth proselytizing tool derived from political as well as religious considerations. Of special concern was Chautauqua’s symbolic role in their public relations battle with nativists over parochial education, school curricula, and the content of public libraries. “The Chautauqua,” wrote the editor of *The Catholic World* in 1890, “is designed on narrow lines, with a deliberate purpose to ignore the truth about Catholics in their relations to history, science, art, and literature.” “Its Methodistical characteristics,” he concluded, “are very offensive to a Catholic.”¹⁰³ Writing somewhat cynically as a warrior admiring an opponent’s skill, he portrayed Chautauqua as a covert weapon to maintain Protestant cultural hegemony. Representing the CLSC as a vehicle of anti-Catholic propaganda, he referred ominously to “well-paid” authors who bring a “fair profit” to the “central committee.”

Bishop Vincent has a machine of great power which, week by week, puts the knowledge of the Catholic Church further and further from the knowledge of the American people. It is a momentous crusade without the cross; and an insidious one, for the calumnies and *double entendre* against the church are well wrapped up and keenly distributed. It is all done too under the shadow of toleration and Christian good-fellowship.¹⁰⁴

With Chautauqua a hopeless case, Catholics embarked on a campaign to create a competitor to the CLSC, entitled the Columbian Reading Union. Reasoned University of Notre Dame Professor Maurice Francis

Egan, "John Wesley appropriated much from us; why should we not take some of the Chautauqua plans?"¹⁰⁵ The Union would fill the vacuum created by the exclusion of Catholic literature from the public school curricula, public libraries, and bookstore shelves. "Catholic books do not sell," lamented *The Catholic World*. "It becomes every day more evident that the great need of our time is to create a Catholic atmosphere," wrote Edward Mountel of Ohio. "The Catholic faith of our young men is more precious than money."¹⁰⁶ The Union offered reading lists intended to supplement the CLSC course of study. Finding not one Catholic author on Christian art, for example, the Union offered to furnish a list of replacement books to "any one following the Chautauqua course" free of charge.¹⁰⁷

The Catholic editors knew that the reading groups comprised only one part of the Chautauqua "machine." For CLSC groups around the country, summer assemblies provided a central location for administration, ceremonial events, and recruitment. But Chautauqua assemblies around the country remained treacherous ground for Catholic visitors, who could often be made uncomfortable by evangelical sermons and offhand nativist remarks. For example, minister William Spurgeon's lecture "The Monk Who Shook the World, or Martin Luther and the Reformation" at the Old Salem, Illinois, assembly was so belligerent that the executive board later passed a resolution denouncing his attack.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, while the original Chautauqua assembly grew organically from the Methodist camp meeting, American Catholics in the 1890s had no comparable tradition. There were few models within the Catholic Church for combining religious education and healthful recreation for laypersons.

Consequently, when a group met in June 1892 at the Catholic Club in New York City to devise an alternative to Chautauqua, the resulting assembly mirrored the original in every respect save the content of its curriculum. Led by Morgan M. Sheedy of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the proposed Summer School on Lake Champlain, situated on a 450-acre site just south of Plattsburgh, New York, would "foster intellectual culture in harmony with true Christian faith" while giving "due allowance . . . to healthful recreation and profitable entertainment." Just as the early Methodist camp meetings provided rest and relaxation for traveling circuit preachers, the Summer School at Plattsburgh would provide much-needed solace for the Catholic Church's clergymen and nuns. Two months later, Sheedy dispatched two representatives to take notes on the physical layout of the Chautauqua assembly. The representatives, according to the *Chau-*

tauqua Assembly Herald, were “amazed at the size and scope of Chautauqua . . . and they were thoroughly convinced that a similar institution would prove of immense benefit to the people of their church.”¹⁰⁹

The Catholic distrust of—and fascination with—Chautauqua in the late 1800s reflected the changing civic status of Catholics nationwide. Most important was the rise of martial patriotism during the Spanish-American War (1898) and the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt (1901–1909). For some Catholic leaders, the emergence of a robust Americanism presented an opportunity to unfurl a newfound sense of entitlement, symbolized in soaring cathedrals and grand public parades. Voluntary institutions figured importantly in this process. By creating Catholic versions of mainstream institutions like Chautauqua—which Roosevelt once declared “the most American thing in America”—Catholics rejected the nativists’ definition of citizenship, invoking freedom of conscience and religious tolerance as the central themes of American identity while declaring their patriotism to the nation-state. The Catholic appropriation of Chautauqua, in other words, typified a wider strategy for the preservation of religious autonomy.

If Chautauqua could be reinvented as a symbol of community that transcended parochial concerns, Catholics stood to benefit. So too would they gain from the open and respectful dialogue that often occurred at the assemblies. In the summer of 1899, in the wake of a spectacular victory over Spain, Catholic Rev. J. M. Cleary toured midwestern assemblies with a speech titled “Religion and Country, Church and State.” His appearance on the platform reminded Protestant audiences not to judge people on their religious beliefs. And yet, Catholics assumed the greater risk in such exchanges. Patriotism was as limiting as it was empowering. A largely Protestant audience might realize that good citizens could be found among all creeds. But had they learned anything about Catholic history, culture, and theology? The creation of a *separate* assembly in Plattsburgh only seemed to exacerbate the problem. Its founders envisioned it as a bold appropriation of mainstream culture to protect Catholics against that culture. Yet it left the ignorance of that wider culture largely untouched.¹¹⁰

More worrisome still to Catholic leaders was the chance that the Chautauqua medium would overwhelm the Catholic message. Even in the safe space of the Plattsburgh assembly, Catholics struggled to make Protestant-dominated middle-class conventions their own. Though its inaugural advertisement referred to Chautauqua only once in passing, the Summer School clearly reflected its Protestant progenitor’s influence. The adver-

tisement, for example, incorporated the standard tropes of assembly brochures, including romanticism (“the purple mountains . . . symbolize the yearning for higher things”), pastoralism (“remote from the clamor and rush of the towns . . .”), and a preoccupation with the health benefits of nature (“the mind, invigorated by the perfumed breath of the pine-woods . . . will grow clear and quick . . .”). Only its stress on patriotism and its pledge to help retard “the ruffian note of war” revealed the document’s Catholic authorship.¹¹¹ Through the Catholic Chautauqua, Catholics demonstrated that an ethno-religious minority could still be good citizens. Hark’s leadership of the Mt. Gretna assembly proved the same about German American Moravians. But having met the standards of “good” citizenship, could Catholics retain their religious identity?¹¹²

The Chautauqua establishment welcomed the arrival of the Plattsburgh assembly. The appearance of a separate assembly two hundred miles to the east helped deflect attention from a glaring hole in Chautauqua’s landscape: while all the major Protestant denominations built chapels and missionary rest homes on the original Chautauqua grounds, the Catholic Church had no such presence. A dedicated Catholic house would not be built on the Chautauqua grounds for more than a century. Even if the Plattsburgh assembly allowed anti-Catholic sentiments to go unexamined, Protestant Chautauquans were forced to consider whether their narrow conceptions of citizenship were appropriate in a nation growing more diverse by the day.

Conclusion

The Catholic Chautauqua of 1892 pulled Vincent’s creation in unexpected directions. The Jewish Chautauqua Society, founded the following year, sent it even further afield. In 1893 Rabbi Henry Berkowitz of Philadelphia began an educational program designed to impart knowledge about Jewish culture to Jewish immigrants arriving from Europe. The Jewish Chautauqua Society soon evolved into an elaborate public lecture series, a system of reading circles modeled on the CLSC, a religious school, and, by 1897, an annual assembly, for Jews and non-Jews alike. Both it and the Catholic Chautauqua were designed to preserve ethno-religious traditions within a Protestant majority. Both marshaled the resources of local religious leaders and educators to accomplish this task. In both cases, local

ethno-religious elites might have chosen different titles for their institutions. However, both decided to appropriate the Chautauqua model for their own ends. The “Chautauqua idea,” despite parochial origins, had proven to be malleable in the hands of J. Max Hark, Morgan M. Sheedy, and Henry Berkowitz.¹¹³

Was Chautauqua intended to be a sustainable and tolerant community, calibrated to the needs of a diversifying, urban society? Yes and no. On the one hand, as a self-proclaimed political neutral, it claimed the high ground over the political parties and reform societies. Chautauqua’s role was not to advocate; rather, consistent with the Jeffersonian ideal, it would educate the public, inform and enlighten the people, and instruct them in the loftier aspects of citizenship. On its platform, opposing views could be expressed and heard. At “Catholic Day” at the Lithia Springs (Illinois) Chautauqua in 1894, Father J. W. Crowe detailed Catholic contributions to world civilization, explained Roman Catholic Church doctrine, and dispelled popular misconceptions (his reassurance that “no saloon keeper can be a good Catholic” provoked loud applause). The following year, another lecturer called to amend immigration laws “to prohibit the immigration to this country of the ignorant and vicious hords [*sic*] of the old world.”¹¹⁴ The absence of supervised discussion left such instances of discordance jarringly unresolved—evidence of the intrinsic messiness of participatory democracy. Its physical format, a hybrid of the New England town square and the popular religious revival, placed Chautauqua even closer to the sacred center of U.S. democratic practice.

When first unfurled, the canopy of Chautauqua covered only a small crowd of middle-class, northern Methodists and their friends. It was, after all, erected by Victorians possessed with a deep and abiding suspicion of ethnic, racial, and religious “others.” Vincent, Miller, Douthit, and Hark all embodied the contradictions of their era: they embraced modernity yet yearned nostalgically for a simpler era; they believed in participatory democracy yet accepted the exclusionary effects of class, racial, and gender hierarchy. All hoped to sacralize the social order by appropriating the organizational modalities of the industrial age, including mass print, common schools, and the sober vacation resort. And although endowed with varying degrees of power, all four used their gender and racial entitlements to fill leadership roles in their communities. Not surprisingly, when Chautauqua began to reach out to ethno-religious minorities, some people smelled a plot. Anglo-Saxon Protestant meanings pervaded the Chautauqua idea. Try

as some people might, those elements remained, and some—like the worried editorialists in *The Catholic World*—saw in Chautauqua a scheme to deprive them of their autonomy.¹¹⁵

By the mid-1890s, however, these objections were melting away. Chautauqua had come to more closely resemble the big tent ideal so cherished by advocates of the institution today. Middle-class Catholics and Jews had pulled up the stakes and expanded the canopy to cover virtually all of white America, hinting at a pluralistic community of educated citizens, all working together within a liberal framework. This feat is all the more astonishing when one considers that truly “national” cultural movements were quite rare in the United States. July 4th and Election Day prompted celebrations that could be said to be national. But ethnic, sectional, and partisan divisions shaped these practices and gave them widely varying meanings. The same could be said for the Sunday school, Sabbatarian, temperance, and abolitionist organizations. These movements never completely erased sectarian divisions, nor did any of them really catch on in the South. Before Chautauqua, only the Lyceum Movement produced a national cultural oeuvre, oriented around celebrities like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Mark Twain. Chautauqua rode atop the spread of bourgeois culture into the Midwest, West, and the New South, replacing the old ethno-religious particularism with a new particularism based on class.

Had someone been hoodwinked? Had Catholics redefined Vincent’s exclusive model of citizenship? Or had Chautauqua redefined Catholic citizenship? I suggest that neither model—selective ethnic appropriation, on the one hand, or Protestant social control, on the other—adequately explains the expansion of Chautauqua’s canopy. Vincent and company had not tricked anyone into compliance with their cultural values; nor were ethno-religious groups immune to Chautauqua’s effects. Rather, Chautauqua is best understood as a cultural space within which ethno-religious cultures *converged* at the turn of the century. Increasingly, reform-minded Protestants, Catholics, and Jews found the common ground between them reoriented around a new conception of citizenship, over which no single group had complete control. The liberal creed, in other words, had been extracted from its denominational origins and transformed into a set of civic standards organized around pan-religious principles (what some would later describe as America’s “civil religion”). Turn-of-the-century citizenship stressed a mythology of white, middle-class prosperity in which the moral benevolence of expert-led modern institutions ensured progress.

If Chautauqua was a tolerant community, it was very much an *imagined* community. Its aesthetic derived in part from an upper-class leisure model, one that harkened to a romanticized era before the arrival of seemingly inassimilable immigrants, before the growth of big industrial labor unions, and—especially important for Vincent—before the Civil War upset the harmonious race relations and “large leisure” of the Old South. Chautauquans modeled participatory democracy, to be sure. But they did so in a consequence-free, temporary environment that had been purged of the *demos* itself. What is important for our story is how Chautauqua’s imagined community, warts and all, emerged as a powerful touchstone for middle-class suburbs, middle-class politics, middle-class religiosity, and middle-class conceptions of citizenship. Chautauqua had achieved great success by 1900. However, its failures, then and now, are far more interesting, for they help us understand the quandaries of American liberalism.

4. *The Liberalism of Whiteness: Webs of Region, Race, and Nationalism in the Chautauqua Movement*

The nearest realization of democracy which I have witnessed during a residence of a quarter of a century in the United States is the Chautauqua movement. . . . There rank, wealth, and competitive rivalries appear to be forgotten.

—Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen

The Civil War and the constitutional amendments that followed confirmed, on a theoretical level, the citizenship of emancipated black Americans. However, African American men and women remained trapped in a web of law and custom that excluded them from the political process and conspired to keep them in inferior jobs and schools. Social Gospel advocates rarely targeted their reform efforts toward these victims of institutionalized discrimination, preferring instead to focus on impoverished whites: the immigrant, the orphan, the widowed mother. Rarely were blacks identified as worthy objects of charitable effort and uplift. Perhaps this reflected the notion that the “race question” belonged to southerners. But with every passing year, more and more African Americans would flee the floods, disease, and boll weevil plagues of the South for the uncertain opportunities in the industrial cities of the North. Northern whites were finding the “race question” increasingly difficult to ignore.

And yet, Chautauquans managed to find ways. Race was the great problem of nineteenth-century U.S. democracy, and relative lack of engagement with it was a glaring omission for an institution devoted to problem-solving debate. Race was rarely discussed outside of Chautauqua’s locally vetted media for the dissemination of useful information. In popular lectures and reading circles, the unsystematic presentation of racial issues was more likely to confirm the audience’s confidence in its own blameless liberalism and Christian good works than challenge its underlying assumptions. A Jane Addams appeal for subjective understanding or a Booker T. Washington speech on self-reliance might share the stage haphazardly with Willard F. Mallalieu’s “March of the Anglo-Saxon,” a warning from Josiah Strong on the threat of “the heathen world,” or a John R. Commons diatribe on the “inroads of alien stock.” Having reaffirmed its liberal

attitude on race, Chautauqua, lily-white to the core, observed a respectful silence.

The flight from race, however, attests to its importance. Historians have long noted the connections between racism, chest-thumping patriotism, eugenic science, and the ever-louder calls for immigration restriction at the turn of the century. With the recent attention to the construction of whiteness, what Cecilia O'Leary has called "the racialization of patriotism" is more starkly visible.¹ "Whiteness," Ruth Frankenberg has theorized, "makes itself invisible precisely by asserting its normalcy." Chautauqua's rhetorical and social silence on race attests to what Frankenberg called the "naturalized" or "unmarked norm" of the white social position, giving its members access to a privileged rhetorical position from which the needs of some are presented as universal.² Chautauquans rarely linked blood and nation with the same bluntness as the Daughters of the American Revolution or the Ku Klux Klan, groups that made few inroads into the Chautauqua circle. Chautauquans generally preferred platitudes of racial progress over the fixed categories of the eugenicists and scientific racists. But Chautauqua's blind faith in equal opportunity made racial privilege appear natural by putting it last on the list of social injustices addressed on its platform.

An important qualification is in order: I found no evidence of Chautauquans turning away black patrons. Indeed, in response to a query from a black schoolteacher in 1900, George E. Vincent reassuringly wrote that "we have colored students every year and are glad to accord them the treatment which any self respecting American Citizen should receive."³ My point is more subtle. I argue that when Chautauquans applied standards of citizenship to judge the issues of race, they relied uncritically on a cultural construct that was itself the product of deeply problematic racial thinking; and in this regard, they were typical of most white, native-born, middle-class men and women of the time. Chautauquans enacted their normative white identity through patriotic rituals, regional stereotypes, selective recruitment of nonwhites (like Booker T. Washington), and exoticist fantasies. In the assemblies and circles, I contend, Chautauquans unwittingly constructed a white public, or as one southerner called it, a "home of the sturdy Anglo-Saxon."⁴ There, the particularities of racial, ethno-religious, and national diversity were absorbed into a vision of good citizenship based largely on how good white people were supposed to behave.

Race at Chautauqua did not operate in a vacuum. Religion played an especially important role in orienting white racial identities in the Chau-

tauqua movement away from overtly racist positions. When Booker T. Washington requested in 1896 that the assembly audience treat him “as a Christian gentleman, no more, no less,” he received “great applause.”⁵ Moreover, as racial and class insiders dovetailed at the turn of the century, Chautauquans found themselves coaxed into a racial category not wholly of their own making or control. The cost of whiteness in turn-of-the-century America was measured not only by its role in segregation, immigration restriction, and labor exploitation. More, the normalization of whiteness was closely tied to the normalization of an expanding, unself-conscious middle-class, willfully unaware of the privileges of material abundance and consumer capitalism. In the late 1870s national politicians agreed to abandon the goal of biracial democracy and return the South to “home rule.” Chautauquans’ polite silence on race—like the polite silence observed by white liberals for generations thereafter—helped preserve this status quo for another ninety years.

From Anglo-Saxonism to White Americanism

To understand Chautauqua’s racial conservatism, we must first explore its approach to white ethnicity. Few developments of the late nineteenth century were more threatening to native-born, white, middle-class Americans than the massive influx of European and Asian immigrants. Chautauqua possessed more than its share of nativists—native-born Americans who viewed the influx of allegedly inassimilable foreigners with fear and loathing. To highlight its charms as a vacation resort, Chautauqua’s founders wove anti-urbanism into its institutional fabric. Invidious comparisons abounded. Chautauqua was everything the typical industrial city was not: clean, prosperous, orderly, and otherwise “sufficiently removed from the city to escape the noise and confusion incident to a city.”⁶ The distinction grew sharper in the final years of the nineteenth century, as an influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe, bringing with them new customs and languages, heightened what historians Morton and Lucia White long ago termed the “powerful tradition of anti-urbanism in American thought.”⁷

Opinion differed, of course, on the exact cause of urban dysfunction. Reformers such as Jacob Riis and Jane Addams clung to an environmental interpretation of human intelligence. “In the tenements,” insisted Riis, “all the influences make for evil.” Remove the underlying causes of immorality,

he implied, and even the most alien of immigrants could be re-formed into an American. On the other hand, Henry Cabot Lodge and his American Protection League held no hope for the amalgamation of alien stock, insisting that the new immigrants were biologically unfit for life in a civil democracy. They were, as one protectionist at an Illinois assembly crudely put it, "tainted with brutal instincts as legacy from savage ancestors." As social scientists and policy-makers debated, metaphors and images of urban decline filtered into popular culture. Wrote Thomas DeWitt Talmadge in 1878, ominously echoing Charles Loring Brace's *The Dangerous Classes of New York* (1872): "The ignorant classes are always the dangerous classes. Demagogues marshal them. They are helm-less, and are driven before the gale."⁸

From the first assembly in 1874, the drums of immigration restriction and Anglo-Saxon supremacism beat steadily, if softly, at Chautauqua. "If there has seemed to be danger of Popish domination in the land, by reason of the great disparity in numbers," opined R. M. Warren in 1878, "we need no longer fear . . . Chautauqua has evidently been left out of the calculation by the croakers. If American families in the vicinity of Boston are becoming extinct, Chautauqua comes nobly to the rescue." Few nativists at Chautauqua defined the Anglo-Saxon destiny with more bellicosity than Josiah Strong. Strong mounted the podium in 1888 to read from his famously pugnacious bestseller *Our Country* (1885). "For the first time in history," he trumpeted, "the greatest race occupies the greatest home."⁹ Others, alarmed at the foreign-ness of the "new immigrants" from Eastern and Central Europe, were less optimistic about the United States's fate. According to one *Chautauquan* contributor, "the character of this vast stream of humanity" had "of late years changed for the worse. . . . The republic has become the dumping ground for the offscourings of Europe."¹⁰

If, as Strong envisioned, the "greatest race occupies the greatest home," than Chautauqua was doubly blessed as the epicenter of racial and national identity. Nativist writers and speakers encouraged Chautauquans to value their pure Anglo-Saxon heritage as accrued social capital, a family heirloom they should protect at all costs from the new immigrants of Eastern and Southern Europe. As Anglo-Saxons had created democracy "out of its own insular experience unhampered by inroads of alien stock," as John R. Commons put it, the rights and responsibilities of the nation's legitimate ownership belonged to them alone. History had knighted a race to lead all others. So powerful was this mythology of legal and political entitlement

that its proponents considered themselves heirs of both a genetic and cultural dowry.¹¹

In defining the benefits of racial insiderness, however, nativists at Chautauqua faced difficult choices. Biological determinism seemed incompatible with Chautauqua's evangelical spirit, its self-image as the "consummate flowering of our Christian republican principles." If even the worst sinners could repent, receive God's grace, and experience salvation, it followed that no one should be prejudged to be unfit for citizenship. Furthermore, the strict Anglo-centrists, at Chautauqua and elsewhere, found themselves defending a dwindling genetic pool. By 1900, the census statistics revealed a stark reality—the Yankees of lore had dissipated, their ancestral lines blurred by centuries of westward migration and intermarriage. Even as they anointed themselves official heirs of the national past, fewer and fewer "aboriginal" Anglo-Saxons could be found to personify the supremacists' version of true Americanism.¹²

Moreover, Chautauqua had long served as an inclusive site of multicultural exchange between ethnically English, German, and Scandinavian persons. Cofounder Lewis Miller's ancestral roots lay in German Pennsylvania, as did those of Pennsylvania Chautauqua assembly cofounder J. Max Hark. In the 1880s, interestingly, Methodist minister John George Schaal's bilingual Chautauqua group in Cincinnati, Ohio, replaced the required text on the history of Greece with a German translation of *Onken's Hellas*.¹³ As public endeavors dependent on wide patronage, Chautauqua assemblies and circles adapted to their ethnic environments. The "Scandinavians, Protestant Germans, the Hollanders" were especially prominent in the "western Chautauquas," wrote the *Wisconsin State Journal* in 1902.¹⁴ When the Scandinavian citizens of Marinette, Wisconsin, agitated for recognition on the Lakeside Chautauqua Assembly's 1897 Chautauqua program, the board of directors set apart the evening of 4 August for a lecture by Professor Julius Olson on "The Scandinavians, and Their Contributions to Civilization." And during the 1910 assembly in Willmar, Minnesota, Norwegian Day culminated with a mock-Viking ship set to sail on the lake.¹⁵

Increasingly useless in classifying a hereditary caste, Anglo-Saxonism was absorbed into an expanded definition of patriotism. At Chautauqua, the emotional firmament surrounding the Spanish-American War accelerated the turn to behavior over biology as the measure of citizenship. The "citizen tax" charged to Chautauqua visitors in 1898 equated citizenship with

self-sacrifice—for a community defined not as an ethno-religious caste, but in the legalistic terminology of the modern nation-state. “All the Chautauqua customs,” insisted an 1898 brochure, “are so thoroughly rational, so evidently based upon the real needs of the community, that no one who once understands the situation thinks of questioning them.” Jane Addams’s address “The Social Obligations of Citizenship” linked citizenship to public service. Theodore Roosevelt called Chautauqua “the most American thing in America” during his 1905 visit, following that with this boast: “I am going to speak soon at the Catholic Chautauqua and hope next year to speak at the Jewish Chautauqua. Recognize the good qualities of any man, south or north, Jew or Gentile, provided he is a good American.”¹⁶

The redefinition of *Americanism* as a set of behavioral conventions encountered little opposition at Chautauqua. Many hailed from outside the



FIGURE 4.1 This arch of humanity greeted Theodore Roosevelt upon his arrival at Chautauqua in 1905. Roosevelt used the opportunity to justify U.S. military intervention in Central America and the Caribbean, an approach that historians would later label the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. (Courtesy of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York)

narrow circle of “we” promoted by the Anglo-centrists. Enlarging the circle, but limiting it to “south or north, Jew or Gentile,” expressed Chautauqua’s aim to recruit “all classes and condition of people to become members of the great republic of letters” while also ensuring that Anglo-Saxon ideas and institutions prevailed.¹⁷ A journalist for the *Wisconsin State Journal* viewed Chautauqua as non-Yankee keepers of the Yankee faith. Although “the New England admixture is now but a trace,” this newspaperman observed,

the spirit of the Puritan is marching on, disseminating among the people through the forums and the temples of these assemblies his best ethical and social ideals. . . . The summer Chautauqua is a most useful force in amalgamating people—in declaring the best spirit, in asserting the most intelligent patriotism, in reiterating the truth that this is a Christian nation.

In their search for the “spirit of the Puritan” over literal Yankee heredity as a criterion for good citizenship, Chautauquans contributed to a deeply rooted tradition of imaginative democracy and republican idealism, described by writer Michael Lind as “idea-state nationalism.” Patriotism, insisted one Chautauqua speaker as the Spanish-American conflict came to a close, could be instilled through education. The patriot is not born but becomes one by completing “a course in human relationships, in institutional membership.”¹⁸

“To be great,” wrote Professor John R. Commons to Chautauqua students, “a nation need not be of one blood, it must be of one mind.” The shift from biology to behavior invited nativists to expand their racial typology to include new, previously excluded members. The *fin de siècle* scuttling of traditional genera, therefore, shifted the boundaries of exclusion from ethnicity to race. From it emerged a more inclusive yet equally prejudicial system of racial classification based on skin tone and hemispheric origin, wherein the various nationalities of Europe were conflated into an umbrella pan-European racial category, juxtaposed against Asian and African types. For decades, Chautauqua instructors had weighed the relative merits of the Scotch-Irish, Germans, and Scandinavians against the Polish, Russians, and Italians (the latter group viewed by one minister as “voluble, volatile persons who blow up their saints with fireworks . . .”). But in his required 1907 CLSC text, Commons recommended viewing “the term ‘race’ in a rather loose and elastic sense, for the ethnographers

are not agreed upon it." In Commons's system, these groups belonged to a single race he called Aryan or Indo-Germanic. He juxtaposed this unwieldy supercategory against four others: Semitic (Jewish), Mongolian (Asian), African (black), and Malay (Pacific islanders).¹⁹

In the reduction of the racial universe to five constellations, "the white, yellow, black, red and brown races of the earth," we can discern the contours of what historian David Hollinger has called the twentieth century's "ethno-racial pentagon." Of these, the *white* constellation shone brightest. Marshaled as a collective force for Western civilization, the members of the composite ruling regime enjoyed both the privileges and burdens inhering in class supremacy. Whiteness, according to sociologist Edward A. Ross in another required CLSC reading, was a precious possession—again, both genetic and cultural—that required constant care, investment, and sacrifice from its owner. "Underbreeding," he wrote, had precipitated "race deterioration" and meant that "whites will contribute less than they ought to the blood of the ultimate race that is to possess the globe."²⁰

The shift from biology to patriotic behavior as the litmus test for "good citizenship," therefore, helped widen the boundaries of whiteness. Perhaps this is why the drumbeat of immigration restriction became fainter at Chautauqua after the turn of the century. In the 1880s and 1890s speakers at Chautauqua generally viewed the Polish, Italians, Lithuanians, and Jews as dangerously inassimilable. Thereafter, the "melting pot" metaphor appeared more frequently, reflecting Chautauquans' growing confidence in the ability of democratic institutions to Americanize white newcomers. While America "should not be the dumping ground for the scum and refuse," advised a rabbi speaking from the platform in 1907, Americans should nevertheless prepare the immigrant "as quickly as possible for American life and citizenship." In 1894 lecturer Dewitt Miller's "Stranger at Our Gates" address called for immigration restrictions and the deportation of law-breakers. Ten years later, however, he reappeared with a new speech with the much softer-sounding title "A Face at the Door." "Don't you be afraid of the commonest foreigner," he advised. "He is the very foundation stone of the republic."²¹ Chautauquans also remained skittish on the "science" of eugenics. Wrote Samuel Schmucker to his CLSC readers in 1913, "The science of eugenics is so new that no one is able as yet wisely to say what course is to be pursued in improving the race."²²

The irony should be abundantly clear. To the immigration issue, Chautauquans applied its liberal creed: Americanism, like salvation, could be attained through voluntary choice and managed through the concerted

effort of sympathetic institutions. But its liberalism on immigration rested on its conservatism on race. The European “races” had been collapsed into a single umbrella category of whiteness, a “national physiognomy” described in the coded imagery of skin pigment. Wrote Professor H. H. Boyeson on a visit to the original New York Chautauqua: “Nowhere else have I had such a vivid sense of contact with what is really and truly American.” From a symphony of autonomous instruments, the United States had come to play a single tune. “The *national physiognomy* was defined to me as never before” (emphasis added), Boyeson wrote, his imagery soaring with his spirits, “and I saw that it was not only instinct with intelligence, earnestness, and indefatigable aspiration, but that it revealed a strong affinity for all that makes for righteousness and the elevation of the race.”²³

Dramatic performer John B. Ratto dramatized the “national physiognomy” in his Chautauqua skit. Ratto, a self-described “characterist,” offered a mélange of ethnic and national types comprising the alleged American type. In a 1907 show called “Uncle Sam’s Family,” Ratto offered impersonations of Italian, German, and Polish immigrants, changing makeup and costume in such quick succession that the characters and their stories seemed to blend together. “America is the greatest nation on earth because its people are a mixed people,” he told his audiences before the show.²⁴ By excluding African Americans and Asians from the composite American “family,” Ratto anchored Americanism in a nominal racial identity.

Chautauqua and the Midwest

Chautauqua’s membership records reveal a core constituency: native-born, Protestant, middle-class men and women of European ancestry. The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle (CLSC) was 85 percent female, 99 percent Protestant, and so thoroughly white that its otherwise detailed application questionnaire dropped race as a response category. However, when commentators generalized about Chautauqua’s membership, they often fixated on region instead of race, gender, or class. Its “spirit is pervading the country,” wrote Paul Pearson of Chautauqua in 1906, but “this is especially true of the Middle West, where the movement has a hold on the popular mind that is difficult to overestimate.” Chautauqua’s “special type of buoyancy,” according to travelogue writer David M. Steele, derived from the people of the “Middle West . . . that belt of country which extends indef-

initely west from Philadelphia, . . . and ending somewhere in the Mississippi Valley.”²⁵ “Naturally, the Chautauqua idea grew up in the forests and on the prairies, not in the cities,” remarked *Everybody’s Magazine* in 1914 in a sarcastic distortion of Chautauqua’s actual origins. “It grew up, that is, where the native American occurs free and true to type, not where he has been infected by the worldly and effete European notion of going out and having a gauzy and gaseous Good Time utterly unbuttressed by uplift.”²⁶

It is true that 80 percent of CLSC members between 1882 and 1901 lived in the New England, Middle Atlantic, and northern midwestern states; nearly one-half lived in five heavily industrial states: New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and Massachusetts. Late-nineteenth-century demographic patterns ensured a concentration—in absolute numbers—of CLSC members and assemblies in the industrial North. It is also true that Chautauqua’s founders lived in these states—Vincent made his name in Chicago, and Miller was from Ohio. However, despite the early-twentieth-century effort to locate Chautauqua’s origin on the “prairie,” the midwestern “Chautauqua Belt” was more journalistic lore than fact.

No special possession of the Midwest, Chautauqua prior to 1900 is best understood as a national movement popular everywhere *except* for the South. As a statistical variable, region was far less determinative of the movement’s popularity in a particular community than religion, race, or gender. Comparing the ratio of CLSC membership to population, one finds that the CLSC attracted substantial members relative to the population in every region *but* the South, where the CLSC failed dismally. Figure 4.2 shows CLSC membership by state compared with the population of that state. States where the CLSC was more popular, compared with the national average, are darkened. Comparatively speaking, and contrary to the midwestern identity contemporary observers and historians have often attributed to the CLSC, people in California, Nevada, and Colorado were *more* likely to belong to the CLSC than people in the northern central states. Overall, the citizens of the Pacific and mountain states joined the CLSC at a rate above the national average.²⁷

Although national in reach, Chautauqua chose an allegedly “postethnic” Midwest as its adopted regional identity. What explains Chautauqua’s fable of region? The Chautauqua Belt myth, I suggest, cloaked a racial self-representation so closely reflective of the cultural gestalt that it escaped critical examination. According to historian Frederick Jackson Turner in 1893, constantly advancing and receding frontiers had shaped midwestern

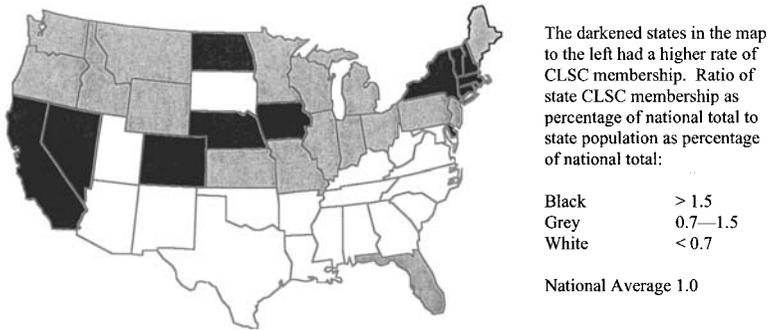


FIGURE 4.2 Relative Rates of CLSC Membership by State, 1882–1901.

society.²⁸ Less an autonomous section than a battleground between English and French, white and Native American, North and South, the region had emerged as “the typically American region,” producing citizens with no sectional allegiances. Hereditarily too, midwesterners were “typical of the modern United States.” The region “represented that composite nationality which the contemporary United States exhibits.”²⁹ “In the composition of its population,” lectured Frederick Jackson Turner to CLSC students in 1915, the middle region was a “prototype of the modern United States, composite in its nationality.” The Midwest was a “mediating, transitional zone” between East and West, “fundamentally national in physiography.”³⁰ Hence, identifying Chautauqua with the Midwest placed it close to the mythical source of U.S. democracy.

The frequent characterization of Chautauqua as a midwestern movement, in other words, conveyed its unmentionable racial identity through the coded language of region. Chautauqua shared the stereotypes of whiteness often associated with the middle states. Midwestern-ness suited white Chautauquans well because of its reputation as an “unmarked” regional identity, an expression of composite Americanism paralleling the “unmarked” whiteness Chautauquans enjoyed in their assemblies. Invoking Chautauqua’s popularity in the Midwest, therefore, served as shorthand for the convergence of ethno-religious communities into a white mainstream—a process made all the more important by the migration of job-seeking African Americans into midwestern and western cities throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Nurtured by sunshine and bracing air, the white public would continue to grow in wisdom, pros-

perity, and strength. "The result is shown in the children of Colorado," boasted the Denver Chautauqua assembly of its fresh mountain breezes: "They are full-chested, strong-limbed and bronzed."³¹ Bronzed indeed!

An Invitation to the White South

It is no coincidence that Chautauqua's adoption of the Midwest occurred as CLSC writers shifted from biology to behavior as the primary trait of good citizenship. The Midwest connection linked Chautauqua to Frederick Jackson Turner's "typically American region," the melting pot for an idealized, postracial "national physiography," and the home of a participatory citizenship based on bourgeois behavior over biology. In this sense, Chautauqua adopted the midwestern stereotype of composite Americanism as its own. But although the decline of strict Anglo-Saxon supremacism contributed to the shift in racial theories imparted to CLSC students, it was not the only contributing factor. Chautauqua's racial mentality was rooted in the sharpened consciousness of nationhood following the Civil War and the related politics of sectional reconciliation and neocolonial expansion. The story of how the Civil War lost its loaded racial connotations and reemerged as an unproblematic symbol of nationhood—with assumptions of whiteness intact—is central to the turn-of-the-century, middle-class experience, and few cultural institutions contributed more to this process than Chautauqua.

Chautauqua burst onto the cultural scene in the 1870s as an unmistakably northern institution. The assembly was founded in 1874, amid the darkest days of Reconstruction. Its charter members, all northern Methodists, were by no means neutral. The Methodist-Episcopal Church split North-South over slavery in 1845. In 1863 Secretary of War Edward Stanton issued an order essentially placing all the assets of the southern branch of the church at the disposal of northern Methodist Bishop Edward R. Ames. The religious reconstruction of southern Methodism continued in the late 1860s, with the Southern General Conference chafing at the appointment of northerners to southern church posts and northern proselytizing efforts among blacks. In 1874, the year of Chautauqua's first assembly, the southern Methodists published a manifesto of religious self-determination and state sovereignty; a tyrannical majority, they insisted, would "expose the minority to harassing legislation if not oppression."

Peace talks at a conference at Cape May, New Jersey, in 1876 failed to placate the hawks on both sides. Calls for “no alliance with Babylon” and “independence” won the day, and the schism continued into the 1880s.³²

There was never any doubt where most early Chautauquans stood in the battle over religious reconstruction.³³ Theodore Flood, a minister and war veteran who became editor of *The Chautauquan*, often preferred to be addressed by his Union Army rank as Colonel Flood. And John Heyl Vincent’s friend Methodist Bishop Matthew Simpson developed a reputation during the Civil War for his rousing pro-Union speeches. In the war’s aftermath, Chautauqua preachers were both triumphal and repentant, celebrating victory while fearing providential wrath for a nation unfaithful to the Prince of Peace. As one lecturer at the first Chautauqua thundered, the United States “is not merely our territory, our population, or our history . . . it is an idea, namely liberty under law. . . . The shot fired at Sumter aroused the nation, because it was aimed at the heart of that idea.” Victory had vindicated the northern cause, and from this baptism by fire the nation was reborn.³⁴

Chautauqua owed its early success to the postwar surge of nationalism. After the modest success of the inaugural assembly in 1874, John Heyl Vincent looked for a bold promotional event, a star visitor whose presence would attract national attention. His first option, Henry Ward Beecher, was then embroiled in a marital scandal. From his days in a Galena, Illinois, pastorate, Vincent recalled his friendship with an ex-soldier and failed farmer then working as a clerk for his father’s business: Ulysses S. Grant. From Vincent’s perspective, Grant was “not a member of any church” but was nevertheless “a man of many good qualities of character.” Vincent invited the president to visit his new assembly—the terms were negotiated through Theodore Flood in absolute secrecy—and Grant accepted. Grant had never warmed to the evangelical style, but Chautauqua appealed to him as a way to exhibit kinship with Protestants without requiring too much in the way of public devotion.³⁵

Politics were also in play. In the 1870s Republicans valued New York and Ohio as swing states for congressional and presidential elections. Grant’s visit, even if just an excursion, would galvanize the Stalwarts and Liberals within the county’s Republican Party as it readied for the 1876 elections. Finally, politics aside, Grant viewed his stay at Chautauqua as a desirable presidential vacation. A journalist who was close to him upon his arrival by train in Salamanca indicated as much: “Of politics he had noth-

ing to say; no question of government was mentioned. He conversed as though he were away from home for rest and recreation and he seemed delighted to take up local interests."³⁶ Grant apparently enjoyed his respite and left the politics to others.

Grant's visit in 1875, and subsequent visits from campaigning Republican nominees and future presidents—James Garfield in 1880, Rutherford B. Hayes in 1892, William McKinley in 1895, and Theodore Roosevelt in 1905—demonstrated Vincent's skill and ingenuity as a promoter, earned the assembly national publicity, and solidified Chautauqua's association with the Republican Party. President Rutherford B. Hayes, a Methodist, teetotaler, and Chautauqua supporter, was frequently in demand as a lecturer at independent assemblies.³⁷ And if some local Republican politicians questioned Chautauqua's decision to exclude them from the negotiations for Grant's first visit, these executive visitations imprinted Chautauqua into the political landscape. In preparation for Grant's arrival on Saturday, 15 August 1875, the Jamestown Stalwarts festooned the entire city with bunting and flags. Grant was whisked from the train station to the pier on streets crowded with well-wishers and overhung with wreaths of evergreen. The gaily bedecked *Josie Bell*, with a flotilla of lake steamers, set out for the half-hour ride to Chautauqua, where tens of thousands more onlookers awaited his arrival. Chautauqua hymnodist Mary Lathbury had written a special song to greet him. Vincent and Miller escorted President Grant to the auditorium, where he sat as the guest of honor in a series of tributes and memorials. On Sunday, Grant went to church and received two Bibles, which he accepted with "a graceful bow."³⁸

The Civil War loomed large in the collective memory of the summer assemblage. Chautauquans staged elaborate rituals to remember the veterans' sacrifices and to undergird the causes for which they had fought. Chautauqua assemblies north of the Mason-Dixon line typically hosted at least one Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) Day per summer program, if not several. GAR members gained admittance free of charge. An observer at the original assembly in New York set the scene: to the strains of "Marching Through Georgia," long lines of blue-clad GAR men "march in from the entrances at the right and left of the platform, to the seats reserved for them in the parquet. As they enter, the assembled audience, moved by the dear old tune, the martial tread, and the sight of the blue coats, rise to their feet and give the Chautauqua salute, while they remain standing until the whole line is seated." The pomp and circumstance

reached new heights upon Grant's death in the summer of 1885. The crowd rose when a line of Cleveland Grays, marching to their own band, entered the auditorium and took their seats at the front. They watched as Judge Albion W. Tourgée—the author of the Reconstruction novel *A Fool's Errand* (1879) and resident of nearby Mayville, New York, since 1881—mounted a platform draped all in black and lauded Grant for giving the “enfranchised an opportunity to become free.” The rustic setting invited guests to project themselves into the heroic drama of the war. “The white tents spread over the Chautauqua grounds make the place look like an army encampment,” observed one journalist in 1889.³⁹

Waving the bloody shirt, however, was not Chautauqua's style. Pageants, marches, and songs of hope, amidst confetti and bunting, confirmed a larger national narrative of survival, redemption, and rebirth. More important, it all served to depoliticize the ongoing battles of Reconstruction. At a campaign speech at Chautauqua in August 1880, Republican presidential nominee James Garfield referred to a black gospel group he had heard in the auditorium the previous day. He wondered “if the sorrows of centuries of slavery had not distilled its sadness” into “voices so unutterably sweet.” As his steamer pulled away from the pier, the Fiske Jubilee Singers, a black gospel group, sang, “This is the year of jubilee / You shall gain the victory / The Lord has set His people free / You shall gain the day.”⁴⁰ Few were unmoved by the linkage of emotional patriotism and religious symbolism. The Jubilee Singers' seemingly unproblematic participation tokenized freedpeople as passive objects of a partisan battle between whites. Indeed, as congressional leaders abandoned Reconstruction and the Civil War reentered the public imagination in the 1880s, the racial elements of the war and Reconstruction were expunged and replaced by a national drama of reconciliation and repatriation. Chautauqua lent its mighty influence over middle-class sentiment to this effort.

Trumpeted J. W. Lee of Rome, Georgia, “in the Chautauqua spirit and conception the North and South are united.”⁴¹ But how could a partisan institution like Chautauqua—closely tied with the northern Methodist church, U. S. Grant, the Republican Party, and the GAR—possibly unite the sections? Although its growth in the South was slow, some southerners joined the movement in the 1880s and 1890s. The incremental relaxation of southern objections to Chautauqua is a major accomplishment of the movement and reveals much about the postwar program of industrial and social rebirth denoted by historians as the New South.

Few articulated the New South vision better than former Texas governor Richard B. Hubbard. Hubbard's "New South" stressed the rejuvenation and diversification of the southern economy. His 1894 Chautauqua address "Our Country—the South; Its Past, Present and Future" made quite clear—through its omissions—who would be included in the circle of "we" implied in the title. During the war, "the poor cottager and the luckless fisherman of the South fought side by side with the rich landowner and the slave-holding neighbor, and with the same courage and enthusiasm." The southern (white) man further demonstrated his heroism during Reconstruction as he took on the task of rebuilding the South; and he valiantly "accepted the additional charge of educating negro children." His efforts produced visible rewards. The region expanded "in material matters, including agriculture, mining, manufacturing, commerce, wealth and intellectuality." Hubbard saw encouraging signs that the (white) southerner would soon assume a prosperous partnership with his long-lost (white) northern brother. By the early 1890s, he noted, "there was but little or any of the bloody-shirt talk, and that now the North and South were throbbing as one great brotherhood."⁴²

Perhaps the best known of the New South's publicists was *Atlanta Constitution* editor Henry W. Grady. Known primarily as a New South ideologue, Grady was first and foremost an Atlanta booster eager to attract northern investment; his various schemes contributed to the rapid postwar growth of Atlanta, which soon eclipsed rivals Macon, Columbus, and Augusta.⁴³ In March 1888 Grady signed on as secretary of the Piedmont Chautauqua, at Salt Springs, just outside Atlanta. The institution's material evolution followed a typical pattern. The Georgia Pacific Railroad contributed \$7,500 to the project and offered a deal on tickets; incorporation papers were filed; and two hundred shares were issued, entitling the owners to prime spots on the assembly grounds for their cottages. Workers raced throughout the early summer of 1888 to finish the auditorium, classrooms, and hotel for opening day. Thousands of visitors gathered for a "Confederate Veterans Day" gala and lunched on a Brunswick stew so hardy that "one plate of it will make your mule throw you." The July 4th celebrations included fireworks and a fifteen-foot portrait of Jefferson Davis. Grady's success inspired nearby towns to follow suit, and soon two other assemblies, the Manchester Chautauqua and the Atlanta Chautauqua, had emerged within minutes of the city. Grady's *Atlanta Constitution* ceaselessly promoted the assembly as a meeting place for North and

South, a “flood of light” to tear away the “veil of prejudice and past feeling.” The assembly relied perhaps too much on Grady’s support. The assembly folded in 1891, just months after his death.⁴⁴

As the “zest and thankfulness” greeting “Alamo Day” at the 1889 assembly in San Marcos, Texas, attested, Chautauqua’s racial project could be adapted to southern politics and social patterns.⁴⁵ Indeed, Chautauqua made inroads into the urban South. But it did not thrive there. All told, the ex-Confederate states produced 10 major assemblies before 1900, of a total of 101 nationwide.⁴⁶ Although less numerous, southern assemblies were identical in structure to their northern counterparts, differing only in content. In this sense, a shared booster style linked southern and northern Chautauquas. The assembly at De Funiak Springs, for example, presented a romanticized “Old South” to its guests, a pre-industrial vision of pastoral charms and obedient slave-servants. Near the assembly was an Old Mill run by a miller “well along in years.” He could be seen “at work in the forest, assisted by his wife and a colored servant, but, as soon as visitors approach, he will hasten to the mill with a handful of grain to show the wonderful working of his invention.”⁴⁷ The assemblies learned to market regional difference. Tourism, therefore, helped to deracialize the Civil War and its aftermath. It also contributed to the spread of an interregional, white, middle-class identity.

Tourism had served this role before. The sections had been lending summer vacationers to one another in a sort of regional exchange program ever since the 1820s. But the antebellum watering holes in Newport, Rhode Island, and Saratoga, New York, were not geared to mass audiences, nor were they organized so explicitly around a nationalistic theme. Thus, Chautauqua produced new and sometimes awkward encounters. Ada Elizabeth Sisson, from Iowa, wondered about the white southerners she met at the original New York Chautauqua in 1895. Attending a pro-women’s suffrage lecture with two North Carolina women, Sisson joined the crowd’s frequent applause, but the southern ladies just “frowned.” Later, the women attended a July 4th celebration in the auditorium. A woman from Buffalo held a flag aloft and sang the national anthem; the whole scene was bathed in tricolored electric lights from above. Sisson surrendered to the moment, but the Carolinians remained aloof. Wrote Sisson, “Something is evidently wrong with an American woman who is not moved by her country’s songs.”⁴⁸

More commonly, assembly organizers and their guests stepped gingerly clear of indelicate subjects and made every effort to spare the feelings of guests from the other side of the Mason-Dixon line. Some assemblies held special receptions to welcome outside visitors. Until the early 1890s, assemblies honored veterans by using the standard language: northern assemblies held “Grand Army of the Republic Days,” while southern assemblies staged “Old Confederate Days.”⁴⁹ However, by mid-decade—that is, even before the Spanish-American War—the assemblies had abandoned these historical appellations in favor of the euphemized, less confrontational “Old Soldier’s Day” or “National Army Day.” According to a California assembly brochure, “Our national war experiences are wider now than the G.A.R.” The old Blues and Grays joined the veterans of America’s most recent war of empire to be honored on an all-purpose “Patriotism Day.”⁵⁰ By establishing a reputation for tolerant acceptance of sectional differences between white people, Chautauqua assemblies helped the country leave the controversies over black equality behind.

Racial Patriotism and the Spanish-American War

Chautauqua appealed as a place where white people from different national backgrounds and regions could go to silently reaffirm their racial identity. In 1893 and 1901 Chautauqua competed with better-funded competitors in this larger racial project: the great national and world’s fairs. The 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago caused a slight dip in the attendance in assemblies as far as Pacific Grove, California.⁵¹ Some assemblies hoped to use the Chicago exposition as an advertising forum. At the end of its 1892 season, the Louisiana Chautauqua organized an excursion to Chicago. In New York, the original institution published a flyer, “Chautauqua 1893 and the Columbia Exposition,” promoting itself as a stopover point for those traveling by rail through the Great Lakes region. Vincent staffed a Chautauqua exhibit at the exposition, a modest alcove of programs and leaflets wedged between the more elaborate displays of the Oxford University, University of Chicago, and City University of New York extension departments.⁵² The Chautauqua literature was only a short walk from the Midway, where visitors received visual confirmation of white superiority. The anthropology exhibit consisted of a hierarchically organized series of tableaux

meant to represent world cultures, a “chain of being” with Europeans at the top and Africans at the bottom.

World’s fairs hurt Chautauquan gate receipts in all instances but one—the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo brought a wave of visitors to the original Chautauqua assembly, just fifty miles away. The Chautauqua held a Pan-American Day on 9 July; the Buffalo exposition organizers reciprocated with a Chautauqua Day one week later, featuring music, lectures on Chautauqua ideals, and a fireworks display. Organizers of that fair made America’s arrival onto the world stage its central theme (albeit one overshadowed by the fatal shooting of President William McKinley on 6 September 1901).⁵³ Chautauqua assemblies also tried to capitalize on the utopian aesthetic evoked by the fairs, as if a visit to Chautauqua would suffice for those unable to attend the real thing. As one California assembly boasted, “One might think while looking over the hotel grounds in their present condition, that structures for the next World’s Fair were in progress of building.”⁵⁴ Assemblies also captured the fair’s spirit of racial and national triumphalism. Indeed, the “White City” image echoed for years in assembly literature: in 1908 a Wisconsin assembly’s “‘White City’ is enlarging” and in 1915, an Ohio assembly’s “white city . . . vanished as silently as the Arab’s tents.”⁵⁵

Despite competition from the world’s fairs, Chautauqua’s relative success in the New South and the growth of intersectional tourism contributed to the redefinition of the Civil War as a source of national—and masculine—vitality. The jingoism of the 1890s, in part the result of the economic reconfiguration of U.S. foreign relations in South America and the Pacific, provided a dramatic background to cultural shifts at the assembly. The speeches of Presidents Hayes in 1892 and McKinley in 1895 dramatize the wider project of translating sectional pride into a militaristic nationalism. As cannon fire echoed over the lake, Hayes commended his listeners for soldiering in “the largest, cheapest, safest and most efficient army the world has ever seen,” the “millions of educated men . . . engaged in the peaceful industries of civil life” whose efforts are “constantly adding to our wealth and power.” McKinley called for a renewal of “that burning love of country which characterized not only the soldiers of the late Civil War, but of every war in which this nation has been engaged from the Revolution to the Rebellion.” He ended with a quotation from Bishop Matthew Simpson: “Nail the Flag just below the cross! That is high enough. . . . Christ and country, nothing can come between nor long

prevail against them.”⁵⁶ Many eagerly awaited the moment when U.S. manhood would be unleashed onto the world.

In the summer of 1898 Chautauquans bunkered for battle. That winter, an explosion sent the battleship *Maine* and 266 Americans to the bottom of the Havana, Cuba, harbor. War with Spain broke out in mid-April and continued into the Chautauqua season. Despite the crisis, platform managers hoped for a good turnout. Coastal resorts within the range of Spanish warships would be shunned, they reasoned, diverting vacationers to Chautauqua’s many inland assemblies. But as reports of naval battles in Manila Bay and Santiago Harbor rolled in, attendance at many midwestern assemblies lagged. A reporter covering the assembly in Burlington, Iowa, noticed a drop in attendance for all but the patriotic programs. Four nearby assemblies closed their doors halfway through the summer program due to low gate receipts.⁵⁷ At the original assembly in New York, the sense of a nation (and an institution) embattled was brought home poignantly when co-founder Lewis Miller’s son Theodore, while charging San Juan Hill with Theodore Roosevelt and the Rough Riders, fell from a Spanish bullet.⁵⁸ To keep guests apprised, the *Chautauqua Assembly Herald* departed from editorial tradition and printed daily, front-page updates about the war.

The flow of adrenaline disrupted ordinary patterns of resort life. Old First Night was Chautauqua’s annual tradition meant to celebrate the passing of generations. In 1898 it turned into an impromptu flag-waving session. The amphitheater broke out into song, with the competing melodies of “Yankee Doodle” and “Dixie” blending into a contrapuntal expression of nationalism.⁵⁹ The CLSC also got into the spirit, naming the 1899 class “The Patriots.” The significance of the war in healing old sectional divisions was not lost on Episcopal Bishop James S. Johnston of Texas, himself a Confederate veteran who had seen action as a second lieutenant with James E. B. (Jeb) Stuart’s cavalry and had spent a year in a Union prison. “I believe that we all rejoiced,” he told his Yankee audience the following summer, “in the fact that the late war between Spain and ourselves so united our great country that there is no longer any North and any South [applause].”⁶⁰

Progressivism and the Black Presence at Chautauqua

The triumphant rendezvous of North and South did not bode well for discussion of the “race question” at Chautauqua. By the turn of the century,

Chautauqua had established itself as a crucible of the white public. It had also cemented its reputation as the summer meeting place for Progressive reformers. These two facts are closely related. Historians have long viewed Progressivism as a failed opportunity for the cause of civil rights. Progressives' dual commitment to the Protestant and commercial missions abroad ran roughshod over the sovereignty of Hawaiians and Filipinos. President Roosevelt dishonorably discharged 160 black soldiers after they were accused of participating in a race riot in Brownsville, Texas, in November 1906, although no indictment was ever filed. And Woodrow Wilson resegregated federal office buildings upon his election to president in 1912. Progressivism drew its strength from the ability of its adherents to define the circle of "we" sufficiently narrowly to preserve a core, native-born, middle-class constituency.

Chautauqua contributed to this larger project by popularizing prevailing stereotypes of black culture and identity. Rural whites in the late-nineteenth-century North relied on a limited array of media for their images of African Americans, including popular fiction, expositions, music, newspapers, and traveling shows. Chautauqua did little to challenge the trivializing romanticism of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The first African Americans at Chautauqua were the North Carolinians, the college gospel singers, who appeared in 1876. Their presence confirmed the inherent musicality of African Americans, according to author Nancy Hartshorn in 1882. It must have been "mortyfyin'" for folks who spent "heaps of money tryin' ter larn how ter sing" only to "hev the shine all took off of 'em by some black folks."⁶¹

The names given to the groups popular at Chautauqua assemblies—the Jubilee Singers, Jingle Concert Company, Nashville Students, Plantation Circuits, Garner Colored Concert Company, and the Williams Colored Singers among them—stressed their southern origins, further adding to the romanticized and depoliticized vision of the Old South promulgated in southern assemblies. While white performers were billed as "trained" and "cultivated," copy for black groups characterized them as rough-hewn talents of "natural" spirituality and musicality whose stories came from the "heart." The Dixie Jubilee Singers, according to one 1907 brochure, would "give life to the Chautauqua." The crude formulas of the language used to advertise jubilee singers paralleled the lack of sophistication in Chautauqua's solutions to the "race problem." The Tuskegee Institute Singers, according to another brochure, a "self-supporting" group under "their



FIGURE 4.3 The Tennessee Singers at Chautauqua, circa 1905. (From the Collection of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York)

leader, Booker Washington,” offered “what bids fair to be a solution of the problem of raising their race from the gutter.”⁶²

The frequent appearance of Booker T. Washington countered some stereotypes but confirmed others. Advocates of white hegemony found it easy to point to his uniqueness as further evidence of the biological obstacles to racial progress. Bishop Johnston of Texas, undermining progress by

linking it to the then-biologically impossible procedure of cloning, put it as follows: "We want some process by which men like Booker Washington can be indefinitely multiplied. [Applause.]" Much more provocative was the 1899 speech of Dr. J. W. E. Bowen, an African Methodist Episcopal minister and professor at the Gammon Theological Seminary of Atlanta. In response to Johnston, Bowen objected to the various Jim Crow schemes to limit black voting in the South, including literacy and educational standards and grandfather clauses; he also decried the "unmentionable crime" of lynching. "Questions of superiority and of ancestry play no part whatever in the settlement of great civic and social questions," he pronounced, combating biological determinism with the tradition of individualism. Every man "should stand upon his own feet." Significantly, Bowen viewed Chautauqua as a potential resource to promote racial dialogue in the South. As segregation deprived the sides of a common venue in which to talk, he called for "yearly gatherings in an assembly of the Chautauqua in the South."⁶³

Bowen's innovation was uniquely consistent with Chautauqua's liberal creed. But like so many ideas offered ahead of their time, it did not come to fruition. During the CLSC's "American Year" of 1904, a number of articles and editorials on "the Negro Question" trickled into *The Chautauquan*. Members of the Brooklyn Chautauqua Alumni (reading circle) read the material dutifully. But the secretary of the group clearly found the issue distasteful and recorded the dialogue with skepticism. Everyone must "know something about negro servants," she wrote, "by the reasons she gave for not having them." Although several papers dealt with the "negro as artisan" and the "negro as citizen," the program deteriorated into a free-wheeling exchange of racist stereotypes. One woman spoke "with admirable mastery of the negro dialect" about "his love for possum." The secretary concluded "that while fully ignorant and shiftless for the most part, negroes can be trained until, as skilled mechanics, they compete with white men." The group's solutions for the Negro question? Some recommended transportation to Africa; others regarded this as impracticable. "The negroes are our wards, our children, troublesome, perhaps, but nevertheless to be cared for, to be educated, and given the rights of citizens only when they show themselves fit to use those rights." The group concluded: "His advancement depends on himself."⁶⁴

Indeed, as Chautauqua platform managers nationwide turned increasingly to lecture bureaus to provide programming, the stage would become

an increasingly hostile place for black Americans. At a Redpath-organized Chautauqua in Iowa in 1911, seventeen-year-old Clara Hinton jotted down thorough notes about each speaker in a journal titled "Chautauqua Beats All." The speech of southerner Belle Kearney on "Old Days in Dixie Land," uncritically recorded by Hinton, was little more than a compendium of the crudest racist clichés. Kearney presented an antebellum South of contented slaves and charitable masters. "It is most terrible to think" that "Negroes and Anglo Saxons" would marry, as those of African blood were "great multipliers." Furthermore, if blacks were returned to Africa, they would sink again into "barbarism." To the question "Now you don't mean to say that Booker T. Washington, taken to Africa would turn barbaric," Kearney replied, "No, he is half white-blooded and this would save him." As the circuit Chautauqua agenda filled up with alligator-grin humorists performing black caricatures and explorers giving talks on travels among the ant-eating pygmies of Africa, hopes of making the assembly a place for the flowering of biracial democracy faded.⁶⁵

Lessons in Orientalism

If the Spanish-American War helped unite regional and ethnic definitions of whiteness in comparison to blackness, it also brought the changing patterns of late-nineteenth-century visions of Asia into sharp relief. As historians and literary critics have long observed, Anglo-American Victorians often approached nonwestern cultures as ambivalent voyeurs, alternately fascinated and repelled by the alien traits of the "Orient." The taking of archaeological treasures expressed the notion that Protestant America, divinely favored and covenanted to spread Christian civilization, was better suited than Asia to serve as steward of the timeless ideals of antiquity. Chautauquans' interest in antiquity, though sometimes motivated by a genuine interest to understand, served to valorize whiteness by juxtaposing it against what they viewed as bizarre, peculiar, and exotic Asian traits. As they did with biology, physics, astronomy, and the entire corpus of social science, Chautauquans located the cutting edge of archaeological studies within the reach of Christianity.

Noting Chautauquans' preoccupation with Holy Land aesthetics, one scholar recently described Chautauquans as "semitic wannabes." The moniker is not far off base. The Park of Palestine, a scale-model replica of

the Holy Land, invited Chautauquans to insert themselves into biblical plot lines. In 1874 visitors traveling by water to the new assembly, upon leaving the pier building on their way into the grounds, were confronted with the “Oriental House,” a cubical, two-story structure with Moorish motifs built by a religious bookseller from New York City. H. H. Otis of the Sunday School department of the Methodist Book Concern ran a bookstore on the first floor. The second floor consisted of an “Oriental Museum,” a collection of “valuable relics from the Holy Land, banners and every conceivable curiosity,” and a “genuine Egyptian mummy” on loan from the Mount Union College in Ohio.⁶⁶ In 1880 the Chautauqua Archaeological Society (CAS) was formed as a part of the Chautauqua School of Theology. Founder J. E. Kittredge of Geneseo, New York, envisioned the CAS as an attempt to scientifically “illustrate or corroborate” the geography of the Middle East and “help to interpret the Bible page.”⁶⁷

Kittredge made rapid progress. In 1881 he placed orders for casts of the Assyrian treasures displayed at the British Museum (“the only copies possessed in this country,” he boasted). In its ambition to create a facsimile of the British Museum, Chautauqua benefited from its contacts with Methodist missionaries. Professor Isaac H. Hall, editor of the Oriental Department of *The Sunday-School Times*, boosted Kittredge’s campaign to build a museum when he loaned his large collection of antiquities, including a cast of the Rosetta Stone, to the institution. Otis’s little Moorish hut was insufficient for housing these new acquisitions. A year later, Kittredge’s wish for legitimate display space came true. Jacob Miller, the founder’s brother, donated enough money to build Newton Hall, which would house the Chautauqua Archaeological Museum until 1905.⁶⁸

The Chautauqua Archaeological Museum was certainly not the first privately funded, public repository of antiquities in the United States. It followed, in a modest way, the pattern set by the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, both built by industrial tycoons and maintained with city taxes. Unique among its more famous competitors, however, the Chautauqua museum eschewed the fancy Beaux Arts architectural style favored by urban philanthropists and the architects of the world’s fairs. Newton Hall was a modest Victorian, wood-frame structure with a large interior courtyard imitating the cavernous main exhibit hall of the British Museum.

And while the larger urban museums sprawled across antiquity, art, and natural history, Kittredge limited the CAS’s acquisitions to “such casts and copies of the monuments of the past as shed light upon the history and

chronology of the Book.” This brought the CAS ever closer to the British model of displaying the coveted fruits of its Middle East empire. Newton Hall would become “a genuine British Museum. Only it shall be, not British, but American. We will wing our lion at the portal and so give to him the added power of the eagle.”⁶⁹ In 1887 Kittredge secured a massive donation from the Egypt Exploration Fund. The London-based philanthropy’s archaeological digs in the Middle East gleaned more artifacts than it could handle. The shelves of Newton Hall soon overflowed with valuable relics, including thirty lamps, fifteen pieces of pottery, seven Roman terra cottas, twenty-four Greek earthenware vessels, five bronzes, seventeen military relics, eighteen statuettes, five coins, and a stamped amphora handle. The collection also included hundreds of miscellaneous pieces from a series of British excavations in the 1880s.⁷⁰ Finally, like the large urban museums, Chautauqua’s curator, Dr. W. W. Whythe, arranged the artifacts haphazardly, without the topical organization and lengthy captioning of contemporary museums.

The museum also benefited from the expertise of one of its curators, A. O. Van Lennep. Born in Egypt, Syria, or Turkey (the reports vary), Van Lennep arrived at Chautauqua Lake in 1873 or 1874 as a sales associate of the aforementioned New York-based H. H. Otis. Although Van Lennep’s official role there was as a bookseller and the curator of the original museum of “curiosities” on the second floor of the Moorish Oriental House, he soon emerged as an eccentric celebrity—he is sometimes given the title “professor” in early accounts. The sight of a fully clad Egyptian lecturing in the museum, bookended by a cast of Isis and full sets of clothing worn by Bedouin sheiks and warriors, must have been striking to Chautauqua guests and certainly afforded Van Lennep a measure of authority. He also ventured into the Park of Palestine, the scale model of the Holy Land, according to a Jamestown journalist, to give lectures “to those who choose to hear.” He would then ascend “to the summit of Mount Hermon, and [give] vent to the most discordant yells, which all are obliged to hear, whether they choose to or not. These sounds are suppose[d] to be lamentations of a religious custom of his countrymen.” In a tent near the boarding hall, Van Lennep arrayed the artifacts he could not fit in the Oriental House. The habitation “reminds me forcibly of a circus side show,” remarked the same writer.

Everything curious and rare, from the land of cross-legged men and women, has obtained and placed upon exhibit free of charge. . . . In front of it are hung large canvas pictures with colored



FIGURE 4.4 In this closeup of a gathering at the prayer circle, circa 1876, the turbaned Van Lennep is seated in the third row on the far left and is looking away from the camera. (Courtesy of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York)

maps, and scenes in his country. In the door stands himself dressed in the true Turkish costume, red pants, blue shirt, heavy sash and red fez, talking loudly to the crowd that is constantly passing in and out, and only the presence of a hand-organ is needed to make the illusion complete.⁷¹

The tradition of objectifying nonwesterners has a long history in European travel narratives and literature. Visitors' accounts of the museum rarely failed to mention Van Lennep's Muslim robes and turban, as if he were "the queerest specimen of the collection."⁷² In addition, Van Lennep's presence at the summer Chautauqua placed him simultaneously on two racial peripheries; he was one of the few nonwhites at the assembly and one of the few non-Europeans in the United States to claim authority in the growing field of Egyptology. It is important to note that Van Lennep had converted from Islam to Christianity. The presence of a converted Muslim confirmed what the missionaries had assumed all along: that Christianity was the true religion of the Holy Land. If Van Lennep were not Christian, it is unlikely he would have been given any authority over Chautauqua's Christ-centric vision of the Middle East.⁷³ In any event, the dark-skinned Van Lennep made a deep impression as authentic. In an 1880 program titled "Lessons in Orientalism," J. S. Ostrander tried to demonstrate Muslim practices. His skit—which included a man "dressed as a high priest," women carrying water, and ceremonial foot-washing—struck one observer as a bit absurd. "At the bottom of such uncouth performances there has, no doubt, been much sincerity."⁷⁴

The interest in the Orient at Chautauqua did not sit well with everyone. Visiting in 1890, twenty-five-year-old English writer Rudyard Kipling found Chautauqua's delicate dance around the link between whiteness and racial authority totally unnecessary. Kipling laughed at constantly being mistaken for a missionary. The missionaries he met at Chautauqua struck him as naive, Bible-toting zealots, ignorant of the raw exercise of power at the root of white imperialism, and unreliable as allies in the preservation of Anglo-Saxon hierarchy. "The will was there, but not the power," he wrote. Chautauqua's attempt to replicate the Holy Land seemed to him especially absurd. He described the Park of Palestine as "a wormy streak of slime connecting it with another mud puddle." "We entered a place called a museum," he wrote, "which had evidently been brought together by feminine hands, so jumbled were the exhibits." "I don't like Chautauqua," Kipling

concluded, as if there were any doubt. "There's something wrong with it, and I haven't time to find out where. But it is wrong."⁷⁵

Perhaps without realizing it, Kipling had identified the crucial difference between the "lion" and the "eagle." Chautauqua had entertained Anglo-Saxonism in the 1870s and 1880s; Kipling's response to the assembly suggests the extent to which British imperial thinking still relied on this doctrine. But since then, Chautauquans had largely rejected Anglo-Saxonism in favor of nationalist exceptionalism. They tended to view their imperial role in providential terms. The divine duty to save souls and spread democratic institutions fell not upon one ethnic group, so the argument went, but on a nation composed of many peoples working together in harmony. The liberal creed helped establish a jingoistic imperial style in the twentieth century that prepared the way for an "empire upon which the sun never shone."⁷⁶

Kipling's puzzlement about Chautauqua also points to the unique type of racism needed by Euro-Americans to maintain their privileged status in a Jim Crow society—not a narrow Anglo-Saxonism, but a more broadly defined whiteness. Discourse about Asia had as much to do with the missionary impulse as with the need to celebrate this relatively new racial category by juxtaposing it against exoticist fantasies. Suddenly, the personal weaknesses most feared in Victorian culture—for example, to be "immoral and immodest," as Frederick Starr's 1896 CLSC textbook phrased it—appeared in descriptions of Asians. ("They are not lacking in intelligence," wrote Arthur Judson Brown of the Koreans, in a typically paternal tone, and with "a Christian basis of morals they would develop into a fine people.")⁷⁷ Once they were externalized, Chautauquans could either disavow or voyeuristically observe their own exotic desires. During its January 1906 meeting, the Brooklyn Chautauqua Alumni (reading circle) invited Mr. Chin Chung to give an address on Chinese customs. Mr. Chung arrived to see several members dressed in Asian costumes, one representing the "Land of the Celestials." All of this "caused Mr. Chin Chun [*sic*] considerable amusement," according to the secretary, adding playfully: "We wonder why?"

Dispensing with the formal expressions of thanks that normally accompanied guest appearances, the secretary maintained an official note of skepticism in the pages of the minutes. Mr. Chung's lecture, "Through Chinese Eyes," provided the group with "a larger view of the Land of Confucianism. Many queer customs were related, especially those regarding marriage; but on the whole, we each silently said: The Land of the Free /

Jolly Ameriky / Will do, you see / For this Yankee.”⁷⁸ Some Chautauqua assemblies catered to those fantasies by letting space for oriental specialty shops. They sold offcolor items made acceptable by their Asian-ness, such as daggers, ornate fans, and seminude sculptures of Middle Eastern goddesses. So too did the pageants involving oriental costumes rely on the power of the masquerade—having defined the alternative to Victorian culture, the costume wearer indulged in its pleasurable excesses, if only for an evening.

Chautauquans reached the turn of the century with no clear position on how to deal with the “race question,” made more pressing every day by the migration of blacks to northern cities. And while Chautauquans had supported the Spanish-American War effort and would later line up behind the gunboat diplomacy of Theodore Roosevelt, there was no consensus on the platform about how to respond to the presence of Asians within U.S. national borders. Immigration restrictions against Asian nations imposed in the 1880s ensured that most middle-class white Chautauquans—in the Midwest and East, at any rate—would not have to confront the implications of their prejudices against Asian culture. In this regard, the Brooklyn Chautauqua Alumni’s invitation of Mr. Chung in 1906 was an exception that proved the rule. The Pacific Grove assembly, however, located on the Monterey peninsula in northern California, was situated quite close to an Asian community in distress. In 1905 the Chautauquans of Pacific Grove would have their chance to translate their charitable impulses into concrete social action.

Nearby the Chautauqua assembly ground was a hamlet of crude huts on the rocks at Point Alones called Chinatown, inhabited by about a hundred Chinese immigrants who had worked on the Central Pacific Railroad. Painters and photographers gravitated to the crude huts and racks of drying fish perched on the rocks. Pacific Grove Methodists conducted missions in the village in the 1890s, including one campaign to send Chinese children to segregated classes at the public school. The mission also collected donations for small gifts and bundles of supplies for Chinese families during Thanksgiving and Christmas. Wrote Mary Sackett in a local paper, “We cannot afford to allow these native-born children to reach maturity an ignorant alien race.”⁷⁹ But economic pressures were growing. In the 1890s white business owners, objecting to the Chinese presence for aesthetic and racial reasons, banded against the Chinese with white fishermen, who were zealous of protecting their economic territory.⁸⁰ With land prices

on the rise, the Pacific Improvement Company began to reclaim unimproved coastal lands for subdivision. By 1900, Point Alones was the oldest intact Chinese village on the peninsula, and the company began looking for ways to oust its residents.⁸¹

In November 1905 the company ordered residents to vacate the property by February 1906. The villagers, 150 of whom had taken refuge there after the recent earthquake in San Francisco, refused to budge despite threats from the sheriff to evict.⁸² At 8:00 P.M. on 16 May 1905, a fire erupted in a barn on the west end of the village. White spectators lined the railroad tracks and cheered as the fire, fed by a brisk westerly wind, swept across the village. As the Chinese families frantically piled their belongings a safe distance from the fire, some white people stole their possessions when they were not looking. The village was totally destroyed.⁸³ The ensuing years saw a lively debate over how much the company should have been held accountable for the violent ousting of the Chinese people from their home at Point Alones.⁸⁴ Notable for their absence from this story, however, were the Chautauquans. Some viewed the event as a moral outrage. "Conscience, honor, delicacy, decency seemed thrown to the winds," lamented one editorialist in the *Pacific Grove Review*. But this outrage did not manifest itself as tangible social action. A relief fund started by a visiting German biologist at Pacific Grove netted only twenty-nine dollars.⁸⁵

Conclusion

This critique should not be taken too far. The structures of racial inequality were already well entrenched by 1874, and Chautauquans never claimed the ability to fix them. On the Asian question, as with the race question, Chautauquans could point to a long record of religiously inspired charitable and missionary activity. Missionary workers came to the assemblies to rest from their work with poor villagers in China and Korea; the Pacific Grove assembly worked to send Chinese children to segregated classes at the local public school. If Chautauquans indulged in the "queer customs" of Asia and the Middle East and spoke of uplifting an "alien" race, they merely used the language of U.S. foreign policy during the Progressive Era, when military interventions in Hawaii, Cuba, Panama, and the Philippines were justified as efforts to spread Christianity and democracy. One might argue that if they failed to act decisively in opposing Jim Crow laws

or the railroads' abuses against Asians, they were merely obeying the customs of the age.

Such instances point, however, to a fundamental flaw of the Chautauqua idea—the gap between knowledge and action, theory and practice, conscience and deed. Reformers and educators could impart knowledge to a Chautauqua audience, but they could not use the assembly as a vehicle for political action. Thus the frustration faced by the black theologian J. W. E. Bowen. His July 1899 speech at Chautauqua called upon the assembly to reenvision itself as a site of biracial democracy and civic deliberation. His talk produced at least one result: two weeks later, the Minister's Club met to discuss "How to Remove the Causes Leading to Lynching."⁸⁶ But Bowen was not calling for talk only. He was calling for action, the type of action that the northern white middle classes would not undertake without leadership from men like John Heyl Vincent and Lewis Miller.

And that was not likely. By 1900, the bounds of the "we" at Chautauqua had stretched as far as they would go. The influx of aliens from eastern and southern Europe had stretched its tolerant impulses to their limit. To accommodate these new citizens under the supercategory of whiteness, Chautauquans redefined "citizenship" as a set of behavior patterns. "Recognize the good qualities of any man," asserted Theodore Roosevelt, "south or north, Jew or Gentile, provided he is a good American." At the same time, however, theorists of race at the assembly sharpened the boundary between Caucasian, African, and Asian "types" and left Reconstruction—which had questioned white hegemony—far behind. Here, then, is the great paradox of Chautauqua's liberal creed: its inclusiveness was predicated on exclusion. To entice immigrants to behave like "good Americans," Chautauquans offered the greatest gift of all, the right to call oneself white.

The silence on race would not last forever. The growth of a black middle class in the early twentieth century, long delayed by slavery and segregation, helped shed new light on the quandary of race among white, northern, middling sorts. Just as Moravians, Catholics, and Jews before them, some African Americans in the early 1900s were able to take advantage of Chautauqua's invitation into middle-class respectability. In 1906 a group of middle-class blacks in Louisiana formed their own assembly. The Louisiana Colored Chautauqua was incorporated on 17 March 1906 with \$5,000 of stock divided into five hundred shares. It held its first—and only—session on land three miles west of Grambling. Such efforts, halting though they

were, meant that blacks who survived a gauntlet of injustices en route to the middle class would not be denied the prerogatives of citizenship simply because of their race.⁸⁷

Finally, the stirrings of a dialogue about race at Chautauqua in the new century had much to do with its declining power in U.S. education. The assemblies had pioneered the notion of citizenship training in the 1890s. But in the 1910s and 1920s new and better-funded institutions—including corporate Americanizers, adult-education professionals, and state normal schools—began to take over the task of citizenship training. By 1923, innovations in the field came not from the assembly but from institutions like the Rockefeller Foundation, led by a University of Chicago Ph.D. named George Vincent, son of Chautauqua cofounder John Heyl Vincent. In that year George Vincent secured foundation funding for the Black Chautauqua of Gulfside, Mississippi, a place for “tired mothers” to “learn something of Home Economics” and where “YMCA and YWCA workers might hold staff conferences.” “Mississippi has not heretofore exhibited many examples of interracial goodwill,” opined *The Journal of Negro Life* in a strategic understatement, and the Gulfside assembly boded well for “a new era in race relations. . . .” If Dr. Bowen’s dream of the assembly as a place for biracial participatory democracy remained tantalizingly unrealized, photos of old men playing croquet symbolized, at the very least, a black permutation of the good life.⁸⁸

The liberal creed had done little to challenge racial hierarchy in the United States. Chautauqua’s liberalism was too passive, its vision of society too limited by its faith in individual salvation, to result in collective action toward stated goals. This was a realization with profound consequences for the institution, especially those worried about the seeming marginalization of traditional Protestantism in public life. By the 1910s and 1920s, the liberal creed had shaken off its parochial origins. Increasingly, denizens of the liberal creed worked through institutional proxies, like welfare agencies, the military, and state universities, to achieve nominally moralistic goals. There were even signs that the liberal creed had moved beyond the confines of the assembly into the very structure of modern institutions. As the next chapter suggests, the rise of modern liberalism and the white clubwomen’s movement were deeply interconnected. Their activism forced institutions to become ever more responsive to a middle-class vision of social order.

5. *From Parlor to Politics:*
Chautauqua and the Institutionalization
of Middle-Class Womanhood

To Katytown the CLSC came not as a process, but as a power.
—Zona Gale

In 1929 writer Zona Gale recalled her childhood in Portage, Wisconsin, in the 1880s, when she eavesdropped on her mother's Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle (CLSC) meetings. The "Katytown Circle" was held in Mrs. Artemus Mason's hideously overstuffed parlor. All around were clashing reminders of refined taste, including " 'golden floral' wallpaper" and a "high bronze and black hanging lamp" from which "hung an ostrich egg, painted with cat-tails." On the floor was a "round felt mat, pinked at the edge and beaded in Greek design." Each time the bell rang, Mrs. Mason would call out to her husband, "Edward! The bell!" despite the fact that he was already moving toward the door. As hostess, Mrs. Mason determined what should be served, who needed shawls to keep warm, what music should precede the meeting (Mrs. Lelah Parkinson playing "Mountain Bell Schottische" on piano), when the meeting should begin, and which selection to read first—all of which she executed with clockwork precision.¹

Despite their authority over the social and aesthetic dynamics of the meeting, the women of the Katytown Chautauqua Circle did not rule the roost; rather, they were caught in overt patterns of deference toward men. Gale portrayed this polite gender battle as a series of unequal exchanges. When her husband yawned aloud at one point, Mrs. Abbott stifled the yawn at its zenith by clutching his leg, rousing him "diminuendo, into a smothered but articulate 'Wha's the matter?'" When their husbands failed to appear, they offered meek and unnecessary excuses: " 'He does hate to change his clothes.' " They patiently forbore their husband's eccentricities and the throat-clearing, paternal mannerisms of the educated men in the group. If anything arose of an indelicate nature, " ('anything with a tang to it,' they said) by common consent it was maneuvered to the minister" for

his disposal. When the host for that evening had read the selection on Greek and Roman letters, they all paused for Mr. Becker, a man constitutionally driven to speak first in all social meetings. Rising grandly, he made several halting and incomprehensible comments and then returned to his seat. Next was Elbert Morehouse, a long-winded lawyer who ignored the topic at hand and told random anecdotes about the Caesars. One after another, the men boasted of their intellectual achievements while speaking knowingly—but without real knowledge—of the noble enterprise the group was undertaking.²

Gale's essay satirized Victorian patriarchy and gently criticized a generation of women for putting up with it. If Gale's Victorian clichés seem timelessly funny, it is because her satiric approach rested on sound literary footing. By 1929, Sinclair Lewis, H. L. Mencken, and Mary Hunter Austin had already made it fashionable to poke fun at Chautauqua's superficialities. Like Mencken, Gale situated herself as the enlightened narrator, demonstrating her advanced stage of development by poking fun at her parents' repressive Victorianism. For example, Gale noted the CLSC's contribution to the women's club movement and suffrage campaign but



FIGURE 5.1 CLSC meeting in progress, circa 1910. (Courtesy of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York)

was reluctant to give these deferential women too much credit. If the CLSC had achieved those ends, she implied, it was purely by accident. A feminist consciousness emerged from these meetings, not as a conscious end, but as a “suggestion,” an “inexplicable psychological phenomena,” a “contagion.” As women held meetings, took exams, framed diplomas, and exhibited seals, they “answered to a faint tocsin, which, in the present pealing clamor of their bells, the twenty million women of the country may as well remember.”³ Behavioral terminology allowed Gale to quickly exit her story on the Katytown CLSC, linking it vaguely to post-suffrage feminism while presenting the actors as individuated victims of medical pathologies, subject to a natural process they presumably could not control.

However, as this chapter shows, women’s experience in the CLSC was a product of historical, not physiological, phenomena. For women’s historians this is well-trodden territory. From the decades of scholarship on reform movements, reading circles, and women’s clubs, we know that white, middle-class women refused to be constricted by the “cult of true womanhood.” As immigration and industrial capitalism transformed nineteenth-century American society, middle-class women became increasingly involved in social benevolence efforts such as Sabbatarianism, abolitionism, temperance, and urban charity. The public visibility afforded by leadership roles in these various movements forced women to recast those activities as extensions of the obligations of motherhood, thus expanding the bourgeois ideal of domesticity, or what historians in the 1970s dubbed variously as “domestic feminism” or “social feminism.”⁴ Indeed, as historians discover evidence of women’s public authority further and further back in time, some have questioned whether “separate spheres” ever truly existed except as an oft-ignored bourgeois prescription. At any rate, few historians now dismiss late-nineteenth-century, middle-class women as politically ineffectual simply because they did not vote.⁵

What were the social and political lessons of the reading club? Reading clubs brought women into contact not only with new texts but also with new organizational techniques and structured forms of collective experience. In *The Clubwoman as Feminist* (1980), historian Karen Blair has argued that reading clubs nurtured “the skills that would enable women to demand reforms for women and for all people in a society that had relegated them to the sidelines.” Historians continue to unearth new archival sources, records, and diaries of the club movement, discovering yet more literary clubs reinventing themselves as prosuffrage societies, more club-

women moving into direct political action. These discoveries have fundamentally changed our image of the literary societies portrayed so humorously by Zona Gale. Literary and social clubs no longer appear as outbreaks of neighborhood gossip or frivolous social clubs that discovered politics by accident. Rather, these crucibles of organized womanhood are increasingly viewed as political instruments linking the club movement with later agitation for women's suffrage, urban reform, and consumer rights.⁶

Chautauqua provides ample evidence of the growing politicization of reading clubs. As with voluntary associations throughout the nineteenth century, women joined Chautauqua circles for a wide array of reasons. Many were initially inspired by John Heyl Vincent's celebration of church, home, and school. Others found it useful as a source of vocational knowledge; some hoped to enjoy an evening of entertainment; others found an escape from the stifling limitations of their lives. But their motivations changed over time as the experience of their collective association widened horizons, gave rise to new perspectives, and suggested new priorities. The few women's historians to dig in the rich mines of Chautauqua's past have concluded as much. "Chautauqua," wrote one graduate student at the University of Iowa in the early 1950s, "seems to have opened its door to the women who escaped the kitchen." Carolyn DeSwarte Guifford has linked Chautauqua to the emergence of "public lady," a Victorian precursor to the New Woman. Virginia Scharff has argued that Chautauqua "acted as a conduit for feminist ideas" that "helped to give women the ideological and intellectual tools to claim new authority in the Progressive Era."⁷

I do not disagree with these interpretations. However, I suggest that there is another truth hidden in the Chautauqua circle experience. In short, it is not enough to state that a women's group was empowering to its members. We must also explore the means by which a certain strata of women asserted their class and ethno-racial authority over other men and women in their communities.⁸ Chautauqua offered thousands of these women opportunities for education not available to working-class and black Americans, and who thus found Chautauqua a means of preserving a particular vision of social order in which they were deeply invested. The decision to start a reading club was, for many, an act of gender rebellion (because it asserted women's intellectual authority against the Elbert Morehouses of the world) but also an act of racial and class preservation (because access to the architecture of power was a function of their class and race). The CLSC

might have been empowering, but at whose expense would that new power be asserted?

If not a women's movement, per se, Chautauqua was certainly a movement *of* women. The lecture halls echoed with their voices. They raised money for assemblies and dominated the reading circles. Their names, always entitled formally as "Miss" or "Mrs.," appeared throughout the brochures and publications. These were, in a sense, the so-called "soccer moms" of the early twentieth century. As they claimed custodianship of the intellectual and physical landscapes of the assembly, they joined their husbands and brothers as more equal partners in the campaign to limit the power of a male-dominated capitalist market and to make modern institutions effective agents of moral and material progress. The liberal creed, then, drew energy from women's refusal to remain trapped in restrictive gender roles.

Who Belonged to the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle?

If women in the Chautauqua Movement sought to expose patriarchal thinking as old-fashioned, they needed to look no further than their own assemblies. At the very core of the CLSC concept lurked a patriarchal mentality. Vincent designed this national reading club and correspondence course as an extension of his efforts to streamline religious education for the masses. Education should not facilitate material acquisition, he insisted, but should reveal insights into the "Word and Works of God." It would stave off the influx of "bad books" and normalize the Protestant path to salvation. It would also improve the intellectual environment for men, who were too busy or poor to go to college, and for women, who did not attend college because their inherent nature tended toward domesticity. The CLSC, in other words, educated women while preserving their domestic role. In the coded language of separate spheres, Vincent designed the CLSC to "have its important part in building the walls of happier homes" and "a more intelligent Christian manhood. . . ."⁹

In Vincent's view, women would use the CLSC to remove "sources of unrest and discontent at home . . . and making one's own house the centre of the whole world of science, literature[,] art, and society." Society would reap the benefits of enlightened motherhood without exposing

women to the dangers of college and losing their womanly presence at home. In an oft-cited quotation that has become part of the lore of Chautauqua, Vincent consented to let temperance advocate Frances Willard speak from the podium because he considered her one of the few women able to do so effectively: "I do not care for women speakers generally," he wrote to Willard. "You are one of my magnificent exceptions."¹⁰ Vincent's opposition to women speakers, his celebration of women's maternal qualities, and his frequent clashes with Susan B. Anthony, Carrie Chapman Catt, and Anna Howard Shaw earned him a national reputation as an opponent of women's suffrage. As Vincent wrote to Willard in 1876, "Women's organizations are not worth much." Women "at home can do infinitely more than any organization whatever."¹¹

Vincent quickly learned that women would not remain sequestered in the domestic sphere at the assembly, and his views did not hold sway for long. From the first assembly, a grassroots skepticism about Protestant patriarchy swirled about the place. His compromise plan—that women would be allowed to speak, but only to female audiences—also quickly fell by the wayside. He was swayed, in large part, by reassurances from his male partner Lewis Miller, the pragmatic Ohio layman whose only criterion was "that the speaker should have a message to deliver."¹² It also helped that the first women speakers promised to avoid suffrage in favor of religious education and temperance, the two issues Vincent held most dear. Softened by the Social Gospel's faith in individual action and surrounded by undeniably competent women, Vincent's patriarchy melted away over the seasons. His opposition to women speakers eroded in the mid-1870s; he tempered his skepticism of women's organizations in the 1880s and 1890s; and by the early 1900s, his fierce opposition to women's suffrage, for which he was nationally known, began to waver.

More to the point, women comprised between 80 and 90 percent of the enrolled CLSC membership.¹³ Chautauqua's promotional literature, however, rarely mentioned the gender imbalance. When it did, it usually emphasized the advantages of the program for men. Some circulars even shamed men for falling behind their wives and daughters, pushing women's self-education labors into the background of the "more important" effort to save male voters from ignorance. In addition, many leaders took a somewhat defensive position on the role of women in the movement. John Heyl Vincent rarely discussed the absence of men in the assemblies and reading circles and, when forced to address gender, exalted women as tireless work-

ers for good. In an effort to deflect criticism of its superficiality and to promote the CLSC as a legitimate educational enterprise, he stressed its universal social role and downplayed the CLSC's popularity among women.¹⁴

Fueled by the keen interest in such a program among middle-class women, Vincent's genius for promotion, and the lack of competition, the reading course mushroomed from the inaugural circle at the 1878 assembly. Spurred by promotional material exhorting members to "become a missionary to go into communities and organize other Circles," CLSCs popped up wherever congeries of middling sorts itched for self-improvement.¹⁵ One social scientist estimated that two thousand circles were in full operation by 1891. The program spread in both rural and urban areas. The largest cities hosted the largest and most active circles, with hundreds in New York City alone.¹⁶

Estimates of the total number of people touched by the CLSC must be separated into three levels of involvement: graduates, enrolled students, and nonenrolled readers. At the CLSC's height in 1887, its enrollment eclipsed that of the nation's largest universities: 4,468 people received diplomas for completing the four-year course of study, 18,000 were enrolled in the course, and untold tens of thousands more unreported (non-dues paying) readers were participating as *ex officio* circle members or as casual readers. Numbers such as these emboldened Chautauqua president Arthur E. Bestor to promote Chautauqua as "the largest institution for higher education in the world," larger than the University of Paris's enrollment of fourteen thousand.¹⁷ By 1914, the CLSC had graduated 48,737, enrolled approximately 275,000 students, and reached hundreds of thousands more casual readers. (See figure 5.2.) The CLSC almost doubled the number of women in the United States exposed to what Vincent described as the "college outlook." Between 1882 and 1893, a total of 32,684 women graduated from U.S. colleges, while 27,141 women graduated from the CLSC.¹⁸

Even in the West, where the ratio of men to women was still 128:100 in 1900, women dominated. The Seattle area of the Washington Territory area saw its first CLSC in 1884. By the time of statehood in 1889, Washington boasted eight circles in Seattle, plus nine more around the state; five years later, there were fourteen circles in Seattle, seven in Tacoma, and two in Olympia, bringing the state's total to nearly fifty. In a state overwhelmingly male, two-thirds of the state's CLSC enrollees in the early 1890s were women.¹⁹ Such figures suggest that for middle-class women in the West,

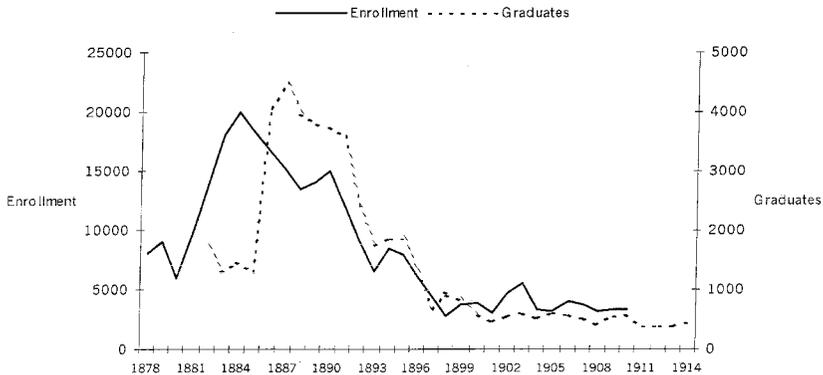


FIGURE 5.2 CLSC Graduates and Incoming Class Enrollment, 1878–1914. (Source: See appendix B)

the CLSC may have taken on added social significance as a cultural refuge from the masculine ethos of postfrontier public culture, a place where women could express the female moral virtues granted to them in Victorian thinking. In Grand Junction, Colorado, in 1885, only 6.5 percent of the women in town belonged to voluntary associations; and only two voluntary associations, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the CLSC, allowed women as official members.²⁰

In the broadest terms, then, Chautauqua was a national and female-oriented phenomenon, easily adaptable to gendered regional mythologies. But whose women's identity did it express? Unfortunately, the CLSC questionnaire was far too narrow to capture the subtleties so important to an understanding of late-nineteenth-century women's class status. Its queries reflected a male-oriented conception of occupation. In particular, the questionnaire failed to define two crucial categories—"keeps house" and "no occupation." Women in domestic work, within or without the house, had trouble deciding which category to chose. Combining the 30.2 percent listing themselves as housekeepers and the 24.2 percent described as having no occupation, as many as 54.4 percent of the female CLSC members between 1882 and 1886 were involved in some form of domestic labor—but we have no way of knowing whether that 54.4 percent labored outside or inside the home, a distinction, along with age and marital status, crucial for a determination of class. Kate Kimball's answers to her own questionnaire add even more confusion; the executive secretary of the CLSC, one of the more

influential female executives in the country, listed herself as having “no occupation.”²¹

Kimball’s vague categories and personal ambiguity symbolized the chaotic reshuffling at the intersection of class and gender in the late nineteenth century. The only quantitative certainty from Kimball’s statistics is that CLSC women in the 1880s and 1890s belonged to a stratum of motivated, educated women, like Kimball, whose entrance into public life scuttled traditional definitions of class. According to the 1890 census results, 13 percent of all women in the United States were employed outside the home. By contrast, at least 39 percent of CLSC women in the 1880s worked outside of the domestic sphere so cherished by John Heyl Vincent, many as teachers (even if we assume that none of the 30.2 percent listing themselves “keeps house” worked outside the home). These were, by any calculation, women on the move.²²

Men in the Minority

The first order of business for women in the CLSC was to establish the CLSC’s intellectual credentials. To do this on the national level, Vincent and Kimball recruited well-known academics like Herbert Baxter Adams and Richard T. Ely. On the local level, however, each group had to defend its own legitimacy. This meant defending themselves *as women* against the slings and arrows of their many male critics. The need was great. Throughout the late nineteenth century, clubwomen’s self-education efforts evoked howls from the intellectual establishment. Stereotypes of the inherent disorganization of women’s mental habits drew from deep wells of patriarchy. “Women need to be trained to clearness of thought and accuracy of expression,” insisted the editors of *The Arena* in 1893. “If the club offers to its members a desultory programme,—papers upon diverse subjects, magazine readings, addresses by invited guests, et cetera,—it may present a pleasing entertainment, but will it not foster the very mental habits which it ought to correct?”²³

The attack on women’s literary societies was part of a wider campaign to stem the “feminization” of academia. Some worried that the curricula would pander to their lesser abilities, sapping education of its authenticity. Lamented David Starr Jordan of Stanford University, there would be “nothing ruggedly true, nothing masculine left in it.” As denominational colleges,

teacher training academies, and state universities opened their doors to women in the latter decades of the century, academics hostile to women's presence in the classroom couched their objections in the language of medical science. Scientists Edward Clarke and G. Stanley Hall provided scientific imprimatur to the notion of higher education as a masculine preserve. Subjecting women to rigorous mental activity would "enfeeble their bodies." One Vassar College student, Clarke reported, suffered permanent reproductive damage because her studies diverted energy "away from the ovaries and their accessories."²⁴ Clarke's theories found their way into CLSC literature via Boston University Professor L. T. Townsend, whose 1889 book opposed coeducation and quoted Clarke liberally. The schools of "our country's daughters," Townsend wrote, "would profit by reading the old Levitical law."²⁵

Women who exceeded their "biological limits" were subject to social censure and punishment. Even at the Chautauqua, a place relatively friendly to the notion of sexless education, one finds insinuations that too much attention to books might send a young woman to early spinsterhood. A. D. Mayo, a lecturer at several southern Chautauquas, including the winter assembly at De Funiak Springs, Florida, ridiculed college women graduates: ". . . too late, at thirty, with broken health, blowed under the cares of a family she is incompetent to rear, sinking down into the American slough of female invalidism. . . ." Mayo's sallow "invalids," ruined by too much study—or perhaps simply victim to their self-induced hysteria or neurasthenia, what moralist T. DeWitt Talmadge called "the imaginary ailments of women"—contrasted with the robust Chautauqua matron, nourished with an education suitable to her familial obligations, and kept healthy by daily moderate exercise at the Chautauqua assembly.²⁶ In one of the many pro-Chautauqua novels published at Vincent's encouragement, a spurned lover blames his failure on her intellectual pursuits. "She is too full of ideas to ever fall in love," bemoans the frustrated suitor. "There is the mischief that the higher education of women is playing."²⁷

The male backlash was especially strong in the college English departments. As late as the 1920s, scholars complained that "literature in the United States is being strangled with a petticoat." The new discipline of literary criticism sought to undo the work of women's literary societies and to subject their unfocused efforts to more rigorous professional—that is, masculine—control.²⁸ As the largest of the literary societies, the CLSC received more than its share of criticism from the pedants. Moreover, male partici-

pants in the CLSC often assumed that they would take leadership positions. In fact, statistically speaking, they occupied official roles disproportionate to their numbers. Nevertheless, CLSC women enjoyed a unique opportunity to display their intellectual and organizational skills in front of doubting men. A closer look at the gender politics of heterosocial circles reveals that beneath the courtesies, women in the CLSC created an alternative style of intellectual authority.

Despite comprising less than a quarter of the CLSC's national membership, men occupied between a third and a half of the primary executive positions within their respective circles. Close examination of ten representative circles from New York to California in the 1880s and 1890s—four led by men, six by women—reveals several common patterns.²⁹ In majority female clubs, it was not unusual for one of the few men in the circle to be asked to serve as chair. Between 1878 and 1880 the massive East Cleveland Literary and Scientific Circle included 117 male and 143 female members, but the committee assigned to write its constitution consisted of 4 men.³⁰ By recruiting male ministers, lawyers, and doctors as executives, circles deferred to local customs. Especially for a new reading circle, struggling to establish itself in the community, it was a reasonable survival strategy to elect the most prominent man as the circle's representative to the outside world. Such considerations clearly guided the overwhelmingly female Excelsior, Minnesota, CLSC's decision to install Dr. Friselle as president of the inaugural circle—he was elected in absentia. After a “grandiloquent speech” from Mr. Bishop informing him of the election, the doctor's “pocket handkerchief was brought into quite frequent use.”³¹

When CLSCs sought to elevate their public profile, they elected a prestigious president, often male. When they sought intellectual authority, they looked outside the circle for potential guest speakers and experts. Because women continued to be excluded from many professional schools and Ph.D. programs, experts with the requisite reputations and degrees were of necessity men. The circles enlisted university professors, high school principals, or even a “scholarly neighbour” to give lectures on the subject at hand.³² Even when women dominated the CLSC, invited experts were normally male.

Although the groups often tapped the expertise of men to promote CLSC efforts, one should not read too much into the male orientation of executive elections. In heterosocial reading circles, women allowed men to take the symbolic role as community liaison, in part, perhaps, to secure

their continued participation by assigning them a figurehead role consistent with their own expectations of masculine control. In Mary H. Field's fictional portrayal of a CLSC group in California, the circle's founder Kate Thurston publicly expresses "relief" that Mr. Chapman agrees to sit at the head of the table, while privately admitting that "she would do all the talking."³³ (She is later elected president.) Moreover, in all but one of the ten aforementioned case-study CLSC groups (the Chautauqua Circle of Crookston, Minnesota) the group elected a woman as the recording secretary. The job required intimate knowledge of parliamentary procedure, perfect attendance, and felicity of expression. As the official scribe of the group's activities, the secretary could spruce up the often dull minutes with humorous asides, such as the comment that a lecture on the science of auditory energy was "sound" in its delivery. In fact, the image of the CLSC that comes down to historians is very much the product of women's emerging public voices. The group's minutes served as the primary source for club histories, also commonly written by women.

Veiled in the third person, women scribes enlivened the parliamentary minutes with unsolicited insight, opinionation, and even recrimination. When the minutes were read aloud at the next meeting, the secretary assumed a role as the designated voice of group conscience, a duty dispatched with aplomb by the Excelsior CLSC secretary when she reproached the group for failing to prepare for the session on English history. By providing an opportunity to narrate the collective foibles of the group, secretaries disassembled the male presumption of knowledge caricatured in Zona Gale's short story. Myra H. Fenton of Cleveland, Ohio, for example, pointed out that the whole group—men and women alike—was bewildered by Mrs. Avery's detailed presentation on the biological functions of the flower. Finally, the voice of judgment sometimes turned inward, as when the secretary in Farmer's City, Illinois, chastised herself for "not being quite courageous enough to speak out in meetings."³⁴

Whether occupying the chief executive position or not, women gained administrative experience through the auspices of Chautauqua reading circles. In six out of the ten sample circles, women served as president; in several others, women served as vice president and treasurer. These positions brought women into direct encounter with the financial, bureaucratic, and legal frameworks of their communities. It also familiarized them with the structured negotiation format taught by *Roberts Rules of Order*, a staple of CLSC groups. Responding to the demand for more training, one Chautauqua assembly in Wisconsin held a "Parliamentary Law Class for

Women” in 1901 to teach debate, voting, balloting, and committee concepts. When the all-women St. Croix Circle of Hudson, Minnesota, split between the married and single members on whether to meet in the morning or afternoon, the clash brought a new appreciation for parliamentary procedure. The secretary wrote of the group’s attempt to hold “as rigorously as is possible for feminine nature to parliamentary rules” and expressed the hope that all the women would hold office at some point. Because “there was a certain culture to be obtained in learning to preside wisely over a society . . . the honors of office holding are thrust upon all.” The group clearly wished to cultivate “an ease of manner and grace in expression, which is so attractive in a speaker . . . that we might attain to that perfect stature of true womanhood.” Note the paradox: the parliamentary skills they learned in the pursuit of that goal evoked limitless possibilities for unraveling their preconceptions of “true womanhood.”³⁵

Women also served as treasurers. Of course, setting budgets and handling money was nothing new for middle-class women, whose skills as the primary managers, producers, and consumers within the household economy had already been put to use in the public sphere through the various antebellum reform societies.³⁶ However, the experience of treasurers in the CLSC transcended that of these earlier enterprises in two important ways. First, the CLSC included men and women as direct participants. Thus, as officers of corporate entities that included men, women treasurers managed *men’s* money. They were ideally situated to give evidence to the irrelevance of gender in such matters and to earn the respect of a mixed audience. Second, the reading circle’s budget was made more complex by its association with a national organization. Treasurers also balanced the financial needs of the national organization against their own charitable impulses toward members of their own group.

As leaders and money managers, therefore, women in the CLSC demonstrated that they could excel as leaders of men. Many used their newfound public voices to emulate the “public lady” model set by Frances Willard and others, women who sustained public careers without relinquishing their claim to special feminine virtues. The CLSC contributed to the management of that delicate balance by bringing women into contact with Vincent’s idealistic—and easily reinterpreted—rhetoric of initiation. Given the importance Vincent and the CLSC placed on graduation as a rite of initiation, it is not surprising that the strongest claims to female intellectual authority came from women who had successfully passed the four-year course and received a diploma. Vincent’s high rhetoric, meant to carve

a nongendered (or normative masculine) sacred role in the social order, was easily redeployed as a system of initiation from ignorance to enlightened womanhood. Versified the 1892 graduates of the Madison, Wisconsin, CLSC: “We are not what we were, in the simple days ‘gone by,’ for now our names are furled on the banners of the sky.”³⁷

Significantly, this account of the Recognition Day experience links the institutional skills and intellectual achievements of the CLSC. Referring to her paper on Russia, the poem lauded the secretary for becoming a “leader of the Nihilists, and bound Russia firm and fast.” This same secretary, “who once so sweetly the ‘roll’ at night did call, now thunders forth *her sentiment* in dynamite and ball.” Their treatment of the group’s president also reflects the link of institutional experience and intellectual empowerment:

Our one time President, Mary, so sweet and modest and true,
Is now a Tiger hunter, in the jungles of Boolastoo;
And as she grasps the Tiger by throat or tail or paw,
She swings the savage feline and shouts “Vive la Chautauqua!”

And in this stanza, the graduates link their experience to the suffrage battle:

Our little General Hanchett, ever ready to attack,
Has made a trip to Luna with the “suffragists” on her back;
She has “settled” on the mountains square on the Moon Man’s
nose,
And there she purposes staying until the Moon Man goes.³⁸

Gathered in the CLSC, middle-class women learned to be skeptical of the social expectation that they should defer to more learned men. They learned to assert themselves despite the chorus of male snores, yawns, throat clearings, and otherwise distracting interruptions. Most important, both men and women were learning to challenge the notion that they must always keep their spheres separate. Wrote Gale, “It makes you feel as if Katytown isn’t all there is to it.”³⁹

The Fraternity of Intellect

John Heyl Vincent was keenly aware of the criticisms levied at the CLSC. To the charge of superficiality, that the Chautauqua programs and the

CLSC secured only “a misty conception of a thousand things,” Vincent countered that the sharp division between traditional schooling and the “real world” constituted an “irrational repression of the natural and universal longing after education.”⁴⁰ But such explanations did not placate his critics. Vincent’s defensiveness is nowhere better illustrated than in the elaborate rituals practiced informally within the CLSC groups and formally during the CLSC commencement ceremony. Graduates of the four-year CLSC course of instruction were honored with an elaborate initiation ritual that far exceeded an average college commencement in complexity. “Recognition Day,” as it was called, appropriated all the trappings of Masonic initiation rites: a long and arduous journey to demonstrate strength and perseverance, a final test of the candidates’ readiness, a paternal regard for young candidates and a respect for the elders of the order, entrance into a secret community entrusted with sacred truths, and postinitiation incentives of successively higher stages of inclusion and respect.

The first commencement ceremony, during the summer of 1882, enjoyed good weather. A crowd of hundreds gathered in the Hall in the Grove, set in a tree-shaded park surrounded by private lots. Classical touches were everywhere. Pillars bore the busts of Socrates, Homer, and Virgil, and mounted urns spilled foliage to the concrete floor. “Athenian watch-fires” burned outside. Down a slate path heading toward the lake was a simple, unadorned wooden arch: the Golden Gate. From there, the superintendent, Albert D. Vail, spoke directly to the assembled CLSC graduates:

The Path through the Grove has been opened; the Arches under which you must pass have been erected; the Key which will open this Gate has been placed in my hands . . . I extend, in the name of the authorities, a welcome into St. Paul’s Grove, under the First Arch. And let the watchmen guard carefully the gate.

The assembly then moved under the protective canopy of the Hall in the Grove, where it was met in procession by “thirty-six little girls, dressed in white, and crowned with wreaths.” There, the superintendent welcomed the candidates into the “guild” of the Upper Chautauqua.⁴¹ The first to walk through the Golden Gate were graduates of Princeton and Yale, arm in arm, followed by a grandmother of eighty-three, her son, and her granddaughter.⁴² Like Kierkegaard’s Knight of Faith, Chautauqua’s new initiates would live simultaneously in the earthly and the beyond: “They look up to the



FIGURE 5.3 A standard element of Recognition Day was the phalanx of flower girls dressed in white. A case of reality imitating art, the presence of flower girls provided a classical backdrop of innocence, beauty, and purity while teaching a powerful lesson in cultural priorities, gender roles, and class prerogative to the children who participated. Also, virginal presentations of femininity in CLSC ceremonies paralleled the use of statuesque, white-clad women in political rallies as Goddesses of Liberty or Truth—static symbols of timeless ideals belying the changing role of women at Chautauqua. CLSC Recognition Day Procession, 1916. (Courtesy of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York)

heights and to the shining crowns which await the gifted and faithful. They are brothers now. . . .” Brotherhood meant responsibility, for “only those go beyond its well-barred portals who know the sacred pass-words . . . a ‘guild’ we shall call it . . . very sacred, and membership in it very honorable, and further revelation concerning it impossible.”⁴³

These stylized rites of passage, enacted every summer at scores of assemblies across the country, seem at odds with the egalitarian ideal expressed in Vincent’s “Chautauqua Idea,” the questionable relevance of the Chautauqua diploma, and the informality of the social atmosphere itself. Three central themes emerge, however, from the participants’ own ac-

counts. First, elaborate ceremonies heightened the power of the CLSC as a shared community experience. CLSC meetings were often coordinated with other formal expressions of friendship, such as dinner parties, game nights, and banquets. Second, rituals expressed the urge to identify with an imagined community of like-minded individuals across the country. CLSC rituals gave a sense of comradeship with “brethren and sisters” in distant towns and cities, who “were reading the same books, thinking about the same subject, and sharing common aspirations.”⁴⁴ Finally, Recognition Day rituals advanced the cultural authority of the teachers. At the first Recognition Day in 1882, Vail established his authority when he presented the class banner.⁴⁵ Made of heavy blue silk and gold fringe, tasseled, with an image of the Hall of Philosophy emblazoned at its center, the banner chronicled the graduates’ journey from parochial ignorance to classical erudition.⁴⁶ In essence, Vail urged onlookers to judge a book by its cover; the luridness of the ritual served as evidence of the authenticity and social relevance of the diploma.

The CLSC inverted traditional hierarchies like a masquerade ball. On any given evening, women led, men followed, readers wrote, and students became teachers. Recognition Day ritual set things “right” again. Male scholars led the procession and judged the candidates for initiation; the graduates did as they were told. Thus, while Chautauqua claimed to have evaded the capitalist dilemma by finding a middle way between profit and egalitarianism, the fraternity of intellect replaced invidious distinctions based on wealth with a new intellectual hierarchy. Chautauquans seeking an alternative to the competitive ethos of capitalism found themselves instead in a race to accumulate the cultural accoutrements of status and respectability or, as author Zona Gale put it, a “competition in the race for seals and courses completed.”⁴⁷ By defining the difference between the elect and the nonelect, and ratifying that distinction through ritual, Chautauqua offered middle-class men and women, disturbed by the abstract relationship between work and production inherent in a rationalized corporate system, a chance to take part in a visual spectacle of upward social mobility.

Integrating the CLSC

Commencement ceremonies were also notable for the absence of African Americans. Vincent and Kimball made no recruitment efforts. What little

advertising there was appeared in Protestant religious journals and secular literary journals, and never in black or Catholic publications. Middle-class black women, with their own club options available to them in the 1880s and 1890s, were often reluctant to face the discomfort of being tokenized by liberals in a white cultural enclave. In Atlanta, middle-class blacks created the Chautauqua Circle of Atlanta, founded by CLSC enrollee Henrietta Porter. When Porter lost her textbooks in a fire, she joined other women of “unusual ability” and influence in Atlanta’s black middle-class community to form a reading group. In addition to reading the usual papers on Milton and other canonical authors, the members sang James Weldon Johnson’s “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” analyzed African art, and wrote papers on black writers including Johnson, Benjamin Brawley, and W. E. B. DuBois.⁴⁸

Women seeking to integrate their CLSC groups faced resistance from racist members. One such Chautauquan, en route from New York City to Chautauqua by train in 1885, clearly found the idea of sharing her circle with black women revolting. To her “utter disgust,” Cornelia A. Teal noticed “a great fat negress sitting in the corner talking to a younger specimen of the African race, about—what do you think?—Chautauqua!” Despite formidable obstacles, however, several Chautauquans did integrate their circles. Mary Scates, one of the more successful of the recruiters in Chicago, hinted at the difficulties in a letter to Kimball:

At last, I have persuaded the colored women that I wrote you of last year to join the great army of the C.L.S.C.’s and today she told me to get a blank for her and she would fill it out. . . . I may get others to join. . . . It may be that this colored woman can induce others of her race to join in the movement. She seems to have quite an influence among them in Chicago. We now have a young colored girl in our office. I will talk to her and see if I can induce her to read the books.

As white women became more conscious of their own collective struggles, some became more conscious of black women’s plight. Wrote Rebekah E. Pinger in 1893, in the tone of a woman describing an unexpected epiphany: “It seems to me that there [*sic*] color places them at a disadvantage.” Another woman expressed pride at having recruited two black women to her

CLSC, adding, "I am more than anxious to see the progress of the African race."⁴⁹

The self-improvement ethos of the CLSC shifted dramatically during discussions of race. White recruiters created an alternative narrative for the black women enlisted into the CLSC. Rhetorically, the "young colored girl in our office" assumed a dependent status; denied the agency to act as both the subject and object of the CLSC's self-improvement ethos, black women appeared as passive recipients of the charitable efforts of the group. The recruiters used Chautauqua to set the standards of "good" citizenship by which African Americans might overcome the infirmities of their station and enter the respectable middle class.⁵⁰ Before she could join her white sisters as a standard-bearer of moral virtue, wrote Olive Ruth Jefferson in *The Chautauquan* in 1893, the black woman must first uplift her own race. The black woman's capacity for hard work proved her "unquestioned right to all the opportunities of American citizenship." But the added burden of the black man's "worthless manhood," according to Jefferson, thwarted all good efforts to improve the black home. The black woman, according to Jefferson, would be capable of little more until she was released from the "despicable tyranny of the 'low-down' animal that so many men of the race still remain." Too often, black sexuality constituted a foil against which white women juxtaposed their own alleged moral authority.⁵¹

As white female speakers, readers, musicians, and performers took to the stage, the racial gap grew more apparent. Women led only 23 percent of the programs at the Long Beach, California, assembly in 1893; by 1908, women speakers and performers comprised 50 percent of the program. Mt. Gretna's program in 1892 included *no* women; by 1905, women ran one-quarter of the programs. Similarly, in Northampton, Massachusetts, the fraction of women running a particular program or lecture rose from 22 percent in 1896 to 29 percent in 1899 to 35 percent in 1910.⁵² White women's rise to visibility was especially acute in Shelbyville, Illinois, where a platform of one-third women in 1902 was by 1920 more than one-half composed of women speakers and performers.⁵³

The rising visibility of white women in Progressive Era public culture contrasted sharply with the marked racial identity of African American women. While white women formalized their relationship to Shelbyville's municipal government as outspoken citizens, black women assumed subject status as passive recipients of charity. Encouraged by the white Shel-

byville Woman's Club, the Shelbyville Chautauqua Association gave over their property for fund-raising drives for the local African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church in 1902 and 1905–1908. Wrote the *Shelbyville Democrat* of the “colored population,” “words will not express their gratitude and appreciation to the white people of this community for the liberal patronage and kindly treatment received at their hands.”⁵⁴ Any thoughts of benefiting from the *parlor to politics* metaphor were eclipsed both by the material needs of the AME church and the struggle of “the Black Man in a White Man's Country”—the title of C. R. Ransom's speech against the inequities of segregation, observing the black man “can not even get a glass of soda water at a drug store.” Black women's appearance at the AME fund raiser came primarily in the form of background entertainment. Ada and Nellie Lee sang as lead in the Lee Jubilee Singers.⁵⁵ Chautauqua allowed white women to dominate the stage, while it tried to relegate black women to the background.

From Temperance to Suffrage

Despite Vincent's exertions on behalf of the Victorian conception of home, the collective experience of the CLSC widened horizons and suggested priorities undreamed of by its conservative cofounder. In this regard, the temperance cause proved to be his undoing. Temperance stood alone as the fundamental bellwether of moral correctness for Vincent and his colleagues. Speakers on unrelated subjects often used barbs at the liquor industry as a means of establishing their moral credibility before moving on to their own topics. Chautauqua's founders and many of its charter members belonged to the Methodist-Episcopal church, renowned since the antebellum era for its strict temperance views. Vincent himself had written a desultory temperance tract titled *Better Not* (1888). As ecumenical movements that crossed lines of gender, ethnicity, and denomination, both Chautauqua and the temperance campaign celebrated a sober, productive vision of American community.

The overlap between the temperance and Chautauqua movements was cemented by a remarkable confluence of their institutional histories. The social roots of the WCTU, the late-nineteenth-century standard bearer of the antisaloon cause, lay on the shores of Chautauqua Lake in the summer of 1874. At the inaugural Chautauqua meeting, veterans of the Crusade, a

temperance revival that spread through southern Ohio that winter, gathered to share war stories. Martha McClellan Brown, an Ohio crusader, suggested during one of these meetings that women needed a central organization to coordinate efforts on the state and local level. She and her cohorts approached Vincent, who agreed to advertise the idea from the platform. Emboldened by Vincent's endorsement, the work of organizing began in earnest. Emily Huntington Miller and Jennie Fowler Willing planned and led the first meeting of the new organization. News of that meeting's resolutions spread through the church network. Temperance organizations in each congressional district should elect a delegate to a convention that November in Cleveland.⁵⁶ Conceived together and born as fraternal twins, the WCTU and the Chautauqua continued to enjoy close relations for the next four decades.

The Kate Field scandal of 1889 reveals just how close the two movements had become. Field, a Missourian who spent three years studying language and music in Italy, first spoke at Chautauqua in 1885 on the "social and political crimes of Utah."⁵⁷ Soon after she was announced as a speaker at the 1889 summer session, rumors circulated that Field was a "special agent and correspondent" of several California wine makers. In a letter to Vincent, she opposed "the intemperance of prohibition" and supported "the cause of personal liberty." Prohibitionist editors and WCTU brass complained, and the dispute soon spilled into the press. One editorialist criticized Vincent for employing her "while she is the avowed paid agent of those whose success means an increase of drunkenness. . . ." A cartoon reprinted in several newspapers showed Field holding up a bottle and advising the audience to drink California wine. At her feet was a samples bag titled "Kate Field, Agent for California Wines." Bishop Vincent sat impotently on the stage. WCTU members in the front seat dropped their heads in shame while the saloon men cheered.⁵⁸ Faced with a barrage of criticism, George E. Vincent "excused" Field from her engagement at Chautauqua in the summer of 1889.⁵⁹ She did not speak at Chautauqua again.

Women at Chautauqua had many obstacles to overcome, not the least of which was the staunch opposition of Vincent and his friend Bishop J. M. Buckley to women's suffrage. Vincent's first foray into the topic at Chautauqua came during a much-anticipated 1884 speech. Vincent ticked off many of the usual antisuffrage clichés on the need to keep politics and domesticity apart: for the good of society, it is best that "man be man" and "woman be woman"; women contribute to the good of society through

their role as mothers; women will not purify politics, rather they will be “dragged down” by it. In a rare moment, however, Vincent’s judiciousness abandoned him. In a bold adventure into politics, Vincent warned of the collapse of Protestant, Anglo-Saxon moral authority and the specter of Romish domination through the auspices of the Democratic Party. “Too many people vote at present,” he insisted. Vincent painted a dark picture of the postsuffrage world:

Romish authority, which now dictates Patrick’s vote, would control Bridget’s. She would vote as he does, not because of his will or example, but because of the priestly dictum which now influences him; and where a man might break loose from the shackles of priestly power, the woman would still remain its craven subject. Her larger faith in the church would render her ballot the more perilous to the state. . . . It is easy to say that women would vote overwhelmingly in favor of temperance. Possibly so, but of this I confess I am not certain. I would not like to run the risk.

Vincent’s defense of the Republican Party ended with a dire warning: “God save us from a class of political women!”⁶⁰

For Vincent, society benefited when women devoted themselves to ennobling the physical space of the home. He expressed his views most forcefully in an 1894 letter supporting the efforts of the Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women. Alluding to his mother, Mary Raser Vincent, Vincent insisted that “the majority of our best women, especially our most intelligent, domestic, and godly mothers,” opposed suffrage. “The instinct of motherhood is against it,” he argued. Whatever subverted the “natural and divine order, must make man less a man, and woman less a woman.” Suffragists had long argued that the cause of temperance would best be served by extending the vote to women. But Vincent’s gender conservatism trumped his temperance convictions—no small feat. Vincent responded with a classic antisuffrage refrain: a woman’s greatest influence over the political process was as a mother and helpmate:

Free from the direct complications and passions of the political arena, the best women may exert a conservative and moral influence over men as voters. Force her down into the same bad at-

mosphere, and both man and woman must inevitably suffer incalculable loss. We know what woman can be in the “commune,” in “riots,” and on the “rostrum.”

The threat to traditional gender roles was a threat to the social order itself. “When one sex is compelled thus to protect itself against the other, the foundations of society are already crumbling.”⁶¹

Vincent’s colleague J. M. Buckley came face-to-face with the forces of Protestant feminism during a debate over suffrage in August 1892 with fellow Methodist cleric Anna Howard Shaw.⁶² Buckley had originally demurred on the much-anticipated showdown, expressing concern that a woman’s voice would not be able to carry far enough to reach all members of the audience in the cavernous amphitheater. According to Shaw, in the hours before the much-anticipated event, Buckley had made “an indiscreet remark, which, blown about Chautauqua on the light breeze of gossip, was generally regarded as both unchivalrous and unfair.” Buckley spoke first. After Vincent’s introduction, he strode up to the podium, only to be greeted by a field of yellow ribbons—the symbol of support for suffrage. During his lecture, an older man in the audience audibly disagreed with one of Buckley’s points, evoking this snipe: “Old man, I’ll make you take that back if you’ve got a grain of sense in your head!” A writer for the *Buffalo Courier* reported that the cool and composed Shaw had won the debate, a victory subsequently trumped in suffrage circles as “the day we wiped the earth with Dr. Buckley.”⁶³

The Chautauqua Movement was in many respects a remarkably egalitarian medium for the dissemination of ideas, and women took full advantage of it. Technically, its lectures and publications were under central control, and certain core principles—most notably, temperance and Christian culture—were not up for debate. However, the absence of proliquis voices like that of Kate Field ensured that many of those normally critical of women’s suffrage would choose not to attend. Chautauqua’s illusion of neutrality formed a favorable political environment for reorienting the debate from the age-old “Woman Question” to a more partisan “Suffrage Question.” The suffrage celebrations of the late 1890s made it clear which side had carried the day.

In 1898 George E. Vincent invited a series of speakers to commemorate the silver jubilee of the first women’s rights convention in nearby Seneca Falls. For the suffrage inner circle, it was a chance to honor the older guard

while promoting new stars, like Carrie Chapman Catt (who, while “wholly unlike Anna Shaw would hold your audience spellbound,” assured Susan B. Anthony). Suffrage forces also set their sights on Chautauqua’s “Woman’s Day” celebration of 1900. Susan B. Anthony clearly viewed Woman’s Day as a chance to score political points; months in advance, she wrote Chautauqua to ask for permission to distribute prosuffrage literature. Alarmed at the predominance of suffragists on the bill, Mrs. Eleanor Phillips of the New York State Association Opposed to the Extension of the Suffrage to Women wrote for clarification: “Are the suffragist arguments presented unofficially at Chautauqua, and in what form, and for how many years past?” The criticism drew a sharp denial from the Vincents. Chautauqua took no official position on the question, George Vincent rejoined. If Phillips’s group wished to be represented, “we should be only too glad to give them exactly the same opportunity that we extend to the other side.”⁶⁴

The antisuffragists declined the invitation, leaving John Heyl Vincent as the lone opposition standard bearer. One wonders what passed through the mind of the sixty-eight-year-old patriarch as he approached the stand and looked out over a sea of yellow ribbons. As suffrage heavyweights Susan B. Anthony, Carrie Chapman Catt, and Anna Shaw looked on, Vincent struggled to maintain some sense of equanimity, as if asking for patience for hopeless retrogrades such as himself. Vincent defined Chautauqua as a platform for “forward movements” (that is, progress) but not “reforms or radical movements.” It was not the institution’s mission to take action on any cause but, rather, to give people information in order for them to make up their own minds. Susan B. Anthony “smiled her acknowledgment” and took the stand. She observed what “a happy day it has been for women since Bishop Vincent inaugurated this Chautauqua. The women are coming to the front.”⁶⁵

Like a man whose passion for liberal dialogue had finally trumped his chivalrous ideals of womanhood, Bishop Vincent relinquished the podium. By 1910, he was forced to acknowledge the logic of the institutional forces he had set in motion. As he wrote in his memoirs: “Even old men may grow in both knowledge and grace. I have increasing faith in the breadth of woman’s sphere and in ‘adult education.’”⁶⁶ That year was a banner year for suffrage organizers in Chautauqua assemblies throughout the Midwest. Just inside the entrance to the Ames, Iowa, assembly was a women’s suffrage tent. “It was said,” recalled one man of the booth, “that no man dared refuse the literature handed to him as he entered.”⁶⁷

Chautauqua Novels

One way white women contested patriarchy in the public sphere was by carving a female presence in the pages of Chautauqua's many publications. Between 1882 and 1912 women authors accounted for countless articles and at least thirty of the required CLSC books, including Sarah Orne Jewett's *England After the Norman Conquest* (1890), two books by path-breaking sociologist Helen Campbell—*The Child and the Community* (1888) and *Child Labor and Some of Its Results* (1890)—eight books on American art by Edwina Spencer, and two books by Jane Addams, including *Twenty Years at Hull House* (1910), which was reprinted specifically for Chautauqua and assigned for the reading year 1911–12. It was the woman novelist, however, who made the most profound literary contribution to Chautauqua's success. Between 1874 and 1899 scores of short stories, poems, and novels, many by women, extolled the virtues of the movement and advertised the Chautauqua name far and wide. Although of limited literary merit, these novels deserve attention as detailed reflections on the tectonic shifts in gender under way within the assemblies.

Chautauqua novels fit squarely with the devotional style of Social Gospel popular literature in the late nineteenth century. Chautauqua novels celebrated youth and chided an older generation for not accepting the changed conditions of modernity. The story lines were contrived to promote Chautauqua and to confirm fixed moral and theological truths. Key among these was the Christian theme of conversion. As the Chautauqua novel progressed, all of its stock characters—the drunkard, the skeptic, the doubter, the spoiled scion, the overworked housewife, the profit-obsessed industrialist—abandoned their immoral and wasteful ways, the surrender usually happening within five minutes to a week of first setting foot within Chautauqua's sacred landscape. The novels also presented stories of social renewal. As the converted Chautauquans returned to their hometowns, their example transformed whole communities to the cause of moral, educational, and civic reform. "It means the regeneration of the whole town," remarks the once uncaring, now enlightened manufacturer in John Habberton's novel *The Chautauquans* (1891).⁶⁸ Finally, single women who remained steadfast and true to Chautauqua were rewarded, by story's end, with the affections and often marriage proposals of desirable Christian men.

Credit (or blame) for creating the plot and character formulas of Chautauqua novels belongs to Isabella ("Pansy") Alden, the prolific author of

more than seventy Victorian novels and temperance tracts, a CLSC student, and a frequent Chautauqua vacationer. Whoever finds “a stray copy” of the Pansy books “on his ancestral bookshelves,” suggested the Modernist writer Mary Hunter Austin, “will know more, on reading it, of culture in the American eighties than can otherwise be described.”⁶⁹ Alden’s *Four Girls at Chautauqua* (1876) weaves true stories of the 1875 assembly, right down to some of its rainy days.⁷⁰ In *Four Girls*, Ruth Erskine and Flossy Shipley, shallow young women from fancy homes, are won over to Chautauqua, in part by the example of their two friends from more modest backgrounds, Eureka (“Eurie”) Mitchell and Marion Wilbur. The somewhat flighty Eurie serves as a mouthpiece for the author’s feminist insights, including a brash dig at Chautauqua’s antisuffrage cofounder. At one point, Eurie exclaims that Vincent “ought to be the president himself” and that she will “vote for him when female suffrage comes in.” Meanwhile, the shy and still disbelieving Flossy Shipley flourishes into a confident Sunday school teacher. Added incentive for a full conversion to Christ comes in the form of a dashing Christian named Evan Roberts. In the sequel *The Chautauqua Girls at Home* (1877), set in the girls’ hometown, Flossy’s personal salvation fuels her social-reform efforts. Roberts, now revealed to be the owner of a massive fortune, resurfaces with an offer of marriage. Anticipating Jane Addams’s *Hull House*, Flossy muses on the need for an “organized system of charity in our church. . . .”⁷¹

The next installment in the Pansy series, *The Hall in the Grove* (1880), extolls the virtues of the CLSC. Interestingly, the preachy appeals to social conscience that give Alden’s first books their political edge are muted in *The Hall*. When Mrs. Fenton cannot answer her fourteen-year-old son’s questions as he studies for a test, she is crestfallen. Determined not to let a wall emerge between herself and her son, she founds the Centreville CLSC and becomes a model of scholarship and domesticity. Miraculously, her example touches off a seemingly karmic revitalization of the town’s moral landscape: a drunkard gives up drink, the CLSC members visit Chautauqua, and a reformed man courts a deserving young woman. Like *Four Girls*, the book ends before the wedding.⁷² *The Hall* reveals a subtle but important shift in depictions of the assembly landscape. In Alden’s first two books, a visit to Chautauqua initiates a process of spiritual and social renewal. In *The Hall*, however, Alden relocated the assembly landscape from the beginning of the narrative, where it once served as the catalyst for benign character developments, to the end of the narrative, where it appeared

as compensation for a job well done. Alden's many imitators, including one by *In His Steps* author Charles M. Sheldon, offered the Chautauqua vacation as a sexual incentive for continued devotion to the cause.⁷³

Significantly, later imitations of the Alden plot eschewed the political *Four Girls* formula for the more leisurely *The Hall in the Grove*. Like Alden, Mary H. Field of San Jose, California, based her novel *Kate Thurston's Chautauqua Circles* (1891) on her experiences during her visit to an actual Chautauqua assembly. Field served as the Pacific Grove's CLSC secretary in 1888. Her main character's boast of having brought legions of visitors to experience Chautauqua may have been based in reality—of twenty enrollees of the Pacific Grove CLSC that year, nine were from San Jose.⁷⁴ Field's novel begins with the arrival of Kate Thurston, an idealistic teacher, in "San Benito," a town of languid young men, gossipy women, and elderly invalids. The contemporary reader cannot fail to notice Thurston's sublimated sexuality, channeled into a love of books so maternal that when she "ran her hand over them, evening and settling them in their final places, one could easily detect a lingering touch. . . ." Thurston, already saintly and in no need of conversion, quickly sets up a CLSC and works diligently to eradicate superstition, placate the street-corner toughs, and lead Dr. Hall—a potential suitor?—to salvation. Such is her magnetism that when she proposes a pilgrimage to Pacific Grove, for a wholesome and "natural" vacation, the "tired housewives" all follow. There, on Lover's Point, Dr. Hall proposes, and the story ends with their joyous return to San Benito.⁷⁵

John Habberton's novel of the same year also dangles the assembly as a sort of spring break for CLSC students. Habberton's heroine, Miss Dawn, while converting her town to the benefits of the CLSC, demonstrates an unusual sensitivity to class. Recruiting two daughters of a mill worker, Miss Dawn hints at the need for cross-class cooperation between women. Initially skeptical, the mill worker comes to embrace the CLSC as a means of securing a better match for his daughters. "You two gals wouldn't be bad-looking if you could get your brains into your faces once in a while," says the loving father: "You just stick to this readin.'" In a story by now familiar, the CLSC's spreading influence causes manifold changes, all within prevailing class norms: old and young find more in common, the classes grow to respect one another, young men find the young women "brighter," *Harper's* replaces trashy weeklies like *Heart's Delight*, boys begin to respect their fathers, rough men are softened; and in the end, Miss Dawn unites with Joe Warren, a CLSC member with impeccable prospects. The entire town

rewards itself with a week of self-improving recreation at Chautauqua. Lest the aspirations of the workers spoil this happy Chautauqua ending, Habberton included a section on the mill worker's wife's efforts to start a boarding house at Chautauqua—implying a peaceable, lateral transfer of material relations from the urban landscape to Chautauqua's idealized middle landscape.⁷⁶

Rising above the crowd of Alden imitators is Nebraska schoolteacher Anna E. Hahn's *Summer Assembly Days* (1888). If Field and Habberton wrote with the zeal of the converted, Hahn adopted the contemplative, introspective, even morbid first-person voice of Jean Trevor, a young teacher in the midst of a severe spiritual crisis. Bored by the long summer break, Trevor convinces her uncle to accompany her to the Nebraska Chautauqua. Even before her departure, spiritual doubts cloud Trevor's romanticized image of the assembly. In a dream, she envisions a glowing sacred enclosure filled with well-dressed men; suddenly, one of the men turns to her, growing menacing before her eyes, asking, "Why do you come here?" The trip goes as planned, despite her fear that she will be asked to account for her presence in the sacred grove. Arriving in the "Summer City," Trevor encounters reminders of her spiritual emptiness at every turn. The sight of a cemetery touches off the first of many excursions into gloomy self-absorption. Now thoroughly embattled, she overhears the phrase "Remember thy Creator" from a nearby conversation and believes it meant for her. "When?" she asks defiantly.⁷⁷

Hahn's book is notable for its candid self-disclosures, for its rejection of plot clichés, and for the narrator's unwillingness to be sidetracked by courtship rituals and marriage proposals that preoccupy the characters in the other novels. But in a striking contrast with Alden's Flossy Shipley, for whom Chautauqua offers both spiritual and sexual satisfaction, Jean Trevor's visit to the assembly only worsens her circumstances on both fronts. The patriarchal messages she hears there only harden her against the church, and by the end of her visit she feels more alienated than before. Col. George Bain, the fiery Kentucky temperance orator, "disquieted" Trevor. His raw emotional power suggests "the mysterious injustice of life." Will this man, like the one from her dream, demand that she account for her soul? At a WCTU meeting following Colonel Bain's lecture, Trevor arrives at the brink of a fully formed feminist thought. Even though it is not their fault, women have taken it upon themselves to save men from the ruin of alcohol. Why do women assume this responsibility? The pews are filled

with women. Here the reader senses Trevor's growing anger: "Where were the men?" Trevor's feminist ideation evolves further when a lecturer on Shakespeare dismisses Anna Hathaway as "a mother to her husband and a grandmother to her children." Later, Trevor sits aghast as another lecturer "explain[s] away Milton's share of the domestic trouble, and throw[s] all of the blame upon the poor young wife!"⁷⁸

Fearful of Bain's psychological hold on the crowd and in flight from the hero-worship of strong male figures, Trevor takes refuge in an afternoon sermon. She finds the preacher "the very embodiment of physical and mental strength." After his sermon, the penitents crowd the pulpit, hands lifted in "fervent prayer." Aloof and independent, Trevor keeps her seat; but internally moved, she musters the courage to share her doubts with a kindly old woman sitting next to her, who counsels her to keep faith in the after-life. She finds solace in Ms. Gray's words and resolves to devote herself to that end. Ending with a whimper, *Summer Assembly Days* reminds us of the diversity of meanings imputed to the conjunction of landscape, bodies, and voices. Not everyone's horizons are widened. For Trevor, Chautauqua only demonstrates the implacability of the obstacles arrayed against her. She resigns to make the best of what she has, hoping only for a "middle ground between success and failure." She will not produce the great literary magnum opus, nor achieve the fame to which she aspires. Perhaps author Anna Hahn meant to convey her own sense of failure; if so, the sentiment seems calculated to evoke a sympathetic response for someone suffering from what later generations would call clinical depression. Magnum opus or not, *Summer Assembly Days* is a passionate and dramatic act of self-expression, taking place within the context of Chautauqua, by a shy woman.⁷⁹

Women as Managers: Kate Kimball's Bureaucracy

In text as well as speech, middle-class white women at Chautauqua refused to conform to the expectations of domestic sequestration. In this effort they were aided by the remarkable editor-in-chief of *The Chautauquan*, Theodore L. Flood.⁸⁰ In 1880, his first year with *The Chautauquan*, Flood compared women's low status in public matters to their second-class citizenship in the church. The limited opportunities given to women, he lamented, "must be hedged about by saying in certain places 'Thou shalt, and thou shalt not!'" Flood proposed the equal valuation of masculine "strength and

courage” with the “feminine qualities of gentleness, humility and love,” editorializing that women should be granted all privileges of ballot and ministry. For the rest of the decade, Flood consistently showed his prosuffrage laurels. In various editorials, he opposed President Chester Arthur’s objections to the appointment of women postmasters and supported a Pennsylvania woman’s campaign to be admitted to the Pennsylvania bar. Flood viewed Chautauqua as a vehicle for women’s public influence, noting approvingly in 1885, “in a new movement such as the Chautauqua how large a share of the work falls to her.”⁸¹

Flood’s efforts heightened Chautauqua’s profile as a progressive force. When a group of prominent women writers formed the “Woman’s Council Table” within the pages of Flood’s *Chautauquan* from 1890 to 1898, Chautauqua seemed poised to emerge as an umbrella organization encompassing a wide array of women’s moral and political reform efforts. The *Review of Reviews* commended the magazine for its “unrivalled excellence” in covering women’s issues. In the “Woman’s Council Table,” thoughtful women sustained a dialogue on economic, political, and international issues. They did not, however, renounce women’s claims to authority in the domestic sphere. An article on etiquette by Emily Huntington might be followed by a Mary Livermore essay on the benefits of cooperative housework, political insight from Florence Kelley, or a debate on suffrage pitting the intellectual juggernaut of Frances Willard and Lucy Stone against two overmatched conservatives. It was a risky editorial strategy. Grouping together the prosaic and the profound—sitting posture and the gold standard, for example—contributed to a climate in which women’s entrance into serious political discourse could be dismissed as superficial. Still, most writers advocated enhanced public roles for women. Under the protective cover of domesticity, the “Woman’s Council Table” kept the focus on women across a wide range of subjects.⁸²

That said, for women eager to compete with men in business, John Heyl Vincent’s signature on a CLSC diploma conveyed an ambivalent message—now that you have learned about the world around you, he seemed to say, you need stray no farther than the kitchen door. By avoiding vocationally oriented literature, Vincent ensured that the CLSC imparted no marketable job skills and its diploma was useless for professional advancement. The domestic bias suffused Chautauqua literature; a prominent column in *The Chautauquan* in the early 1900s was titled “Chautauqua Reading Course for Housewives.” The CLSC tantalized its graduates with the

implied benefit of formal education, that is, that higher education entitled one to the skills and contacts leading to material rewards and upward mobility. It mimicked the formal education process, right down to its graduation rituals, but conferred no professional benefit, except as a sign of strong work ethics and morality.

Despite the obstacles, women were determined to convert their CLSC diplomas into tangible opportunities for self-improvement. In many cases, the possession of a CLSC degree contributed to a résumé tailored for success in a particular field of work. Clara Miller's White Seal diploma of 1892, for example, certainly did not prevent her promotion to deaconess of the Methodist Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, five years later. For many women Chautauquans seeking work outside the home in the 1880s and 1890s, their most readily available career option, teaching, had not yet fully standardized its training requirements. Many informal routes led into the teaching profession. The black-and-white CLSC diploma, according to psychologist Hugo Münsterberg, was highly prized among teachers.⁸³ According to a Chicago publisher, ladies thrown on their own resources for livelihood could supplement their meager income by going door to door selling "Progressive Chautauqua Cards" (flash cards that served as study guides for CLSC students). For teachers, such work provided "healthful exercise, improving them physically and mentally, and adding to their bank account."⁸⁴

No woman gained more notoriety than Kate F. Kimball, a CLSC graduate, executive secretary of the CLSC, and a towering figure in the institution's early history. Kimball was born in 1860 in Orange, New Jersey, the daughter of a Methodist doctor, and graduated from the Plainfield, New Jersey, high school. In 1878 social contacts and intelligence recommended the eighteen-year-old to the executive secretary position of Vincent's new CLSC. Until her death in 1917 (although with reduced effectiveness after a severe stroke in 1909), Kimball served as the CLSC's central administrative officer, located at first in Plainfield, New Jersey, and later in Buffalo, New York. Technically, the CLSC's executive decisions rested with a committee of hand-picked counselors; in reality, executive authority rested with John Heyl Vincent, his son George, and Kate Kimball. By the 1890s, Kimball was supervising as many as twenty employees (all women), corresponding with publishers, writers, and club members, writing for *The Chautauquan*, and contributing (informally) to the process of selecting CLSC books.⁸⁵ Vaguely defined from the beginning, Kimball's role expanded over time until she wielded as much authority as her male employers.

The Vincents trusted her business acumen and gave her broad administrative discretion. The senior Vincent authorized her signature on his checks and gave her full power to negotiate with the contractors, publishers, and banks needed to run a successful nonprofit organization. She saved the CLSC from extinction numerous times with her personal appeals to the consciences of men with deeper pockets, such as Lewis Miller, John Heyl Vincent, and Jesse L. Hurlbut. At other times, she resorted to riskier financing schemes, a practice that tested the benevolence of local bank managers. In 1887 the CLSC's expenses vastly outstripped revenues, and Kimball could not repay an overdue bank loan of \$1,000. A senior member of the staff eventually arranged for Kimball to borrow \$1,000 from a well-situated guest. The financial creativity Kimball learned in the 1880s proved invaluable in building a dedicated CLSC building (Alumni Hall, finished in 1892) and shepherding the CLSC through the financial crisis of 1893.⁸⁶

Kimball's authority derived, in part, from her status as a woman. From a public relations standpoint, Vincent often found it convenient to emphasize her gender, as if to head off accusations of commercial motive and to reassure his audience of the purity of the CLSC's mission. Vincent chastised disgruntled correspondents for suggesting indiscretion on the part of "this young lady," implying that to criticize Chautauqua was to impugn the honor of a virtuous woman.⁸⁷ The Vincents relied on Kimball as a mediator to the mostly female masses. "Among her official associates," noted editor Frank Chapin Bray, "her interpretation of the needs of those whom Chautauqua seeks to serve became a guide and an inspiration."⁸⁸ Much more than a disembodied administrative voice, Kimball soon developed a celebrity-like status among circle members and leaders, who frequently enlisted her as a trusted ally in their own internal struggles. Within the administrative framework of the CLSC, on the other hand, Kimball relayed the educational, economic, and aesthetic needs of women to her male employers. Her advocacy was often covert and indirect: she kept careful statistics on the gender of CLSC members, negotiated to keep CLSC dues low, pushed for readable and clearly written publications, and generally marshaled her administrative resources to meet the particular expectations of middle-class women.

Kimball wielded authority subtly and disarmingly, using the conventional courtesies of age, gender, and position to cajole others to her line of thinking. Her letters—always responding to the salutations "My Dear Miss Kimball" or "Dear Friend" with the more formal "Dear Sir"—were full of

gentle but pointed proposals. In a letter to Indiana University historian James A. Woodburn, she used the pronoun “we” constantly to imply the support of an audience, presumably male, reading behind her shoulder as she wrote. When she did use the “I” pronoun, it was in self-deference: “I would say in the beginning that the plan is not my own, but was elaborated ~~partly~~ by wiser heads.” The decision to cross out *partly* suggests a strategy of assertion through self-abnegation. She explained that while Woodburn’s suggestion of arranging correspondence courses by subject instead of chronology was sound, it was not practical for the CLSC. By easing herself into the dialogue as the reporter of community wisdom and the protector of rural CLSC students, mostly female, she persuaded a university professor to reorient his plans to serve both “the members who can get at libraries and those who cannot on the same footing.”⁸⁹

Although she stood atop a bully pulpit, Kimball shied away from political causes. She rarely spoke publicly outside Chautauqua assemblies, and even when she did, her words rarely strayed far from the movement. Nor did she write often for non-Chautauqua audiences (she wrote articles for *The Chautauquan* and *Religious Education* and a book for the 1909 CLSC course titled *An English Cathedral Journey*). Indeed, an activist could hardly have remained in the executive secretary position for long. The elevation of the pious Kate Kimball, who rarely commented on the “woman issue” and invariably maintained a ladylike distance from the rough and tumble of politics, reflected Vincent’s conservative ideal of public womanhood. Kimball’s quiet authority contrasted with the more strident styles of Carrie Nation and Frances Willard. Kimball is best viewed as one of America’s foremost female executives of her day, one of an elite cadre of “public ladies” struggling to reconcile their enlarged ambitions with traditional definitions of womanliness.

Kimball’s leadership, however, was not without controversy. Questions about Kimball’s motivations arose early. *The Chautauquan* editor Frank Chapin Bray dubbed her the “mother superior” of the organization, a metaphor that highlighted Kimball’s matronly demeanor, moral certitude, and lifelong singleness.⁹⁰ Less generous was the rumor that Kimball harbored a hidden love for John Heyl Vincent. Whether such feelings existed, and if so, if they were ever made known, remains a matter of conjecture. In a CLSC office photograph, historian Catherine Kleiner has noticed a framed picture of Vincent sitting on Kimball’s office desk. Others have pointed to this unusual passage in an 1888 letter from the elder bishop to

the unmarried Kimball: "I have no doubt that your appearance [as a speaker in 1889] will be hailed with such swaying of the lilies as has never been witnessed before, and your departure from the platform would be, ——." ⁹¹ While oddly intimate and cryptic, this passage is open to various interpretations. Many Victorians spruced their letters with inside jokes, literary references, and unwritten words, all meant to convey secret meanings to a confidant. ⁹² Alas, these diametrically stereotypical explanations of Kimball's motivations—"mother superior" on the one hand, would-be lover on the other—do little but trivialize her deep faith in Chautauqua and its importance to women.

There were limits to Kimball's authority. In the late 1880s a feud broke out between Kimball and Theodore Flood. Their conflict derived in part from the failure of John Heyl Vincent and his son George E. Vincent to clearly delineate their respective duties. He gave them both sweeping, and overlapping, powers to promote the CLSC. Flood managed *The Chautauquan* from his office in Meadville, Pennsylvania, with complete autonomy, bringing him into frequent conflict with Kimball, who reasonably expected to exert some measure of administrative authority over the magazine's content, pricing, and subscriptions. Flood, envisioning a profitable journal of the caliber of *The Century* or *Harper's*, complained of Kimball's practice of accepting discounted journal subscriptions. When Kimball advertised *The Century* (Flood's presumptive competitor) in one of her CLSC circulars, Flood protested the act as a "direct violation of my contract with the Assembly." Kimball, convinced that Flood intended to sacrifice Chautauqua on the altar of commerce, maneuvered to limit his influence. In 1889 she audaciously proposed merging the CLSC with the University of Chicago's American Institute of Sacred Literature (directed by ex-Chautauqua administrator William Rainey Harper). So intense was the animosity that the Vincents were forced to intervene that year. They rejected Kimball's plan to merge the CLSC with Harper's institute, relieved her of authority over advertising, and relocated her offices from Plainfield, New Jersey, to Buffalo, New York, just fifty miles from Chautauqua. ⁹³ Swiftly and emphatically, the Vincents reasserted administrative control, placated the valuable Reverend Flood, and reminded Kimball who was in charge.

Such episodes reminded female Chautauquans to express their gender politics in subtle ways. For example, Mattie Harris Williams of Shreveport, Louisiana, was one of the few female assembly managers in the country. Like

Kimball, Harris gained recognition as a Christian lady first, and as an able manager second. Her résumé was impressive: cofounder of the Louisiana Educational Association (LEA) in 1883; president of Hypatia, an elite reading club; organizer of the Free City Library Association; and superintendent of the educational department of the Louisiana State Fair. As cofounder and general manager of the Louisiana Chautauqua in the 1890s, she earned the title “Mother of Chautauqua.” She was also a columnist for *The Daily Caucasian* and a historian of her United Daughters of the Confederacy chapter who held the “Lost Cause . . . near and dear to her heart as well as all things pertaining to her beloved southland.”⁹⁴ Williams used Chautauqua to insert gender issues into the LEA’s debate over education. Her 1895 talk at the Chautauqua, titled “Should Sex Regulate Wages?” was followed by an informal discussion in which she proposed that “fitness and capacity, not sex, should be the only consideration.” She also insisted on holding a “Women’s Day” every year.⁹⁵ Williams claimed the role of spokesperson that Kimball was unwilling to take for herself.

So too did the officers of the many women’s clubs affiliated with Chautauquas across the country take on publicly visible roles. The “old girls” network at Chautauqua Lake included Kate Kimball, novelist Isabella “Pansy” Alden, poet Mary Lathbury, and Chautauqua Woman’s Club stalwarts Emily Huntington Miller, Mrs. B. T. Vincent, and Mrs. Percy V. (Anna) Pennybacker. Organized in 1886, the Chautauqua Women’s Club (CWC) soon established affiliation with the national General Federation of Women’s Clubs (which Pennybacker led from 1912 to 1916). The CWC ran its own educational programming, including departments of Household Economics, Education, Social Ethics, Philanthropy, and Reform; and, as if in recognition of the limitations of the standard CLSC curriculum—given over as it was to Vincent’s patriarchal Protestantism and later to George E. Vincent’s academic orientation—the club recommended its own reading list.⁹⁶ The Woman’s Department at the Glen Echo assembly near Washington, D.C., was founded in 1890 for “the advancement of women, improving and enlarging her scope of usefulness” by Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross (she lived in Glen Echo until her death in 1912).⁹⁷ In the early 1900s hundreds of CLSCs were absorbed into bigger, more civic-minded women’s clubs, often associated with the General Federation of Women’s Clubs and its state affiliates.⁹⁸

Kimball’s presence loomed large for the most famous of the graduates from this network, Ida B. Tarbell. Tarbell, the Progressive Era muckraker

famous for her exposé of Standard Oil's corrupt business practices, claimed to have "learned [her] trade" as a beat reporter for *The Chautauqua Assembly Herald*. Key to this network was the Press Club and Press Bureau at Chautauqua, where journalists and apprentices met and mingled during the summer months to discuss their profession, present papers, and network. By 1905, 150 active newspaper, book, and periodical writers met at the Press Club. Authors read from their own works during "Author's Night," and the club awarded prizes for stories from a pile of papers sympathetically termed "rejected manuscripts." Men dominated, but women like Ida Tarbell used the professional structure it provided to boost themselves into the profession.⁹⁹

One such ambitious woman was Grace Farrington Gray. Gray's association with Chautauqua began as a teenage vacationer. During the summer months, she wrote articles about the Chautauqua assembly for the Jamestown (New York) High School newspaper. Encouraged by her success, she sent social write-ups to *The Jamestown Journal*, *The Philadelphia Press*, and *The Cleveland Leader*. Gray used her corpus of Chautauqua articles to secure a valuable recommendation from Isabella Alden, the author of the many "Pansy" novels on Chautauqua. Alden praised the twenty-year-old for her "excellent Christian character" and "well cultured mind." (By contrast, the male editor of *The Jamestown Journal*, while praising her "rare aptitude for the work," added the sexist slight that she was "faithful and painstaking as only a woman can be.") Recommendation letters in hand, she moved to Minneapolis, took a job with the *Minneapolis Times*, married its editor James Gray, wrote speeches for her husband's political campaigns as a Democrat for mayor (successful) and governor (unsuccessful), and after her husband's death in 1916, took over as associate editor of *The Farmer's Wife*.¹⁰⁰ As institutional experiences gave rise to new options for the pursuit of individual goals, Chautauqua set the stage for some middle-class women to renegotiate the boundary lines of gender while advocating the liberal creed.

"Women's Clatter" in the Public Sphere

As the examples of Kate Kimball, Mattie Williams, and Grace Farrington Gray suggest, for public women to win acceptance, they would strike a Faustian bargain with tradition. In exchange for the unusual level of moral

authority they held within the assembly, women rarely challenged patriarchal assumptions directly. Instead, they used the metaphors of domesticity to justify greater involvement in civic affairs. Thus, Kate Kimball asserted her authority as the “mother” of the CLSC. A similar effect allowed female guests to assert their values on the physical space of the assembly. As the domestic role shifted from permanent residence to the temporary summer home—literally, as they removed their portraits and bric-a-brac from the trunk to find new places for them in the tent or cottage—women refused to replicate their roles *exactly* as they were at home. Some assumptions, like the rigid demarcation of public and private spheres, were conveniently forgotten, others distorted and reinvented. By treating the assembly as an extension of the typical Victorian parlor, Chautauqua women would make their towns safe in preparation for women’s fuller entrance into civic life.

Few rooms in the Victorian home were more important than the parlor. Parlors served as links between the public world and the private space of the family. When invited guests moved from the street to the parlor, they entered a deliberately constructed space, festooned with the trappings, if not the substance, of emotional intimacy: portraits, bric-a-brac, curved sofas (called, significantly, a “tête-à-tête”), picture albums, personalized decorations, family bibles, and musical instruments. It was a highly stylized form of conspicuous consumption, speaking to the mistress’s ability to master consumer choice without succumbing to gaudy materialism. By arranging commodities in tasteful ways, middle-class women showcased their ability to pick and choose among the plethora of retail options. Books and other evidence of advanced learning spoke not only to the family’s taste and appreciation of literature but also to its ability to emulate an aristocratic model of leisure. Shielded from the street, the workplace, the kitchen, and other sites of production, the parlor provided a refuge from the rigors of commercial life and a place where women, in particular, could develop the domestic refinements viewed as indispensable to the effective running of a Christian home.¹⁰¹

Labor at the assemblies was commonly segregated by gender. Men dominated the platforms and ran the financial aspects of the assembly while women took charge of turning tents and cottages into temporary family homes. Women devoted much of their energy into both creative and mundane endeavors that fell within the “woman’s sphere.” It took creativity, for example, to make a canvas hutch seem more like the clapboard farmhouse they left behind. Women guests brought furniture and wall decorations



FIGURE 5.4 Domestic labor was not eradicated at Chautauqua but, rather, shifted from one group of women to a group of less-privileged working men and women, drawn from the local work force. The staff of the Hotel Athenaeum got together on the veranda for this picture, circa 1895. (Courtesy of the *Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York*)

from the parlor to enliven their tents and cottages. One visitor to the assembly at Ocean Grove, New Jersey, noted that many of the tents were “furnished like parlors.”¹⁰² Less inspiring was the domestic work. While tent dwellers were liberated from the kitchen, cottagers (with the uncommon exception of those that could afford to bring maids) were saddled with the same cleaning, shopping, cooking, and general drudge work that was expected of them at home. Virtually every assembly included a dining hall, which shifted domestic labor from a privileged group of women to younger volunteers or female wageworkers.

In addition to the cottage kitchen and parlor, the bedroom was under women’s control at the assembly. The lack of nighttime privacy, with its obvious limitations on sexual activity, may have helped tilt the balance of power in favor of married women striving to assert reproductive choice by placing limits on their husband’s sexual access. Privacy in the tiny cottages could be found only during the day, when busybodies left to attend lectures, classes, concerts, and recreational activities. In these stolen moments, the empty cottages, hotels, and boarding halls provided space for women to

enter what historians have described as a “female world of love and ritual,” a gushingly affectionate, though often nonsexual, style of female interaction common in the nineteenth century. In letters and the relatively new consumer phenomenon of postcards, women conveyed close emotional bonds to friends elsewhere. “Only wish we had a cottage for that would mean you here too,” wrote one visitor of the Miami Valley, Ohio, assembly to her friend in Columbus. “*When* are you coming to see me?” she asked a few weeks later: “I am waiting and watching and ” ” ”, this continuing to a maddening degree.”¹⁰³

Women at Chautauqua were not content to focus on the interior, private space of their cottages. Indeed, women took charge of the public space of the assembly with the same gusto that they brought to the organization of interior spaces. In Georgetown, Texas, the local newspaper printed this plea for improving the appearance of its fledgling assembly: “The ladies of the city are requested to furnish pot plants to decorate the rostrum and fountain.” Donors were assured of getting their plants back “when the session is over.”¹⁰⁴ For Women’s Temperance and Home Missionary Days, the women of Pitman Grove, New Jersey, draped the auditorium in bunting, decorated the pulpit and altar railings, and hung baskets of flowers and a dozen bird cages from the rafters.¹⁰⁵ This informal blurring of private and public spaces reveals an expectation of entitlement.¹⁰⁶ The assembly would from then on serve as a communal parlor, decorated by women for the benefit of all. In Mary Field’s romance novel set in Pacific Grove, California, lovers at the end stage of their courtship meet each others’ families outdoors “with as much apparent ease as if they were in a beautiful parlor.”¹⁰⁷

Chautauqua women pooled their resources to more deeply inscribe their values on the physical landscape. Notable in this regard were the many ladies improvement clubs or ladies auxiliaries. Members were often the wives of board members or otherwise prominent men in the assembly hierarchy. But assembly directors rarely funded the improvement societies in full. Relegated to low-budget priority, the improvement organizations resorted to creative fund-raising tactics for their landscaping and construction projects. The Ladies Auxiliary of the Hedding Chautauqua Assembly in New Hampshire, formed in 1896, held an annual street fair for improvements to the grounds.¹⁰⁸ The auxiliaries devoted their revenue to infrastructure and buildings, like the bandstand and bridge at the Crystal Springs, Mississippi, assembly and the administration building, arch frame entrance, and Woman’s Building at the Lincoln, Illinois, assembly.¹⁰⁹ A



FIGURE 5.5 A group poses on the porch of the WCTU cottage at the Colorado Chautauqua Assembly, circa 1905. (From the Collection of the Colorado Chautauqua Association, Boulder, Colo.)

Waterloo, Iowa, businessman offered matching funds, leading to the construction of Willard Hall in 1905. The Greenfield, Ohio, assembly included a Decorating Committee made up of three women—the only women listed in the assembly’s leadership roster.¹¹⁰

As the definition of home expanded to encompass the assembly, so too did the expectation that the assembly would serve as a refuge from the perceived excesses of male public culture.¹¹¹ Like prohibitionists and home missionaries, women made sure to keep the assembly free from masculine vice. Alcohol was absolutely prohibited, and police patrols kept on the lookout for rakes and pickpockets. One Chautauquan wrote to thank the YMCA for handling the security during the 1887 session near St. Paul, Minnesota. She appreciated the “patriarchal care that guards the grounds from all [that] could poison life, or minister to the vile passions of humanity.”¹¹² A Wisconsin assembly promised, “Ladies and children will be as safe and comfortable in their tents on the grounds as they could be in their own homes.”¹¹³ Special surveillance zones reinforced the notion of the assembly as a women’s place. In 1886 Mrs. A. H. Jewett of Philadelphia cre-



FIGURE 5.6 Chautauqua cottages strove for a seamless connection of parlor, porch, and outdoor space. This cottage at 22 Center, Chautauqua, New York, built in 1876, apparently nestled in the woods (though sandwiched between cottages on each side), featured an overhanging skirt to create a covered second-story porch. (From the Collection of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York)

ated the Jewett House, a Victorian boardinghouse for twenty-five women, accepted by application. Assemblies also featured “comfort stations” and “Woman’s Buildings.” Like the sitting rooms at department stores, these structures offered cold water and a place to rest for women and their children as they went from program to program. In 1903 the women of Lincoln, Illinois, pitched in by staffing a nursery to free up time for mothers of young children.¹¹⁴

The assemblies also served as prebattle headquarters for the leaders and foot soldiers of Prohibition. The WCTU School of Methods at the Connecticut Valley Chautauqua issued a call for all those “engaged in the righteous battle for God, Home and Native land” to “push the conflict with still greater efficiency.”¹¹⁵ WCTU president Frances Willard struck an imposing figure at these gatherings. In fact, she indirectly helped start an assembly near her home in Chicago. Her friendship with Solomon and Clara Thatcher of River Forest, Illinois, led to a bequest of the two hundred acres that would become the Lake Bluff Camp Meeting, later a Chautauqua assembly.¹¹⁶ At Willard’s encouragement, Sarepta M. I. Henry opened a Gospel Training Institute at Lake Bluff in 1881. Her four-year study course, modeled on that of the CLSC, was designed to teach skills to make women effective temperance speakers.¹¹⁷ In 1902 another well-to-do Illinoisian, Mrs. E. W. Brainerd, leased her timberland two miles from Lincoln, Illinois, for the purposes of a Chautauqua assembly. When it was sold to the association seven years later, she stipulated that if intoxicating liquors were ever used there it would revert immediately to her ownership. Women’s temperance activism, here and elsewhere, fundamentally reshaped the built landscape and altered the legal identity of particular land parcels, setting limits on its present and future uses.¹¹⁸

The kitchen, ironically, formed another point of entry into public life for Chautauqua women. Late-century advocates of domestic science and home economics, related disciplines falling under the rubric of “scientific motherhood,” endeavored to reshape domestic spaces, work patterns, and female bodies for greater efficiency. By the early years of the twentieth century, they had fixed themselves in the curriculum of women’s colleges, normal schools, and even state universities. Domestic-science pioneers like Nellie Sawyer Jones and Sarah Tyson Rorer targeted Chautauqua early on as a valuable pedagogical tool. An officer of the Kalamazoo (Michigan) Chautauqua Assembly in 1907, Jones would serve as professor of home economics at the University of Wisconsin in the 1920s. Rorer, who edited

the domestic-science column of *Ladies Home Journal*, ran the Philadelphia School of Domestic Economy, published more than fifty books on cooking and diet, and headed the Household Science Department of the Pennsylvania Chautauqua Assembly.¹¹⁹

The ideological energy from this movement—evident in such overstatements as “good bread is one of the mightiest moral forces of the universe”¹²⁰—fueled Chautauquans’ ambitions to engrave women’s culture into the landscape. If the assembly could be improved by a woman’s touch, why not the entire city? Many middle-class clubwomen affiliated with Chautauqua assemblies translated the parlor metaphor into progressive politics. Take, for example, the Shelbyville Woman’s Club (SWC), founded in 1900 with the diminutive and dour Winifred Douthit, Chautauqua founder Jasper Douthit’s wife, at the helm. The Domestic Science Department of the SWC started in 1900 in the parlor of Mrs. George Graybill. Discussion topics ran the gamut from the raising of chickens, to meat preparation, to the scientific management of the family economy.¹²¹ But its rhetoric of progress soon found other avenues of expression. In 1905 it pushed the SWC to call for sidewalks, paving, and street lighting; advocated the prohibition of frame buildings in the central business district; and in 1906 offered a forty dollar prize for the sixteen best-kept lawns in Shelbyville (judges drawn from out of town). Winifred Douthit was also a moving force behind the Anti-Expectoration Law of 1909. The women of Shelbyville, Douthit promised, would create so much “‘women’s clatter’ that some minister or lawyer will be arrested for spitting on the side walk and the people will find out that they *can* enforce laws.”¹²²

In another revealing episode, the Ladies Chautauqua Park Club of the Southern Oregon Chautauqua Assembly in Ashland formed in 1902 for the limited function of beautifying the grounds. Members held dinners and raised enough money to hire a gardener to work on the lawns and flower beds. It did not take long for the group to recognize that the interests of the assembly and the larger community were closely related. The park club formed a new group called the Woman’s Civic Improvement Club and lobbied the city council for help in converting a bankrupt mill just down the hill from Chautauqua into a city park. They shamed the town for allowing its Chautauqua speakers, some of “international” repute, to see the dilapidated pigsty and barn at the rear of the abandoned mill. Merchants wanted to improve the mill as a commercial area, and some of the older residents favored preserving it as a historical landmark. Here the clubwomen acted

as the town's progressive voice, charting their own territory between commercial interests on the one hand and historical nostalgia on the other.

In December 1908 the city granted the club's request, voting to convert the mill grounds into a park. "We want to be a wide awake town," the Improvement Club claimed in 1909. "Let us not be called 'mossbacks' any longer, but boosters." The Improvement Club continued their activities, offering prizes for the best lawn, purchasing land for more parks, encouraging planting along the railroad bed, landscaping the median in the center of the town's main boulevard, helping design the streetlights, working for domestic-science training in the public schools, and staffing an exhibit building at the railroad depot "in order to make Seattle Fair visitors who pass this way sit up and take notice of Ashland."¹²³ Begun with the purpose of sprucing up the Chautauqua assembly, the Woman's Civic Improvement Club emerged as a major force in Ashland's boosterish efforts to recreate itself as an attractive tourist location and residential area. Chautauqua expressed the growing conviction of many women that they, as much as their husbands and brothers, deserved a stake in the reshaping of public culture in the Progressive Era.

The domestication of the assembly grounds contributed to the larger renegotiation of gender identity in the Progressive Era in two ways. First, by extending the parlor into physical space defined as community property, middle-class women promoted a cultural atmosphere conducive to greater involvement in the public sphere. In this sense, assembly aesthetics were consistent with the larger expansion of maternalist rhetoric in women's reform circles since the late nineteenth century. Second, the logistical challenge of making ten acres seem like home required cooperation and organizational sophistication. Scores of improvement committees and clubs sprouted up in camp meetings and Chautauqua assemblies between 1874 and 1919. Whether or not members joined for the express purpose of developing political skills, these organizations nevertheless provided valuable organizational experience and promoted the idea that women were entitled to have a voice in the development of their communities.

Conclusion

Beyond the suffrage rallies and yellow-ribbon parades, the transformation of gender for white middle-class people between 1870 and 1920 was a quiet

revolution, fought silently over the meanings attached to the places, bodies, and voices of everyday life. Perhaps this is why the “assembly” refused to conform to the traditional binary model of gendered place in Victorian America: women in private, men in public. Where did the feminine sphere end and the masculine sphere begin? What was public and what domestic? In the physical environs of the assembly, we find that what historians once viewed as the “separate” domains of the male public and the female domestic realms were hopelessly entangled. The voice of Anna Howard Shaw, allegedly too timid to be heard in the far reaches of the amphitheater, echoed throughout the assembly. Bodies and voices, which Victorians separated and classified by gender and class, constantly crossed, recrossed, and straddled those boundary lines.

As historian Jeanne Halgren Kilde has argued convincingly, William James was not alone in perceiving the “predominance of the feminine” at Chautauqua. The lingering camp-meeting tradition, which promoted a familial atmosphere between “brothers” and “sisters” in Christ, along with the informality of the place, which broke the strict boundaries between inside (private) and outside (public) space, helped feminize Chautauqua’s landscape. As dining halls relieved women of some domestic chores and freed them for encounters with the widened horizons of higher learning, they did things that were “profoundly ‘unfeminine.’”¹²⁴ An analysis of Chautauqua’s landscape, however, must not stop with gender. Reading the landscape necessitates a parallel investigation into the process by which the voices of some men and women, better situated by dint of superior material resources or racial privilege, were more likely to be inscribed into the physical landscape than those belonging to other groups.

From the beginning, women formed the spine of the Chautauqua Movement. They comprised at least three-quarters of the CLSC membership, led efforts in small towns to incorporate Chautauqua assemblies, held fund-raisers, badgered their reluctant husbands, and made the assemblies home bases for the reform activities that grew from the argument for special “women’s virtues,” including the home missions and the WCTU. The assemblies were in many ways extensions of the Victorian parlor, providing safe spaces for women to test the waters of greater involvement in public affairs without appearing radical or “unwomanly.” For older, career-oriented women, the CLSC served its purpose. Younger feminists within the movement, however, soon grew frustrated with its limitations. For Grace Farrington Gray and Ida Tarbell, the possibilities of the parlor metaphor had

been exhausted. In pursuit of genuine reform in labor relations, consumer protection, and the environment, Chautauqua's daughters rarely followed in their mothers' footsteps.

White women's prominence in the public sphere of Chautauqua helped free them from the strictures that once barred professional and political achievement. But as white women undertook custodial authority over the landscape, they soon found themselves ensconced in a system of class relations not of their making. Having smuggled themselves closer to full-orbed middle-classness, Chautauqua women found themselves saddled with new responsibilities in the maintenance of the new regime: a white, middle-class strata, rapidly organizing into professional organizations, separating itself into specially constructed utopias in the new suburbs, and celebrating progress while evading the reality of the racial underpinnings of prosperity. Chautauqua women joined their male counterparts in a mutual vulnerability to the vicissitudes of the market and the altered spiritual horizons of consumer capitalism.

This boded well for the cause of Progressive reform and for the rise of modern liberalism in general. But it also reshaped political culture in subtle and far-reaching ways. As historian Kathryn Kish Sklar has argued, "the gendered construction of politics gave distinct opportunities to women's political activism and at the same time set distinct limits on that activism." After the Nineteenth Amendment granting women the suffrage passed in 1920, the virtue of Protestant femininity lost some of its political cachet. Politically active women appealed less and less to the gender-specific language of domesticity and motherhood. Historian Paula Baker has argued that postsuffrage women "lost their place above politics and their position as the force of moral order."¹²⁵ Thereafter, gender lost some of its power in defining modern liberalism. Moreover, strict patriarchy was replaced with a newly coercive consumer culture, which piled new obligations and stereotypes upon the old. Despite the new challenges presented by a post-Victorian public culture, white women at Chautauqua had gained new individuality as more fully recognized citizens of the liberal state.

6. *Useful Knowledge and Its Critics: The Messiness of Popular Education in the 1890s*

The living teacher has gone on among the labyrinths and up the steepes of knowledge; has tried and toiled and triumphed.

—John Heyl Vincent

It does not really matter what you give the public in the Hall of Philosophy.

—Professor Herbert Baxter Adams

By the mid-1890s, Vincent and Miller's experiment on the shores of Chautauqua Lake was a spectacular success. In just twenty years, it had spawned more than eighty imitators. Fifteen thousand men and women across the country were enrolled in the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle (CLSC), with three thousand graduating yearly. In a nation of only 65–75 million persons, probably one-half million Americans participated in some form of Chautauqua fare every year in the 1890s. The original institution had tripled in acreage. Its summer program had ballooned from twelve to fifty-six days. Several Republican presidents and a cadre of wealthy benefactors, including H. J. Heinz, Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, and Clement Studebaker, publicized the assembly and sustained it during lean years. A group of elite academics had thrown their weight behind Chautauqua's model of enlightened citizenship. In the early 1890s, under the leadership of Yale University professor William Rainey Harper, the institution appeared poised for leadership over the rapidly growing university extension movement. A stunning validation of Chautauqua's success came in 1891, when Rockefeller made Harper the most powerful man in higher education by tapping him to lead the University of Chicago. At Chicago, Harper used his Chautauqua experience to build the largest university extension system in the country.

Chautauqua and academia enjoyed a promising partnership in the late 1880s and 1890s. The crusade for popular education and liberal religion that went under the Chautauqua name appeared unstoppable. And yet, Harper's departure for Chicago did not bode well for Chautauqua's future. In fact, the 1890s saw the high-water mark of Chautauqua's impact on U.S. society. As early as 1889 Edward Everett Hale, one of Boston's religious fixtures and a loyal patron of Chautauqua, wondered aloud if Chautauqua's success would

produce more of the intellectual disorder and pedagogical confusion it had been designed to reverse. One so-called Chautauqua assembly in New Hampshire, he complained, was little more than a “horse show” of packaged lectures arranged for “popular effect.” Hale heard too much *vox populi* and not enough from the pulpit. He witnessed “a concert, a temperance lecture, woman’s rights address, a reading from Shakespeare, a normal class—but no Chautauqua.” He particularly objected to the distribution of special diplomas for the completion of courses. Only Chautauqua in New York should have the authority to do that, he argued. He advised that Vincent “crush out” this bogus practice and proposed a centralized system along the lines of a university extension, administered from the CLSC’s Plainfield, New Jersey, office. With prophetic insight, Hale beseeched Vincent not to “let the assembly managements go to the lecture bureaux [*sic*]. . . . Make Plainfield the central bureau for them all.”¹

There is more at work here than a purist complaining about philistines. Hale’s instinct for centralization exemplified a major trend affecting all levels of U.S. education in the late nineteenth century. Hoping to rein in Chautauqua’s wayward franchises, Hale envisioned a centralized administration run by unquestioned experts. Similarly, as historians have shown, many education reformers saw it as their mission to free schools from the tyranny of small-town schoolmarms and ministers, replacing their undisciplined folkways with state certification tests and summer institutes—in other words, an organizational structure better suited to the occupational specialization of urban society.² However, despite a flirtation with university extension, the leaders of Chautauqua lacked the resources to heed Hale’s advice and quash regional variation. Even if Chautauqua possessed the means to impose a national standard of popular education, it lacked the will. In the Chautauqua movement in the 1890s we find messy, decentralized, middlebrow culture not yet subjected to bureaucratic or corporate control.

Although Chautauqua resisted the professionalization trend in U.S. education, it was not immune from its effects. The gulf between Victorians and the elite theorists of a managed society widened. Academic professionalization began to deprive Chautauqua of some of its star educators. Some professors in the 1890s were unwilling to risk criticism from colleagues who considered Chautauqua to be a mockery of true scholarship. Meanwhile, vocational training was being added to Chautauqua’s Arnoldian educational mission.³ The rise of business-related instruction and normal

schools reflected the more pragmatic mindset of young men and women—especially younger women, liberated from some of the educational and economic barriers to independence. Vigorous manhood and womanhood styles clashed with Victorian notions of character and undermined some of the assumptions underlying Arnoldian self-culture. Although Chautauqua's reading circles and assemblies remained popular, new questions were being asked about Chautauqua's relevance to the liberal project it had helped set in motion.

Chautauqua and the University Extension Movement

The intellectual ooze at Chautauqua Lake in western New York produced a flowering of Progressive sentiment. There, reformers constructed the cultural consensus needed to meet the challenges of rapid industrialization, urbanization, and immigration. Most Progressive causes, including compulsory education, child-labor legislation, food and drug inspection, conservation, and public hygiene found their way—somewhat haphazardly—into Chautauqua's lectures, sermons, and publications. On economic issues, presentations by William Jennings Bryan, Terence V. Powderly, Richard T. Ely, and Edward Bemis outnumbered those by proponents of strict laissez-faire principles. But when the Social Darwinist and free market theorist William Graham Sumner served up his usual quip at Chautauqua Lake—"if you ever come to live in a socialistic society, make sure you get on the committee"—the audience laughed.⁴

In a ritual replayed in thousands of parlors across the country, readers of the CLSC curriculum met in weekly meetings to discuss challenging new ideas. One CLSC member in Georgetown, Texas, a doctor, led the argument for the socialization of transportation during a debate in 1890, concluding that "he was inclined to the opinion that state ownership was the best solution of the vexing problems connected with the operation of the [railroads]." Later that evening, a woman quoted approvingly from Edward Bellamy's best-selling book *Looking Backward*: "The author compared their conditions to a coach which some had to pull, while others sat on cushioned seats enjoying the ride, while occasionally giving vent to the expressions of their sympathy for those who toiled in their traces."⁵ Ideas about the need for proactive governance spread in "a moderating way," reflected the New Dealer Rexford Tugwell, whose mother was an avid Chau-

tauquan. "Even a mild sort of socialism was given a hearing in the literature going out to the Reading Circles."⁶ Under the cover of respectable leisure and uplifting education, the CLSC gave political shape to social Protestantism and prepared its students well for the age of reform.

Who selected these mildly socialistic articles and books for the CLSC? Until about 1890 the book selection process was remarkably informal. Vincent created a committee of counselors, empaneled more for their geographical proximity to Chautauqua, friendship with Vincent, and religious leanings than for their scholarly credentials. Most were Methodist ministers in the Northeast. Only *Christian Union* editor Lymon Abbott and the Boston Unitarian Edward Everett Hale could be said to be luminaries. Academics were left out of the loop. As Hale explained, "I do not believe that the average college professor understands the American people."⁷ After casual consultation with his advisers, Vincent made the final decisions on all CLSC texts, which he insisted should be "short, comprehensive, cheap." Vincent took full responsibility for the decisions, reminding his critics that all the CLSC books were "likely to arouse criticism" no matter what they said.⁸

By the late 1880s, Vincent's travel schedule made continued micro-management of the CLSC impossible. Without any official change in focus or policy, the process for selecting CLSC books was gradually institutionalized. When John Heyl Vincent was made bishop in 1888, his son George E. Vincent (1864–1941) took over as director of instruction at Chautauqua. The promotion of George Vincent confirmed what many had already noticed: the CLSC curriculum was becoming less obviously religious and more academic. The first CLSC authors were "almost all non-specialists or laymen in the particular subjects," wrote one contributor to *The Chautauquan* in 1912. By the early twentieth century, "almost all of the Chautauqua text-books are now written by university professors. . . ."⁹ After graduating from Yale University, the younger Vincent matriculated at the University of Chicago, where he earned one of the first Ph.D.s in sociology ever awarded in the United States, cowrote one of the first textbooks of sociology with his mentor, Albion W. Small, in 1894, and stayed on as a sociology professor and dean. Later, he would serve as president, respectively, of the University of Minnesota (1911–17) and the Rockefeller Foundation (1917–29).¹⁰

As the younger Vincent's star rose, Chautauqua attracted new celebrities, such as Cornell University president Andrew D. White. University of

Chicago professors came to dominate the Chautauqua courses and reading lists.¹¹ Second to Chicago's influence was The Johns Hopkins University, brought into the Chautauqua fold through the enthusiasm of historian Herbert Baxter Adams and Kate Kimball's brother, physicist Arthur L. Kimball. An influential Chautauqua-Johns Hopkins-Wisconsin triad emerged when Hopkins professors Richard T. Ely and Frederick Jackson Turner imported their interest in Chautauqua into their new positions at the University of Wisconsin. (The Madison contingent's interest in Chautauqua forms an interesting parallel with their innovative approach to popular education and progressive governance called "the Wisconsin idea.") George Vincent knew these scholars and communicated with them with an ease his father never achieved.¹²

George Vincent tried to chart a middle path between forceful scholarship and readability; he sought books that would "give a clear idea of principles without too many facts to be remembered."¹³ Alas, the middle path proved hard to find. The CLSC's four-year curriculum cycle did not always jibe with the market. Observed *The Nation* in 1889, Chautauqua textbooks were "subject to the limitations of production to order as opposed to spontaneous and competitive production." At other times, publishers viewed the CLSC as a thousand-pound gorilla that would take sales away from existing titles. When publisher Thomas Cromwell heard that Chautauqua was assigning Richard T. Ely's *Introduction to Political Economy*, he dashed off a letter to Ely, alerting him to a serious problem: the Chautauqua volume would surely "injure the sale" of Ely's manuscript "Industrial Democracy," scheduled to be published by Cromwell the following year. And "having a pecuniary interest in the matter I am desirous of protecting that."¹⁴

Publishers may have cringed when their star authors signed Chautauqua contracts. But for those in the ivory tower looking for windows to the outside world, Chautauqua offered new vistas of opportunity. Still in an embryonic stage in the 1870s and 1880s, U.S. higher education lacked rigorous professional standards and scholarly canons. As departments struggled to define their curricula, general books as those found in the CLSC course could fill the void. Instructors at Virginia's Hampton Institute, for example, subscribed to Chautauqua publications.¹⁵ Meanwhile, academics were defining their specialties and forging a more exclusive professional identity. Chautauquas, along with summer schools, university extension programs, summer institutes, and conferences, served as congenial places for academics to meet one another and define their disciplines.¹⁶ Few other

summer jobs offered more political influence or as many chances for the broader dissemination of their work than a position as lecturer, summer instructor, or author of CLSC textbooks. A Chautauqua summer also served as an occasion for professional networking.

Chautauqua did not invent the university extension movement. But the two major forces impelling it also converged on Chautauqua Lake in the 1880s: first, a belief that the maintenance of social order in a modern industrial society depended on an enlightened citizenry; and second, a desire to elevate the reputation and social influence of the academy. The British university extension system had impressed John Heyl Vincent during a visit in 1880. Three years later, he tapped William Rainey Harper, a professor of Hebrew at Baptist Theological Seminary in Morgan Park, Illinois, and the pioneer of a summer and correspondence course there, to try something similar in New York. Harper ingeniously adapted the summer school to Chautauqua's Arnoldian ideal of voluntary self-culture. Harper directed the Chautauqua College of Liberal Arts (renamed the Chautauqua System of Education in 1892), a complex system of classes, journals, and correspondence courses chartered by the State of New York to grant the baccalaureate degree. For five dollars a year, study initiated at one of the summer schools at "Chautauqua University," as it was called, continued by mail. After passing a written exam at the end of the course, the student received one certificate; those with sixteen certificates received a diploma.

The experiment proved disastrously expensive. Chautauqua University lost more than \$7,000 in 1888, forcing William Rainey Harper to cut the honoraria for Ely and Adams.¹⁷ That summer, Vincent met with Adams, Harper, Ely, anthropologist Frederick Starr, and George E. Vincent to streamline the program's operations. They drafted a prospectus calling for a "revival" of higher education in the United States through the "voluntary association of students and itinerant lecturers" through "cooperation with American colleges . . . libraries, mechanics' institutes, lyceums, labor unions, guilds, young men's Christian associations, Chautauqua literary and scientific circles." The Chautauqua University Extension system would promote "good citizenship . . . by the organization of the most intelligent and progressive local forces." Harper proposed a mass mailing to colleges, CLSC circles, assemblies, and YMCA locals, spurring them to create extension centers. Most important, Chautauqua would no longer have to pay the salaries of the itinerant lecturers but would lend its name, leadership, and unifying vision to an enterprise to be funded by the professors' home universities.¹⁸

It was a bold vision, not far off from what Edward Everett Hale would propose the following year. But the universities beat Chautauqua to the punch. A full explication of the university extension movement in the 1890s is beyond the scope of this work. But consider, as a case study, what happened in Pennsylvania. In Philadelphia in 1890, Cambridge University professor Richard G. Moulton kicked off a statewide university extension campaign with a rousing speech.¹⁹ Extension lectures, Moulton advised, must contain less rote instruction and more stimulation, less logical exposition and more human drama. Popular audiences, he insisted, needed “something tangible and human” to pique their interests. At Moulton’s encouragement, Philadelphia academics founded the Society for the Extension of University Teaching (SEUT) and published a magazine and two papers. Between 1890 and 1900 their “People’s University” delivered 954 lectures at 236 extension centers. Throughout Pennsylvania, they found students already prepared for educational fare by the hard work of Chautauqua volunteers like J. Max Hark, who helped create Chautauqua Extension Centers in Middletown and Lebanon.²⁰

Although Chautauqua’s dream of leading a national university extension movement never panned out, an ersatz version of university extension flourished at the independent assemblies into the next century. Many used local academic talent and science teachers to create a random patchwork of religious departments, normal lectures, domestic science classes, and liberal arts programs. The Pacific Grove, California, assembly, for example, organized schools of Natural History, Botany, Sunday School Normal Work, Music, and Elocution. Commissioner of Education William T. Harris adopted this approach when he led the University Extension Department at the National Chautauqua Assembly in Glen Echo, Maryland, in 1890.²¹ For the next twenty years, a number of assemblies separated their “institutes of sacred literature” or “Bible school” from the general program of liberal education, essentially a hodgepodge of modern languages, art, history, elocution, music, and science.²² To be sure, offerings varied wildly based on the availability of instructors, the specialties of local experts, or the whims of local management. Sometimes the money ran out. But while the university extension fad within academia had run its course by 1900, the assembly schools continued to feed the passion for self-culture well into the next century. The assembly at Old Salem, Illinois, ran schools on natural science, American literature, and rhetoric into the 1910s and between 1913 and 1915 hosted speakers from the Carnegie Institute for World Peace.²³

The decline of university extension after 1900 says more about academics than about average Americans. In retrospect, it is not hard to see why a group eager to ally itself with cosmopolitan modernity against rural ignorance eventually grew tired of such wasteful activities. The professorate could not dismiss the gulf between humanist and technocratic education with the breeziness of John Heyl Vincent or J. Max Hark. As the travel miles and bills mounted, many academics stepped off the slender bridge connecting them to Chautauqua Lake and withdrew into the scholarly idiom of their field. Chautauqua's blameless piety had long insulated it from harsh criticism, but its heightened ambitions as an educational leader called forth more strident criticisms in the 1890s, many from the closing ranks of the academic professionals. Meanwhile, a revolt of anti-Victorian intellectual luminaries put Chautauqua still further on the defense, dulling its burnish, and hardening its allegiance to an embattled notion of self-culture.²⁴

Revolt of the Intellectuals

While Chautauquans embraced academia, not all scholars embraced Chautauqua. As professional organizations emerged for each discipline, haphazard syllabus decisions gave way to rigorous standardization. To sharpen the boundaries of legitimate scholarship, some academics in the 1880s and 1890s distanced themselves from Chautauqua's priggishness, flowery rituals, crowd-tested conventions, and—as some male academics saw it—feminine superficiality. Chautauqua emerged as the *vox populi* against which academics defined their professional identity as objective social scientists. Some resented Chautauqua for invading their intellectual turf. John H. Wright of Harvard, for example, took umbrage at the institution's conferring of degrees. The "diplomas" offered by assemblies "can never equal that presented for the same degree in our better colleges and universities." He also disapproved of his colleagues' practice of associating themselves with the Chautauqua enterprise without first securing the school's permission. Harvard's good name should not be lent so cheaply.²⁵

More intractable still was the animus against radical scholars who used Chautauqua to further political causes. Notable in this regard was the sociologist and self-described "Christian Socialist," Richard T. Ely, Chautauqua's most controversial academic endorsee. In 1884 Ely's article in *Labor Movement* shocked colleagues with its sympathetic representation of labor: "The world will listen even to socialism," he promised, "if properly

presented." A year later Ely founded the left-leaning American Economic Association (AEA) on the principle that the state was an agency "whose positive assistance is one of the indispensable conditions of human progress."²⁶ Ely's efforts to retard the influence of the laissez-faire advocates sparked a two-year debate pitting a minority of left-leaning economists against the more conservative members of the profession such as William Graham Sumner and Simon Newcomb. In Chautauqua, Ely had found a method to present Christian socialism to the masses under cover of respectability. In 1892 he selected Chautauqua as the site for an AEA conference and introduced his own reading course titled the Chautauqua Political Economy Clubs.²⁷

Academic opposition to Chautauqua was in many cases not about Chautauqua at all but part of a larger professional trend toward scientific objectivity. Ely's attempt to hold the 1892 AEA conference at Chautauqua touched off two months of bickering. Ely's allies were politically minded academics who saw Chautauqua as a potential vehicle of social change. Politically minded scholars Edward W. Bemis and Carroll D. Wright weighed in on Ely's side; the nonacademic members of the AEA also supported his decision to locate the conference at Chautauqua.²⁸ Arrayed against Ely and Chautauqua, however, were a coterie of professionally conscious, often younger, social scientists who viewed Chautauqua's ersatz approach to higher learning as a threat to their scholarly image. Eager to project a scholarly image for themselves and their disciplines, and put off by Ely's administrative style, which some considered high-handed, the group expanded their opposition to include a general critique of Chautauqua. Davis R. Dewey of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology summarized his feelings in blunt terms: "Chautauqua is not associated with the highest academic scholarship."²⁹

As professional demands became more important to academic advancement, some wondered openly if Chautauqua work was simply a waste of time. Herbert Baxter Adams's advice to his pupil James A. Woodburn gives further evidence that university extension was a failed effort to curtail academic professionalism.³⁰ From the beginning, Adams viewed Chautauqua as a remunerative summer job, a Johns Hopkins enclave, and a career opportunity for his students.³¹ For five years Adams, Ely, and E. W. Bemis had cultivated Chautauqua as a sort of Johns Hopkins lakeside retreat. When George Vincent hired two lecturers from the University of Pennsylvania to speak on topics that overlapped with his course in American History, Adams resigned in a huff. Even after his rift with George Vin-

cent, Adams's maneuverings on behalf of his student continued. "It will be a question between you and [the University of Pennsylvania professor], and I want you to *win*." When Woodburn received an attractive offer to teach yearly and summer extension courses, Adams warned him not to "sacrifice scholarly work to this extension business. . . . My present watchword is 'University *Intension*.'" ³² This was a startling comment, in some ways, from the man who was one of Chautauqua's primary boosters in academia. Citing professional demands, Adams withdrew into the world of the academy.

Meanwhile, Chautauqua's star began to fade among intellectuals. While millions of middling sorts flocked to what Theodore Roosevelt acclaimed "the most American thing in America," avant-garde authors and cultural rebels recoiled in horror. Chautauqua popularized everything they opposed: Victorian prudery, feminized religion, and a cultish allegiance to all ideas European. For the twenty-five-year-old British writer Rudyard Kipling in 1890, Chautauqua was a spoiled opportunity for flirting. All around him were "scores of pretty girls." This Amazonian utopia presented a frontier of sexual opportunity suitable for his manly arts. To Kipling's dismay, a regime of matriarchs thwarted his pursuits. Kipling singled out the missionaries for ridicule, bitterly accusing them of defeating his efforts to sexually colonize this female landscape. Their evocation of Christianity struck Kipling as an unnecessary ruse to justify the cold reality of imperialism, an exercise of will best left to white male procapitalists like himself. Chautauqua (and, by extension, America) would never improve until its women "got married." ³³

A less rakish, although equally masculine, objection came from another outsider to the Chautauqua scene, Boston intellectual William James. In his letters home and in an essay titled "What Makes a Life Significant" (1899), William James questioned Chautauqua's core assumptions. Utopia, he discovered, was boring. "I long to escape from tepidity," James wrote to his wife from the assembly. In an effort to create a place free from the trials of industrial life, Vincent had created a "middle-class paradise" bereft of the competitive ethos ("human nature *in extremis*") that, in James's view, gave rise to the best in creative accomplishment and made life significant. In a collection of memorable phrases, James wished for "something primordial and savage" like an "elopement" or an "Armenian massacre." He yearned for "heroism and the spectacle of human nature on the rack." Fleeing from Chautauqua on the train, James beheld some workmen doing "something on the dizzy edge of a sky-scaling iron construction." The sight "brought me to my senses very suddenly." Self-improvement could not be achieved

by education and culture alone. Only through rigorous struggle could men learn and evolve.³⁴

As long as their national movement grew, Chautauquans could abide the occasional barb. But dark clouds loomed. By the turn of the century, many academics and intellectuals were abandoning ship. Many of the leaders of the New History, for example, were raised and educated in the Midwest, and some in the bosom of Methodism, before taking lofty positions in Ivy League schools. James Harvey Robinson grew up in Bloomington, Illinois; Charles Beard as a Quaker in Indiana, attending the Methodist DePauw University; and Carl Becker as a Methodist in the Chautauqua town of Waterloo, Iowa (where he moved at age eleven). Edward Eggleston preached Methodism in Minnesota and worked with John Heyl Vincent on the campaign to standardize Sunday school education before turning his attention to American history. For this group of intellectuals, Chautauqua did little to retard their growing disenchantment with the easy answers of evangelical Protestantism. The pious Christian is the “very peculiar individual” in the library who “never reads anything but commentaries on books of the Bible,” according to Carl Becker, adding that “if Methodism is slowly dying in Iowa there is hope for the world.”³⁵

Edward Eggleston’s early biography charts a path similar to that of John Heyl Vincent. Both were raised in a southern-stock Methodist family, Eggleston in Indiana, Vincent in Alabama and Pennsylvania; neither went to college; both became Methodist circuit riders in the Midwest while still in their teens; and both pursued careers as writers and editors. In 1873, however, their paths diverged. Vincent scaled the Methodist hierarchy from circuit rider to bishop, while Eggleston eventually left pastoral work for New York and a new calling as a secular magazine editor, writer, novelist, and, finally, historian. Eggleston departed most dramatically from Vincent in matters of faith. Vincent resolved his spiritual doubts soon after his bout with Millerism and had little angst left to express in poetry or literature. The more skeptical Eggleston remained restless and insecure. “Two manner of men were in me,” Eggleston confided: a religious side expressed in preaching and a rebellious persona beset by “fits of moral ardor in which my literary pursuits seemed a sort of idolatry.”³⁶ In *The Transit of Civilization* (1900) Eggleston portrayed the Puritans as superstitious, repressive, and authoritarian. Liberation from superstition, apparently, served for Eggleston as a compelling leitmotif in both faith and scholarly interpretation.

As avant-garde thinkers like Becker and Eggleston moved away from

the camp-meeting Methodism of their youth, Chautauqua occupied an increasingly precarious position in U.S. culture. By 1893, Eggleston's patience with Chautauqua had ended. That year he agreed to lecture at Chautauqua in New York. He quickly regretted the decision. "This is Recognition Day," he wrote to one of his daughters. "All the graduates new and old are marching in processions preceded by a great line of little girls in double columns and white dresses . . . there will be no end of nonsense." Struck by "the utter ludicrousness of such a way of getting knowledge," Eggleston discovered just how far he had departed from the respectable mainstream: "I was asked to march with the *other* dignitaries but I just couldn't." Eggleston's aloofness did not bode well for Chautauqua. As a symbol of progress, it could not survive long without the support of society's progressive thinkers. As the twentieth century approached, those thinkers turned their reform energies to more promising media or, in some cases, abandoned the cause of reform altogether.³⁷

Chautauqua emerged as a flash point for academia's uncertain response to the early-twentieth-century movement for urban reform and participatory democracy. On the one hand, an alliance between academic experts and technocratic reformers flourished in federal and state government, reaching its zenith most famously in the Wisconsin Idea. But the demands of professionalism ensured that all such commitments would be made with fear and trembling. From the instructor's perspective, Chautauqua's inefficiencies and limitations ran counter to the progressive model of specialized functions, streamlined institutions, and enlightened scientific management. Thus, while some of Chautauqua's critics joined Walter Lippmann and other intellectuals in rejecting Victorianism and constructing secular models of social order, Chautauqua expressed an older, and probably more popularly held, strain of progressive thought. Hence, while some educators and intellectuals abandoned Chautauqua, many remained. We should not overlook their powerful faith—nowhere more visible than in the Chautauqua movement—in popular education, participatory democracy, and Christian citizenship.³⁸

"I Like Something Doing": Masculinities at Chautauqua

The fact that the assembly's most vociferous critics were men is not unimportant. Kipling, James, and Eggleston all emerged more confident in their

rugged masculinity—meaning sexual access for the young English novelist, and a vigorous, post-Victorian pragmatic realism for the American philosopher and historian. Increasingly, elite critics of Victorian culture found in Chautauqua all that they opposed. Against its false fronts, stultifying femininity, and intellectual hero worship, they juxtaposed their own search for something real, authentic, and natural.³⁹ This style of rebellious masculinity clashed with Chautauqua's family atmosphere and never dominated the assembly; but there were inklings of it, especially among the college students who flocked to their parents' cottages in such numbers that the Chautauqua Institution dedicated a separate building as the College Club. As one observer reflected some years later: "College songs are hummed about the grounds, and glee club airs come strummed on guitars from the cottages. . . ." ⁴⁰ What did these young men and women think of the place? Did they share William James's wish for something "primordial and savage"?

For young adults, the system of structured social gatherings, combined with a leisurely, informal tone and a vigorous outdoor culture, created "unbounded opportunities for flirting," in the words of Albert S. Cook. Indeed, some joined the CLSC because of its well-known appeal to other churchly and self-improving singles, giving rise to a new interpretation of the CLSC acronym: Come Love Sit Closer. One farmer, mistaking the CLSC for a "matrimonial society in New Jersey," wrote Kate Kimball to request a match with a quiet woman of "average book learning" who "preferred religion [*sic*] (not catholic)."⁴¹ In many popular stories about couples who meet in the CLSC, the actual betrothal is postponed until the lovers can be alone together at the assemblies. In the differentiated landforms of the assembly, courting youths escaped from the matrons' watchful eyes and formed an independent youth subculture. Youths gathered at specially defined zones within the assembly landscape, such as the road along Chautauqua Lake in New York or Lover's Point at Pacific Grove, California. Sometimes, romantic and sexual desires unfolded in the woods and fields outside the assembly gates. "Dear heart how I would have enjoyed that climb with you," a woman's future husband wrote of the hills around Chautauqua Lake, "to look into your eyes and see them shine with love for me and for all things lovely in nature."⁴²

Admittedly, these were generally not the sexiest of landscapes. As opposed to the mountainscapes of the tourist West, where rugged individualists could test their mettle against the raw elements, assemblies balanced a



FIGURE 6.1 Warm weather, leisure time, structured programs, and a variegated landscape provided single men and women opportunities for unchaperoned socializing. Pictured here is an impromptu gathering of young men and women in a “private” grove at the Waseca, Minnesota, assembly. (*William Cummings Collection, Waseca County Historical Society, Waseca, Minn.*)

romantic view of nature with artifice, comfort, and convenience. Chautauqua’s landscape was not that of the pioneer but of the settler, the homesteader. Except for the occasional outcry from capricious Nature—such as the squall that came from nowhere on 17 July 1882, killing a couple from London, Ohio, who had rowed out into Chautauqua Lake in “a boat for only one”—the landscape would not interfere with the development of a female community.⁴³ Images of the feminine ran wild in depictions of Chautauqua’s surrounding landscape. “There are here no towering steeps, no yawning canyons,” explained a railroad promotional brochure for the Chautauqua Lake region, “no moaning surf, no roar of cataract. The keynote is Repose.” “A verdant, fertile country slopes gently down to the water’s edge,” the passage continued: “everywhere a succession of buttercups, daisies, clovertops, and golden rod—always the low of cattle, the hum of bees, the song of birds. Nature’s noises do not startle, the landscapes do not exhaust.”⁴⁴

For some men, that was exactly the problem. “There are no distractions,” grumbles the macho fictional character Terry Nicholson in response to the prosaic landscape in Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s feminist utopia *Herland* (1915). “Nowhere a man can go and cut loose a bit . . . if you like a perpetual Sunday School, it’s all very well. But I like Something Doing.” Gilman, an occasional speaker at Chautauqua on such topics as “Woman’s Place,” may well have been picturing something akin to the assembly when she envisioned a “land that looked like an enormous park” full of healthy, racially homogenous women who lived in communal homes.⁴⁵ Male responses to Chautauqua’s female-centric landscape varied, but a main strategy can be easily summarized: many, in search of “Something Doing,” stayed away. Others attended but rebelled by eschewing the lectures and emulating the indulgent lifestyle of the upper-class watering hole or, alternatively, the vigorous activity of the mountain lodge. “Where are the men?” asked an editorialist to the *Exeter Gazette* (New Hampshire) in 1891. The young men were “off canoeing, bicycling or tramping,” he answered, “getting strength for the next winter’s work, living outdoors and wearing comfortable clothes.”⁴⁶

The generation of the 1890s, it should be noted, did not invent physical culture. In 1879 the CLSC assigned William Blaikie’s book *How to Get Strong and How to Stay So* as mandatory reading. Blaikie’s text presented physical fitness not as an antidote to Victorian artificiality—that theme would emerge later—but, rather, as a response to urbanization. At the “corner of Broadway and Fulton Street,” Blaikie explained, “scarcely one in ten is either erect or well or thoroughly well-built.” Farmers and laborers are better off, Blaikie concluded, for they retain their endurance while the clerks “get thin, and stay so.” Urban women, too, suffer from the modern malaise. Girls so afflicted have “flat chests, angular shoulders, often round and warped forward, with scrawny necks, pipe-stem arms, narrow backs, and a weak walk.” Consequently, they will fail to attract men, for whom “physical beauty” counts more than “erudition” (a careless snub that surely raised the ire, if not the spleen, of the CLSC’s many female students). With his frightful imagery of decaying bodies, Blaikie sounded a call-to-arms for the white middle classes. Boys should learn running, swimming, and football, a game excellent “for developing intrepidity and other manly qualities.” Blaikie’s class-specific and gendered prescriptions—competitive sports for boys and men, regular calisthenics for girls and women—would become standard features of assembly programming.⁴⁷

The rise of an independent youth culture and rugged sports at Chautauqua certainly merits consideration as evidence of the changes in masculine styles. Chautauqua saw its share of boastful lotharios, including Frank Walsh as the man of action and daring-do in an 1885 *Overland Monthly* essay by “E. F. H.” Walsh was “haughty and overbearing, yet physically weak,” a brilliant conversationalist who “enjoyed greatly the company of the beautiful ladies” at Chautauqua Lake.⁴⁸ Chautauqua also vaunted athletic heroes, including Director of Athletics Amos Alonzo Stagg, who had once aspired to the ministry but decided he could “influence others to Christian ideals more effectively on the field than in the pulpit.”⁴⁹ And generally speaking, the search for vigorous masculinity dovetailed with Chautauqua’s new definition of citizenship. White men had declined “to the point of . . . actual threatened extermination,” warned Dr. John H. Kellogg of Battle Creek, Michigan, speaking to an assembly audience during the heightened patriotism of the Spanish-American War: “This means race degeneration at a tremendous rate.”⁵⁰

But even as white men claimed the mantle of aggressive nationalism, we must not assume that a raw, unleashed “will to power” (in the Nietzschean sense) went unchecked at Chautauqua; nor must we rely on the problematic assumption of secularization. To the contrary, these symbolic escapes from a stultifying, effeminate Victorian culture did not always resonate with members of the Protestant, rural middle classes. Most men at Chautauqua seemed not to mind that masculine vices had been compartmentalized, if not completely stamped out. Many men at Chautauqua agreed fully with their wives’ efforts to place the perceived rowdiness of working-class men’s leisure—cockfighting, saloon culture, prostitution, variety shows, and music halls—under control before those activities could affect middle-class visions of social order.⁵¹ The continuing influence of social Protestantism tempered the excesses of imperial mentalities at Chautauqua. It further ensured that the various boy’s clubs would impart more than a simple “simulacrum of purposeful activity” (as historian David MacLoed put it) but would tether white manhood to the moral fixtures of Christianity.⁵²

Long before the martial enthusiasm of the 1890s, Methodist camp meetings and Chautauqua assemblies took special pride in the health of their boys. In 1874 a minister at the Ocean Grove, New Jersey, camp meeting observed the “boy nature” that emerged when boys were allowed to reign free. Watching their “bashing and shooting their little boats everywhere” as they played, the observer took heart in “the masculine status of

Methodism generally.” In the 1880s the original assembly published a monthly journal *Chautauqua Boys and Girls*, focusing mainly on religious education for boys and girls. Activities steered clear of civic issues and politics generally. Paraphrasing George Washington, one Chautauqua organizer in 1892 insisted that exposing children to political campaigns and parties does “far more harm than good . . . they train them to nothing but the most irrational and dangerous partisanship.”⁵³ The emergence of hierarchical boys clubs between 1900 and 1917 signaled a break from this apolitical tradition. Boys at Chautauqua entered ever-stricter regimens of civic duty. The first boys clubs appeared at midwestern Chautauquas around 1900. In 1902 the inventor of basketball, James Naismith, ran the boys club at the Winfield, Kansas, assembly. The same year, the Winona Assembly of Indiana ran a well-organized system of clubs oriented around sports competitions. The Winona boys that year fared well against the “Indianapolis Clippers” and the juvenile clubs of the surrounding towns.⁵⁴

Over the years, civic instruction for boys intensified. The “Winona Boy City” of 1910 vastly enlarged the expectations placed on boys, essentially asking them to complete the idealized society their parents had only begun to create for themselves. Whereas girls clubs revolved around domestic arts, boys elected their own mayor, city officers, and postmasters. In a chilling appropriation of youthful idealism into the service of the state, “boy power” was also channeled into the enforcement of law and martial defense of the assembly. For the “Boys Brigade” that it held in 1900 and 1901, one Illinois assembly borrowed arms from the Illinois State Arsenal and drilled the youngsters in marching, gunnery, and athletics. The 1914 Southern Ohio Chautauqua Assembly, meanwhile, thanked the “manly fellows” of Winchester Boy Scouts for “keeping the grounds clean and free from intruders.” As historian T. J. Jackson Lears has argued, the rise of secular nationalist organizations like the Boy Scouts—at Chautauqua as elsewhere—“shunted aside an older, more evangelical vision” and “portended a modern kind of patriotism for an era when war would be conducted by huge bureaucratic organizations.”⁵⁵

While state-oriented patriotic styles represented a shift in boys and girls clubs at Chautauqua, the evangelical vision remained vitally important to both public culture and private life. The Winona Boy City required “chapel every morning and the spiritual side as well as the physical is looked after and developed in building the character of the boys.” At the Chautauqua Farm Boy’s Camp at the Des Moines (Iowa) Chautauqua, boys were



FIGURE 6.2 Football instruction, circa 1920. (Courtesy of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York)

instructed in “grain study, study of grasses, rope tying, practical talks and military drills” and sat through “evangelistic talks” from local clergymen. Chautauqua lecturers acknowledged that “character building is most vital to the state” and recognized the need to assert Christian principles in the civic standards of masculinity.⁵⁶

The masculine ethos within Chautauqua assemblies continued to flow into channels carved by the patriotic discourse of the 1890s and institutional needs of the Protestant churches. Notable in this vein was the Men’s Club at Chautauqua Lake, built in 1893 as the electric light and power house. It stood on a berm at the crest of Palestine Park, used to represent the highest peak in the Holy Land during Jesse Hurlbut’s Sunday school tours. The appearance of a phallic, smoke-belching marvel of technology amidst the sacred space of Palestine Park created a dramatic tableau of progress. Nicknamed “The Castle” because of its heavy, brick, medieval touches, it featured several smaller parapets surrounding one large, circu-

lar, castlelike tower. During Gov. William McKinley's visit in August 1895, electricity from the new power plant illuminated a campfire gathering of singing, cheering Civil War veterans.⁵⁷ Around 1903 this symbol of martial masculinity, so typical of the rebellious antimodernism of bourgeois men at the turn of the century, was converted into a men's club with smoking rooms, an observation room, and a barber shop. Both social and professional men's groups met there, including the Masonic Club, Lawyers' Club, Ministers' Club, and college fraternities.⁵⁸ The men's club contained male vices within a marked space, apart from the domesticated space of the assembly yet still deeply embedded in a religious milieu.

Just as masculine vices were channeled away from the assembly's public sphere into the men's club, so too were the more rugged competitions, such as football, reoriented into circumscribed zones of physical expression. Hiking, at the Boulder Chautauqua, provided a healthful outlet for the "awakening of the hunting and migratory instinct. . . ."⁵⁹ Playing fields would have to do for independent assemblies that lacked Boulder's majestic peaks. Most conducted a School of Physical Culture—the fancy term given to the paid coordination of women's calisthenics and men's sports. Women were encouraged to attend to strengthen their bodies in the service of putative gender roles—to be better mothers, wives, and, in the years leading up to World War I, citizens capable of sacrifice for the needs of the state. To entice men out to the fields for instruction in tennis, football, basketball, and track, brochures warned of occupational obsolescence and physical decay. This more aggressive masculine style found expression within the domesticated public space of the assembly. In 1908 assemblies in the Kentucky towns of Lebanon, Bardstown, Columbia, and Greensburg entered their baseball heroes in the "Chautauqua League."⁶⁰

To be sure, men noted the predominance of the feminine at Chautauqua. As if to raise the rhetorical bar beyond the reach of aspiring female speakers, descriptions of male speakers began to stress their intellectual and physical brawn. In 1900 the Carmel Grove Chautauqua lauded Dr. Louis Albert Banks as "one of the most manly men the Methodism of the West has produced."⁶¹ The "tall, well-knit physique" of Sen. J. P. Dolliver, as described in a 1902 program, was "in itself quite sufficient to command attention anywhere." When he was speaking, "his manly appearance, coupled with the wit and brilliance of his utterances win for him the good will of his audiences at once." Virility in physique and voice were inextricably linked and elaborated in intimate detail. Albert Boynton Storms struck one



FIGURE 6.3 Park of Palestine, circa 1900. In this remarkable mix of religious, leisure, and industrial space, the scale model of the Holy Land, built in the early 1870s, is visible in the foreground. The beach is immediately to the left. North of the ditch that represented the Red Sea, the institution's power plant is running at full steam. In 1903 this castle-like structure would be converted into the Men's Club. (From the Collection of the Chautauque Institution Archives, Chautauque, New York)

reviewer as “a fine specimen of physical manhood. . . .” The advertising for Storms exhausted virtually all of the available masculine clichés evoked by his family name. Storms was born in the country, and “in that place of fresh air, wholesome food and abundant labor was built that splendid physique. . . . Every inch a man, he has taken strong hold of the element of manliness in men.” Of Dr. L. G. Herbert, another brochure revealed that “men always respond to his manly qualities. As a pastor he was known as a ‘man’s preacher.’ ”⁶²

At Chautauqua, as elsewhere, some men perceived that the churches and reform movements had become feminized. Threatened, some men sought the antidote in martial heroism and rugged masculinity. Others lashed out at the New Woman and yearned nostalgically for the old days of unquestioned patriarchy. There was, therefore, a masculine rebellion within the Chautauqua assembly. But it was a mild one. John Heyl Vincent’s antisuffragism was discredited in the 1890s. And the muscular Christianity of Chautauqua’s sports heroes and the rakish style of its young men rarely transgressed the boundaries created for them. William James’s concerns were not those of all middle-class Americans. Even absent the soul-forging, life-or-death scenarios romanticized by James, guests yearning for life in extremis could find satisfaction in less extreme alternatives located at the assembly, such as a baseball game, a brisk swim, or a moderately difficult book. The assembly belonged, instead, to the moderate family men who rejected martial styles and trumpeted paternal devotion as proof of true manhood.⁶³

The journal of William D. Baker, a U.S. postal worker and active Methodist from Norwood, Ohio, exemplifies the assembly’s appeal to this dominant, if colorless, demographic. Far from abandoning Chautauqua as an expression of his rugged masculinity, Baker, son of a grocery store owner, found the assembly well suited to his domestic needs. Upon graduating from the University of Cincinnati, Baker passed the civil service exam in 1888 and took a position at the bottom rung of the Norwood post office. When the international issuing clerk died, Baker took over his \$1,000 job and married Anna Crowther. To take time from his job and their volunteer Sunday school work at the Grace Methodist Episcopal Church, the young couple took advantage of the government’s two-week vacation and took a trip to Sandusky, Ohio, in 1895. Baker’s managerial training at the post office clearly enhanced his lay pastoral work. Elected superintendent of the church Sunday school in 1900, Baker organized teacher training classes and

started a weekly newsletter for “intensifying the interest and increasing the efficiency of the [Sunday] school.” After trips to Niagara Falls during the summer from 1906 to 1909 with their infant daughter, the family apparently searched for something closer to home and with a more wholesome atmosphere.⁶⁴

They found it at the Miami Valley Chautauqua in Franklin, Ohio, which they visited every year during the 1910s (except in 1913, when the assembly grounds were obliterated by the flooding Miami River). As Baker’s mounting obligations made extended vacations impossible, his family would visit the assembly for several weeks every summer, while he made jaunts “up on Saturday and return[ed] Sunday night” on the interurban line. This travel regimen seemed guaranteed to inure middle-class men to the humdrum of suburban life: the never-ending cycle of work and leisure, the jarring back-and-forth between city and country, the managerial obligations of church work, and the travails of commuting. After 1919 the Baker family ceased their trips to the Miami Valley Chautauqua altogether and began attending the circuit Chautauqua in Norwood.⁶⁵ They had found a way to enjoy both vacation and education without leaving town. Chautauqua assemblies were finding it hard to compete with the large, impersonal institutions—including the federal government for which Baker worked—that were coming to dominate public life in the 1910s. With democratic liberties and suburban prosperity seemingly assured by an efficiently run state, faith found the path of least resistance into civic culture rerouted from public institutions to individual choice. A still resolutely religious people had begun to adopt the language of secular liberalism.

Delsarte and the Natural Expression Movement

Male bodies and voices achieved a certain mythological status within the confines of the Chautauqua assembly. But if the rise of athletic heroes and manly preachers signaled a shift in the cultural ideals of the male form—from the restrained gentleman to the authentic, “natural” man—a parallel shift can be seen in the ideals of the female body and voice. Through the discipline of “vocal expression” and health fads like Delsarte, middle-class women unearthed their own “natural” identities buried beneath years of Victorian artifice. Later feminists would reject their exclusive dependence on the natural as a source of female authority, preferring instead to stress

environmental factors. For the time being, however, the natural expression movement empowered middle-class women to reshape their bodies and voices—just as they had reshaped the physical landscape—to more forcefully assert themselves in both domestic matters and civic society. In so doing, these women weathered the cult of the masculine in Progressive Era culture and politics and sustained their aesthetic and acoustic presence on the Chautauqua platform.⁶⁶

The new embrace of the “natural” can best be seen in what might be termed the *natural expression movement*—my umbrella term for the expressive health fads popular among women at Chautauqua between 1890 and 1920. By 1895, when Solomon H. Clark, professor of elocution at the University of Chicago, delivered an address on the “New Elocution” at Chautauqua, the movement was already in full swing. Clark presented a devastating critique of affected nineteenth-century speech patterns. “Elocution has become a byword for all that is bad and affected and stilted in reading.” Practitioners of the “New Elocution” would set aside the courtly affect that had for so long veiled the original author’s meanings. New elocutionists would give expression only to “the central idea, the unity to which all details must be subordinated.” Armed with “modern psychology,” readers could retrieve Shakespeare’s moment of divine inspiration, channeling his genius, and hence the divinity from which it sprang, into the corrupted present.⁶⁷ Promised one vocal expression teacher at a Chautauqua assembly, “Correct the habit and the voice is changed and becomes what it was designed to be by the Creator.”⁶⁸

The health movements sweeping middle-class society in the late nineteenth century prepared Chautauquans well for the New Elocution. Since the 1870s, assemblies had touted themselves as all-purpose health sanitariums. Women who refused to accept their ailments and debilitating neuroses as “natural to woman” found at Chautauqua all manner of salves, including the “rest cure,” the “water cure,” and the “fresh-air cure.” As bodily vitality became increasingly important to racial and national ideology, commentators began to search for more vigorous methods. In the 1890s *Ladies Home Journal* began recommending looser skirts and corsets to enable a host of outdoor activities and sports, including hiking, tennis, and bicycling, activities that went under the banner of “Physical Culture” at Chautauqua assemblies, YMCAs, and women’s colleges. When G. Stanley Hall, a frequent visitor at Chautauqua, compared sickly Euro-American women to the resilient peasant women of Europe, the point could not be

more clear: civilization had not been good to women's health. Recovering it would require some compromise to primal instincts, within the boundaries of good taste and decorum.⁶⁹

Delsarte provided just such a compromise. While the decorating committees and teaching institutes represented more or less logical extensions of certain aspects of Victorian morality, Delsarte broke subtly but surely from tradition. Its founder, French music and acting teacher Françoise Delsarte, linking the Romantics' belief in divine immanence in nature with human physiology, conceived of the body as an instrument of divine will. Delsarte and his followers, working from "invariable rules which have their sanction in philosophy," created a Tai Chi-like system of poses, meditations, stretches, and breathing exercises described as the "science of the soul ministered by the organs."⁷⁰ European and American pupils of Del-



FIGURE 6.4 Advocates of the Delsarte calisthenics system sought the most "natural" forms of bodily expression. This 1896 Delsartian reinforced the search for the natural by conducting the demonstration in Native American garb. (Courtesy of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York)

sarte saw themselves as liberated souls in an age of narrow orthodoxy. There was no “artificiality” in the system, according to one of Delsarte’s popularizers in the United States, Genevieve Stebbins. It worked not through “studied effect” but because it came “straight from the heart” and opened “channels for expression.”⁷¹ Delsarte’s liberation, therefore, was more spiritual and therapeutic than political. Prefiguring Dale Carnegie’s “power of personality” advice manuals, self-actualized Delsartians would enjoy an enlarged presence in society.

This organic style of expression spread quickly. Delsarte’s foremost American popularizer was Steele Mackaye, who developed the system of “harmonic gymnastics” that became synonymous with Delsarte in the United States. Professional acting and elocution schools in the United States adopted the system in the 1870s. In the early 1880s it spread to physical culture programs more broadly and, by the 1890s, had emerged as both a gymnastic practice and a therapeutic philosophy.⁷² The titular evolution of Chautauqua’s summer school reveals the shift. In 1883 it went by the name Elocution School; in 1884, Chautauqua School of Elocution; in 1887, School of Oratory. In 1894, as the measure of Clark’s influence, it dropped the Victorian “elocution” altogether and adopted the euphemism preferred by organic readers: Chautauqua School of Expression. Instructors at the top schools, including Clark’s University of Chicago program, the New York School of Expression, and the Emerson College of Oratory, found summer positions at Chautauqua assemblies.

The New Elocution also helped create an entirely new programming category. Dramatic readers, mostly women, were usually drawn from the new elocution programs to read classic literature on the Chautauqua stage. “One thinks not of the arts of the elocutionist,” one reviewer wrote of Miss Eva M. Shontz’s reading during the 1896 program at Lithia Springs, Illinois, “but of the sentiment that the speaker is trying to impress upon her listeners.”⁷³ By presenting dramatic readers not as performers but as passive vessels of great minds, Chautauqua managers insulated themselves from the charge that they had abandoned education for entertainment and exposed good women to unwholesome influences. The dramatic readers were not painted ladies, the managers insisted, but “readers,” “elocutionists,” or “impersonators.” Thus, Eleanor Randall was a “dramatic artist,” Jeannette Kling a “mono-actress,” Maude Willis a “reproducer of great plays,” and the great Margaret Stahl merely a “play interpreter.”⁷⁴ Concerned about the specter of the theater, advocates of natural expression

tried to link these celebrity readers to the domestic sphere. Clark, in particular, offered the new elocution as yet another tool women could use to improve their homes and their communities. "If there were more of the old fashioned reading around the fireside of the best and noblest in literature," he suggested, "there would be less gatherings at clubs, at the street corners and in the saloons."⁷⁵

Turn-of-the-century Chautauquans took to Delsarte with a passion. While Frederick Taylor's stopwatch streamlined workers' motions for maximum efficiency, middle-class women at Chautauqua enjoyed the privilege of "personal liberation." One Chautauqua guest recalled being very impressed with an 1895 Delsarte presentation by Emily M. Bishop, an instructor in the School of Expression: "It is the soul which has a body, instead of the body which has a soul. . . ." ⁷⁶ The Delsarte method taught women how to project authority and confidence. "Why do women feel trepidation when they are to read a paper at a literary society, or to give a five minutes' talk at the 'Club'?" asked Bishop. "Because they are conscious of their instruments of expression. . . . Fear is born of this self-consciousness." Bishop's Delsarte textbook for her Chautauqua students includes this remarkable reference to women's political struggles: "When by self-knowledge and self-discipline, women gain habitual, easy control of their bodies, *they will have achieved an important emancipation*"⁷⁷ (emphasis mine).

Perhaps. Since the Puritans, American clergymen had viewed theater, dance, and, indeed, all forms of spontaneous expression with deep suspicion. At best, they argued, theater and dance were wasteful luxuries enjoyed by a morally dissipated elite; at worst, these activities made young people vulnerable to sexual sin and debauchery. At Chautauqua, women's efforts to claim an "authentic" style of expression paved the way for dance's eventual acceptance. Classes in dance were offered as "physical culture" activities in the 1910s. Even before World War I, Chautauqua offered a course in national folk dances, reflecting a heightened curiosity in alternative sources of authentically "American" culture. By 1926, the institution conducted training in "modern social dances," classic dances, and folk dances; New York University offered for-credit dance courses in 1929; and in 1936 Chautauqua inaugurated its first formal course in modern dance.⁷⁸

But what power had dance "emancipated" women to wield in society? An anecdotal answer comes from one of Chautauqua's "monactors," Margaret D. Paul, who in 1914 summoned the courage to join a suffrage pa-



FIGURE 6.5 A physical culture class along the shores of Chautauqua Lake, circa 1912. (Courtesy of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York)

rade. "I don't know if anything will be thrown at us or not, but we will risk it," she confided in a letter home. Perhaps the confidence she had gained as a performer undergirded her willingness to confront a potentially hostile and violent crowd.⁷⁹ This speculation notwithstanding, it is fair to state that physical self-realization, divorced from political goals or meanings, was at best a circuitous route to the type of political emancipation sought by suffragists and reformers. It is not coincidence that the older guard of activist women at Chautauqua, including Jane Addams, Anna Howard Shaw, and Frances Willard, steered clear of the natural expression movement. These reformers were motivated by the powerful impulses of social Christianity, and their prominence at Chautauqua derived from the power conferred upon them as public exemplars of traditional religion.

The rise of religiously eclectic emancipatory schemes like Delsarte helped dechristianize Chautauqua's public culture. By legitimizing physical expression within the assembly, women demonstrated their growing confidence in more private ways. They seemed less willing to leverage their collective gender identity for political effect—a precursor, perhaps, to the exuberant expressiveness of what in the late twentieth century would be dubbed "cultural feminism." Religious faith still had political consequences, but it would thenceforth manifest itself in more subtle and less publicly gendered ways.

Business, Correspondence, and Normal Schools

The gender rebellions of the 1890s, modest though they were, presented new challenges to the movement. Young men and women were questioning some of the assumptions upon which Chautauqua had based its claim for social and political influence. Its decision to incorporate dance was both a compromise with and an appropriation of modernity, intended in large part to contain such "authentic" expressions within a nominally religious milieu. The same could be said for the appearance of business schools and vocational training programs at the assemblies. Vincent had not intended this—the CLSC was supposed to provide a humanistic education to enlighten workers, not provide them with vocational training. This "school for out of school people," as the assembly in Janesville, Wisconsin, called it, was supposed to arrest the slide into materialism and prevent the imminent decline of "mental culture" in business-oriented adults.⁸⁰ And yet, by

1900, most assemblies offered some form of manual training in drafting, stenography, or bookkeeping. What had happened?

To understand the appearance of vocational training at Chautauqua, we must look beyond Vincent's Arnoldian rhetoric. First, the decision to put vocational programs in the brochure reflected a decision most Chautauquans had already made about the public high schools. To ensure that public education remained relevant to industrial life, they would have to offer manual training. Theodore L. Flood called for compulsory education laws and practical vocational training as early as 1883; and in 1892 William T. Harris, U.S. Commissioner of Education, while acknowledging the evils of government paternalism, advocated standards of "minimum provision" for all schools.⁸¹ Thus, when John Dewey traveled to Chautauqua Lake in 1900 to lecture on the "Social Duties of the School" and "How Shall the School Best Fulfill Its Social Responsibility," he encountered an audience of receptive pragmatists, not high-minded idealists. Teachers must impart practical, technical knowledge on how to be productive, Dewey reminded the assemblage: "The school is an institution of social interaction."⁸²

Second, the assemblies were facing stiff competition for students from colleges and universities, many of which were relaxing their gender prohibitions in the 1890s. Commercial correspondence schools, which modeled themselves on the CLSC, also presented an especially daunting opponent. The biggest such enterprise, Internal Correspondence Schools (ICS) of Scranton, Pennsylvania, boasted 112,600 students in 1900, compared with only 5,000 that year for the CLSC. Correspondence schools courted women aggressively. In a 1901 advertising campaign, ICS pointed out that Chautauquas, normal schools, and colleges offered only "mental gymnastics," whereas ICS "rounds out" liberal education with "technical training." So as not to appear too radical, the ad made sure to divide men's courses (like engineering) from women's courses—drafting, bookkeeping, ornamental design, and (interestingly) teaching. While the ICS promised to "help improve your salary, increase your bank account, and advance your position in the world," it would also "awake the noblest chivalry in man."⁸³

If it were to meet the demands of its clientele, Chautauqua would have to make manual training part of its offerings. One Pennsylvania farmer, writing in 1894, seemed incredulous that his certificate for the Chautauqua Home Reading Course in Agriculture would not entitle him to "a situation on an experimental farm, as teacher in an Agriculture College or as a lecturer." The course's administrator at Pennsylvania State University re-

sponded delicately: "I would seriously question whether our Chautauqua Course certification would have much value in securing a position."⁸⁴ In 1885 the original Chautauqua introduced a School of Business, featuring courses in penmanship and bookkeeping. Many independent assemblies, including the Bay View assembly in Michigan, followed suit. In 1890 the Texas Chautauqua Assembly introduced the Commercial Department. "The above courses are of special interest to young ladies and gentlemen," it averred, "who could, by organizing evening and Saturday classes in Penmanship and Book-keeping double their income."⁸⁵ Assemblies frequently advertised local business schools in their brochures.⁸⁶

Finally, the decision to expand Chautauqua beyond its Arnoldian limits reflected the new focus on teacher training and preparation. Many high school teachers, most of them women, used their CLSC diplomas to improve their pedagogy, gain public speaking experience, and improve their negotiating position with their school superintendents. In the 1880s some teachers took advantage of the Chautauqua Teachers' Reading Union (CTRU), a professionally oriented branch of the CLSC administered by Thomas W. Bicknell at Chautauqua in conjunction with Kate Kimball. The CTRU worked with state teacher's associations in Iowa and Kansas, providing curricula and books for three regular and several advanced courses of reading and correspondence testing. Though the Union was abandoned by 1890, it pointed toward a powerful development in the training of teachers: the emergence of a state-run accreditation system administered by state teachers associations via districtwide "teacher's institutes." The state teachers associations established close ties with the independent Chautauqua assemblies, staging summer normal schools and conducting tests for accreditation at the assembly sites.⁸⁷ Chautauqua was even recognized at national meetings. An informal poll conducted at the door to the National Educational Convention in Chicago in 1888 counted eight hundred people there who claimed to be Chautauquans.⁸⁸

Again, while the emergence of national conventions and state-run normal schools vindicated Chautauqua's brand of liberal education, it foretold difficulties for the movement itself. The rise of the normal schools paralleled the passage of more stringent regulations and standards for entrance into the teaching profession in the 1890s. The word "normal," interestingly, appears first in Chautauqua literature in reference to sacred pedagogy (that is, the ubiquitous "Sunday School Normal"). By the turn of the century, the word had been appropriated for use in public school administration. Sensing the demand and eager to serve a civic purpose, state uni-

versities annexed preexisting normal colleges (usually retitling them “state teacher’s colleges”) and opened up education schools at their flagship campuses. In the Progressive Era, many of those state programs added music instruction to the list of instructional specialties that fell under state accreditation guidelines. New York State’s 1901 decision to issue certificates for music supervisors helped the Chautauqua School of Music become a de facto professional school. In 1914 the state allowed Chautauqua graduates to transfer credits from their summer work to accredited academic institutions. The institution even helped graduates find jobs.⁸⁹

Chautauqua assemblies served as a transition to a more bureaucratic approach to teacher training. Some won an important concession from their state teachers associations: official normal schools would be held on the grounds, with state accreditation or raises as the reward for diligent study. From 1892 to 1905 the Louisiana Educational Association arranged to fund a normal school at the assembly in Ruston. It was sort of an educational boot camp, beginning each day at 8:45 A.M. with mandatory Latin and history lessons, followed by breakout sessions on topics ranging from elocution to experimental chemistry. One local school district offered an extra month’s salary for those completing the course. By 1905, the state was holding summer institutes on college and university campuses, and the normal school at Ruston closed.⁹⁰ Some assemblies also earned the right to host mandatory districtwide teachers institutes.⁹¹ The 1903 teachers institute at the Big Stone Lake Chautauqua Assembly, according to one boastful journalist, enjoyed “a larger enrollment than any Normal School in Minnesota or South Dakota.”⁹²

But the program folded in 1919. By then, it was clear that teacher preparation was just too important to be left to amateurs. Voluntary Chautauqua normal programs had largely given way to mandatory accreditation programs at courses at state universities, with salaries docked for nonattendance. All of this symbolized Chautauqua’s success in promoting standardized teacher preparation; but it was also a portent of difficulties to come for the movement.

Conclusion

The stirrings of masculinity and the search for feminine self-realization signaled the end of substantial conflict over gender within the Chautauqua movement. With their newfound access to the structures of material influ-

ence, white women joined men as custodians of an ever-more-exclusive white, middle-class landscape. Thereafter, as gender became a less compelling mode of social order in the assemblies, gender battles were waged on a more symbolic level. In this regard, the dialogue among Chautauquans, and between Chautauquans and its elite critics like William James and Rudyard Kipling, while revealing of gender differences within the category we call middle class, is more important for what it drowned out: a dialogue on the more troubling issues of race and class inequality.

In the 1890s and early years of the twentieth century new discourses of vocational striving, gendered naturalism, and consumer desire competed with evangelical Protestantism for the audience's attention. Chautauqua remained as spiritually alive as ever; its sacred space still compelled and inspired; its landscape remained subject to contesting interpretations, as it always had. But a dechristianization process is clearly in evidence at the turn of the century. While ministers comprised the largest occupational category of male CLSC members in 1882, by 1890, they had dropped to second; by 1898, they were one of the least represented occupations.⁹³ Dechristianization was accelerated, in part, by the rise of alternative, therapeutically oriented spiritual health movements. Even the staid Winona, Indiana, assembly would come to offer a lecture series on "Christian Health Culture . . . not a new religion," it reassured, "but a powerful aid in the religion one already has." This new aid was "not a mind cure, but teaches the laws of mind in relation to health, happiness, and success."⁹⁴ Some of these new movements, like Delsarte, co-existed peaceably with traditional religious practices; others, pushing beyond the limits of orthodoxy, found new homes in theosophy, mind cure, Spiritualism, and Christian Science; still others made a religion out of consumerism, seeking transcendence in the new world of material abundance.

As Chautauquans organized in ever-more-demanding professional regimes, they would not be forced to relinquish their faith in Arnoldian education or their religious worldview. The loyalty demanded of them by the professional-managerial strata and the larger system of class relations it represented did not squelch their spiritual stirrings. The rise of theologically vague emancipatory schemes like Delsarte helped loosen the close alliance between Christianity and public culture at Chautauqua, paving the way for greater religious pluralism. Far from ushering in an age of secularization, therefore, industrial capitalization spurred a religious pluralization that multiplied the opportunities for both intellectual autonomy and social

rebellion. If the symbolic rebellions of the Delsartians as they strove for self-realization could easily be co-opted by the forces of consumer capitalism, they could just as easily spin off into evangelical religion, cultural feminism, or politically engaged secular liberalism. Muted on the public stage, religion at Chautauqua would find unexpected avenues of individual and social expression at the dawn of the consumer age.

7. *Success through Failure: Chautauqua in the Progressive Era*

An educational institution, like an organism, may outlive its usefulness. It may have done valiant service but may be unable to adjust itself to new conditions.

—*The Chautauqua Daily*

Gazing at the lakeside city of classrooms and cottages from a steamer in 1897, urban reformer Jacob August Riis wistfully recalled the transformation of Chautauqua. Upon his arrival in the United States twenty-seven years earlier, Riis followed the trail of Swedes who had migrated to western New York. After building huts for miners on the Allegheny River's muddy banks and doing odd jobs on the lake steamer to Mayville, he settled in Jamestown's "Swede Hill," a neighborhood of narrow streets and small balloon-frame houses overlooking the railroad yards. There, in the shadow of an imposing Lutheran church, he built furniture in a carpenter's shop. Over the next three decades, Riis worked his way from boat hand and carpenter to acclaimed journalist, photographer, and urban reformer. In 1897 Chautauqua invited him to lecture on his efforts to improve tenement life in New York City. "Ah well!" he wrote from a steamer as it passed Chautauqua: "It is pleasant to think that from this spot goes out year by year a host who believe that it is growing better all the while, and who want to help it grow better. That is Chautauqua's message to the world. Could it send a better?"¹

Over the next twenty years, a period referred to by historians as the Progressive Era, the assembly would see continued growth and aesthetic refinement. A visitor to Chautauqua during those decades of rapid expansion would have disembarked at the three-story Pier Building (1886–1916), skirted with covered porches and topped with a bell tower. In 1911 its heavy iron bells were moved to the Miller Bell Tower, the sixty-nine-foot brick Italianate campanile that still dominates Chautauqua's skyline from both land and water. Our visitor might have heard music emanating from somewhere up the hill to the left, followed by a roar of applause—all coming from the five-thousand-seat Amphitheater (1893), fitted in 1907 with

one of the largest outdoor organs in the world. Curious to see more, he or she might have followed the lake path until the trees opened up on the right, revealing the Golden Gate, the square archway at the foot of the Hall of Philosophy (remodeled 1906), the open-air, neoclassical lecture hall through which CLSC graduates walked to signal their initiation into Vincent's fraternity of intellect. Around the hall were rows of Victorian cottages, modest in size but impeccably neat. A brightly hued piece of gingerbread molding added some color to the scene.

Our visitor might have paused for a minute in this tranquil place. A canopy of leaves above kept the Hall of Philosophy shaded and cool. As the visitor's eyes grew accustomed to the light, he or she would have spotted a series of tile mosaics emblazoned on the floor, showing the name and motto of each CLSC graduating class since 1882. Few scenes better attested to the enduring traditions of Western civilization. From this place, the visitor would have been able to see denominational chapels and gingerbread cottages ringing a small, leafy park. On the other side was the Hall of Christ (1909), an interdenominational chapel designed by Library of Congress architect Paul J. Pelz in—what else—a classical style. This was the core of Chautauqua's sacred landscape. It expressed so well Chautauqua's uniquely appealing mode of knowledge that even the most jaded young tough or rebellious daughter, if only for a moment, could be convinced of its universality. The visitor could have watched as a studious young woman, notebook in hand, crossed the path of a bather, hair still wet from his afternoon constitutional. The Chautauqua ideal was a blessed one, the visitor might have reflected while resting in the shade under the Hall of Philosophy; and in that very moment, the ideal had achieved its fullest realization. Here was Chautauqua's message to the world. Could it send a better?

However, all was not well. Even as the original assembly thrived, the movement itself faltered. The building boom and rapid expansion of those years placed on the institution a hefty financial burden, making it more reliant on corporate philanthropy. Meanwhile, the independent assemblies experienced devastating budgetary problems. To cut costs without sacrificing quality, some tried to pool their resources and form specialized talent bureaus. Others succumbed to the temptation to buy cheaper talent packages provided by big-city lecture bureaus. These arrangements kept some assemblies alive for a time. Beginning in 1904, the assemblies faced a new and (for most) insurmountable foe: the so-called *circuit Chautauquas*, commercial tent shows that had appropriated the Chautauqua name and con-



FIGURE 7.1 One of the few tangible legacies of the Manning-Kelsey blueprints of 1903—the Hall of Philosophy, Chautauqua, New York, as remodeled in 1906. Note the formal entrance flanked by Athenian lanterns. (Courtesy of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York)

cept. The programs became more entertaining and less overtly religious, bringing larger crowds; in response, fundamentalist Christians gave up on Chautauqua and joined Bible schools instead. The circuits dramatized what already should have been apparent. While the original assembly flourished, nationwide, the independent assemblies were turning into summer pavilions for genteel entertainment, and the CLSC was in decline. The Chautauqua moment was coming to a close.

The movement was in many ways a victim of its own success. Establishment Chautauquans did not miss the irony. The “great universities and other centers of learning have adopted the Chautauqua idea in modified ways,” admitted a 1902 assembly brochure, “and are successfully carrying it out with all the advantages of high grade teachers, large endowments, and the seal of great institutions for the diploma. . . .” Municipal governments were spending millions for libraries, parks, and lecture series—in

essence, funding publicly what Chautauqua had once provided informally. Hence, Chautauqua's fortunes declined during the Progressive Era. The independent assemblies gave up control over cultural programming to the corporate lecture bureaus and reinvented themselves as citizenship training centers, while the traveling circuits popularized a new, more consumer-oriented brand of self-culture. Chautauqua had served as an able guardian of the liberal ethos in its infancy and early adolescence between 1874 and 1920. But liberalism would spend its adult years elsewhere.

The Ambiguous Career of City Beautiful

The "mother" institution's dramatic expansion during the Progressive Era reflected in large part the tenacity of George E. Vincent (president 1907–11) and Arthur E. Bestor (director 1907–15, president 1915–44). Both faced the challenge of leading the movement in the uncertain years following the deaths of Lewis Miller in 1899 and William Rainey Harper in 1906. Both men were products of Harper's University of Chicago: Vincent received his Ph.D. and taught there, while Bestor graduated in 1901 and lectured in political science for Harper's university extension system from 1904 to 1912. As for their childhood years, both were Illinois-born sons of ministers who grew up in the bosom of Chautauqua. Vincent, of course, was the cofounder's son. Bestor's father, Orson Porter Bestor, promoted CLSC groups and took his son to visit some of the assemblies that had sprouted within a train ride of their home in Dixon, Illinois. (Dixon was practically the epicenter of the independent assembly movement; between 1880 and 1898 at least eleven major assemblies popped up in Illinois and southern Wisconsin, including one in Dixon.²) With Bestor's elevation to the presidency in 1915, a son of the movement returned to where it had all started. The independent assemblies, sometimes suspected of trivializing the movement's ideals, had been redeemed.

The movement could not have asked for a more capable leadership duo. Under their reigns, the campus swelled to 331 acres and the summer session to 60 days in the first two decades of the new century. Vincent and Bestor placed the institution on more firm scholarly footing and secured the support of wealthy benefactors. The assembly appeared to be weathering the storms of modernity well enough. Several thousand new CLSC members enrolled in the CLSC every year from 1900 to 1919. The num-

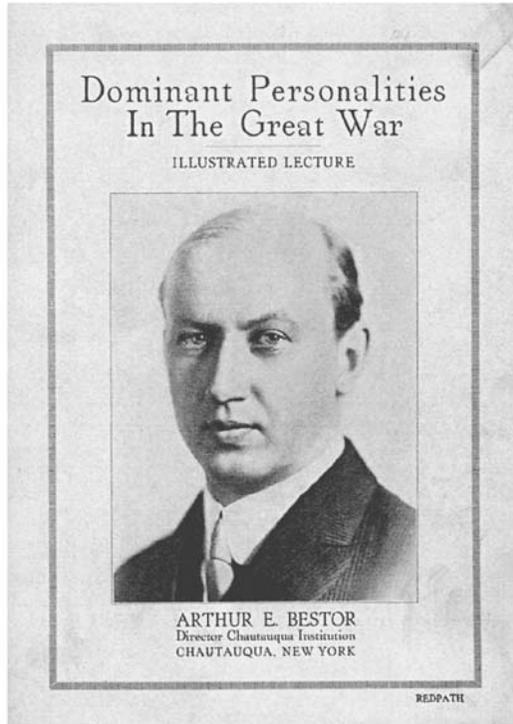


FIGURE 7.2 Arthur E. Bestor from a 1916 lecture brochure. (*Redpath Chautauqua Collection, Special Collections Department, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa*)

ber of active Chautauqua assemblies continued to rise, reaching its peak of approximately one hundred in 1907.³ True, sons and daughters were not following exactly in their parents' footsteps. Interest in the CLSC had fallen as middle-class women in search of more practical degrees enrolled in college, normal, and correspondence schools. But a tonier set of upper-middle-class women at the original Chautauqua, such as Mrs. Percy V. Pennybacker, had less need of vocational training and could afford the time spent pursuing liberal education and larger causes in the Chautauqua Woman's Club. The institution could afford to hire the best academic and artistic talent without putting headline entertainment on the marquis to pay the bills. Most impressive, during a building spree between 1900 and 1920, based in part on an elaborate 1903 master plan inspired by the City Beautiful Movement, the institution built or rebuilt twenty public structures and twelve memorial buildings.

Therefore, despite increasing competition from commercial purveyors of middlebrow culture in the early twentieth century, the original assembly retained its popularity as a symbol of the Arnoldian ethos and as a place of healthful recreation. In these heady years, as many as one million people visited Chautauqua assemblies every summer. Meanwhile, the original assembly at Chautauqua Lake, tapping into strong political currents, reinvented itself as a Progressive utopia. Its leaders were not city managers but “trustees,” its guests “citizens,” its gate fee a “tax.” It had developed into what one writer in 1905 called a “model city,” complete with public buildings, park spaces, natural scenery, and modern sanitation. The original assembly, now legally reorganized as the Chautauqua Institution, took care of the ordinary municipal matters expected of permanent towns, such as fire protection, road repair, street cleaning, sewage, water, electricity, telephones, and inspection. Underneath eleven miles of paved streets, brick guttering, cement sidewalks, and street lights were four and a half miles of sewage pipes. The “city in the woods” boasted a level of municipal efficiency capable of satisfying even the most ardent urban reformer.⁴

Chautauqua’s newfound charm as a “model city” deserves a closer inspection. After all, had not assemblies always based their appeal on *anti*-urbanism? Despite (or perhaps because of) the demographic reality of urbanization, anti-urban rhetoric was pervasive among American elites throughout the nineteenth century. As we learned in chapter 2, Chautauquans profited from the bourgeois repugnance of the industrial city. During the Progressive Era, however, American elites were less willing to cede control of the city to the mostly Irish political machines in New York, Chicago, and elsewhere. City government would have to be restructured: to limit the abuses of patronage, civil service reform; to prevent voter fraud, campaign reform and the Australian (that is, secret) ballot; to combat immorality, antiprostitution and blue laws; to improve health, parks and gymnasiums. Seeking to fill their sails with the new wind of urbanism, Chautauquans shifted course. Whereas they had once billed the assembly as pastoral middle landscapes that negated most aspects of a pluralistic, industrial metropolis, they increasingly reenvisioned the assembly as a “model city,” a microcosm of an idealized cosmopolitan society.

The image of the muscular skyscraper, soaring above an electrified metropolis, emerged as a potent symbol of progress and national destiny. Assemblies lacked the resources for skyscrapers. But electrification was well within their reach. Assemblies emulated what historian David E. Nye has

called the “Great White Way.” Between 1900 and 1920 municipalities abandoned gas lighting for electric. The buzzing arc lamps formed a powerful symbol of social progress and dramatically expanded usable public space. Electricity arrived at Chautauqua Lake as early as 1879, and in the 1880s for some of the larger assemblies across the country. The other assemblies followed suit, so that by 1905 virtually every one could boast its own version of the technological sublime. The Marinette, Wisconsin, assembly grounds would be “brilliantly illuminated by electric lights every evening.”⁵ Some guests encountered electric street lighting for the first time at these assemblies. As they returned home, the powerful images of public space they had encountered inspired similar improvements in their own towns. In 1902 one journalist from Epping, New Hampshire, compared his town, which had rejected bond issues to build an electric plant, to the electrically equipped assembly nearby. “Can it be possible that Hedding needs more light than Epping?”⁶

Progressive thinkers also embraced the streetcar as a symbol of technological progress and efficiency. The streetcar conveyed people to work and back quickly, and its interurban extensions facilitated middle-class escapes into the healthful, green spaces outside the city. As assembly patrons, streetcar companies proved just as benign as the railroads. While Chautauqua constituted an inexpensive alternative to the railroads’ expensive hotels, with the streetcars, its position was reversed. Interurbans treated the assemblies as *highbrow* alternatives to its *lowbrow* amusement parks. Thus, the streetcar that first arrived at Chautauqua from Jamestown to the sound of firecrackers and cannon also stopped at Celoron, an enormous amusement park in Lakewood.⁷ Railways serving Chautauqua assemblies, battling the perception that the interurban was little more than a warm-up for a roller coaster ride, spun their advertising rhetoric toward the themes of progress and education. In 1908 the Pacific Electric Railway, which served Redondo Beach near Los Angeles, promoted a “Chautauqua Trolley Course” to “supplement and amplify the learning acquired from books.” Effortlessly climbing into Vincent’s Upper Chautauqua, the “trip up Mt. Lowe will give you broader conceptions of the beauties of nature and the achievements of man.”⁸

Chautauquans’ efforts to bring urban life into harmony with the organic social patterns of the summer vacation did attract the attention of thoughtful urbanists. In the years after the Columbian Exposition of 1893, Chicago and the other great industrial cities, growing heedlessly, seemed to be drifting further and further from Frederick Law Olmsted’s vision of



FIGURE 7.3 Chautauqua Traction Co., just outside the gates of Chautauqua, New York, within months of its official opening on 4 July 1904. (Courtesy of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York)

a differentiated garden-city.⁹ It was at this time that architects and urban planners, some of whom were involved in the City Beautiful Movement, first began to marvel at Chautauqua's potential to serve as a model of urban evolution. In 1903, while New York and Chicago tried to make themselves more pastoral, Chautauqua embarked on an ambitious project to make itself more urban. To its authoritative nineteenth-century motifs would be added a forward-looking cosmopolitanism. The institution hired architect Warren H. Manning of Boston, an Olmsted student and veteran of the Columbian Exposition; Albert Kelsey, whose blueprints helped design the "Model City" at the St. Louis fair; and sculptor J. Massey Rhind. Few of the Manning-Kelsey plans ever materialized. But their visions reveal an ambition to engineer an efficient and productive citizenry through the re-ordering of the urban environment.¹⁰

In essence, Manning and Kelsey proposed transforming Chautauqua into something akin to the Ringstrasse in Vienna. They borrowed several motifs from Otto Wagner's designs for the International Exhibition in

Paris in 1900. Wagnerian touches were everywhere. Broad esplanades would cut across the campus in wide swaths, ringed with Athenian fire towers, balustrades, Roman lamps, brass seals, display fountains, obelisks, wide stairways, planters, and a new bell tower named Angelus Tower.¹¹ The Manning-Kelsey design would have tipped the scales decisively in favor of public space over private. Indeed, of the four zones of human activity their design motifs were meant to link—the intellectual quarter, athletic quarter, arts and crafts village, and residential district—three were public. Rhind submitted plans for a series of allegorical sculptures representing “Christianity Supported by Science and Literature,” “Summer Rest, Home Study, and Athletics,” and a heroic-sized bronze on the main avenue representing Education, “symbolized by a beautiful, intellectual type of womanhood seated on the throne of knowledge” surrounded by “twelve signs of the zodiac” as a reminder of the rewards garnered from year-round study.¹² Inspired by the Columbian Exposition and the Ringstrasse in both content and example, the new Chautauqua would draw strength from deeply rooted classical truths; facilitate the efficient functioning of municipal government; and create an environment so thoroughly imbued with symbolism that a behavioral departure from the norm could never be conceived.

It is probably just as well that most of the Manning-Kelsey plan failed to materialize. For decades, the New England town square had served as the assembly’s primary aesthetic model. The diverse styles of the nineteenth-century American village ran riot at the assembly: Queen Anne for the cottages, neoclassical columns for the Grange Hall and Hall of Philosophy, and a Second Empire tower atop the Italianate Hotel Athenaeum. Thus, the Chautauqua assembly captured what historian Thomas Bender has described as the “idealized heritage of New England town life that emphasized the ideas of organic social relations, community, and natural beauty.”¹³ Progressive Era urbanists, on the other hand, focused on travel routes, usage, and production; they tended to use machine metaphors and focus on the mantra of efficiency; their enormous, soaring skyscrapers and plazas were meant to inspire conformity with the productive potential of the industrial city. For them, the Chautauqua assembly served less as a microcosm of community than as a specialized leisure space to facilitate industrial efficiency and prosperity.

Lacking unruly immigrants, riotous laborers, or rootless intellectuals, Chautauqua had none of the social conflict City Beautiful was meant to suppress. This fundamental flaw in conception rendered the Manning-



FIGURE 7.4 Paul J. Pelz's Hall of Christ, designed in the 1890s, not completed until 1909. (Courtesy of the Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York)

Kelsey blueprints discordant with the assembly's landscape. Most of the plans collected dust. Only a pared-down version of the Hall of Philosophy took shape in 1906. The ridiculously ornate "arts and crafts village" was completely scrapped, and new designs were drawn up, resulting in the craftsman-style Arts and Crafts Quadrangle of 1909. The linchpin to the

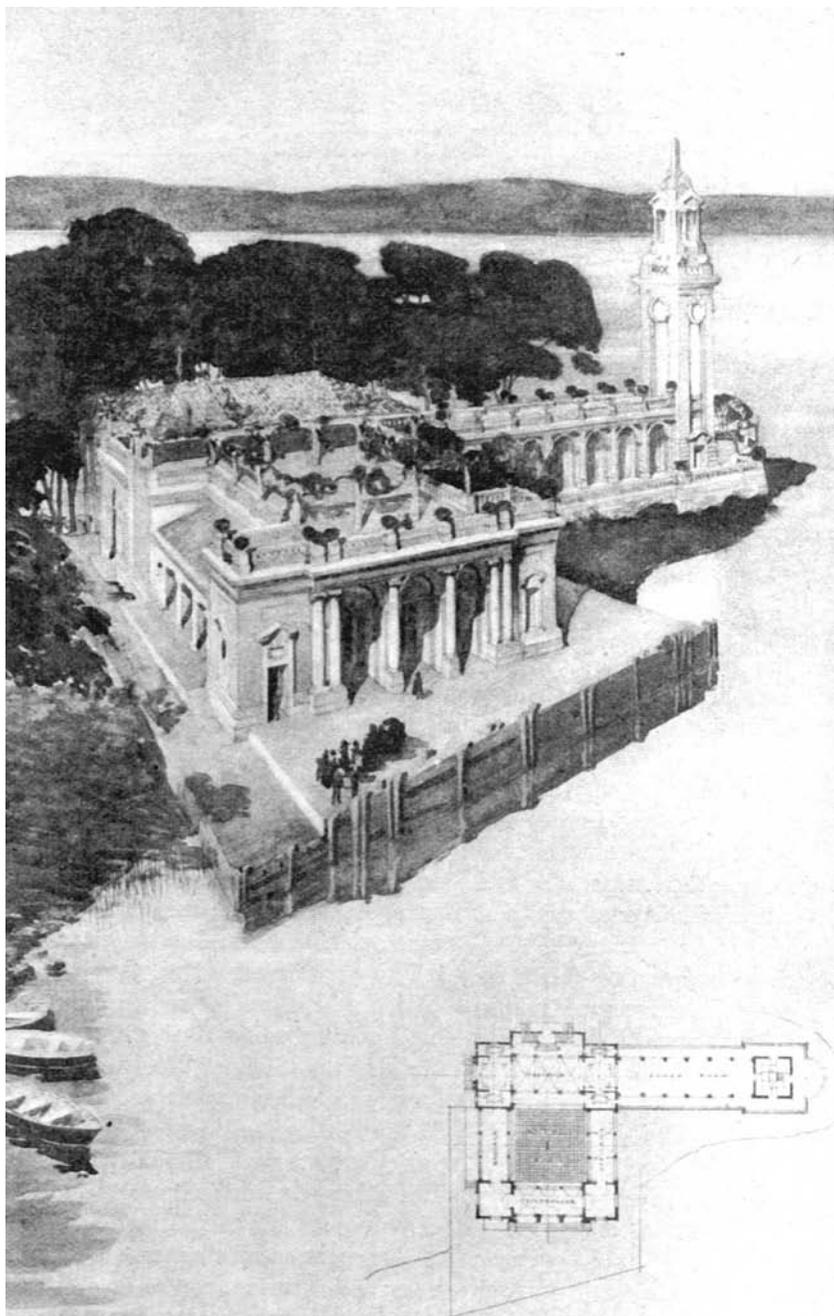


FIGURE 7.5 Manning-Kelsey design for an Arts and Crafts Village. (Source: *The Chautauquan* [August 1903])

entire urban renewal project in Chautauqua, the neoclassical ecumenical temple called the Hall of Christ, with its heavy support stones and thick columns, did not develop as planned either. Paul J. Pelz designed this building in the 1890s. But funding problems delayed its completion until 1909. The ambiguous career of City Beautiful at Chautauqua suggests that its value as a model city would forever be limited by the fact that it was not a true twentieth-century city but an idealized nineteenth-century American village, perpetually poised on the brink of modernity. Today, the original assembly remains frozen in the early 1900s—the beginning of the end of Chautauqua's role in the formation of modern liberalism.

Libraries, Parks, and Lecture Series

If the original Chautauqua assembly—with its urban density, immense scale, and deep pockets—struggled to keep up with the cosmopolitan spirit of the age, imagine the challenge facing the independent assemblies. The movement had often served as the vanguard for new ideas of citizenship and Progressive reform. Lacking the resources to institutionalize those ideas, the assemblies could only watch as bigger organizations assumed responsibility for the services they had once provided privately: humanistic education, virtuous recreation, and civic instruction. During the Progressive Era, municipalities began to provide for free what the assembly had once provided for a fee: libraries, parks, and free lectures. As Frank Bray noted ruefully, some of the movement's best ideas “have gone over to institutions endowed with facilities to handle them to better advantage.”¹⁴

Chautauquans were deeply involved in efforts to establish public libraries.¹⁵ In 1882 industrialist Andrew Carnegie gave away the first of thousands of grants to build free public libraries in towns and cities throughout the English-speaking world. The decision to accept a Carnegie grant shifted the balance of power away from the clubwomen who supported the library and Chautauqua associations and toward the town's commercial boosters. It also strengthened the hand of library professionals, as they wrested control from the untrained CLSC enthusiasts whose civic spirit breathed life into libraries in the nineteenth century.¹⁶ (The Chautauqua Institution, it should be noted, gave its imprimatur to the trend toward professional management of libraries. In 1901 a school of library training was inaugurated under the leadership of Melvil Dewey.) In De Fu-

niak Springs, Florida, the Ladies Library Association was formed in 1887 to “elevate the moral and intellectual understanding of our community.” In the 1920s, when it was renamed the Library Association and its operations turned over to the city, old Chautauquans must have smiled knowingly; the public library grew from, but long outlived, the assembly.¹⁷

Assemblies also overlapped with the parks movement. The assemblies were originally inspired by the same cultural forces that drove New York’s Central Park and Baltimore’s Druid Hill Park: the Protestant embrace of healthful leisure, the republican ideal of civic virtue, and the elite preference for pastoral landscapes over chaotic cityscapes. Visitors were bound to strict prohibitions against alcohol, indecency, and violations of the Sabbath.¹⁸ By uplifting the immigrant, parks could serve as models for democratic stability and inculcate bourgeois behavioral standards and gender roles among the lower classes and immigrants. Few movements more directly embodied these impulses than the independent Chautauqua assemblies. “Austin, as a city,” complained a Chautauqua group in Texas, “seems to have missed her opportunity of setting apart suitable places for parks.” Consequently, “it was the charge of ‘private enterprise’ to supply this necessary social function.”¹⁹ Similar impulses impelled J. Max Hark to join forces with railroad mogul Robert Coleman to create the Pennsylvania Chautauqua at Mt. Gretna in 1892. The idea caught on. Between 1900 and 1926 the city of Lancaster created five public parks closer to the center of town.²⁰

The city parks of the Progressive Era responded to many of the same urges that had propelled the assemblies. But the slow, contemplative pace of the Chautauqua assembly did not jibe well with the new doctrine of efficiency. Weary workers, so the new thinking about parks went, needed a place to recharge their minds and bodies for the next day’s work. Hence, for the modern park to be made socially useful, it must be accessible; fast, inexpensive, quiet streetcars, rather than clunky railroads, should bring visitors to its entrance; professionals, not amateurs, should design and manage it. Nineteenth-century assemblies had offered themselves as a place *apart*. But newer Chautauqua parks functioned *within* modern society. Thus, in 1907 the town of Pana, Illinois, situated a small Chautauqua within Kitchell Park and plied the profits into park improvements. Neighboring Taylorville purchased a private estate in 1913 and transformed it into a recreation center, including a wading pool, baseball field, artificial lake, and a five thousand-seat Chautauqua auditorium.²¹ In this limited way, the Pro-

gressive Era state absorbed and institutionalized Chautauqua's middle-class model of leisure and self-culture, inscribing it permanently into the civic landscape.

This would not be the last time government appropriated the Chautauqua idea. During the Great Society reforms of the 1960s, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) devoted public money to fund cultural performances deemed artistically valuable. In the 1980s state humanities councils, using NEH dollars, began funding "Chautauqua scholars" programs, traveling troupes of lecturers and historical impersonators that have become especially popular in the Midwest. These present-day permutations of Chautauqua can be traced to the Progressive Era. New York City's Department of Education began staging free "Stereopticon Exhibitions in the Parks" in 1903.²² By 1912, 101 cities held "social center" courses mostly in the evening at school auditoriums or city libraries. In the 1920s state health departments latched onto the Chautauqua concept as a means of spreading important news about public health. By 1926, most American cities of more than one-half million residents had instituted a free lecture series.²³

Chautauqua had lobbied tirelessly for public libraries, parks, and lecture series. Now that governments had taken on more responsibility for these functions, would Chautauqua survive? "There are many [other] reading courses today," admitted a brochure writer for the assembly in New Hampshire, in 1902:

Nearly every organization has them, so where once the Chautauqua idea was monarch of all it surveyed, now numerous feudal lords have set themselves over principalities, taking in about the whole range of human learning. The summer months have therefore come to find a multitude of persons who once wished to study at a grove or by the sea who now are looking for a rest, and who can blame them? Much studying is a weariness of the flesh. We must stop now and then.

The Chautauqua idea, continued the writer, "needs to be adapted to the present time." It should offer a varied program of "Institutes, Conventions, Lectures, and Entertainments (literary and musical). It is instructive without being dry; it is entertaining without being trashy. And it recognizes the need of fun." This new conception of Chautauqua, acknowledged

the writer bluntly, was “an attempt to meet these demands of today.”²⁴ Would this new version of Chautauqua prove successful? Or would the movement—as implied by the writer of this chapter’s opening quotation—“outlive its usefulness”?

The Trouble with the Assemblies

In 1907 Arthur Bestor inherited a relatively healthy balance sheet. The institution’s operating table that year showed a \$10,500 net profit. However, even the “mother” Chautauqua would soon feel the ill effects of a movement losing steam. The 1909 season resulted in a deficit.²⁵ All but two of the next eleven seasons would see the assembly running in the red. In 1910 George E. Vincent admitted that yearly profits from gate receipts were going to pay debts on buildings erected and remodeled during the housing boom of the previous decade. He also worried that the floating debt of \$140,000, owed to bond holders for those projects, was too large for safety.²⁶ Bestor’s financial skill would be put to the test. To attract \$100,000 in endowment money, he considered asking CLSC graduates to contribute \$10 to their alma mater, in order to “maintain its high educational character in this day of commercial competition backed by ample capital.” He also turned to Chautauqua’s commercial backers, notably the Massey, Heinz, Rockefeller, and Studebaker families. Their donations would help wean the institution from its dependence on bonded debt.²⁷

While the institution survived, many independent assemblies were not so fortunate. Many had already borrowed heavily and prayed that bond holders would forgive the debt as a civic duty. The depression of 1893 killed off assemblies in Austin, Texas, and Clatsop, Oregon, and probably several others. Facing a \$774 loss from the 1895 season, the corporation in charge of the Waseca Chautauqua Assembly in southern Minnesota got by with another \$10,000 stock issuance. Cold and rainy weather during the summer of 1902 produced a wretched season for a number of smaller Iowa assemblies. The Spirit Lake assembly, awash in \$4,618 of debt, declared bankruptcy.²⁸ The 1904 World’s Fair in St. Louis injured gate receipts at assemblies as far as Iowa. And an alarming number of assemblies took nose dives in 1907. “An unusual number of Assemblies have suffered deficits this year,” wrote a puzzled Jasper Douthit, “some of them in debt many thou-

sands." Another Iowa Chautauqua group identified 1907 as the beginning of their "hard luck."²⁹

What was going on? In absolute numbers, the number of assemblies in operation rose steadily during these allegedly "hard luck" years. In 1907 at least one hundred assemblies across the country offered summer programs, up from about eighty at century's turn (see figure 2.1). However, most of the new ventures were concentrated in a swath of rural America stretching from Nebraska and Iowa into central and southern Illinois. By 1900, the "Chautauqua Belt," prematurely theorized by observers in the nineteenth century, had begun to materialize. Towns and small cities in the Chautauqua Belt competed fiercely for guests; beating out your neighbor's assembly became a matter of civic pride. Four assemblies packed into a fifty-mile radius, complained W. E. Hardy of Lincoln, Nebraska, created too many incentives for cheap programs and foul play. "I believe competition will be the death of Chautauqua assemblies in Nebraska, unless the pressure is relieved a little."³⁰

Competition with other assemblies accounted for only part of the trouble. Much of the instability in the 1890s and early 1900s was caused by stiffer competition with the amusement parks. Flush with capital, streetcar companies built hundreds of amusement parks, or "electric parks," during those years. Even the "mother assembly" vied for guests with the Celoron amusement park, located just ten minutes away by streetcar. "Celoron is to Lake Chautauqua," boasted one 1898 brochure, "what Coney Island is to New York City, a place of amusement."³¹ Those seeking outlandish attractions had once flocked to Chautauqua's biblical fantasyscape, where Peter Mamreoff Von Finkelstein, "dressed in Oriental costume" and accompanied by a "party of Syrians," once lectured on "Eastern and Biblical scenes."³² But as the assembly became more domestic, its otherworldly appeal diminished. By contrast, Celoron offered a toboggan water slide, electric fountain, zoological garden, dancing pavilion, and "great Phoenix wheel from the Atlanta Exposition . . . a facsimile of the famed Ferris wheel at the World's Fair."³³ A measure of the electric parks' growing challenge to Chautauqua came in 1907, when a small assembly in Kalamazoo, Michigan, held its sessions *inside* the Oakwood Park amusement area.³⁴

Assemblies responded variously to these challenges. Some, like the original assembly in New York, went further into debt. Others found a more expedient solution: good, clean entertainment. The trend toward

secular entertainment at the assemblies began in the mid-1890s. In 1894 the Connecticut Valley Chautauqua Assembly in Northampton, Massachusetts, invited its first entertainer—James S. Burdette, the “celebrated humorist and impersonator.”³⁵ Within a decade, the Northampton management had established the recipe upon which the circuit Chautauquas of later years would rely: a few popular preachers, inspirational speakers, and serious musicians, mixed with a bevy of assorted impersonators, comedians, and entertainers. Northampton offered A. DeGeorge, “the Paganini of the Mandolin”; Rosani the Juggler and Magician; Kreiger “the mystifying magician”; and a demonstration of the American Vitagraph (moving picture device). Over a third of the program was occupied by a variety of musical acts, from soloists to brass bands to comedic quartets—popular songs



FIGURE 7.6 Hendrickson and Rosani flyer, circa 1920s. Rosani enjoyed several decades of employment at Chautauqua venues from the 1890s through the 1920s. (*Redpath Chautauqua Collection, Special Collections Department, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa*)

began to replace Baroque classics and hymns. By the time George R. Stuart raised the question “Is Fun Divine or Devilish?” at the 1907 session, the assembly in Northampton had already given its answer.³⁶

The Northampton Chautauquans were in good company. The appearance of Rosani the Magician on the platform was a natural extension of trends within the Chautauqua movement since its inception. Since the 1880s the consensus in Social Gospel circles was that fun was divine. Social Gospel advocate Washington Gladden reasoned in 1884 that the “amusement industry” was already an undeniable fact of U.S. society. Managers of dubious morality ran too many of these baseball parks, skating rinks, and dance halls, Gladden warned. If trends continued, he suggested, working-class men and women, “their hearts inflamed against their more prosperous neighbors,” would spill into the streets like acid; “for the cheap theatre is one of the mouth-pieces of the communist and the pétroleuse.” Gladden urged his readers to introduce Christian amusements into their towns and cities. “Amusement, like religion and education, is a real need of human beings.” The church “has a positive function to fulfill in furnishing diversions that shall be attractive, and, at the same time, pure and wholesome.” And what was unwholesome about a juggler?³⁷

Rosani might pass muster with mainstream Protestant ministers. However, his appearance on the platform seemed inconsistent with Chautauqua’s educational ideals. Chautauquans’ ambivalence about secular amusements was especially apparent in their response to theater. Consistent with its Methodist origins—the Methodists’ official ban on theater attendance lasted from 1877 until 1924, a period roughly corresponding to the rise and fall of the Chautauqua Movement—drama was introduced on the Chautauqua platform gradually and in small, palatable doses.³⁸ The elaborate convocation ceremonies, patriotic rallies, and pageants of the 1880s paved the way for the “dramatic impersonators” of the 1890s, many influenced and trained in Delsarte and other natural expression techniques.³⁹ By the end of the century, dramatic impersonators at Chautauqua assemblies—although the women were still forbidden from wearing makeup or saucy costumes—had penetrated into the realm of theater. A remarkable actress named Gay MacLaren could pantomime all parts of a five-character play with the continuity of a motion picture.⁴⁰

Most accounts of Chautauqua report that drama troupes did not appear on the platform until Ben Greet’s Shakespearean ensemble toured the country on the Redpath circuit in 1913. Although some historians cast the

arrival of theater on the circuits as proof of “the loss of the Chautauqua ethic of education and uplift,” the role of theater at Chautauqua is complex and ambiguous.⁴¹ For example, Ben Greet’s first appearance at an assembly came six years before his Redpath contract—in 1907 at an assembly in Michigan.⁴² In fact, local drama troupes were performing at Chautauquas in the supposedly puritan Midwest as early as the late 1890s.⁴³ In 1899 local theater groups at assemblies in Wisconsin (Delevan Lake) and Iowa (Burlington) staged performances of *Barbara* and *Lend Me Five Shillings*.⁴⁴ The decision caused a stir in the heavily Methodist city of Burlington, Iowa. One editorialist, sensing the trend toward entertainment, complained in 1897 that “it is not necessary to resort to fake shows, gambling privileges and traffic in intoxicants in order to entertain the public.”⁴⁵ Nevertheless, as a number of theater historians have concluded, Chautauqua performed a vital role in reassuring the corn belt that “perhaps the theatre was not as dangerous as had been believed.”⁴⁶

This was not the outcome that Lewis Miller and John Heyl Vincent had intended. Nor did they intend a more disturbing consequence of Chautauqua’s appetite for entertainment: communities were giving control over programming to commercial interests. Strapped for cash and eager for headline performers, more and more managers in the early 1900s were purchasing talent from big-city commercial lecture bureaus like the Redpath agency.⁴⁷ Alarmed by the trend, John Heyl Vincent called a meeting of midwestern assembly managers in St. Louis in the fall of 1899. The result of that meeting was the formation of the International Chautauqua Alliance (ICA). Although Chautauqua Institution figures remained involved in the ICA—indeed, Arthur E. Bestor served as its president in 1909—leadership responsibilities fell largely to the directors of the independent Chautauqua assemblies. At a meeting in Chicago in December 1901, the ICA elected James E. Moseley, director of the assembly in Madison, Wisconsin, as president; John H. Groff of Mt. Gretna, Pennsylvania, as treasurer; and the irrepressible Rev. Jasper Douthit of Illinois as secretary.⁴⁸ The ICA was not the only response to the rising dependence on talent bureaus. Statewide alliances of independent Chautauquas were formed in Illinois (1901), Iowa (1908), and Missouri (1919).⁴⁹

The Chautauqua collectives responded to the existential crisis facing independent assemblies in the early years of the new century. For decades, towns had jostled over whose Chautauqua assembly was bigger. But with lecture bureaus taking profits, secular amusements proliferating, and commercial circuit Chautauquas beginning to prowl the countryside, assem-

blies could no longer afford to compete with one another. Managers of the ICA did their best to defuse their boosterish, competitive impulses. They met in a spirit of collegiality and took proactive steps to share knowledge, expose price gouging, and pool resources to purchase talent more efficiently. In this regard, the collectives exemplified other Progressive Era cooperatives designed to limit corporate power, such as farmer's cooperatives and consumer advocacy groups. Most important, the collectives represented an effort to stave off the perceived commercialization of Chautauqua. The "good name of Chautauqua was being perverted for commercial purposes," feared Douthit; he called for all "true" Chautauquans to "prevent, so far as possible, fake enterprises under the name."⁵⁰ Despite the extraordinary building spree that gave rise to utopian hopes at the original assembly in New York, the new century dawned on a movement fighting forces both within and without that threatened its very existence.

The Theater of Politics in the Progressive Era

As theater troupe manager Daniel Frohman admitted in 1911, "no one goes to the theatre to be educated." But if the theater would never educate its audience, it might elevate their morals. Theater could be "an ethical force in modern life"; through the power of persuasion, clean and wholesome plays could impart "healthful living" instead of "base and sordid" behavior.⁵¹ The modern Chautauqua pinned its future on such hopes. There was plenty of competition already. By 1900, 1,300 touring companies played at hundreds of opera houses and repertoire tents across the United States. A stigma of illegitimacy still attached to the card-playing rakes and painted ladies that accompanied the repertoire companies. Chautauqua billed itself as the moral alternative. "It was reported that some profane words like 'hell' and 'damn' were used in some of the plays," recalled Everett Ludley of his boyhood in Manchester, Iowa, in the 1910s. While the independent Cass Players were forced to set up their tent down by the river, the Manchester town fathers allowed the Chautauqua circuit to use the grounds of the central school.⁵² Chautauqua repaid the town fathers' confidence by both purging the content of anything salacious and maintaining the pretense of high culture.

The characterization of Chautauqua plays as "elevating" or "uplifting" deserves closer scrutiny. Insofar as they confirmed the moral consensus of its audience, the plays could be said to be uplifting. But they were not up-

lifting in John Heyl Vincent's sense of the term. The Broadway plays selected for Chautauqua lacked the theme of social renewal that typified earlier Chautauqua storytelling. True to the liberal creed, the "Pansy" novels testified that to be useful to society, individual salvation must manifest itself as purposive action within the structure of modern institutions. By the 1910s, that idea had moved into the Progressive mainstream. Into the void rushed a litany of plot clichés in which common sense triumphed over modern conceit. Marital fidelity is preserved in *Her Own Money* (1915) when Mary Alden reconciles herself to economic dependence on her husband. A good work ethic is celebrated in *It Pays to Advertise* (1917) when the lazy scion Rodney Martin finally realizes the inherent value of a hard day's work. And when the youthful Matt Peasley earns the salty old ship captain's admiration (and his daughter) in *Cappy Ricks* (1923), the audience was reminded of the benefits that accrue when youth venerates age.⁵³

Chautauqua plays departed from the liberal creed in another crucial respect. While earlier Chautauquans rejected urban aesthetics and class tensions, they nevertheless yearned to rub shoulders with refined city folks. The Chautauqua drama of the 1910s discarded this subtle cosmopolitanism and instead offered a series of anti-urban fantasies. Its villains were usually outsiders, many of them from the metropolis. Juxtaposed against the dutiful daughter, loving father, and lovable country bumpkin were the dashing city slickers, trying to steal the farmer's girl; the confidence men, enticing the young man with false promises of riches; and the bankers, trying to foreclose on the family home. At least two of these anti-urban stereotypes appeared in Winchell Smith's *Turn to the Right* (1916), popular on the Chautauqua circuit in the late 1910s. Joe Bascom's search for fortune has gone terribly awry, and he has turned to drink and gambling. Unjustly accused of a robbery, he is sent to prison. He eventually returns home with his jailbird friends, Muggs and Gilly. Feared at first, the ex-convicts prove their worth when they foil Deacon Tillinger's efforts to foreclose on the family farm. Meanwhile, a city slicker courts the lovely daughter; but she is saved when the police come to arrest him for the crime of which Joe Bascom was wrongly accused. To cap it off, the Country Bumpkin character discovers a way to make jam out of the peach trees on the Bascom property. The fortune Joe once sought in the city turns up in his own backyard.⁵⁴

The idea that young men and women could outsmart city folk and find "acres of diamonds" at home resonated deeply with rural audiences. Russell Conwell, future president of Temple University, delivered his "Acres of

Diamonds” speech more than six thousand times to Lyceum and Chautauqua audiences. Essentially an inspirational monologue, it opened with a Horatio Alger–esque vignette about a rural man who, deciding not to follow the exodus to the big city, dug in his backyard and struck oil. As for the newly enriched man’s responsibility to society: Conwell rejected service in favor of stewardship. “Get rich, young man, for money is power, and power ought to be in the hands of good people. . . . I say you ought to be rich; you have no right to be poor.” Though Yale-educated and made wealthy by his grueling speaking itinerary, Conwell insisted, “I am a laboring man myself.” (Popularized by its many iterations, themes of “Acres of Diamonds” found their way into Bruce Barton’s best-selling apologia for modern consumer capitalism, *The Man Nobody Knows: A Discovery of the Real Jesus* [1925]. Barton interviewed Conwell for an article in 1921, and Conwell’s example helped distill Barton’s fusing of liberal Protestantism with the organizational structure of a modern advertising agency.)⁵⁵

As theater became domesticated, Chautauqua lecturers learned to market themselves as colorful and inspirational personalities. During the Progressive Era, inspirational speakers at Chautauqua championed the power of personality. For Redpath lecturer William Rainey Bennett, Director of the Bennett Institute of Better Speech and Personality Development, power derived from “Psychology”—it was “A search for That Something that all great men and women have, and that YOU may have.”⁵⁶ It is not coincidental that Dale Carnegie’s first experience with the power of speech to persuade, influence, and manipulate was at a Chautauqua circuit lecture. According to one account, the theory of personal power that later developed into his best-selling *How to Win Friends and Influence People* came to Carnegie as a youngster while he was watching a large man in a white collar perform on a Chautauqua stage—it could have been William Jennings Bryan, Russell Conwell, or William Rainey Bennett. From that moment, Carnegie turned his formidable energies to the words that worked in real-time situations, “such as handling a child, winning a wife to your way of thinking, or satisfying an irritated customer.”⁵⁷

Politicians also learned to market themselves as personalities. Chautauqua was no stranger to politics, of course. Republican presidents from Ulysses S. Grant to William McKinley had used the assemblies to increase their exposure in New York and in the key swing states of the Midwest. Some agrarian radicals in the 1890s hoped to find a similar political benefit from Chautauqua. In 1895 both the northern and southern branches of the Farm-

ers' Alliance, precursor to the Populists, created lecture systems "somewhat on the plan of the Chautauqua" to educate its members.⁵⁸ In the 1890s Chautauqua assemblies began to abandon their pro-Republican stance and strictly didactic lecturing mode, venturing further into the realm of political debate. Debates were staged between all combinations of wets, dries, goldbugs, silverites, Populists, Republicans, and Democrats. The arrival of a theatrical style of politics on the platform illustrated the shift in the institution's mission from Arnoldian self-culture to citizenship training. The Southern California Chautauqua introduced "The Forum" to its guests in 1896; described as "exceedingly popular in Eastern assemblies," The Forum entailed the presentation of papers and formal discussion.⁵⁹

The reinvention of Chautauqua as a forum for civic debate served the Progressive cause admirably. Progressives like Hiram Johnson (California), Albert B. Cummins (Iowa), and Robert M. LaFollette (Wisconsin) used the gatherings as paid campaign appearances. LaFollette was legendary for his long and vitriolic diatribes against "special privilege." Many Progressives viewed the Chautauquas as a direct avenue to the people and, thus, as superior to the press. Irving Fisher of Yale University admitted as much in 1924, when he wrote Paul M. Pearson, president of the International Lyceum and Chautauqua Association, to commend Chautauqua's role in "keeping American public opinion informed, alert, and unbiased. . . ." The "newspapers generally are becoming less loyal to the people and more subservient to the interests from whom they hope for advertising," concurred sociologist E. A. Ross. "That calamitous degradation of the printed word makes the spoken word more and more the vital factor in the formation of public opinion. Then, long live the free platform afforded by the Chautauqua and Lyceum."⁶⁰ Assemblies usually paired Progressives up with opponents on the right and left. In this way, they presaged the "equal time" laws, which since 1927 have required radio and television networks to offer equal advertising time to opposing political candidates.

In part because of the yeoman labors of Richard T. Ely to domesticate radical thought through such CLSC books as *The Strengths and Weaknesses of Socialism* (1899), assemblies did not exclude labor leaders and socialists from their debate plans. Labor leader Samuel Gompers became a well-known figure on the Chautauqua scene, although his speeches were usually segregated apart from the program. He lectured during "Capital and Labor Day" at the 1902 Winona, Indiana, assembly (speaking immediately after Sen. Mark Hanna).⁶¹ Eugene Debs and Victor Berger both appeared in

limited Chautauqua engagements from 1900 to 1913. "While you may not agree with him in all that he says," one Illinois assembly manager reminded potential visitors, "you certainly are not so prejudiced that you will not listen to him."⁶² The Socialist Party's surprising success in the 1912 elections boosted their visibility on the Chautauqua stage the following summer. At a small assembly in the railroad town of Mountainair, New Mexico, in 1913, the State Socialist Convention held a day-long program with lectures on "Sabotage and Syndicalism versus Socialism" and "Woman's Influence in the Socialist Movement."⁶³ So too did the presence of anticommunists rise that year. H. E. Byram, president of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway, took to the Chautauqua stage in the summer of 1913 to ask his audience to "rebuke those radicals" who were "jeopardizing the industrial, social, and spiritual institutions of this great nation."⁶⁴

None of these emerging political celebrities was more closely identified with Chautauqua than William Jennings Bryan of Nebraska. That Bryan viewed his deep involvement with Chautauqua as an expression of his rural, Great Plains identity as against Washington sophistry is clear. He was more beloved on the circuit than in Woodrow Wilson's White House, where he served as Secretary of State (1913–1915). Bryan's critics could not decide which part of his Chautauqua lecturing disturbed them more: the sight of a public official earning enormous honoraria all summer long (Bryan claimed it was necessary to afford the courtly lifestyle of Washington) or Bryan's use of Chautauqua to maintain his perennial gadfly status within the Democratic Party. In any event, it was a mutual relationship. Bryan, nicknamed "the Voice" for his hearty set of pipes capable of sending his voice more than half a mile, attracted gate receipts big enough to send an assembly from red into the black. His staple speech "Prince of Peace," delivered thousands of times throughout the Progressive Era, proved resistant to every assault of science and criticism, and it changed little from the 1890s through the early 1920s. Bryan provided Progressive Chautauquans with a irresistible mimetic link to the evangelical age while pushing them to consider civic solutions to social problems. "Prince of Peace" began with a simple homily that Bryan apparently considered a conclusive refutation of modern biblical scholarship. "Until you can explain a watermelon, do not be too sure that you can set limits to the power of the Almighty and say just what He would do or how He would do it." He then presented a brief biography of Christ, stressing his call for peace and mercy. Finally, to achieve true peace was not to accumulate wealth, as per Russell Conwell,

or to distribute wealth, in the model of Andrew Carnegie. Rather, it meant daily service to a larger social good.⁶⁵

It is not coincidence that Chautauqua's role in Progressive reform, like that of William Jennings Bryan, falls between the cracks of the existing scholarship. Historians tend to locate the heart of Progressivism in the urban middle class. Still important to scholars are the class-based interpretations of Richard Hofstadter, George E. Mowry, and Samuel P. Hays. According to this school, a new caste of urban, middle-class managers and specialists, given new prominence in the industrial order but anxious to consolidate their new-found status, enforced their vision of an efficiently run moral society mainly through the media of controlled forums of popular democracy and government-by-expert.⁶⁶ However, in selecting this historiographical school as the straw man from which to dissent, we have ignored historian Otis Graham's long-ago reminder, challenging Richard Hofstadter's model of the "status conscious" urban professional, that many Progressives hailed from rural areas.⁶⁷

In the plays, lectures, and political debates of the early-twentieth-century assembly, one finds plentiful evidence of the hopeful anti-urbanism that typified the rural arm of the Progressive Movement. The Progressive assembly pointed both backward and forward. On the one hand, it seemed to be telling its guests that despite the rise of the metropolis, institutions could still be organized to meet moral ends. Through melodramatic plays, inspirational lectures, and the prophetic politics of William Jennings Bryan, audiences could return to a simpler time, before Sears and other mail-order businesses put small-town retailers out of business, and before mechanization and the increasing scale of agribusiness had forced so many family farms into deep debt. On the other hand, Progressive Era Chautauquans embraced and popularized the cult of personality, consumerism, and mass culture; theirs was a "hybrid culture," as one historian of rural America put it, which remained "distinct from and, at times, opposed to the more urban mainstream."⁶⁸ With its open-air amphitheater and lecture hall, reading circles, and stated neutrality in all debates, Chautauqua seemed ideally suited to articulate this oft-overlooked strand of Progressive thought.

Departure of the Fundamentalists

Chautauqua's shift toward entertainment, citizenship, and the cult of personality training placed it at the center of U.S. political culture in the Pro-

gressive Era. Ultimately, however, the new assembly format would not be enough to prevent the movement's decline. For many conservative Protestants, who had suffered the addition of education and genteel amusement to the camp meeting revival, the appearance of entertainment was the last straw. Frustrated with Chautauqua's trivialities—not to mention its failure to do something about Darwinian evolution, biblical criticism, and other heresies that in their view had crept deep into the heart of the church—some conservative Protestants abandoned the Chautauqua assemblies. The Fundamentalist schism demonstrated the vitality of U.S. Protestantism during the Progressive Era. The departure of Fundamentalists, however, further undermined Chautauqua's claim to have resolved the dispute of science and religion and to represent the ecumenical consensus of the Christian community. And ironically, it hastened the spread of secular liberalism in U.S. public discourse by weakening the liberal creed that had once tethered political reform to an ecumenical or panreligious vision of moral order.

It is a wonder that the schism did not occur earlier. Chautauqua's ecumenical spirit and openness to alternative views had long been a fertile breeding ground for controversial thinking. On its platform appeared many of the popularizers of liberal Protestantism, such as Algernon Crapsey and Herbert L. Willett, professor of Semitic language at the University of Chicago, both reviled in conservative circles for questioning the actuality of the Virgin Birth.⁶⁹ In general, CLSC selections avoided direct engagement with such hot-button debates. Who cares “whether or not a veritable big fish in the Mediterranean Sea 2600 years ago did actually swallow a disobedient Hebrew?” asked Jasper Douthit. The real message was to “do our duty to God and man, or we must be brought at last by a just God to pay the penalty. . . .”⁷⁰ One might criticize Chautauquans for accepting platitudes without critically engaging the philosophical foundations upon which those platitudes rested. But this gauzy optimism served an important purpose: it cast Chautauqua as a neutral forum for debate while enlisting both sides as partners in the liberal project.

Conservatives had other reasons to be concerned about Chautauqua. Over the decades, a sober, nominally religious model of citizenship had largely replaced Holiness as the camp meeting institute's *raison d'être*. That process had unfolded slowly—although not imperceptibly. Clerical critics of Darwinism and modern criticism, like Sam Jones, Thomas DeWitt Talmadge, and Billy Sunday, appeared as speakers at Chautauqua assemblies in part to point out the error of Chautauqua's dalliance with

“Godless social welfare talk” and to redirect its energies toward spiritual conversion. (Sam Jones, a celebrity evangelist on the assembly speaking circuit, openly ridiculed Chautauqua: “We haven’t enough religion to run a camp meeting,” he lamented, “so we organize Chautauquas.”⁷¹) Thus, their participation in the liberal project was at best conditional and qualified. Many midwestern assemblies offered a compromise: Chautauqua’s name would attract large crowds to the revival-style meetings that took place at announced times, usually immediately before or after the summer program. Disciples of Billy Sunday held their Bible school every year at the Miami Valley Chautauqua Association (Ohio). Sunday himself had a summer home at a Presbyterian summer encampment in Winona Lake, Indiana; by the mid-1890s, the grounds housed a Chautauqua program and a religious conference center. In Dixon, Illinois, home of Chautauqua President Arthur E. Bestor, Bible school study days were mixed into the general summer program.⁷²

While barbs flew between liberal and literalist interpreters of Scripture, Chautauqua was able to stay out of the crossfire. In the 1910s, however, Chautauqua lost its neutrality in the liberal/Fundamentalist debate. A subtle but revealing change took place in how assemblies advertised Bible schools in their brochures. Increasingly, the Bible schools were being segregated from the general program. “The Assembly is educative, that was the primary idea,” admitted the Dixon, Illinois, assembly in 1909. “But have we not made the amusement idea the prominent one?” By 1911, the Chautauqua and Bible Conference were listing their programs *separately* on the brochure. A decade later the Bible Conference was publishing its own pamphlet, having no more need of Chautauqua’s window into the secular world. At the Clear Lake assembly in Iowa, the split occurred in 1910; the association’s decision to hire a lecture bureau to provide entertainment prompted the Clear Lake Epworth Assembly, until then integrated into the program, to sever the partnership and begin advertising its programs separately. Also in the 1910s the ambitiously named International Federation of Christian Workers, a group dedicated to “aggressive evangelism in all fields and all lands,” moved its offices from Chicago to Siloam Springs, Arkansas, and held its meetings in the Chautauqua amphitheater there—apart from the regular program.⁷³

The circuit Chautauquas widened the Fundamentalist schism. None of the major lecture bureau managers dared to venture into the dense theological thicket that separated the literalist and liberal interpreters of Scrip-

ture. Some lecture bureaus in the 1910s abandoned Sunday programs altogether—in essence, reopening a debate about the appropriate uses of the Sabbath that assemblies had settled decades earlier.⁷⁴ Censorship was not uncommon. Circuit manager Keith Vawter once rejected a play because it bordered too much on the issue of divorce; managers instructed troupes to delete certain words; and speakers were often asked to provide a copy of their speech and not to deviate from it on the platform.⁷⁵ In catering to the conservative sensibilities of rural audiences, circuit lecturers captured the Fundamentalists' grievances about modernity. Stock dramatic characters and morality lectures—dubbed somewhat sarcastically by bureau managers as “Mother, Home, and Heaven” lectures—championed young adults who rejected the Big City's fool's gold allure and stayed in town to wed the all-American girl or boy. Implicit in these and other plot formulas was another Fundamentalist complaint about modern culture: the New Woman had abandoned her divinely sanctioned roles as mother and domestic helpmeet. Finally, the circuits introduced new communication methods and techniques of persuasion to the evangelical community. The Los Angeles evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson frequently preached at or near Chautauqua circuit tents until she moved to Los Angeles, created her own superchurch, and set up KFSG—the first religious radio station in the country—to broadcast her sermons.⁷⁶

Ultimately, the Fundamentalist withdrawal from mainstream institutions undermined Chautauqua's standing as the big tent of U.S. Protestantism. Traditional Chautauquans did not sit idly by, however. Shailer Mathews, professor of religion and dean of the divinity school at the University of Chicago, led the campaign to preserve Chautauqua's status as an umbrella organization. Mathews spent twenty-two summers at Chautauqua as director of religious studies. To meet the challenge, he took the step his Social Gospel predecessors would not take—he offered a theory of social salvation based on theologically nonspecific spiritual principles, characterized by a friend as “the personality producing activities of the cosmos, the combination of forces working toward the production and enrichment of human life.”⁷⁷ Mathews would never admit that he had left a Christian venue, and the point is still debated. Regardless, Mathews's reworking of the relationship between faith and action helped frame the process of dechristianization under way within the Chautauqua assembly in a nonthreatening light. During the Progressive Era, public culture within the Chautauqua assembly no longer relied as heavily on Christian symbols

and texts. Under Mathews's model, religious belief at Chautauqua would enter the reordered public sphere in two ways: 1) through the dictates of individual spirituality oriented to the social; and 2) through the political influence of the church, reorganized as an interest group to fight for agreed-upon church principles.

"What is the modern social order?" he asked boldly in 1914. Modern society had brought new developments in technology, science, method, industrialism, and democracy. Would these developments "be filled with spiritual idealism, or will they develop a new materialism, the more dangerous because it rests upon wealth and learning?" The "social gospel is not another gospel," he cautioned, by way of an answer. This new gospel recognized salvation as "the heightened and spiritualized personality of every individual." When Mathews argued that university and vocational training should be "Christianized," he did not mean in a traditional theological sense. Rather, he meant that students should be made aware of the way that "God uses human agencies to bring men and himself together."⁷⁸ While religion would continue to work its way into public life through individual choice and action, religious institutions would need to streamline their approaches to remain competitive in an age of religious pluralization. As municipalities and professionals became more involved in the charity work, the church should gradually withdraw from poor relief and focus on its specialty. The "function of the church is pre-eminently that of ministration to men's spiritual needs," Mathews argued in 1912.⁷⁹

For three decades liberal Protestants like Shailer Mathews had coexisted peacefully under the Chautauqua canopy with Billy Sunday and Sam Jones. The departure of Fundamentalists in the 1910s unearthed new regional and theological tensions. Mathews's version of the liberal creed had become too worldly, too secular, for many southern and midwestern Fundamentalists. It had merged too thoroughly with the aspects of modernity they opposed. Meanwhile, intellectuals and social critics began to criticize the circuits for pandering to rural ignorance and traditional morality. The polarization of U.S. Protestantism occurred at an inopportune time for "true" Chautauquans like Jasper Douthit, then battling to throw the money changers out of the temple. In 1904 the enemy finally came out in the open, taking the form of the "circuit Chautauquas," the for-profit, mobile entertainment and self-culture troupes that canvassed the country until 1932.

Circuit Chautauquas and the Corporate Reorganization of Culture

Few aspects of Chautauqua's past cause more confusion than the rise of the circuit Chautauquas. The assemblies and the circuits shared the same name, a stated belief in cultural uplift, and a decade or two of cohabitation. Consequently, the two institutions have become jumbled together in cultural memory. For some, especially those familiar with the extant Chautauqua Institution, the word calls to mind the quaint, highbrow, somewhat archaic way Protestants liked to spend their July, a last bastion of self-culture and strict morality. Others recall a tent show where older relatives gathered to drink pink lemonade and take in barbershop quartets and stumping politicians. Of these two clashing bits of Americana, the circuits occupy the larger space in U.S. cultural memory. Compared to the assemblies' hundreds of thousands of visitors in more than one hundred locations, the circuits reached millions at thousands of sites. Contemporary Chautauqua reenactments prefer the commercialized traveling version over the Victorian assembly, despite a lingering sense that they were not "true" Chautauquas.

Given the lack of knowledge of the original movement, the appearance of a huge commercial lecture circuit, bearing the Chautauqua name, was perplexing to contemporaries and historians alike. Had the movement always been like this? Or were the circuits commercial perversions of something pure and good? There was no doubt where establishment Chautauquans stood on this issue. In 1908 the minister, lecturer, and Armour Institute of Technology (Chicago) director Frank W. Gunsaulus saw the circuit entrepreneur Keith Vawter at a railroad junction. Gunsaulus had just returned from an engagement at one of his favorite independent assemblies and was in a foul mood; his beloved lake-grove institution was on the verge of bankruptcy. "You're ruining a splendid movement," Gunsaulus roared. "You're cheapening Chautauqua, breaking it down, replacing it with something that will have neither dignity nor permanence." Many journalists in the 1910s began identifying the circuits as "chautauquas" in lowercase. The shift from the valorized formal noun to the informal noun dramatized the devolution of the movement. Historians echoed such sentiments. Howard Mumford Jones was not alone when he triumphed the "altruism that had made the original Chautauqua a unique product of American earnestness" while lamenting the rise of its "commercialized offspring" with its brand of "genteel vaudeville."⁸⁰

It is hard to disagree. The circuits were commercial enterprises that traded on Chautauqua's good name and blurred its educational mission. That said, we need to be wary of doom-and-gloom stories in which complex social processes are reduced to a battle between true believers and apostates. The declension narrative of noble assemblies giving way to vulgar circuits was, in part, the imposition of critics (like Gunsaulus) and historians (like Jones) who sympathized with the humanistic goals of the original movement and viewed the circuits as symbols of cultural decline. Hence, before we blame the circuits for "cheapening Chautauqua," we should first consider the extent to which they perpetuated trends already under way in the assemblies. The circuits were often accused of commercialism; but capitalist motives had always coexisted with high ideals at the assembly. The circuits were often accused of forsaking education for entertainment; but many assemblies adopted Lyceum entertainment in the late 1890s. Some say the circuits killed off the assemblies. That is largely true; but the independent assemblies were already facing financial difficulties. Few midwesterners objected when the Redpath Company took "Chautauqua" as the title for their ersatz variant of Victorian self-culture in 1904. For most, the traveling tent show was a continuation of, not a departure from, a process of institutional evolution.

The circuit arose out of a sympathetic business response to the troubles facing independent assemblies. It was the brainchild of Keith Vawter, who grew up in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and studied business at Drake University, and J. Roy Ellison, who fondly recalled visiting the independent assembly at Crete, Nebraska, as a child. In 1904 the two men, both employed by the Redpath Lyceum Bureau, joined forces to profit from the assembly's demand for culture while meeting its high standards. First, they tailored a lecture and entertainment package to independent assemblies and offered it at reduced rates. Next, they campaigned to convince a majority of assemblies in Iowa to accept the package, thus cutting down on travel expenses. Actualizing this plan proved difficult. Of the twenty-five Iowa assembly managers Ellison interviewed, only nine agreed to book the Redpath Chautauqua slate. Many of the assemblies felt no need for corporate intervention, having already joined the International Chautauqua Alliance, the group formed in 1899 to ensure independence from the Lyceum bureaus. Others stubbornly rejected the concept of collective buying, whether by fellow colleagues or by a corporation, and insisted on doing their own booking as a matter of civic pride.⁸¹

Vawter and Ellison only narrowly avoided disaster in 1904. The nine assemblies they contracted were located all over the state and held their sessions at various times, resulting in long commutes and mounting hotel bills as performers waited for the next performance date. Desperate to employ idle talent, Vawter and Ellison invented the Chautauqua circuit. Cleverly, they bought a circus tent (later dyed brown to make it seem less circuslike), advertised the show as a “Chautauqua,” and marketed it to towns along the route. In this way, six more towns were added to the list. Although they still lost money, they had made two crucial technical innovations. First, previous independent assemblies relied primarily on the resources of railroads, merchants, and civic boosters, with lecture bureaus serving a subordinate role as hired subcontractors. Vawter and Ellison inverted that relationship by creating their own assembly, determining its content, and asking the boosters to serve as silent partners. Second, they had begun to break the assembly managers’ monopoly on stage space. Thwarted in the effort to broadcast from the steel-and-wood auditoriums, Vawter and Ellison fabricated their own mass media network out of rope and canvas.⁸²

In fits and starts between 1904 and 1910 Keith Vawter refined the circuit technique and made it profitable. Vawter resumed operations with a circuit of thirty-three towns in 1907. This time, he contracted local residents to take care of advance ticket sales, thereby shifting the potential loss from low gate receipts from Redpath to the town. Two summers later, he introduced a seven-day Chautauqua, and in 1910 he perfected “tight booking,” the key to the circuits’ profitability. Vawter scheduled shows in neighboring towns one day apart and then divided the talent into seven teams, one for each day of the show. The Day One team, for example, would arrive in time to open the show that afternoon and evening. The next morning they would travel to the next town and repeat the same show, and so on down the line. Only the superintendent and tent crew stayed in the same town for the entire week.⁸³ In the winter Redpath sent booking agents into the field to instill the Chautauqua spirit in prominent citizens and exhort them to form a committee and sign a contract. Advance agents followed some months later to paper the town with flyers, shore up the committee’s often flagging confidence, and help them sell their quota of season tickets. It was the superintendent’s task to use his or her charms, both in person and from the podium, to flatter, cajole, or even shame the committee into signing a contract for the following summer.

The formula worked. By 1913, the circuit had become a massive commercial enterprise, with scores of competitors trying to get in on the profits. Redpath, the largest player in the industry, served six hundred towns, most with populations of fewer than ten thousand, and reached an audience of about six hundred thousand. The largest and most successful competitors came from the Lyceum world, including Travers-Wick and the Jones Chautauqua System. Roy Ellison split from Redpath in 1912 and formed the Ellison-White Chautauqua System, which focused its efforts in the U.S. West and Canada. Several smaller bureaus catered specifically to the independent assemblies. The Midland Chautauqua circuit served ten Iowa assemblies, while the Lincoln Chautauqua bureau, run by one-time assembly manager James L. Loar, provided fare to Illinois assemblies into the 1920s.⁸⁴ At least three national bureaus also courted independent assembly business: Chautauqua Managers Association, Dunbar Chautauqua Bureau, and Coit-Alber Independent Chautauqua Company. Two independent bureaus tried to use the circuits' economy of scale to sell a higher grade of educational fare. The National Chautauqua Bureau, led by the peripatetic assembly manager Wilbur L. Davidson of Washington, D.C., and the Swarthmore Chautauqua Association, led by Paul M. Pearson of Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, fell into this category.⁸⁵

As partners split and companies merged, Chautauqua circuits came to embrace the managerial ethos spreading through the corporate United States in the early twentieth century. At the annual Lyceum conventions in the 1910s a Manager's Code was developed to discourage mercenary sales tactics and create standards for professional behavior.⁸⁶ The code did more than set standards of fair play. It was a means by which managers defined themselves as professional servants of middlebrow culture and advanced their interests as a class apart from both the workers who provided the services and the customers who paid for them. Tight booking brought a carefully managed, factory-style specialization of labor to the realm of cultural production. Bidding wars drove up the honoraria for celebrities. But for unheralded musicians plying their trade, the circuit meant hard work and long hours for \$25 to \$50 per week.⁸⁷ Superintendents earned more; to prevent them from playing one bureau off the others, managers regularly shared information about commissions. And in a practice that infuriated local committees and audiences alike, managers often bought, sold, or exchanged contracts without consulting townspeople. "Ordinary business courtesy would have required that you at least ask for our formal consent,"

complained one Kentucky town upon learning that Redpath had sold its contract to another bureau. "We consider your action a dirty trick."⁸⁸

Local assembly managers had been gradually relinquishing control over Chautauqua programming since the late 1890s. The rise of the fully evolved traveling circuit in the 1910s accelerated the loss of local cultural autonomy. Having exchanged control for convenience, circuit towns found themselves consumers of a corporately managed mass culture. Assembly towns fared only marginally better. They owned their own stage, which gave them the option of fashioning their own program out of local talent or negotiating for national talent from a position of strength. Some smaller assemblies proved remarkably resilient: in 1914 a small independent assembly in Georgetown, Ohio, boasted that it was "not controlled or operated, directly or indirectly, by any Bureau." At the Greenfield assembly, "everything is local."⁸⁹ In general, however, the circuits spread like a toxic cloud that missed only the original assembly in New York and a handful of others. The circuits were "surrounding them on every side," according to Harry Dunbar in 1915. Small towns whose independent assemblies had been defeated by those belonging to bigger neighbors now had their revenge.⁹⁰

It is difficult to date the demise of the assemblies with certainty. Most of the one hundred or so independent assemblies operating at the dawn of the circuits in 1904 continued to exist into the 1910s in one form or another. Many bought a few more years of existence by signing bureau contracts. They rarely advertised this fact, however. Some flip-flopped back and forth between circuit fare and independent programming, trying to find the right mix between local control and profitability. Others intermeshed Lyceum and local programming. And a good many ceased to exist altogether, their institutional identities snuffed out by an economic disaster—bankruptcy, sale, or dereliction—or a natural cataclysm—fire, flood, or epidemic. Fires in Mount Dora, Florida, and Acton, Indiana, killed off the assemblies there in 1905 and 1906, respectively. A 1913 flood nearly finished off the sizable Miami Valley Chautauqua in Franklin (now Chautauqua), Ohio. The assembly in Petersburg, Illinois, came to an especially tragic end in 1915 after the Sangamon River overflowed and contaminated drinking wells with typhoid, killing thirteen guests. And the Waterloo, Iowa, and Delevan, Wisconsin, assemblies closed in 1919 when their respective auditoriums burned to the ground.⁹¹

Even seasoned Chautauquans were having trouble spotting the true independents amidst the swarm of circuits. One journal, perhaps mistaking

circuits for independents, counted 160 assemblies operating in 1905. Kate Kimball seemed a bit unsure when she estimated “more than a hundred” in existence the following year. Other assessments, with camp meetings and defunct assemblies thrown in for good measure, were as high as three hundred or four hundred.⁹² But this numerical exaggeration came to a halt after the traveling circuit Chautauquas revealed their true nature. In 1911, as the Chautauqua Institution grew more uneasy with the commercialism of the circuits, *The Chautauquan* sharply downgraded its appraisal to thirty-two. (Incidentally, I believe this to be a fair estimate of the number of assemblies retaining at least partial control of their educational programs into the 1910s.)⁹³ Henceforth, the editors implied, the journal would be counting only “true” Chautauquas. In 1912 E. H. Blichfeldt defined “real” assemblies as something more than “talent exhibits.” It was not a “political convocation” nor a place for anything “sectarian or biased.” “It springs up,” he concluded, “from a spontaneous demand of the people themselves, or from a desire to do the people good.”⁹⁴ “True” Chautauquas dug in and prepared for war.

From Liberal Creed to Secular Liberalism: Shelbyville, Illinois

Jasper Douthit’s hometown of Shelbyville, Illinois, soon emerged as a major battlefield for what Douthit perceived as an apocalyptic battle between true and false uplift. Indeed, for anyone interested in the history of Chautauqua, this town of approximately five thousand people in south-central Illinois is a gold mine. It produced *two* assemblies: Lithia Springs, Douthit’s temperance encampment and Chautauqua assembly located a couple of miles out of town; and the Shelbyville Chautauqua Association, founded in 1901 on the county fairgrounds at the center of town by a group with ties to downtown retailers and the commercial club. To understand this remarkable clash of interests, and its relevance to liberal thought in the Progressive Era, we must first examine the economic and political context.

The white Kentuckians and Virginians who settled Shelbyville in the early nineteenth century hoped that it would emerge as a commercial gateway to the growing northern region of the state. Much to their chagrin, the Illinois Central railway bypassed the county seat and brought commerce and industry to neighboring towns instead. In 1898 industrial strife reached Shelbyville’s doorstep. On 1 April the United Mine Workers in nearby

Pana, Illinois, walked off the job. When the company imported hundreds of African American workers from Alabama, white union workers took to the streets. For almost a year, sheriff's deputies and national guardsmen patrolled the streets, arresting black and white workers and trying to keep order. Following a riot in April 1899 that killed five black and two white workers, the governor intervened to broker a settlement. The black workers were forcibly returned to the South, and the operators acceded to union demands.⁹⁵

In 1904, in part because of anger over the Pana strike, Republicans swept into power in Shelby County, replacing the Democratic establishment that had lorded over local politics since the 1820s. Municipal officials, mostly Democratic, were faced with the unpleasant task of meting out justice to the strikers, whom many saw as victims of the affair. Erstwhile Republican state assembly candidate George Chafee courted Democratic voters in paid advertisements throughout the county, claiming that "hundreds of democrats in Shelby county, where we both live, will bolt Wallace [his Democratic opponent] and support Chafee."⁹⁶ Wallace carried heavily Democratic Shelbyville, as expected, but lost badly in the countryside. Chafee rode Theodore Roosevelt's coattails to Springfield, only the third non-Democratic senator from Shelby County since Andrew Jackson had been in the White House.⁹⁷

The startling Republican victory of 1904 points to a broader shift in the balance of power in south-central Illinois. Nineteenth-century politics pitted wealthy, landed, southern-born Democrats against a loose array of farmers, some recent immigrants, African Americans, and middle-class Republicans. But the southern gentry was in decline. Newspapers from 1890 to 1920 were filled with sentimental obituaries of the "pioneers" who had settled Shelby County in the early nineteenth century, like the rich Virginian cousins William and Anthony Thornton, who amassed huge fortunes in railroads and banking.⁹⁸ While celebrating their accomplishments, the obituaries conveyed a powerful subtext: the passing of these romantic heroes presaged the rise of the new era. The new elite would have to deal with industrial turbulence like the Pana coal strike, compete with other towns for state road dollars and interurban connections, oversee infrastructure improvements and utilities, and cope with new technologies like electricity and the telephone.

The Pana strike and subsequent Republican victory contributed to the rise of a bipartisan, technocratic, Progressive consensus. Increasingly, in-

fluence flowed not through the party organizations but via one's access to the new commercial elite. As the new Republican senator from Shelby County, George Chafee held center court. Chafee led a group of young, educated men in a reading group called the "Brains Club." These men, coming of age in the 1890s and confident in their cultural and economic authority, were poised to take control from the landed Democrats.⁹⁹ "Essays on politics and religion were taboo," recalls one member. "We usually wrote on current topics . . ."—as if politics and religion were relics of the past. For the Shelbyville Businessmen's Association, by 1910 the most powerful single organization in town, class self-identification trumped partisan affiliation. At one gathering over sandwiches, pumpkin pie, and cigars, "politics will be tabooed."¹⁰⁰ "Ownership of property is individual," editorialized *The Shelbyville Democrat* in 1912, "but our prosperity as a whole is closely bound up in each other's interests."¹⁰¹

Town leaders threw themselves into the whirlwind of municipal reform.¹⁰² The town council passed resolutions regulating water, telephone, and electricity franchises, distributing road money, creating a health system, passing compulsory vaccination, and funding the construction of sidewalks, street lamps, and utilities.¹⁰³ Amidst the enthusiasm, a group of downtown merchants decided to create their own Chautauqua assembly. In 1901 a syndicate of entrepreneurs led by Brains Club member and town mayor John C. Westervelt inaugurated a new Chautauqua assembly on the county fairgrounds. It was the perfect place for an assembly, on the railroad lines and just a half mile from town. Westervelt, also president of the Shelby County Fair Association, viewed the new assembly as another way to attract revenue and investment for his big-money constituents in the center of town. As a wealthy merchant and executive leader of the town government, fairground association, and the new Chautauqua assembly, he emerged with George Chafee as the county's power broker. The new assembly enjoyed the support and free advertising of the Democratic Party's weekly organ *The Shelbyville Democrat*, which ran the new assembly's program on the front page.¹⁰⁴ They built an enormous auditorium—\$8,000 worth of steel buttressing, skylights, cement flooring, and elaborate stage design that, when completed, seated three times as many as Jasper Douthit's covered shed at Lithia Springs.

Douthit viewed the new assembly as "a mean trick," a challenge to his Unitarian ministry from a "wealthy corporation of bankers, lawyers, merchants, and money lenders" bent on enhancing their bottom line.¹⁰⁵ The

promoters of the new Chautauqua, complained Douthit, “thought I had been making money and that rivalry was just as legitimate in this as in other enterprises.”¹⁰⁶ Lithia Springs was facing challenges from other quarters as well. Between 1890 and 1910 Shelby County and the eight counties surrounding it all saw the establishment of telephone companies, electric utilities, and rural free postal delivery. Interurban lines crisscrossed the region, linking south-central Illinois with St. Louis. In the next two decades, three amusement parks, four country clubs, three radio stations, twenty movie theaters, and hundreds of miles of paved roads emerged in the nine-county region.¹⁰⁷ Douthit’s rivals in the center of town embraced the new technology of cinema and constructed a garage to house a hundred automobiles for the 1912 assembly.¹⁰⁸ Even worse, it hired circuit Chautauquas to run a two-week Chautauqua program, complete with jugglers, inspirational speakers, preachers, political debates, and theater troupes.

Embittered and hounded by creditors, Douthit wrote plaintive requests for financial help to friends and fellow Unitarians. He feared that his grounds would fall into the hands of “speculators and land grabbers” who would make quick work of the “beautiful forest of trees that I have made sacrifice to save these last seventeen years.”¹⁰⁹ In 1912, facing a choice between “the loss of my home and adequate support for old age, or bankruptcy,” Douthit sold the property and soon severed all ties with Lithia Springs after a dispute with the new owners.¹¹⁰ The Shelbyville Chautauqua assembly continued into the 1920s, but instead of running its own platform, it simply invited a lecture bureau to use its auditorium for its own program. Douthit’s liberal creed had come and gone in Shelbyville. The new era would be dominated by a strata of technocratic managers, like Mayor Westervelt, whose skill at manipulating public institutions to make the Town Beautiful—corollary to the City Beautiful—a reality reflected the new liberal consensus. Though nurtured in the Chautauqua circles and assemblies, the liberal creed had matured and found a home in society at large. Even as modern liberalism took shape during the Progressive Era, Chautauqua’s role in the culture of liberalism diminished steadily.

The Great War and the Agony of the Circuits

The United States’s involvement in World War I threw the Chautauqua Movement a lifeline. For many, the declaration of war against the Germans

in 1917 was a positive step toward the liberal ideal. Here, at last, was a chance for an expertly run state to shed a feminized Victorian culture, unleash pent-up aggressions, defend democracy, and pursue the moral goals of a pious people. Its sails filled by a gust of patriotism, the Chautauqua Institution zestfully embraced its expanded role as a focal point of civic nationalism. At the National Security League conference at the lake in 1917, Prof. Albert Bushnell called for “patriotism through education.” Chautauqua could best contribute to the war effort, he argued, by disseminating prowar messages. It constituted the perfect “halfway house on the road to inform and arouse.” Those giving talks at the Speakers Training Camp for Education in Patriotic Service in 1917 included luminaries like Franklin D. Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and George Creel, Director of the Bureau of Public Information. Arthur E. Bestor asked the audience to serve both country and Chautauqua by buying \$100 Victory Bonds and then donating them to the institution.¹¹¹

The mobilization effort also provided women with a chance to expand their social role—and strengthen their claim for political rights—by lending their special virtues to the war effort. Women led Red Cross drives, trained as nurses, and sold Liberty Bonds. At the 1917 meeting Chautauqua Women’s Club President Anna Pennybacker spoke on the question of “What Our Country Asks of Its Young Women.” In this widely reprinted address, Pennybacker called on women to provide moral leadership to an embattled nation:

[I]f our men are to give the best that is in them, we must keep the atmosphere of our homes sweet and serene. Remember, no sacrifice is a great sacrifice unless it is made *cheerfully*. Let there be no weeping, no complaining, no lamentation, when our beloved ones answer the call to duty. This is also a time for moral sanity and lofty ideals.

The influence of young women on soldiers is “terrifying in its strength,” she warned. “This is an awful responsibility, young women, but it is yours; you cannot escape it.” Even as the country muscled up in preparation for a test of martial manhood, it should not forget the noble cause for which it fought. “I love to think of our America today as a gracious, beautiful matron,” she said. “In her hour of peril, before the altar she calls her stalwart

sons, she calls her fair young daughters and says: 'My children, behold this Flag, "the Stars and Stripes"; it has been baptized in blood and sacrifice; it stands for liberty and love.'"¹¹²

High rhetoric like this helped mute some of the bickering between assemblies and circuits. The issue of local autonomy versus standardization had divided them in the 1910s. The war made relinquishing local control over culture a patriotic act for both. Between 1917 and 1919 the axis of mass culture shifted from Times Square in New York to the official propaganda mills of Washington, D.C. Pressure on the circuits became especially acute. The notion of subsidizing the Chautauqua circuit came up periodically at the International Lyceum Association meetings between 1915 and 1919. Bureau managers, eager to preserve control over a profitable industry, defeated these proposals. The circuits would remain private and untaxed (for the moment). In exchange for the government's forbearance, the circuits willingly shared their podium with an army of Red Cross volunteers, Liberty Bond salesmen, and Four Minute Men. President Woodrow Wilson hailed the circuits as "effective messengers for the delivery and interpretation of democracy's meanings and imperative needs" and hoped that "the people will not fail in the support of a patriotic institution that may be said to be an integral part of the national defense." This quotation appeared frequently on circuit brochures. The Travers-Wick Chautauqua asked the public to "patronize our assemblies, and we are speaking for President Wilson when we ask it."¹¹³

In the end, however, World War I did not save the Chautauqua Movement. The rabid anti-German rhetoric undermined the spirit of liberal tolerance and clashed with the more inclusive notion of white citizenship that had flourished at the assemblies since the 1890s. It also marginalized a major source of Chautauqua's ethnic base, especially in the Midwest. Moreover, liberal theologians had long relied on German historicism; when this came under suspicion as an anti-American ideology, Chautauqua lost one of its foundational philosophies. The attrition rate among independent assemblies skyrocketed during and immediately after the war. Economically speaking, the war brought the two worst years of Arthur E. Bestor's administration. The Chautauqua Institution lost a staggering \$23,000 in 1917 and nearly \$25,000 in 1918. Meanwhile, the war killed off the assembly in his hometown of Dixon, Illinois. "[M]any institutions of this kind have ceased to exist," the assembly explained in 1918, "on account

of changed conditions brought about by the world war." The Lincoln, Illinois, assembly saw its ticket sales shrink and suffered many cancellations as musical and theatrical groups lost members to the war effort. "It was the war that kept many of the independent Chautauquas in operation," wrote one historian in 1938, "and when the war was over, many of them broke camp for the last time."¹¹⁴

If the war heightened the circuits' appeal as a locus of civic nationalism, fame proved fleeting. Tent-show managers could not rely on the railroads, which had been reorganized for the military campaign, to transport performers and equipment. They turned instead to automobiles—thus helping popularize the transportation tool that would bring an ever-wider universe of entertainment options within the reach of middle-class Americans. More important, the blatant appropriation of the circuits for propaganda purposes discredited it among an already skeptical intellectual and academic elite. James H. Shaw, a member of the Speaker's Bureau of the War Loan Organization, admitted in 1919 that his plan to send Army officials to tell their stories on the circuit "would be in a sense propaganda under cover. . . ."¹¹⁵ When lecture bureau manager Charles F. Horner became the director of the U.S. Treasury Department's Speakers' Bureau and served on the War Department's Military Entertainment Council, the line separating the circuit from the state was blurred even further. The propaganda function of the circuits revealed that it had abandoned Chautauqua's historical role as an independent proponent *for* the modern state and had become instead an agent *of* the state.

By war's end it was clear that neither Chautauqua nor the United States would be same again. In 1920 the nation faced a deep recession. Anti-German rhetoric during the war had bred a deep suspicion of "hyphenated Americans," leading to vigilante attacks on immigrants and the censorship and deportation of political radicals. The Ku Klux Klan would soon be reborn in the Midwest, its membership swelled with returning doughboys. The modern KKK's seemingly harmless picnics, public rallies, and "Klan-tauquas" belied the deep and abiding racism that lurked in the nation's heartland. In this year of troubles, Chautauqua experienced a more intimate tragedy. Cofounder John Heyl Vincent died on 9 May 1920, breaking a vital link to the liberal creed. Meanwhile, the circuit Chautauquas seemed resigned to Normalcy. "This year we face a world at unrest, full of economic and civil strife," admitted one group in 1920. "We feel that the keynote of our chautauqua this summer should be:

“God’s in his Heaven
 All’s right with the world.”
 Our lecturers will give us inspirational addresses;
 Our entertainers will make us forget our troubles and problems;
 Our Music will soothe, rest and inspire us.¹¹⁶

Chautauqua circuits continued to flourish into the early 1920s. But they had lost the confidence of the nation’s intellectual elite. Many critics, confusing Chautauqua with other objectionable aspects of rural life, such as the KKK and Fundamentalism, hailed its ebb as a step forward for open-mindedness. No one expressed anticircuit sentiments better than novelist Sinclair Lewis. In his novel *Main Street* (1920) he offered a portrayal so scathing that it still shapes our collective memory of Chautauqua. *Main Street* presents Chautauqua as a “combination of vaudeville performance, Y.M.C.A. lecture, and the graduation exercises of an elocution class.” The master of ceremonies is a “bookish, underfed man who worked hard at rousing artificial enthusiasm.” Inspirational speakers spin yarns and tell jokes, evoking “the laughter of old yokels . . . a mirthless and primitive sound like the cries of beasts on a farm.”¹¹⁷ By juxtaposing the worldly Progressive Carol Kennicott against the backward Gopher Prairie, Lewis dramatized the cultural stagnation of the rural Midwest. In this, Lewis revealed more about himself than Chautauqua. Lewis, who hailed originally from Sauk Centre, Minnesota, was by the late 1910s in full flight from what he viewed as the conservatism, intolerance, and dullness of small-town life.

Chautauqua’s association with the commercial “circuits” sent its reputation among the literary avant-garde, college professors, and all other self-styled members of the intelligentsia, falling even further in the 1920s and 1930s. Allen D. Albert described Chautauqua as a relic of the “most old-fashioned conservatism and morality.” God-fearing yokels from Iowa, complained Willard H. Wright in 1913, had recreated Los Angeles in the image of the rural hamlet, complete with Chautauqua lectures, gossip, and “corrective agitations” like regulating “the proper length of bathing suits.”¹¹⁸ One writer after another recoiled from Chautauquans’ sackcloth-and-ashes puritanism and accused them of not knowing how to have a good time.¹¹⁹ By the late 1920s, national commentators ceased to capitalize the word *chautauqua*, further eroding its claim to stand for universal ideas of truth and faith. Editor H. L. Mencken used the term *chautauquan* as a pejorative synonym for “ignorant hayseed.” The “chautauqua gives the

public what it thinks the public wants,” wrote John S. Noffsinger, and this “spares the chautauqua any need of conceiving and carrying out a program with more specific gravity.” Editors lined up to write Chautauqua’s obituary.¹²⁰

Did the Chautauqua circuits really deserve all this animosity? The anticircuit movement, I suggest, was less a critique of Chautauqua than a byproduct of the expatriates’ campaign to define themselves in opposition to what they viewed as the corrupt mainstream of national culture. The shrillest attacks on Chautauqua came from intellectuals wrestling with their own middle-class, midwestern upbringings. The example of Mary Hunter Austin, Chautauqua’s most caustic critic, is especially revealing. Austin grew up in Carlinville, Illinois, with CLSC meetings in her living room. She would later mark her intellectual progress by the distance she had put between herself and Carlinville. Counseled the dashing editor and writer Charles Lummis in 1904: “Don’t fill yourself with that Chautauqua idiocy about leaving it to the dreadful scientists to know anything.”¹²¹ When in 1926 a Texas women’s club decided to locate its annual summer retreat, based on the Chautauqua model, in her adopted hometown of Santa Fe, New Mexico, Austin would have her chance to confront the “idiocy” head-on.¹²²

Fearing the dilution of native culture and the loss of artistic independence for the Anglo artists, Austin rallied a coalition of Pueblo Native Americans and Anglo artists to defeat the proposal. Several years earlier Austin had spoken out against the Burson Bill, an “Indian reform” proposal favored by Anglos who coveted Pueblo land. “This is Mainstreetism in its worst form,” she had argued.¹²³ Austin viewed the Texas Chautauqua women as the next great threat to Santa Fe’s splendid isolation from the rest of the country. “There is no ‘market,’ no commercial measure,” wrote Austin, romanticizing her home not a little bit: “The question is not what one does at Santa Fe, not a question of attainment, but of release.”¹²⁴ Chautauqua had always been about boosterism and tourism. The imminent arrival of Chautauqua’s crowd-tested formulas gave Austin—herself a town booster, of different stripe—a chance to celebrate Santa Fe’s authentic folkways and link them to a Modernist ethos of personal liberation.

The drumbeat of criticism continued into the 1930s. Thomas W. Duncan’s novel *O’Chautauqua* (1935) used the circuit as setting for his critical retrospective on the Roaring Twenties. The novel chronicles a tent show traveling through northern Wisconsin. Effie Caliver is loyal, loving, and

kind, the sort of woman praised in Chautauqua circles; but she is suspected of having affairs while her husband Bob is off fighting in Europe. Bob Caliver is spendthrift and vain and cheats on Effie with Karla Matchet, an actress in his dramatic troupe (they will run off to start a radio show together). Mutual friend Prof. Doc Lingfish, a member of The Iowa Association for the Abolishing of Intoxicating Liquors and Tobacco (TIAAILT), drinks with his students and lusts for Effie (they will later marry). Worst of all is the scheming and malevolent Charlie Barnes. “That was the nice thing about Chautauqua,” Barnes thinks: “—when you got involved with a woman, you could move on.”¹²⁵ The townspeople view Chautauqua as a “fine moral institution,” but everyone associated with the show knows better. Duncan’s circuit exists only to perpetuate itself—vacuous and commercial, it signifies nothing.

Scathing portrayals like this one had a profound impact on how historians told the story of the Chautauqua movement in general. During the 1930s, history professor Harrison John Thornton of the University of Iowa (then State University of Iowa) sent at least nine of his master’s degree students into the field to chronicle Chautauqua’s career in the state. Thornton may have intended the project as a study in folklore or rural sociology. His own publications on Chautauqua’s history, which included numerous articles and an unpublished one-thousand-page tome that presently sits in the Chautauqua Institution Archives, presented its subject in a relatively positive light. However, his students, like the youthful cynics portrayed in *O’Chautauqua*, told a different story.¹²⁶ Some dredged up evidence of double-dealing and personal profiteering from retailers, land developers, and bankers—the latter occupation in especially ill repute in the Midwest during the Depression. In essence, Thornton’s team confirmed a milder version of *O’Chautauqua*.

Modernist novelists, social critics, and Iowa graduate students confirmed what professors in the 1890s suspected. “Chautauqua,” as one MIT professor had put it, “is not associated with the highest academic scholarship.”¹²⁷ It is possible that some academics never forgave Chautauqua for its dalliance with political mavericks like Ely, who used Chautauqua’s educational system to spread Christian Socialism among the unwashed middle classes. And then there was Chautauqua’s association with William Jennings Bryan, whose attacks on evolutionary scientists in the 1910s and 1920s earned him few fans in academia. All of this confirmed that Chautauqua was an edifying trinket at best or, at worst, a byproduct of the crude

hucksterism of the early twentieth century. The Chautauqua Institution survived the doldrums and even experienced a renaissance in the 1980s and 1990s. But its internal histories remained awkwardly disconnected from its toxic children. This book represents a reunion, of sorts, for the long estranged branches of the Chautauqua family.

Conclusion

To “true” Chautauquans like Jasper Douthit, the circuits typified the crass commercialism of the age. But the reality is more complex. The circuits both continued and departed from the assembly tradition. Like the assemblies, the circuits expressed the civic pride and communitarian values of the town. Its slate of musicians, comedians, politicians, inspirational speakers, and theatrical performers differed only in degrees from what many of the assemblies were offering in the 1890s. However, the assemblies had always been more than merely a media for the dissemination of culture. They had also offered a vision of democracy in an industrial society. As towns and small cities built libraries and parks—in essence, as governments assumed the mantle of liberalism from Chautauqua—the circuits were free to dispense with it. What remained was a medium for the distribution of middlebrow culture, one separated from the democratic forum that once gave it social meaning, increasingly dependent on the ephemera of consumer culture, and easily co-opted by a state operating with or without public approval. As a technology of mass culture, the circuit more closely resembled its electronic successors of the twentieth century—radio, silent movies, talkies, television, and the Internet—than its Lyceum predecessor of the nineteenth.

Chautauqua’s devaluation in the 1920s had much to do with the Scopes “Monkey” Trial and the subsequent death of William Jennings Bryan. Scopes defined Fundamentalism as a rural, southern movement. Historian Edward Larson does not overstate the matter when he concludes that after the Scopes Trial, “elite American society stopped taking fundamentalists and their ideas seriously.”¹²⁸ More important, William Jennings Bryan’s death at the trial’s conclusion deprived the Chautauqua circuits of their foremost moneymaker. It also deprived traditional Chautauquans of a living link to the Social Gospel. His vision of a perfectible society drew not on the Enlightenment tradition of science and reason but on a postmillen-

nial sentimentality that assumed that all social reform rested on the moral perfectibility of the human heart. By translating John Heyl Vincent's liberal creed into the modern age and pushing the Democratic Party to make good on its liberal promise, Bryan (and the Chautauqua movement he helped sustain) had left a powerful and lasting legacy.

Temporarily commandeered by the war-mobilization effort, the tent shows returned to edifying fare in the summer of 1920. But their relationship to the public sphere had changed. While the assemblies had enjoyed protection from taxation and special powers as nonprofit subsidiaries of an increasingly proactive state, the federal government in the 1920s began to treat the circuits as corporate media networks. It imposed an "amusement tax" on the circuits immediately after the war. Only Pearson and Ellison, then operating on a nonprofit basis, were exempt from the duty. In 1922 the circuit managers almost accepted a buy-out offer from a consortium of Wall Street investors. They may have regretted their decision not to take the offer. While millions of Americans in twelve thousand towns saw circuit entertainment during the Jubilee summer of 1924, the fiftieth anniversary of the original assembly, thousands of towns refused to sign contracts for the following year. The 1925 death of William Jennings Bryan, a mainstay of the circuits, seemed to seal their fate. Circuits declined in popularity until the Depression of the early 1930s, when the last tent shows folded. "An old order had passed," wrote one observer, "and Chautauqua, its purpose served, was passing with it."¹²⁹

Conclusion:
Failure Through Success?

When you've got a Chautauqua in your head,
it's extremely hard not to inflict it on innocent people.
—Robert Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974)

Where, if not here, can we join and animate the national conversation
about the evolving American experiment?
—Chautauqua Institution President Scott McVey (2001)

Much more could be said about the circuit Chautauquas of the 1920s. As the first nonprint media empire of the twentieth century, and precursors to radio and television, the circuits offer fruitful opportunities for research into the relationship between consumerism and political culture. The circuits left a wealth of published and unpublished papers, archival documents, and unrecorded oral histories, all of which deserve a more extensive and critical treatment than they have yet received. Alas, we have space in this volume for only the roughest outline. This is not to imply that the circuits were culturally unimportant. Rather, the brief treatment they receive here reflects my sense that the most significant contributions to democratic thought carried out under the Chautauqua name—the democratization of leisure, the dechristianization of public culture, and the popularization of modern liberalism—had already manifested before the circuits' ascendance. By 1920, the assemblies and circles had already made their dynamic and partially successful intervention into U.S. culture.

By 1920, the Chautauqua moment had come to an end, in large part because of a paradigm shift in the history of useful knowledge in the United States. Many of those in pursuit of “self-education,” “self-improvement,” or “culture-study” in the nineteenth century, especially women and rural nonelites, came to those activities with little schooling or prior experience with formal education. But compulsory attendance had dramatically increased high school attendance, and the rise of state universities, trade schools, and normal colleges had vastly expanded the availability of higher education. The proponents of useful knowledge adopted new approaches with revealing titles: “adult education” or “continuing education,” phrases designed to encompass those who had already been educated but desired more. Meanwhile, the burden of promoting adult education passed from

voluntary associations to bureaucratic organizations. The cultural value of self-culture had not diminished much, if at all; in fact, the demand for adult education remained powerful enough to attract the attention of the managers of charitable foundations, New York publishers, universities, and municipalities.

To the new professionals, adult education, with its tangible rewards for the cause of participatory democracy, tolerant debate, and informed citizenship, was too vital to be left to amateurs. In the 1910s staffers at Ford's Sociology Department advised a system of education to teach Five-Dollar Men how to become better husbands, fathers, and workers. Ford was not alone in its concern. As Andrew Carnegie's interest in libraries waned in the 1910s, the Carnegie Corporation funded a series of studies on the effect of schools on immigrant assimilation. The tip of the adult-education iceberg surfaced in 1924, when Carnegie's board of trustees asked Frederick Kappel to convene a panel of experts on adult education in the United States. The panel included Dorothy Canfield Fisher, later named to the Book-of-the-Month Club's Board of Judges, and Eduard Lindeman, son of Norwegian immigrants and scholar of education. From this conference sprang the American Association for Adult Education (AAAE) in 1926, a clearinghouse for the activities of labor groups, women's organizations, prison educators, and industrial schools.

In Lindeman, adult education found its philosopher. Spruced with quotations from Friedrich Nietzsche, John Dewey, and George Santayana, *The Meaning of Adult Education*, published to coincide with the AAAE's founding in 1926, revealed the influence of contemporary critics Walter Lippmann and Thorstein Veblen. But against their technocratic solution to the dilemmas of modernity, Lindeman offered a pure and authentic revival of self-education, a "modern quest for life's meaning," a "revolution of the mind." Here, Lindeman displayed an older, progressive faith in the capacity of ordinary people, even laborers facing a soul-crushing work regimen, to achieve spiritual renewal. "Labor will come into its own," wrote Lindeman, "when workers discover better motives for production and finer meanings for life." Adult education would empower human creativity to ignore Veblen's machine mentality and the ticking of Frederick Taylor's stopwatch. In his critique of specialization, Lindeman's call for "smaller collective units" as an alternative to mass society, and his perhaps naive expectation that labor would prefer adult education over direct action reached back to a modified version of Chautauqua for inspiration, offering

adult education as a means of reestablishing core meanings in a modern age.¹

Since 1874 Chautauqua had tried to reconcile democratic ideals with the realities of corporate capitalism. Fueled by an ecumenical form of Christianity, Chautauquans reconceived the state as “the instrument through which men can express their faith in God in terms of social service” and articulated the principle that would shape modern liberalism—some human needs, like nature conservation, primary education, and freedom from corporate monopoly, were too important to be left to the market.² What they heard from the podium and read in CLSC publications reminded them that the age of the individual was over. Chautauqua made grandiose promises—that scientific endeavor only amplified the great themes of religion; that Social Gospel principles could solve the great ills of an industrial polity; and that government, properly led, had a positive role in saving people from their own foibles. In the new era, well-informed and godly citizens, acting in concert, would oversee large institutions that efficiently satisfied social needs. They created new public institutions, granted certain immunities and powers by the state, that served as both the means and ends of the liberal creed. With their best-kept lawn awards, neighborhood advocacy, women’s clubs, and preference for proactive municipal governance, the assemblies formed a powerful auxiliary to Progressive reform between 1900 and 1920.

The early-twentieth-century battle between “true” Chautauquans and the circuits was less a war between liberalism and its alternatives than it was a war *within* liberalism over its meaning and direction. The battle was, in part, generational. Lewis Miller, John Heyl Vincent, Jasper Douthit, and Max Hark represented an earlier generation of liberal reformers. Spurred by the postmillennial enthusiasm and revitalized nationalism that followed the North’s victory in the Civil War, these men strove to make the Christian Republic a reality. In the early 1900s mass urbanization and immigration had rendered such visions anachronistic. A new generation of liberal reformers, weaned during the labor/capital battles of the 1880s and 1890s, inherited moral and racial codes from their forbears—but pursued their goals with greater technical sophistication. At the assembly of the 1890s many of the forces redirecting religion into the private realm could be found in concentrated form: suburbanization, professionalization, consumerism, privatized religion, militaristic nationalism, and anti-Victorian gender rebellion. Young women, especially, were finding other ways—such

as taking jobs in the emerging welfare state as teachers or social workers—to sustain their revolt against patriarchy.

Chautauqua's moment was over by 1920. The decline of its moralistic style of politics is, I think, indicative of a wider consumer trend in modern middle-class life. Public ladies had given way to private citizen-consumers; public religion had given way to private spiritualities; and public space found new use as private residences. With the privatization trend came a growing reliance on the marketers of mass culture, themselves agents of huge and unaccountable corporations. But middle-class folks did not surrender to consumerism. For the remainder of the twentieth century, the expanded scope of state power to promote social justice—a notion that Chautauqua made palatable—curbed corporate excess in the 1930s, addressed the long-ignored promise of racial equality in the 1960s, and in manifold other ways transformed social relations in the United States. Hence, I find much to lament and to celebrate in the demise of the Chautauqua movement. On the one hand, it typified the loss of individual autonomy in a mass society. However, it also paved the way for a period of meaningful—if agonizingly slow and unfinished—democratic reform.

Twentieth-century Chautauquans continued to attend church and draw inspiration from religious and spiritual sources. However, they were less likely to drape their liberal reform efforts in religious language. Rather, Chautauqua reinvented itself as a citizenship training center and a free forum for democratic dialogue. If Chautauqua was no longer needed to produce Protestants, it would at least produce citizens rooted in moral truth and capable of contributing positively to the liberal state. As faith increasingly manifested itself implicitly through personal conscience rather than explicitly through public discourse, the liberal creed was subsumed into the publicly secular brand of liberalism that would define much of twentieth-century U.S. politics. In an age of a dechristianizing public culture and a pluralizing religious landscape, the religious impulses that had fueled this experiment on the banks of a lake in western New York cut new channels—most of them bypassing Chautauqua—through the reordered patterns of domestic and political life.

Although Chautauqua's moment in U.S. history was brief, cultural activities under its name have continued unabated since the experiment of 1874. The Institution refused to close its doors during the Depression, despite a devastating debt problem caused by overbuilding. Only a last-minute gambit from industrialist John D. Rockefeller in 1936 saved the In-

stitution from foreclosure.³ The Institution survived to host some of the twentieth-century's notable cultural events: George Gershwin composed his *Concerto in F* at Chautauqua in 1925, and in 1936 Franklin D. Roosevelt delivered his "I Hate War" speech from the floor of the Amphitheater. Across its stage passed some of the century's most important shapers of opinion, including Upton Sinclair, Henry Ford, Amelia Earhardt (who landed a plane on the golf course in 1929), Karl Menninger, Harry Hopkins, Thurgood Marshall, Ralph Bunche, and President Gerald Ford. If it failed to rally white northerners to the aid of tormented civil-rights advocates in the South during the 1950s and 1960s, or send people to the streets to protest an unpopular war in Southeast Asia, Chautauqua at least provided a safe space to "discuss riots while remaining riotless," as Theodore Morrison put it.⁴ A remarkable forum on U.S.-Soviet relations in 1987 attracted national attention and an appearance, via satellite, from President Ronald Reagan. The Institution presently hosts 150,000 visitors a year, employs 1,300, and brings tens of millions of dollars into the local economy.

The Institution's renaissance during the "Morning in America" conservatism of the 1980s, however, dramatizes the changed atmosphere at the original assembly. While Vincent and Miller were forward-looking men who embraced progress, the current manifestation of Chautauqua is frankly historical in its approach. In 1974 Miller and Vincent were honored on the ten cent U.S. postage stamp commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the movement. (Barbara Walters, while announcing the event, stumbled over the word a bit, laughing it off: "I can say statistics, but I can't say Chautauqua."⁵) The beautifully preserved grounds recall a lost moment of premodern simplicity; lest any visitor forget that they have been time-warped to the Victorian Era, historical markers and a recently reconditioned museum are there to remind them. This effect, also, is part and parcel of Chautauqua's liberal legacy. Since the New Deal, and the subsequent decision to make the welfare state a permanent part of the fabric of U.S. life, most Americans are liberals in the historical sense of the term. The original assembly champions and preserves one strand of liberal thought, one rooted in the tolerant tradition of humanistic religion that arose from the Social Gospel. Chautauqua's liberalism has grown introspective, reflective, even conservative.

As the original assembly turned inward, its humanistic spirit and faith in informed citizenship were muted. Vincent considered the outreach aspect to be an indispensable part of the Chautauqua ideal. "Knowledge un-

used for the good of others,” intoned the Ottawa, Kansas, assembly, “is more vain than unused gold.” In this sense, the purest Chautauqua spirit resided not at the original assembly but in the thousands of ad hoc efforts to inform, arouse, and educate undertaken in the Chautauqua name since the 1920s, such as public radio and television, public lecture series, and some Elderhostel groups. In the 1970s the federal government started using the term as a moniker for its series of public humanities programs, administered through state humanities councils.⁶ The use of the term *chautauqua*, officials believed, would strike a balance between populism and elitism. On the one hand, it evoked a historically authentic (and uniquely American) tradition of spreading useful knowledge; on the other hand, steering clear of academic nomenclature would insulate it from charges of pedantry.⁷ In 1995 NEH director Sheldon Hackney modeled his “National Conversation” program, which aimed to inspire communities to begin dialogues about pressing social issues, on the Chautauqua idea. Although this program fell victim to political pressures, by 2002, the NEH-sponsored summer programs, many of which employ talented historical reenactors and mimic the traveling tent-style format of the circuits, continued to attract large audiences.

The revival of interest in Chautauqua aesthetics also coincided with the late-twentieth-century renaissance of the original assembly. Many of the neotraditional architects and urban planners who formed the so-called New Urbanist School found in Chautauqua an ideal model of community. Eschewing large-scale modern utopias and seeking relief from the tyranny of the automobile, New Urbanists have looked to the New England town commons, the nineteenth-century religious assembly, and the midwestern small town for inspiration. Chautauqua’s imprint was clearly evident in the New Urbanist town of Seaside, Florida (just a few miles from the site of the De Funiak Springs assembly), and the Disney company’s Celebration, Florida (Jane Breckenridge Eisner, wife of Disney CEO Michael Eisner, is originally from Jamestown), both of which restored traditional symbols of community like the front porch set on a narrow tree-lined street. “Just 30 minutes from downtown Orlando,” boasts an Orlando tourism website, “Celebration harkens back to a kinder, gentler era.”⁸ The yearning for authentic community has also been behind the scores of Chautauqua revivals held across the country each summer. Several ex-assembly towns have restored their amphitheatres and resumed cultural or entertainment programming. Other towns, having lost their assembly sites long ago, are busy

unearthing the communitarian tradition buried by decades of road building and residential development.

In some respects, Miller and Vincent would approve of these efforts to reclaim community. Like the assembly that sprang up on the shores of Chautauqua Lake in the early 1870s, these attractive places welcome public exchange, value family and education, and instill a sense of community. But I think Miller and Vincent would be troubled at the preoccupation with real estate values and class exclusivity (and because of the connection between class and race in the United States, *de facto* racial exclusivity) of so many neotraditional communities. During the season, the gate sustains Chautauqua's commitment to its educational program. But during the off-season, the gate symbolizes a growing trend, evident in suburban design as well as national immigration policy, to seal one's family off from a public culture that we are told is debauched and sordid. Even the original Chautauqua assembly, which knows better, has in recent years succumbed to the cynicism about public life and the temptation to relinquish control over social goods to the "natural" effects of the free market. The original assembly now struggles with questions whose answers will help define its legacy:

1. Does the community wish to resume its leadership role as a disseminator of useful information? Or will the community leave this matter to the market?
2. Does the community wish to take steps to become more racially, ethnically, religiously, and occupationally diverse? Or should this matter be left to the market?
3. If the community wishes to become more diverse, will the community make sacrifices necessary to ensure that there is affordable housing? Or will this area, too, be left to the market?

From its inception, Chautauquans were not content to leave such questions up to the exigencies of the free market. Gates, fees, and temperance laws, all obvious restrictions on personal liberty, were deemed necessary sacrifices for desired ends. Special breaks were given to ministers and layworkers—breaks that did not make economic sense and were in no way "natural" outgrowths of the market—to ensure that they could afford to rest from their labors at the many denominational houses throughout the grounds. And the assemblies were always in the real estate business, insofar as enclosing them created housing shortages that drove up real estate

prices and created an incentive to turn private homes into inns and boardinghouses. Left to its own devices—in a national and global context, as well as in the microcosm of Chautauqua—the market creates prosperity and wealth in ways that may or may not correlate to the values of a community. Although it ultimately helped legitimize the capitalist class system, Chautauqua understood this.

Chautauqua's prosperity has resulted in a strong educational program and sleek, freshly painted facilities. But its housing crisis has taken on new proportions. Since the 1980s hotels and boardinghouses that housed twelve families of moderate means were converted to condos housing only three or four wealthier families. As reasonable rentals disappeared, rental prices skyrocketed to thousands of dollars per week, ensuring that the average, middle-class Americans that Vincent and Miller courted, especially the ministers and teachers, could no longer afford to attend. Whether Chautauqua prefers its prosperity to have this effect or whether it will act—as it often has—to contain deleterious market effects is not clear. If the Chautauqua creed has imparted anything of value to U.S. political culture, it is this: the ongoing struggle to define community should not rely on government experts or unfettered corporations who wish to impose their will on the community, but on the democratically negotiated consensus of individuals who, by reading, listening, and thinking critically, have learned something about an issue and organized collectively to force modern institutions to be responsive to social needs. And thus, a new generation faces a struggle to save its ideals from the jaws of success.

Appendix A:
Independent Chautauqua Assemblies Founded
1874–1899

<i>Assembly</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Inaugural Year</i>
Chautauqua	NY	Chautauqua	1874
Lakeside	OH	Ottawa	1877
Ottawa	KS	Franklin	1878
Round Lake	NY	Saratoga	1878
Monterey	CA	Monterey	1879
Rome City	IN	Noble	1880
South Framington	MA	Middlesex	1880
Madison	WI	Dane	1880
Ocean Park	ME	York	1881
Mountain Lake Park	MD	Garrett	1882
Crete	NE	Saline	1882
Mahtomedi	MN	Washington	1883
Monteagle	TN	Grundy/Marion	1883
Fryeburg	ME	Oxford	1884
Waseca	MN	Waseca	1884
Carlise	PA	Cumberland	1885
Siloam Springs	AR	Benton	1885
Long Beach	CA	Los Angeles	1885
De Funiak Springs	FL	Walton	1885
Lake Bluff	IL	Lake	1885
Elsah (a.k.a. New Piasa)	IL	Jersey	1885
Acton	IN	Marion	1885
Excelsior	MN	Hennepin	1885
Canby	OR	Clackamas	1885
San Marcos	TX	Hays/Caldwell	1885
Vashon Island	WA	King	1885
Bay View	MI	Emmet	1886
Berwick	PA	Luzerne	1886

Glen Park	CO	El Paso	1887
Mount Dora	FL	Lake	1887
Dixon	IL	Lee	1887
Winfield	KS	Cowley	1887
Lexington	KY	Fayette	1887
Northampton	MA	Hampshire	1887
Sedalia	MO	Pettis	1887
Long Pine	NE	Brown	1887
Epping	NH	Epping	1887
Silver Lake	NY	Wyoming	1887
Albany	GA	Dougherty	1888
Salt Springs	GA	Douglas	1888
Fremont	NE	Dodge	1888
Lake George Village	NY	Warren	1888
Redondo Beach	CA	Los Angeles	1889
Colfax	IA	Jasper	1889
Council Bluffs	IA	Pottawattamie	1889
Beatrice	NE	Gage	1889
Big Stone City	SD	Grant	1889
Hot Springs	SD	Fall River	1889
Georgetown	TX	Williamson	1889
Lake Tahoe	CA	El Dorado	1890
Glen Echo	MD	Montgomery	1890
Clarion	PA	Clarion	1890
Ridgeview	PA	Dauphin	1890
Chester	IL	Randolph	1891
Shelbyville			
(Lithia Springs)	IL	Shelby	1891
Ruston	LA	Lincoln	1891
Epworth Heights	OH	Clermont	1891
Clatsop	OR	Clatsop	1891
Madison	SD	Lake	1891
Austin	TX	Travis/Williamson	1891
Waterloo	IA	Blackhawk	1892
Northport	ME	Waldo	1892
Crystal Springs	MS	Copiah	1892
Mount Gretna	PA	Lebanon	1892
Talladega	AL	Talladega	1893
Spirit Lake	IA	Dickinson	1893
Epworth Assembly	MI	Mason	1893
Muskegon	MI	Muskegon	1893
Devil's Lake	ND	Ramsey	1893

Plattsburgh	NY	Clinton	1893
Tully Lake Park	NY	Onondaga	1893
Ashland	OR	Jackson	1893
Detroit Lakes	MN	Becker	1894
Orleans	NE	Harlan	1894
Point O'Woods	NY	Suffolk	1894
Gladstone	OR	Clackamas	1894
Havana	IL	Mason	1895
Remington	IN	Jasper	1895
Salem	NE	Richardson	1895
Findley Lake	NY	Chautauqua	1895
Clear Lake	IA	Cerro Gordo	1896
Urbana	IL	Champaign	1896
Maysville	MO	Dekalb	1896
Lincoln	NE	Lancaster	1896
Binghamton	NY	Broome	1896
Eagles Mere	PA	Sullivan	1896
Burlington	IA	Des Moines	1897
Clarinda	IA	Page	1897
Petersburg	IL	Menard	1897
Cawker City	KS	Mitchell	1897
Carthage	MO	Jasper	1897
Franklin (now Chautauqua)	OH	Coshocton	1897
Marinette	WI	Marinette	1897
Boulder	CO	Boulder	1898
Pontiac	IL	Livingston	1898
Chetek	WI	Barron	1898
Delevan	WI	Walworth	1898
Allerton	IA	Wayne	1899
Lake Orion	MI	Oakland	1899
Smithville	OH	Wayne	1899
Waxahachie	TX	Ellis	1899

SOURCE: Bibliography, "Assemblies and Circles: Books, Chapters, and Articles" and "Assemblies and Circles: Theses and Dissertations." See also Andrew C. Rieser, "Canopy of Culture: Chautauqua and the Renegotiation of Middle-Class Authority, 1874-1919" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999), bibliography, "Assemblies and Circles by State," pp. 494-500.

Appendix B:
CLSC Incoming Class Enrollment and Graduates,
1874-1914

<i>Year</i>	<i>Incoming Class Enrollment</i>	<i>Graduates</i>
1878	8000 ¹	
1879	9000	
1880	6000	
1881	10000 ²	
1882	14000 ³	1714
1883	18000 ⁴	1298
1884	20000 ⁵	1470
1885	18375 ⁶	1299
1886	16750 ⁷	4048
1887	15125 ⁸	4468
1888	13500	3973
1889	14000	3803
1890	15000 ⁹	3758
1891	12180 ¹⁰	3592
1892	9360 ¹¹	2422
1893	6542	1754
1894	8425	1870
1895	7870	1867
1896	6170 ¹²	1315
1897	4470 ¹³	658
1898	2763	930
1899	3741	831
1900	3871	583
1901	3121	478
1902	4702	555
1903	5514	608
1904	3325	541
1905	3218	601

1906	3968	588
1907	3802	531
1908	3242	420
1909	3300	552
1910	3300	574
1911	394	
1912	393	
1913	400	
1914	449	

SOURCE: Except as otherwise noted, Charles Knicker's summary of CLSC interoffice reports titled "Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, Total Enrollment, Total Number of Graduates, Total Class Memberships—1882-1914," in unbound dissertation draft, "The Image of the Christian as Seen in the CLSC" (1969), Manuscripts Collection, Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, New York.

Abbreviations

- AEB Arthur E. Bestor Papers, 1852–1962, University Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, Illinois
- CAH *Chautauqua Assembly Herald* (Chautauqua, New York)
- CHT Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas
- CCC William Brewster Nickerson Room, Cape Cod Community College, West Barnstable, Massachusetts
- CCH Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle, Pennsylvania
- CHS Cincinnati Historical Society Library, Cincinnati, Ohio
- CIA Chautauqua Institution Archives, Smith Memorial Library, Chautauqua Institution, Chautauqua, New York
- CSR Center for Southwest Research, Zimmerman Library, Special Collections, University of New Mexico
- CUB University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries, Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder, Boulder, Colorado
- CUL Olin Library, Cornell University Libraries, Department of Manuscripts and University Archives, Ithaca, New York
- DPL Dixon Public Library Vault, Dixon, Illinois
- DUA Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana
- GCA General Commission on Archives and History, The United Methodist Church, Madison, New Jersey
- HCH Hennepin County Historical Society, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- HLC Huntington Library, Pasadena, California
- HNM Historic Northampton, Northampton, Massachusetts
- HSP Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- ISHL Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois
- KPL Clarence L. Miller Family Local History Room, Kalamazoo Public Library, Kalamazoo, Michigan
- LIU Woodburn Mss. 1880–1914, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
- MHS Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota

MLD	Methodist Library, Drew University, Madison, New Jersey
NHH	New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, New Hampshire
NIU	Regional History Center/Archives, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois
NYPL	New York Public Library, New York, New York
OHS	Ohio Historical Society, Archives/Library Division, Columbus, Ohio
RBH	Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center Library, Fremont, Ohio
RCC	Redpath Chautauqua Collection, Special Collections Department, University of Iowa Archives, Iowa City, Iowa
SCH	Shelby County Historical Society, Shelbyville, Illinois
SHSI	State Historical Society of Iowa, Manuscripts Collection, Iowa City, Iowa
SHSW	State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Library, Madison, Wisconsin
SHSWA	State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Archives Division, Fourth Floor, Madison, Wisconsin
WCH	Waseca County Historical Society, Waseca, Minnesota
WRH	Western Reserve Historical Society Library, Cleveland, Ohio

Notes

Introduction

1. E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (London: Merlin Press, 1991), 7.

2. Merle Curti, *The Growth of American Thought* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1943), 595–97, 602–3; Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 140–44; James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 189–90; Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 117; Louise Stevenson, *American Thought and Culture, 1860–1880* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 157–61.

3. Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America*, 140–44; Thomas J. Schlereth, “Chautauqua: A Middle Landscape of the Middle Class,” *Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village Herald* 13, no. 2 (1984), 22–31; Trachtenberg, “‘We Study the Word and Works of God’: Chautauqua and the Sacralization of Culture in America,” *Henry Ford & Greenfield Village Herald* 13, no. 2 (1984), 3–11; Martin E. Marty, “Popular Education in America Today: The Chautauqua Ideal,” *Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village Herald* 13, no. 2 (1984), 60–69; Eldon E. Snyder, “The Chautauqua Movement in Popular Culture: A Sociological Analysis,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 8, no. 3 (Fall 1985), 79–90; Joseph F. Kett, *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties: From Self-Improvement to Adult Education in America, 1750–1990* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), esp. ch. 5, “The Homely Renaissance, 1870–1900,” 143–79; R. Laurence Moore, *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), esp. ch. 6, “Chautauqua and Its Protective Canopy,” 147–71; Jeanne Halgren Kilde, “The ‘Predominance of the Feminine’ at Chautauqua: Rethinking the Gender-Space Relationship in Victorian America,” *Signs* 24, no. 2 (Winter 1999), 449–86; Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), esp. ch. 4, “‘No late hours, no headache in the morning . . .’: Self-Improvement Vacations,” 101–26; Andrew C. Rieser, “Seculariza-

tion Reconsidered: Chautauqua and the De-Christianization of Middle-Class Authority, 1880-1920," in *Middling Sorts: Essays in the History of the American Middle Class*, edited by Burton Bledstein and Robert Johnston (New York: Routledge, 2001), 136-51.

4. Stevenson, *American Thought and Culture*, 229.

5. Theodore Morrison, *Chautauqua: A Center for Education, Religion and the Arts in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 163. "This is the best book we have to date on Chautauqua," wrote one reviewer in 1980, "but we need a more searching and critical study." Allen F. Davis, "Continuing Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (Summer 1980): 228.

6. See bibliography.

7. Reliable and well-written narratives of the Chautauqua Institution can be found in Jesse L. Hurlbut, *The Story of Chautauqua* (New York: Putnam's, 1921); Charles Robert Knicker, "The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, 1878-1914: A Historical Interpretation of an Educational Piety in Industrial America" (EED diss., Columbia University, 1969); Robert Louis Utlaut, "The Role of the Chautauqua Movement in the Shaping of Progressive Thought in America at the End of the Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1972); Alfreda M. Irwin, *Three Taps of the Gavel* (Chautauqua, N.Y.: Chautauqua Press, 1987); James Paul Eckman, "Regeneration Through Culture: Chautauqua in Nebraska, 1882-1925" (Ph.D. diss., University of Nebraska, 1989); Jeffrey Simpson, *Chautauqua: An American Utopia* (New York: Harry N. Abrams in association with Chautauqua Institution, 1999).

The title of Joseph E. Gould's *The Chautauqua Movement: An Episode in the Continuing American Revolution* (New York: SUNY Press, 1961) is really a play on words, a reference to William Rainey Harper's movement from Chautauqua to the presidency of the University of Chicago in the 1890s. One reviewer objected to "the misleading nature of the book's title. . . ." Frank Buckley, "Chautauqua and Chicago," *Minnesota History* 37, no. 8 (December 1961), 340-41.

8. See esp. Gay MacLaren, *Morally We Roll Along* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1938); Robert Case and Victoria Case, *We Called It Culture: The Story of Chautauqua* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1948); Charles F. Horner, *Strike the Tents: The Story of Chautauqua* (Philadelphia: Dorrance & Co., 1954); Harry P. Harrison, *Culture Under Canvas: The Story of Tent Chautauquas* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978).

9. One encyclopedia described Chautauqua as "somewhere between revival meetings and country fairs in spirit" and erroneously listed 1924 as its last year. Another mentioned the original Chautauqua and the circuits but left out the CLSC and the independent assemblies altogether. Judith S. Levey and Agnes Greenhall, eds., *The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia* (New York: Avon Books, A Division of the Hearst Corporation, 1983), 159; Eric Foner and John A. Garraty, eds., *The Reader's Companion to American History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1991), 158-59.

10. John S. Noffsinger, *Correspondence Schools, Lyceums, Chautauquas* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1926), 142.

11. Merle Curti, *The Growth of American Thought*, 595.

12. A note about the “middle classes”—and there were many middle classes, as historian Nell Irvin Painter has shown, “of many ethnicities and races”—is in order. I suggest that few cultural movements were more solidly rooted in the middle classes than Chautauqua. For men in the CLSC, the reading club and correspondence course, class can be interpolated from the hierarchy of listed occupations. Between 1882 and 1891 approximately 22 percent could be classified as working class or agricultural (that is, farmers, firemen, conductors, millers, and mechanics), 21 percent as clerks, with the remaining majority of 57 percent in middle-class professions (in descending order: ministers, teachers, merchants, students, bookkeepers, lawyers, doctors, and manufacturers). In a society in which the labor force was still overwhelmingly agricultural and industrial, a movement in which only 22 percent of the men belonged to those occupational groups can safely be characterized as a middle-class movement. Painter quotation from *Standing at Armagedden: The United States, 1877-1919* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1987), xxiv.

The definition of class used here, however, is not limited to objective determinations like salary, assets, or occupational status. A better approach is to address the ways in which one's position in a social hierarchy is formulated through experiences at work, in communities, and in political life and through symbolic reconstructions of that hierarchy in language and aesthetics. Important here is the distinction between class consciousness and class awareness, the latter term acknowledging the possibility of class perception that does not automatically reveal itself through conflict or economic self-interest. Historian Stuart Blumin, paraphrasing Anthony Giddens, identifies the middle class as “the one most likely to express awareness of its common attitudes and beliefs as a denial of the significance of class.” The term “middle class,” therefore, is best defined as a shorthand term for the favorable affiliation across lines of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and region between people whose mutually recognized kinship of status above laborers but below the elite often took the form of denying the existence of class as a legitimate analytical category. Stuart M. Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 10. See also Blumin, “The Hypothesis of Middle-Class Formation in Nineteenth-Century America: A Critique and Some Proposals,” *American Historical Review* 90, no. 2 (April 1985): 299-338; Dale L. Johnson, *Class and Social Development: A New Theory of the Middle Class* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1982), 24, 106; Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (orig. pub. 1899) (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 136-56.

Book-length social histories of the nineteenth-century middle class include Burton Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: Norton, 1976); Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America: 1820-1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978); Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); John S. Gilkeson, *Middle-Class Providence, 1820-1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

13. Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen, “The Chautauqua Movement,” *Cosmopolitan Magazine* 19 (May 1895), 158.

14. The terms *Progressive Era* and *Progressivism*, as they are deployed here, denote the oeuvre of urban and political reform that flourished in municipal, state, and federal governments from the mid-1890s to about 1920.

15. See C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962); William A. Galston, *Liberal Purposes: Goods, Virtues, and Diversity in the Liberal State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Michael J. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Historians Daniel T. Rodgers and Nancy Cohen have traced the roots of modern liberalism to the labor/capital battles by industrial polities in Europe and North America. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998); Cohen, *The Reconstruction of American Liberalism, 1865–1914* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

16. Journalist Walter Lippmann argued in 1914 that the inflexible moralisms and “simple rules of a village civilization” no longer made sense in a world of constant change and urban complexity. This is essentially the argument of Robert Wiebe’s seminal work *The Search for Order* (1967), which chronicled the collapse of nineteenth-century agrarian values and the rise of “an aggressive, optimistic, new middle class” of technocratic managers. Walter Lippmann, *Drift and Mastery: An Attempt to Diagnose the Current Unrest* (New York: M. Kennerly, 1914), 93–94; Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877–1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 166.

17. Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Society* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), 231; Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1958); Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1949).

18. This interpretation of modern middle-class culture departs sharply from the critique of consumerism developed by historians T. J. Jackson Lears, William Leach, and others. “Modernization was not a neutral or impersonal process,” Lears has written in *No Place of Grace* (1981): “it was primarily furthered by the dominant social groups who stood to benefit, however indirectly, from corporate expansion.” Managerial elites at the turn of the century were not innocent or unwitting beneficiaries of macroeconomic change. “Their response to personal frustration had unintended results: the revitalization and transformation of their class’s cultural hegemony.” In later publications, Lears has stressed the role of advertising and mass culture in creating “a new and secular basis for capitalist cultural hegemony.” Through advertising, the class values of Protestant elites were normalized as “American” values. In a similar vein, William Leach has argued that to “a considerable degree . . . no religious tradition” had the power to resist the seductive new neon advertisements and retail window displays that adorned the modern cityscape. T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 9, xvii; Lears, “From Salva-

tion to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930," in *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1920*, edited by Lears and Richard Wightman Fox (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 3-38, 4; William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 5. Lears has developed these themes more thoroughly in *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).

Recent critiques of secularization theory and its misapplications include Mary Douglas, "The Effects of Modernization on Religious Change," in *Religion and America: Spiritual Life in a Secular Age*, edited by Mary Douglas and Steven Tipton (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 25-43; Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

19. "Subsidiarist" is a word recently coined by historian Daniel Rodgers to emphasize that the emergence of modern liberalism entailed more than simply an expanded state apparatus, but a wider cultural and social consensus on the need to set limits on the market. Groups like the Salvation Army and Chautauqua were not governmental agencies, but they were the beneficiaries of enabling legislation that allowed them to pursue public goals relatively free of market interference. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 28.

20. Josiah Strong to Richard T. Ely, 17 November 1888, Ely Correspondence, Micro 924, Reel 2, SHSW; Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (New York: Macmillan, 1910), 97.

21. Moore, *Selling God*, 148. Works on the continuing vitality of U.S. religion in the first half of the twentieth century include Kevin J. Christiano, *Religious Diversity and Social Change: American Cities, 1890-1906* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Roger Fink and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992). On the Social Gospel generally, see Ronald White, *The Social Gospel: Religion and Reform in Changing America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976); Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America*; Susan Curtis, *A Consuming Faith: The Social Gospel and Modern American Culture* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); Paul T. Phillips, *Kingdom on Earth: Anglo-American Social Christianity, 1880-1940* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).

22. Jon Butler, "Protestant Success in the New American City, 1870-1920: The Anxious Secrets of Rev. Walter Laidlaw, Ph.D.," in *New Directions in American Religious History*, edited by Harry S. Stout and D. G. Hart (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 313.

23. See Diane H. Winston, *Red-Hot and Righteous: The Urban Religion of the Salvation Army* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999); Nina Mjagkij and Margaret Spratt, eds., *Men and Women Adrift: The YMCA and the YWCA in the City* (New York: New York University Press, 1997); Judith Weisenfeld, *African American Women and Christian Activism: New York's Black YWCA, 1905-1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

24. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 89.

Chapter 1

1. Huey Long has suggested that the Chautauqua idea was influenced by the Enlightenment-inspired religious separatists who founded the Oneida Community in central New York State in the 1840s. Insofar as the Oneidans—along with the Lyceum, mechanics' institutes, and Chautauqua advocates of later decades—were influenced by Enlightenment ideals of social perfectibility, the connection is real. But the more direct catalyst lay in the midcentury campaign to reform and modernize the Protestant Sunday school curriculum. Huey B. Long, "Adult Education in the Oneida Community: A Pattern for the Chautauqua Assembly?" *Journal of the Midwest History of Education Society* 22 (1995): 203–15.

2. Vaughan MacCaughney, *The Natural History of Chautauqua* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1917), 100–10.

3. B. Dolores Thompson, *Jamestown and Chautauqua County* (Jamestown, N.Y.: Windsor Publications, 1983), 11–17.

4. William M. Beauchamp, *Aboriginal Place Names of New York* (New York: New York State Museum, 1907), 38–39; quoted in Frank Chapin Bray, *A Reading Journey Through Chautauqua* (Chautauqua, N.Y.: Chautauqua Institution, 1905), 13; Lewis Henry Morgan, *League of the Ho-de-no-sau-nee, or Iroquois*, Vol. 2 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1922), 128; Thompson, *Jamestown and Chautauqua County*, 9. More Native American lore on the origins of the word can be found in a fascinating book by Mabel Powers called *The Portage Trail* (East Aurora, N.Y.: Roycroft Shops, 1924), 31–36.

5. The McGready story can be traced to the first accounts of Methodist camp meetings and continued throughout the nineteenth century. See William Tobias, "Camp-Meetings Described and Exposed and 'Strange Things' Stated" (1825), 5, SHSWA; Rev. A. C. Morehouse, *Incidents of the Early History of Methodism in England and America* (New York: N. Tibbals & Sons, 1881), 22–23. Other early revivals included Logan County, Kentucky (1800), Cane Ridge, Kentucky (1801), Carmel, New York (1804), Ossining, New York (1805), and Jonesville, Virginia (1810). On early camp meetings see also Charles A. Johnson, *The Frontier Camp Meeting, Religion's Harvest Time* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1955); Catharine C. Cleveland, *The Great Revival in the West, 1797–1805* (Gloucester: Peter Smith Publisher, 1959); Kenneth O. Brown, "Finding America's Oldest Camp Meeting," *Methodist History* 28:4 (July 1990): 252–54; Ellen Eslinger, *Citizens of Zion: The Social Origins of Camp Meeting Revivalism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999).

6. According to historian Nathan O. Hatch, these were "rootless and visionary preachers, spurning conventional religious establishments and genteel social routines, championed religious movements devoted to reaching people at large."

Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 55–56.

7. Tobias, “Camp-Meetings Described,” 11. On confrontations between Methodist circuit riders and Congregationalist ministers in New England, see Rev. W. I. Ward, *Yarmouth Camp Meeting: Its History and Its Leaders, Authorized by the Board of Managers, May 2, 1910* (Yarmouth, Mass.: n.p.), Yarmouth shelf, CCC.

8. E. W. Howe, *The Story of a Country Town* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), 33. “It does seem to me that the Mithodists air the only payple that can do any good among sich pagans as we air.” Edward Eggleston, *The Circuit Rider: A Tale of the Heroic Age* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1970), 101.

9. John Brinckerhoff Jackson, “The Sacred Grove in America,” *The Necessity for Ruins* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980).

10. Horatio Beach, *The Brockport Republic* (Brockport, N.Y.), 19 June 1857, quoted in D. Gregory Van Dussen, “The Bergen Camp Meeting in the American Holiness Movement,” *Methodist History* 21, no. 2 (January 1983): 69–89, 78; Galusha Anderson, *When Neighbors Were Neighbors* (Boston, 1911), 105–6, quoted in Dussen, “The Bergen Camp Meeting,” 77.

11. Caroline R. Siebens, “Camp Meeting,” (1963), 13, unpub. journal, Yarmouth shelf, CCC.

12. Historian Ellen Weiss counted seven major eastern camp meetings using the radial street designs modeled after L’Enfant’s Washington, D.C., a number confirmed by Kathleen Ann Frome. Ellen Weiss, *City in the Woods: The Life and Design of an American Camp Meeting on Martha’s Vineyard* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 32; Kathleen Ann Frome, “The Sacred and Secular Landscape of Chautauqua, 1874–1900” (M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, School of Architecture, 1988), 14. Weiss has included Lancaster, Ohio, in her list, although it should be noted that Lancaster’s debt to L’Enfant is indirect, as its design was based on that of Indianapolis, in turn inspired by Washington, D.C. John Franklin Grimes, *The Romance of the American Camp Meeting* (Cincinnati: The Caxton Press, 1922); Edward A. Leary, *Indianapolis: The Story of a City* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1971), 10–13. See also William B. Wiggin, “Plan of the Grounds of the Hedding Campmeeting Assembly, 1873,” Maps Collection, NHH.

13. Eslinger, *Citizens of Zion*, 225.

14. In 1872 a lay preacher from Kansas named M. V. B. Knox described how a “colored sister from New York—sister Smith”—helped him escape from “the pits” one day when she questioned him “till I saw the reason” for his depressed spirit. “This Afternoon,” *Proceedings of the Second Annual State Methodist Camp Meeting of the State of Kansas, Held Near Topeka* (Lawrence, Kans.: Republican Daily Journal, 1872), 25.

15. Methodism’s role in the evolution of antebellum middle-class culture is explored more fully in Nathan Hatch’s “The Puzzle of American Methodism,” *Church History* 63 (June 1994): 175–89, and in a book by his student, John H. Wigger, *Tak-*

ing Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

16. Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (orig. 1832) (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1927), 64-67.

17. These remote locations created a "natural barrier from the populous towns" and their "baser sort of fellows," recalled John Heyl Vincent. Vincent, *A History of the Wesleyan Grove, Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting* (Boston: Press of Geo. C. Rand & Avery, 1858), 30.

18. Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-class Culture in America, 1830-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), xvii.

19. Moncure Daniel Conway recalled seeing black Methodists behind the platform at a Virginia camp meeting, listening to the same preacher but conducting their own private ceremony. Benjamin Latrobe, America's first professionally trained architect, noticed a similar format in 1809. Conway, *Autobiography, Memories and Experiences of Moncure Daniel Conway*, vol. 1 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904), 27; Talbot T. Hamlin, *Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 319. On Methodism in the South, see Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (New York: Knopf, 1997).

20. The political consequence of evangelical faith is a matter of contentious debate among historians of antebellum religion, and it will not be resolved here. See T. Scott Miyakawa, *Protestants and Pioneers: Individualism and Conformity on the American Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964); Donald G. Matthews, "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process, 1780-1830: An Hypothesis," *American Quarterly* 21 (1969): 23-43; William R. Sutton, *Journeyman for Jesus: Evangelical Artisans Confront Capitalism in Jacksonian Baltimore* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998). Sean Wilentz has noted a "tightening of Methodist discipline" after 1815, which bound evangelical religion "ever closer to the creed of morality and self-repression." Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984), 85.

21. Rev. G. K. Morris, "A Night Scene at Ocean Grove," in Rev. E. H. Stokes, *Ocean Grove. Its Origin and Progress, as Shown in the Annual Reports* (Philadelphia: Published by the Order of the Association, 1874), 50-51.

22. Vincent, *A History of the Wesleyan Grove*, 190; F. C. Holliday, "Camp-Meetings of the Olden Times," *Acton Lectures* (Indianapolis: Central Printing Company, 1881), 21-34, 21-22, Camping-Acton, Methodist Records file, DUA.

23. "Long-Time Resident Recalls Past in Memories of Yarmouth Camp Meeting," *The Barnstable Patriot* (Hyannis, Mass.), 19 August 1948, 1, in Yarmouth Camp Meeting Collection, Scrapbook, Yarmouth shelf, CCC.

24. The railroad reached Yarmouth in 1863, Orleans in 1865, Wellfleet in 1870, and, finally, Provincetown in 1873. Irving W. Lovell, "The Story of Yarmouth Camp Ground and the Methodist Camp Meetings on Cape Cod" (1985), 27, 28-29, SHSW.

25. Charles A. Parker, *Pitman Grove, New Jersey, 1870-1900: Through a Tiffany Window* (Woodbury, N.J.: Gloucester County Historical Society, 1984), 192.

26. The Northwestern Iowa Methodist Episcopal Conference looked at five locations for their camp meeting in 1871. Only the one at Clear Lake had a railroad connection and the strong support of the local congregation. The first assembly was held there in 1873. Beth Ann Herker Schumacher, "From Camp Meetings to Memories: The Story of the Clear Lake Chautauqua" (M.A. thesis, University of Northern Iowa, 1985), 10-11.

27. Alice H. Manning, "Laurel Park Commemorates 100th Anniversary Aug. 26," and Alice H. Manning, "Northampton's Laurel Park, Peaceful Domain for Religious Activities," *Daily Hampshire Gazette* (23 May 1968), newspaper clippings in Parks-Laurel Park file, HNM. See Otis Cole and Oliver S. Baketel, eds., *History of the New Hampshire Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1929), 287.

28. On the debates over the Sunday use of New York's Central Park, see Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 310. On the Metropolitan Museum, see Larry Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), 182-83. On blue laws, see Morton Keller, *Affairs of State* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977).

29. The governor of New Hampshire estimated attendance at the 1866 camp meeting in Hedding, New Hampshire, to be ten thousand. Newspapers covering the opening-day festivities in 1872 reported crowds of eight thousand (at Laurel Park, Connecticut) and ten thousand (at Pitman Grove, New Jersey). Cole and Baketel, eds., *History of the New Hampshire Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 282; Alice H. Manning, "Laurel Park Commemorates 100th Anniversary Aug. 26"; Pitman Grove estimate by reporter for *Woodbury Constitution*, Parker, *Pitman Grove, New Jersey, 1870-1900*, 48-53.

30. "Fourth Season, Connecticut Valley Sunday School and Chautauqua Assembly at Laurel Park" (1890), Parks-Laurel Park file, HNM. Regrettably, the residents of Laurel Park today have to deal with Interstate 91, which roars by just a stone's throw from the front gate.

31. Almer Pennewell, *The Methodist Movement in Northern Illinois* (Sycamore, Ill.: The Sycamore Tribune, 1942), 273-77.

32. That settled the fight, though it did not entirely heal the wound. When a fire leveled the camp ground in 1905, residents blamed sparks from the locomotive for starting the fire. Some even considered a lawsuit. See Rosella Hayworth, "Acton Camp: Cottages, Chautauqua, and Catastrophe," unpub. ms., n.d., in Camping-Acton file, Methodist Records file, DUA. As late as 1933 Washington Grove still prohibited tennis playing on Sundays. Philip K. Edwards, *Washington Grove, 1937-1977* (Washington Grove, Md.: P. K. Edwards, 1999).

33. Grimes, *The Romance of the American Camp Meeting*, 98-100.

34. "By-Laws" in "Proceedings of the Annual Convention of the Cumberland County Sabbath School Association of Pennsylvania" (Carlisle, Penn., 1887), 5, CCH.

35. John Rodney Jenson, "A History of Chautauqua Activities at Lakeside, Ohio, 1873-1970" (Ph.D. diss., Bowling Green State University, 1970), 40; Lovell, "The Story of Yarmouth Camp Ground," 37.

36. Lovell, "The Story of the Yarmouth Camp Ground," 37; Grimes, *The Romance of the American Camp Meeting*, 51.

37. "Minutes, Centennial Campmeeting Assoc.," Minutes of 13 July 1894, 85, First United Methodist Church Records, NIU.

38. Lord James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth* (New York: Macmillan, 1891), 581.

39. The early minutes of the camp meeting association in Rockford, Illinois, are filled with agonized deliberations over how to pay the aggregate tax load: would the amount come from the operating budget, or would individual lot owners have to ante up separately? "Minutes, Centennial Campmeeting Assoc.," Minutes of 4 July 1879, 36.

40. Jon Butler, "Protestant Success in the New American City, 1870-1920: The Anxious Secrets of Rev. Walter Laidlaw, Ph.D.," in *New Directions in American Religious History*, edited by Harry S. Stout and D. G. Hart (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 298.

41. Daniel Walker Howe, "The Evangelical Movement and Political Culture in the North during the Second Party System," *Journal of American History* (March 1991): 1216-39, 1239.

42. On Methodist camp meetings after 1865, see T. Otto Neal, "Lake Junaluska—Heir to Camp Meetings and Chautauqua," *Methodist History* 11, no. 4 (October 1963): 17-26; Ellen Weiss, *City in the Woods*; Randall H. Balmer, "From Frontier Phenomenon to Victorian Institution: The Methodist Camp Meeting in Ocean Grove, New Jersey," *Methodist History* 25, no. 3 (April 1987): 194-200; Glenn Uminowicz, "Recreation in a Christian America: Ocean Grove and Asbury Park, New Jersey, 1869-1914," in *Hard at Play: Leisure in America, 1840-1940*, edited by Kathryn Grover (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992): 8-38; Charles H. Lippy, "The Camp Meeting in Transition: The Character and Legacy of the Late Nineteenth Century," *Methodist History* 34, no. 1 (October 1995): 3-17.

43. John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (London: Epworth Press, 1952), 6, 74, 11-12. Bishop Mathew Simpson's *Cyclopedia of Methodism* defined "Holiness" as the belief that mortal man is capable of "perfection of his nature by which he is infinitely averse to all moral evil." *Cyclopedia of Methodism* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881), s.v. "Holiness," author unkn.

44. Holiness advocates, it should be noted, were opposed by the Gradualists, who agreed with the general principle of perfection but held that it could be achieved only in the next life. See Timothy L. Smith, "The Holiness Crusade," in

The History of American Methodism, vol. 2, edited by Emory Stevens Burke (New York: Abingdon, 1964), 608-27; Charles Edwin Jones, *Perfectionist Persuasion: The Holiness Movement and American Methodism, 1867-1936* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1974); Melvin E. Dieter, *The Holiness Movement of the Nineteenth Century* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1983).

45. Lippy, "The Camp Meeting in Transition," 5-6.

46. Rev. George Hughes, *Days of Power in the Forest Temple: A Review of the Wonderful Work of God at Fourteen National Camp-Meetings, From 1867-1872* (Boston: John Bent & Co., 1873).

47. "The Sunday-School Missionary" (Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1908), 2, WRH.

48. Col. J. T. Griffin, *American Sunday Schools* (London: Sunday School Union, 1866), 7.

49. "Wisconsin State Sunday School Convention" (1863), SHSWA.

50. Silas Farmer, "Editorial," *Sunday School Journal* 8 (April 1870), 94.

51. This number includes the Chautauqua assembly. The others include the Cumberland County Sabbath School Association in Carlisle, Pennsylvania (1875); Camp Wesley on Silver Lake, New York (1877); Sunday School Assembly of Kansas and Missouri at Ottawa, Kansas (1878); Wisconsin Sunday School Association at Green Lake (1880) and then Lake Monona in Madison (1881); Cumberland Valley Sunday School Assembly at Lake Park, Maryland (1881); and Tennessee Sunday School Association at Monteagle (1882). See Andrew C. Rieser, "Canopy of Culture: Chautauqua and the Renegotiation of Middle-Class Authority, 1874-1919" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999), appendix A.

52. "Proceedings of the Annual Convention of the Cumberland County Sabbath School Association of Pennsylvania" (Carlisle, Pa., 1887), 4, CCH; "Statistical Report," "Proceedings," (1875), 6.

53. Rev. B. F. Alleman, "The Perils of the Youth of To-Day," in "Proceedings of the Annual Convention of the Cumberland County Sabbath School Association of Pennsylvania" (1885), 37; "Proceedings," (1885), 29.

54. Rev. Homer H. Moore, *Ida Norton, or Life at Chautauqua* (Jamestown, N.Y.: Chautauqua Press, 1878), 25.

55. "A New Camping Ground," *The Chautauqua Democrat* (13 July 1870), 1; "Chautauqua Lake Camp Meeting Association. Purchase of Fair Point by the Methodists," *Jamestown Journal* (26 May 1871), 4. See also Helena M. Stonehouse, *One Hundred and Forty Years of Methodism in the Jamestown, New York Area* (Jamestown, N.Y.: Parthenon, 1954), 31-33.

56. Moore, *Ida Norton*, 21, 22. Moore went on to stay at Chautauqua in the summer and write articles for the *Chautauqua Assembly Herald*.

57. See Kate Bruch, "Early Days of Chautauqua," Box 1, Folder 5, Mina Miller Edison Collection, CIA.

58. Ellwood Hendrick, *Lewis Miller: A Biographical Essay* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925), 160-67. The two-week program commenced on 4 August 1874.

59. Theodore Morrison, *Chautauqua: A Center for Education, Religion and the Arts in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 33, 34.

60. Moore, *Ida Norton*, 22.

61. Ocean Grove is the most massive specimen of the Holiness Movement. By 1872, 1,500 lots had been surveyed, 1,000 sold, and 300 cottages erected. Stokes, *Ocean Grove*, 10-11.

62. "Winnepesaukee Lake Assembly, C.L.S.C. Recognition Day, Thursday, July 23, 1891," in CLSC, Winnepesaukee Lake Assembly, 1891 folder, NHH.

63. "Hedding Camp Ground Centennial, 1862-1962" (1962); "Hedding Chautauqua, Summer School, Biblical Institute, Assembly. 1899" (1899), 27, Hedding Chautauqua Association folder, NHH.

64. D. Hamilton Hurd, *History of Middlesex County, Massachusetts*, vol. 3 (Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis & Co., 1890), 658.

65. See Rieser, "Canopy of Culture," 49-50, appendix A.

66. These somber events were soon put to music. Chautauquans Mary A. Lathbury and William F. Sherwin wrote the words and music, respectively, for "Day Is Dying in the West," now a standard in Protestant hymn books. Morrison, *Chautauqua*, 36.

67. Entertainment also came in a religious package in these early assemblies. Artist Frank Beard, who had served as an illustrator for *Leslie's Weekly* and *Harper's Weekly* during the Civil War, developed his "Chalk Talks," progenitors of the modern PowerPoint presentation, at Chautauqua. A small orchestra led by F. A. Goodwin provided musical accompaniment for various events and gatherings. *Ibid.*, 34-35.

68. Moore, *Ida Norton*, 21; Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, *The Story of Chautauqua* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1921), 47.

69. B. W. Gorham, *Camp Meeting Manual* (Boston: H. V. Degen, 1854), 137.

70. "Chautauqua Lake and Its Surroundings" (1875), reprinted in Arthur Wellington Anderson, *The Conquest of Chautauqua*, vol. I, (Jamestown, N.Y.: Chautauqua County Historical Society, 1932), 345.

71. *History, Legislation, By-Laws, Rules and Regulations of the Chautauqua Assembly. 1889* (Syracuse: Courier Printing Co., 1888), 40, Rules and Regulations folder, AEB. The New York and Erie Railroad reached Dunkirk and Westfield in the 1850s; the Atlantic and Great Western Railroad reached Jamestown in 1860. In 1887 the tracks to Chautauqua were extended south to Jamestown; in 1902 the whole lake rail system, which by then included Westfield to the north, was dubbed the Jamestown, Chautauqua and Lake Erie Railroad.

72. R. M. Warren, *Chautauqua Sketches* (Buffalo: H. H. Otis, 1878), 68-70. Ironically, Sunday is now the only day of the week on which the gates open and visitors to Chautauqua are admitted for free.

73. "The Chautauqua By The Sea. Second Season of the Long Island Chautauqua at Point O' Woods . . . July 14th to Sept. 2d, 1895" (Patchogue, N.Y.), Nassau County Museum, Long Island Studies Institute, Hempstead, N.Y. De Funiak Springs in Florida kept a Sunday moratorium on ticket sales, although I could

not determine whether it closed its gates. "Our Greeting," *The Florida Chautauqua* (Cincinnati, Ohio) 1, no. 1 (January 1886), 8, PA Box 31 41, OHS.

74. According to the 1891 constitution of the Pennsylvania Chautauqua at Mt. Gretna, no Sunday trains were allowed. But in 1893 Robert Coleman, the wealthy patron and railroad baron who had started the assembly, lost control of the Cornwall and Lebanon Railroad. When the new owners released a schedule that included Sunday stops, the assembly's board of directors met secretly to elect a delegation to negotiate with the railroad. Compromises were reached until 1896, when the battle began anew. This time, with pro-Sunday train forces within the board gaining strength, many of the members submitted resignations. Purged of its Sabbatarian contingent, the Mt. Gretna assembly accepted Sunday trains and never broached the issue again. Jack Bitner, *Mt. Gretna: A Coleman Legacy* (Lebanon County, Pa.: Donald Blyler Printer, 1990), 67, 125.

75. Hurlbut, *The Story of Chautauqua*, 23.

76. *Ibid.*, 32.

77. John Habberton, *The Chautauquans: A Novel* (New York: Robert Bonner's Sons, 1891), 259.

78. In May 1886 the legislature empowered the board of trustees to hire deputies to take the policeman's oath of service to the State of New York. Chapter 319, passed in June 1886, authorized Chautauqua's deputies to arrest those who forged or tried to pass through the gates with counterfeit admission tickets. *History, Legislation, By-Laws, Rules and Regulations of the Chautauqua Assembly. 1889* (1888), 40-41.

79. Warren, *Chautauqua Sketches*, 42; Hurlbut, *The Story of Chautauqua*, 44-45.

80. Moore chafed at Vincent's imperious attitude and hinted that he was not the only one of this sentiment. "I would like to see a change," he said to his companion. "Is this matter managed by a committee?" she asked. No, Moore concluded tersely: "It is under the sole control of Dr. Vincent." Moore, *Ida Norton, Or Life at Chautauqua*, 125.

81. *The Burlington Hawkeye* (Burlington, Iowa) (29 June 1899), quoted in Helen Gladstone Nau, "The Chautauqua in Des Moines County, Iowa" (M.A. thesis, State University of Iowa, 1937), 19; "As Others See It . . . The Hillsboro News Says," *The Shelbyville Democrat* (13 August 1903), SCH.

82. Richard T. Ely, *Ground Under Our Feet: An Autobiography* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 79-80.

83. Letters of Rev. E. Morris Fergusson to Edwin Wilbur Rice, April 1916, quoted in Edwin Wilbur Rice, *The Sunday School Movement and the American Sunday School Union, 1780-1917* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1917), 375.

84. "Chautauqua: Famous Summer Town on Lake Chautauqua, New York" (1898), SHSW; Paul M. Pearson, "The Chautauqua Movement," *Lippincott's* 78 (August 1908), 192.

85. "Dr. Talmadge's Address," *The Glen Echo Chautauqua* (Glen Echo, Md.) 1, no. 2 (18 June 1891), 2, CIA.

86. John Heyl Vincent, *The Chautauqua Movement* (Boston: Chautauqua Press, 1886), 5.

Chapter 2

1. Charles A. Parker, *Pitman Grove, New Jersey, 1870–1900* (Woodbury, N.J.: Gloucester County Historical Society, 1984), 185; Vincent, quoted in J. L. Hurlbut, *The Story of Chautauqua* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1921), 23. At least six of the independent Chautauqua assemblies were founded by non-Methodist church groups: Ocean Park, Maine (Free Baptist, 1881); Crete, Nebraska (Congregational, 1882); Plattsburgh, New York (Catholic, 1893); Dixon, Illinois (Lutheran, 1887); Lithia Springs, Shelbyville, Illinois (Unitarian, 1891); Petersburg, Illinois (Presbyterian, 1897).

2. On the gospel of good cheer, see David Strauss, “Toward a Consumer Culture: ‘Adirondack Murry’ and the Wilderness Vacation,” *American Quarterly* 39, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 270–86.

3. Vincent, *The Chautauqua Movement* (Boston: Chautauqua Press, 1886), 30.

4. R. M. Warren, *Chautauqua Sketches* (Buffalo: H. H. Otis, 1878), 47.

5. J. Max Hark, “The Summer Vacation,” *Christian Culture: Official Organ of the Pennsylvania Chautauqua* 3, no. 3 (June 1892), HSP.

6. On the nineteenth-century connections between class formation, tourism, and national identity, see John F. Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); John Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Anne Farrar Hyde, *An American Vision: Far Western Landscape and National Culture, 1820–1920* (New York: New York University Press, 1990); William A. Gleason, *The Leisure Ethic: Work and Play in American Literature, 1840–1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). National identity has been an especially important theme in recent scholarship. Sublime tourist attractions, according to historian John Sears, “suggested transcendent meanings across denominations, classes, and genders. . . .” Niagara Falls “offered a common ground to all.” Sears, *Sacred Places*, 6–8.

7. Thomas J. Schlereth, “Chautauqua: A Middle Landscape of the Middle Class,” in *Cultural History and Material Culture*, edited by Schlereth (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1990): 218–32, 223; David Schuyler, *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986). See also Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York, 1964); Gunther Barth, *City People: The Rise of Modern City Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, 1980); Leo Marx, “Pastoralism in America,” in *Ideology and Classic American Literature*, edited by Sacvan Bercovitch and Myra Jehlen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 36–49.

8. Earl Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1957), 134. See also Theodore Corbett, *The Making of American Resorts: Saratoga Springs, Ballston Spa, Lake George* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 1-11.

9. Thomas Bender, *Towards an Urban Vision: Ideas and Institutions in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 182-83.

10. The evolution of assemblies into places resembling planned communities calls into question the distinction, theorized by geographers, between the undisciplined land-use approach of the *subdivision* era (1870-1910) and the master-planning of the *community builders* of the 1910s and 1920s. There is little doubt that what Mary Corbin Sies has called the "professional-managerial stratum" of "architects, developers, housing reformers, domestic scientists, [and] advertisers" exerted their influence over domestic life between 1870 and 1920. However, the Chautauqua assemblies remind us that the emergence of this professional stratum represented not a sharp break from a crumbling tradition but an extension of a continuing process of adaptation to organizational and technological advances. Though technically subdivisions, the assemblies were in essence planned communities, at first temporary and later permanent, with zones for roads, stores, parks, schools, and churches. Marc A. Weiss, *The Rise of the Community Builders: The American Real Estate Industry and Urban Land Planning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 6, 40-41, 44-48; Mary Corbin Sies, "The City Transformed: Nature, Technology, and the Suburban Ideal, 1877-1917," *Journal of Urban History* 14, no. 1 (November 1987): 81-111. On the history of U.S. suburbanization, see Sam Bass Warner, Jr., *Streetcar Suburbs* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962); Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (New York: Basic Books, 1987); John R. Stilgoe, *Borderland: Origins of the American Suburb, 1820-1939* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

11. Continues the quotation: ". . . the decline of the assembly, may be dated from the moment that these two motives were divorced." Glenn Howard Darling, "The Chautauqua in Black Hawk County, Iowa" (M.A. thesis, State University of Iowa, 1936), 23.

12. "Eighth Annual Session of the Cumberland Valley Sabbath School Assembly" (1892), 3, CCH.

13. Vincent, "Chautauqua Document No. 1, A Brief Statement of the Chautauqua System of Popular Education" (1891), CIA.

14. "The Chautauqua Assembly," *Los Angeles Daily Herald* (Los Angeles) (2 May 1890); "The National Chautauqua of Glen Echo . . . Washington, D.C." (1890), 2, Chautauqua subject file, MLD.

15. John Habberton, *The Chautauqua: A Novel* (New York: Robert Bonner's Sons, 1891), 203; W. W. Willoughby, "The History of Summer Schools in the United States," *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year 1891-92*, Vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894), 937-45.

16. Ida B. Tarbell, "Bishop Vincent and His Work," *McLure's Magazine* 5 (August 1895): 240-54, 243; Stephen B. Weeks, "A Check List of American Summer Schools," *United States Bureau of Education, Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1894-95* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1896), 1485.

17. David T. Glick of the Edison Institute and independent scholar Harry S. McClarran painstakingly combed every page of every issue of *The Chautauquan* for references to assemblies, concluding that the number of assemblies operating during the summers of the 1890s varied from forty-seven to sixty-six. Glick counted a total of 292 independents founded at one time or another before 1912. McClarran, using a somewhat more liberal definition of an assembly and supplementing *The Chautauquan* with other published materials and his own archival research, estimated 351 total communities that developed independent Chautauqua programs. David T. Glick, "The Independent Chautauquas Then and Now," *Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village Herald* 13, no. 2 (1984): 42-51; Harry S. McClarran, "A Flying Fish: A History of the Independent Chautauqua Assembly Movement for the Chautauqua Network" (1994), 145, unpub. ms., CIA.

18. Austin, Texas; Boulder, Colorado; Urbana, Illinois; Madison, Wisconsin; Lincoln, Nebraska; Binghamton, New York; Burlington, Iowa; Waterloo, Iowa; and Plattsburgh, New York.

19. "Prospectus of the Colorado Lake Chautauqua Association" (1893), 12, 5, CHT.

20. Billy M. Jones, *Health Seekers in the Southwest, 1817-1900* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 189.

21. Siloam Springs, Arkansas; De Funiak Springs, Florida; Salt Springs, Atlanta, Georgia; Hot Springs, South Dakota; Lake Tahoe, California; Lithia Springs, Shelbyville, Illinois; Crystal Springs, Mississippi; Shelby Springs, Talladega, Alabama; Lake Harbor, Muskegon, Michigan. The Monona Lake Assembly in Madison, Wisconsin, rested on the site of Lakeside Water Cure, a sanitarium erected in 1854 and destroyed by fire in 1877. See Suzanne Julin, "South Dakota Spa: A History of the Hot Springs Health Resort, 1883-1915," *South Dakota Historical Collections* 41 (1982): 193-272.

22. "The Great Piasa Spring," *The Piasa Chautauqua* (Chautauqua, Ill.) 4, no. 2 (May 1906), 8, Old Salem Chautauqua folder, CIA; "1897. Hedding Chautauqua, Hedding, N.H." (Manchester, N.H., 1897), 5, NHH; "Chautauqua a Sanitarium," *CAH* 5, no. 19 (19 August 1880), 1.

23. Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961), 72-73.

24. Albert S. Cook, "Chautauqua: Its Aims and Influence," *Forum* 19 (March-August 1895): 686-706, 703.

25. John Rodney Jenson, "A History of Chautauqua Activities at Lakeside, Ohio, 1873-1970" (Ph.D. diss, Bowling Green State University, 1970), 46.

26. "Chautauqua Institute Register, 1882-1884," Elizabeth Thatcher Papers, CUL.

27. Helen Putnam Shaver, *Steps to the Heights* (Tuscon: Pima Printing Company, 1957), 37.
28. "Program 1903. Weldon Springs Chautauqua. August 14-24" (1903), 4, Chautauquas-Official Programs file, ISHL.
29. "Second Announcement of the Lake Bluff Camp Meeting Association" (Chicago, 1877), 11, Illinois file, CIA.
30. *The Chautauqua Magazine* (Austin) 1, no. 1 (June 1894), 12, CHT; *Albany Weekly News and Advertiser* (1 September 1888), 2, quoted in Doris Lanier, "The Early Chautauqua in Georgia," *Journal of American Culture* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1988): 9-18, 13.
31. William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1991), 146, 212, 235, 245, 257, 360, 364-65; Andrew R. L. Cayton and Peter S. Onuf, *The Midwest and the Nation: Rethinking the History of an American Region* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); Hal S. Barron, *Mixed Harvest: The Second Great Transformation of the Rural North, 1870-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).
32. "Prospectus of the Colorado Lake Chautauqua Association" (1893), 1-2.
33. On nineteenth-century boosterism, see Charles N. Glaab, *Kansas City and the Railroads* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1962); Don Harrison Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825-1870* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978); Carl Abbott, *Boosters and Businessmen: Popular Economic Thought and Urban Growth in the Antebellum Middle West* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981); David Hammer, *New Towns in the New World: Images and Perceptions of the Nineteenth-Century Urban Frontier* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Katherine G. Morrissey, *Mental Territories: Mapping the Inland Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).
34. Beth Ann Herker Schumacher, "From Camp Meetings to Memories: The Story of the Clear Lake Chautauqua" (M.A. thesis, University of Northern Iowa, 1985), 19.
35. Jesse Lyman Hurlbut's 750-page *Hurlbut's Story of the Bible Told for Young and Old* (Philadelphia: J. C. Winston, 1904) sold more than 1.8 million copies. Alice Payne Hackett, *Fifty Years of Best Sellers, 1895-1945* (New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1945), 104.
36. "East Cleveland Literary and Scientific Circle. Cleveland, O. Records, 1878-1882" (1882), 65, Ms. 389, WRH; "Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, Farmer City, Ill. Minutes, 1885-1886," 24, ISHL.
37. Darling, "The Chautauqua in Black Hawk County, Iowa," 3-4; Helen Gladstone Nau, "The Chautauqua in Des Moines County, Iowa" (M.A. thesis, Iowa University, 1937), 1-3.
38. J. L. Shearer to Kate F. Kimball, 20 May 1889, Folder 1, Kimball Correspondence 1888-89 Sa-Y, CIA.
39. "Chautauqua Assembly Annual. Official Organ of the Chautauqua Assembly of Southern California" (1890), 4, Rare Books, HLC.

40. "First Annual Lakeside Chautauqua Assembly. Marinette, Wis.—1897" (1897), inside cover, SHSW.

41. James E. Child, *Child's History of Waseca County, Minnesota* (orig. 1905) (Owatonna, Minn.: Whiting & Luers, 1988), 369-72.

42. Roland M. Mueller, "Tents and Tabernacles: The Chautauqua Movement in Kansas" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1978), 15.

43. Zoa Ann Worden, *Queen City of the Blue: Beatrice, Nebraska* (Beatrice: Gage County Historical Society, 1976), 60, 67. Census data from 1880 Census—Beatrice, Neb., Gage County, Vol. 5, Ed. 343, Sheet 20, Line 33; 1880 Census—Beatrice Neb., Gage County, Vol. 5, Ed. 345, Sheet 1, Line 6, Microforms Room, SHSW.

44. *History, Legislation, By-Laws and Regulations of the Chautauqua Assembly. 1889* (Syracuse: Courier Printing Co., 1888), 40-41, Rules and Regulations folder, Box 11, AEB.

45. "By-Laws of Mahtomedi Chautauqua Association, Adopted Sept. 6, 1887," *Mahtomedi Chautauqua Herald* 1, no. 2 (November 1887), 15, MHS.

46. "As Others See It . . . The Hillsboro News Says," *The Shelbyville Democrat* (13 August 1903), Microfilm 3, SCH.

47. "Fourth Season, Connecticut Valley Sunday School and Chautauqua Assembly" (1890), 11, Parks-Laurel Park file, HNM.

48. "Kalamazoo Chautauqua Assembly. Oakwood Park, Kalamazoo, Michigan" (1907), KPL.

49. L. E. Egle, "L. E. Egle Tells Lions Club of the Visit to Chautauqua Lake," *The Arcadian* (Arcadia, Fla.) (16 August 1928), 1, Florida file, CIA.

50. "The National Chautauqua of Glen Echo," 15, 16.

51. Frank Custer, "The Chautauqua: A major phenomenon that used to dominate what is now Olin Park," *Madison Magazine* 23, no. 7 (July 1981): 47-56, 53. Concessions to the Point O' Woods assembly on Fire Island, New York, are detailed in Madeline C. Johnson, *Fire Island: 1650-1980* (Mountainside, N.J.: Shoreland Press, 1983), 103.

52. *The Texas-Colorado Chautauqua Journal* (Denver, Colo.) 2, no. 5 (June 1900), 6; Harold F. Wilson, *Cottagers and Commuters: A History of Putnam, New Jersey* (York, Pa.: Maple Press, 1955), 15-16.

53. In 1889 a trustee of the Crete, Nebraska, assembly accused nearby Beatrice of creating a "carnival atmosphere," to which a Beatrice journalist responded with charges of poor management. Quoted in James Paul Eckman, "Regeneration Through Culture: Chautauqua in Nebraska, 1882-1925" (Ph.D. diss., University of Nebraska, 1989), 88.

54. Henry J. Fletcher, "The Doom of the Small Town," *The Forum* 19 (March-August 1895): 214-23, 219.

55. Jean Haskell Speer, "Cowboy Chautauqua: An Account of Its Origins in Central Texas, 1885-1890," *The Southern Speech Communication Journal* 45 (Spring 1980): 282-96, 289.

56. Judge R. M. Widney, “Kickers at the Chautauqua Assembly,” in “Chautauqua Assembly Annual . . . Chautauqua Assembly of Southern California. Fifth Annual Announcement. Redondo Beach, Calif.” (1890), 13, Rare Books, HLC.

57. “A Holy Row, All About the Chautauqua Assembly,” *Los Angeles Times* (10 March 1889). See also S. H. Weller, “Southern Chautauqua Assembly,” *Land of Sunshine* 5 (1898), 78–83.

58. Crockett Ricketts, “History of the Founding of Colorado Chautauqua,” *The Daily Camera* (Boulder, Colo.) (17 March 1926), 1–2.

59. “Seventh Annual Session of the Ames Chautauqua Association, August 10–19, 1910” (1910), SHSW; “Lake Bluff Annual 1882,” 11, Lake Bluffs folder, CIA.

60. “The Beauty of Location and Charm of Scenery of Sylvan Lake,” 1887 brochure quoted in Millard Owen, *History of Orange Township* (Rome City, Ind.: American Legion Post 381, n.d.), 68.

61. Owen, *History of Orange Township*, 59–61, 65; “Map of Grounds. Island Park Assembly” (1888), Rome City, Ind. file, CIA.

62. “Monterey Assembly,” *The Chautauquan* 5, no. 1 (October 1884), 28; Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West*, 114. For a partial list of assembly–railroad pairings, see Andrew C. Rieser, “Canopy of Culture: Chautauqua and the Renegotiation of Middle-Class Authority, 1874–1919” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1999), 402, n. 80.

63. “Good News for Old Salem,” *Old Salem Chautauquan* (12 August 1902), 3, quoted in Katharine Aird Miller and Raymond H. Montgomery, *A Chautauqua to Remember: The Story of Old Salem* (Petersburg, Ill.: Silent River Press, 1987), 19.

64. “Tourists Guide to Summer Homes in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Dakota and Missouri” (Milwaukee, Wis., 1889), 6, 18, 22, 26, SHSW; “Summer Resorts Along the Line of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway” (1897), 16, SHSW; F. A. Miller, “Among the Lakes of Wisconsin and Minnesota” (1906), 37–38, SHSW.

65. Accuracy with labels was less important than the marketing benefits of invoking the mythical West as a landscape of leisure. Rome City, Indiana, used the phrase “the Western Chautauqua” on its stationery; the *Sandusky Daily Register* claimed so for Lakeside, Ohio, in 1888; the 1899 program for the Rock River Assembly in Dixon, Illinois, claimed it had taken its place “as home of Chautauquans in the west”; and in 1902 the Chicago and Alton Railroad stated their desire to transform the Petersburg, Illinois, assembly into the true “Chautauqua of the West.” Island Park Assembly stationery in Folder 10, “Other Assemblies,” Kate Kimball Letters, 1879–1883, CIA; Jenson, “A History of Chautauqua Activities at Lakeside, Ohio, 1873–1970,” 114; “The Rock River Assemblian. Twelfth Annual Program . . .” (1899), 18, Rock River Assembly–Programs file, DPL; Miller and Montgomery, *A Chautauqua to Remember*, 19.

66. Richard E. Noble, *The Touch of Time: Robert Habersham Coleman, 1856–1930* (Lebanon, Pa.: Lebanon County Historical Society, 1983), 48–51.

67. Frank McDounaugh, Jr., "The Rocky Mountain Chautauqua" *Colorado Magazine* 29, no. 4 (October 1952): 255-65, 257.

68. Paul Wesley Ivey, *The Pere Marquette Railroad Company* (Lansing, Mich.: Wynkoop Hallenbeck Crawford, 1919), 209-74.

69. Frank N. Elliot, "When the Railroad Was King," *Michigan History* 49 (December 1965), 310-11; Willis Frederick Dunbar, *All Aboard: A History of Railroads in Michigan* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), 173, 253-56.

70. Robert M. Carter, "Forum on the Bay," *Methodist History* 6, no. 2 (January 1968): 50-58, 50.

71. Shaver, *Steps to the Heights*, 1-25.

72. Kathleen Neils Conzen, *Making Their Own America: Assimilation Theory and the German Peasant Pioneer* (New York: Berg, 1990), 8-9.

73. "Monteagle Sunday School Assembly. Program of 1886," Monteagle Assembly folder, CIA.

74. "Texas Chautauqua Association, Session of 1889. July 2-July 19" (Georgetown, Texas, 1889), 2, CHT. See Jane Brown McCook and Martha Mitten Allen, "The Texas Chautauqua Assembly at Georgetown," in *Georgetown's Yesteryears: Reaching for the Gold Ring*, edited by Allen (Georgetown, Texas: Georgetown Heritage Society, 1985).

75. "Hedding Chautauqua Session of 1902, Aug. 4-28" (Hedding, N.H., 1902), Hedding, N.H., folder, CIA.

76. D. Hamilton Hurd, *History of Middlesex County, Massachusetts*, Vol. III (Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis & Co., 1890), 658; Stephen W. Herring, *South Middlesex: A New England Heritage* (Northridge, Calif.: Windsor Publications, 1986), 85.

77. Vincent, *The Chautauqua Movement*, 47, 50. See also Vincent, "The Upper Chautauqua," *The Chautauquan* 5, no. 5 (February 1885), 284-85.

78. Vincent, *The Chautauqua Movement*, 168, 247. For more on the relationship between fraternal ritual and middle-class values, see Mark C. Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

79. "Bishop Sessums . . . A Great Sermon at Chautauqua in 1898," newspaper article (1898), reprinted in *Lincoln Parish History*, edited by Mary Frances Fletcher and Ralph L. Ropp (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Co., 1976), 112.

80. Richard Tithen, "1800s Religious Retreat Struggles to Stay Alive in Modern Times," *The Clermont Sun* (n.d.), facsimile of article provided by Cindy Johnson, Director, Clermont County Historical Society, Batavia, Ohio.

81. Mary I. Love, "The Mountain Chautauqua, Mountain Lake Park, 1881-1941," *The Glades Star* (Oakland, Md.) 5, no. 20 (March 1982): 385-401.

82. Ada Elizabeth Sisson, "A Chautauqua Journal by Ada Elizabeth Sisson," 1 July 1895, 38, CIA; Wallace Bruce Amsbary, "Reminiscences" (1945), 47, quoted in Abigail A. Hemingway, "Wallace Bruce Amsbary: A Social and Intellectual Case Study of a Chautauqua and Lyceum Circuit Performer from 1886 to 1921" (Ph.D. diss., Northern Arizona University, 1989), 19.

83. Monteagle, Tennessee (1884), Elsay, Illinois (circa 1890), Waseca, Minnesota (circa 1890), Glen Echo, Maryland (1890), Winifield, Kansas (circa 1895), Mountain Lake Park, Maryland, (1896), Petersburg, Illinois (1898), Marinette, Wisconsin (1898). Mt. Gretna's Hall of Philosophy was completed in 1909. For a cogent discussion of Chautauqua's mythical landscape, see Kathleen Ann Frome, "The Sacred and Secular Landscape of Chautauqua, 1874-1900" (M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, School of Architecture, 1988), 46.

84. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (1979), s.v. "Amphitheater"; *ibid.*, "Auditorium"; "Redondo, the Rare," *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles) (3 May 1890).

85. "Eighth Annual Session of the Cumberland Valley Sabbath School Assembly" (Carlisle, Pa., 1892), 5, CCH; Nau, "The Chautauqua in Des Moines County, Iowa," 9; Hurlbut, *The Story of Chautauqua*, 54; A. C. Folsom, "Pontiac," *The Chautauqua Journal* (Urbana, Ill.) 2, no. 1 (April 1900), 26.

86. Geoffrey M. Gyrisco, "The Changing Wisconsin Farmstead," *Buildings of Wisconsin* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming); Jack Bitner, *Mt. Gretna: A Coleman Legacy* (Lebanon County, Pa.: Donald Blyler Printer, 1990), 71-72. The Mt. Gretna auditorium stood for a century, until the roof buckled in a snowstorm in the mid-1990s. It has since been restored.

87. Findorff now dominates public contracting in southern Wisconsin. "Findorff: Accenting a Century of Success, 1890-1990" (Madison, Wis., n.d.), SHSW.

88. "Connecticut Valley Sunday School and Chautauqua Assembly. 15th Annual Session" (1901), Parks-Laurel Park file, HNM.

89. "Third Annual Summerfield Chautauqua. August 10 to 18, 1912. Summerfield, Ohio" (Cumberland, Ohio, 1912), 25, PA Box 279, OHS.

90. "Behold! I Show You a Delightful Land," *The Florida Chautauqua* (Cincinnati, Ohio) 1, no. 1 (January 1886), 14, PA Box 31 41, OHS.

91. John L. McKinnon, *History of Walton County* (Gainesville, Fla.: Palmetto Books, 1968), 358; Matthew A. Beemer, "The Florida Chautauqua as Text: Creating and Satisfying a Disposition to Appropriate Cultural Goods in Northwest Florida" (Ph.D. diss., Louisiana State University, 1997), 155.

92. The De Funiak Springs Land Company was for all intents and purposes synonymous with the Florida Chautauqua. The syndicate also set up ancillary companies to take the concession business, including the Citizen's Hotel Company, De Funiak Land Association, and Gulf Ice Company. McKinnon, *History of Walton County*, 361.

93. Rupert J. Longstreet, "The South Florida Chautauqua," *The Story of Mount Dora, Florida* (Mount Dora, Fla.: Published by the Mount Dora Historical Society, 1960), 111-25, 113.

94. The example of Lake Orion, Michigan, illustrates the process. Formed in 1899 as a means to promote the recreational facilities and land value of the resort area on Lake Orion, the assembly spurred the construction of hotels and boat-houses. The Lake Orion assembly was soon connected via a latticework of interurban railways throughout Detroit's suburban hinterland. When the assembly went

under in 1909, a consortium called the Lake Orion Summer Homes Company purchased the entire operation, liquidated its assets, and converted it into a quiet community of cottages. Richard Lee Waddell, *A Bicentennial Historical Sketch of Oakland County, Michigan, 1815-1976* (Pontiac, Mich.: Oakland County Bicentennial Commission, 1976), 67-77; Thaddeus D. Seeley, *History of Oakland County, Michigan*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1912), 5-8.

95. Thelma Jones, *Once Upon a Lake* (Minneapolis: Ross and Haines, Inc., 1957), 246-47; Ellen Wilson Meyer, *Happenings Around Excelsior* (Excelsior, Minn.: Tonka Printing Co., 1982), 53-54.

96. The Hon. Charles A. Partridge, *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Lake County* (Chicago: Munsell Publishing Co., 1902), 678; Virginia Mullery, *This Land of Lakes and Rivers* (Waukegan, Ill.: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1989), 36; John J. Halsey, *A History of Lake County, Illinois* (Chicago: Harmegnien & Howell, 1912), 490.

97. Federal Writers' Project, *Illinois, a Descriptive and Historical Guide* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1939), 410.

98. In the northern midwestern United States and in Canada, the white pine had been timbered and lumber was expensive, so recycling made good economic sense. Dorthy Turcotte and Jean Jarvis, *Greetings from Grimsby Park: The Chautauqua of Canada* (Grimsby, Ont.: The Grimsby Historical Society, 1985), 53.

99. Howard Emich, "The Fabulous Story of Chautauqua and Its Life in Marinette," *Marinette County Historian* 9, no. 2 (August 1984): 2-7, 3.

100. Summer colonies include Pacific Grove, California; Boulder, Colorado; New Piasa, Illinois; Northampton, Massachusetts; Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts; Excelsior, Minnesota; Bay View, Michigan; Epworth Heights, Michigan; Findley Lake, New York; Point O' Woods, New York; Lakeside, Ohio; Mt. Gretna, Pennsylvania; Monteagle, Tennessee; Delevan, Wisconsin. Residential suburbs or exurbs include Redondo Beach, California; Dixon, Illinois; Lake Bluff, Illinois; Petersburg, Illinois; Acton, Indiana; Ames, Iowa; Waterloo, Iowa; Mountain Lake Park, Maryland; Lake Orion, Michigan; Excelsior, Minnesota; Mahtomedi, Minnesota; Pitman Grove, New Jersey; Chautauqua, Ohio; Marinette, Wisconsin. Parks include Clinton, Illinois (state); Lincoln, Illinois (city); Lithia Springs, Illinois (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Recreational Area); Pana, Illinois (city); Shelbyville, Illinois (city); Glen Echo, Maryland (national); Waseca, Minnesota (city); Beatrice, Nebraska (city); Georgetown, Texas (city); Waxahachie, Texas (city); Madison, Wisconsin (city). The Austin, Texas, assembly ground is now a private school.

101. The national landscape is littered with assembly-related place names, including Chautauqua Park, Georgetown, Texas; Chautauqua Lake, Crystal Springs, Mississippi; Chautauqua Reservoir, Montgomery County, Ohio; Assembly Park, Tully Lake, New York; Chautauqua Road, Ashland, Oregon; Chautauqua Lake, Gladstone, Oregon; Chautauqua Drive, Lincoln, Nebraska; Chautauqua Road, Marinette, Wisconsin; Chautauqua Reservoir Road, Boulder, Colorado; Chautauqua Boulevard, Palisades Park, California.

102. Seymour S. Tibbals, *Miami Valley Chautauqua* (Chautauqua, Ohio: The Miami Valley Chautauqua Association, 1946), 37.
103. Quoted in Stephen Schlosnagle, *Garrett County: A History of Maryland's Tableland* (Parsons, W.V.: Garrett County Bicentennial Committee, 1978), 297.
104. S. D. Chaney to George E. Vincent, 27 March 1900, Folder 1, George Vincent's Letters 1890-1900, CIA.
105. Historian Thomas Bender's interpretation of Frederick Law Olmsted's suburban designs holds true for Chautauqua suburbs. "The sense of differentiated communal life that these neighborhoods displayed marks them off from present-day suburbs," he has written. "That the very things they held in common—religious, social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds—excluded Americans from their community, should not blind us to Olmsted's ideal." Bender, *Towards An Urban Vision*, 182-83.
106. R. Laurence Moore, *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 148.
107. Christopher H. Evans, Review of Phillips, *A Kingdom on Earth*, H-Net Book Review, Published by H-SHGAPE (February 1999), 3.
108. Owen, *History of Orange Township*, 59-65.

Chapter 3

1. Oft-cited members of these overlapping categories include E. L. Godkin, George William Curtis, Charles Eliot Norton, and Julia Ward Howe. Howard M. Jones, *The Age of Energy: Varieties of American Experience, 1865-1915* (New York: Viking Press, 1971); John G. Sproat, "The Best Men": *Liberal Reformers in the Gilded Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); Geoffrey Blodgett, "The Mugwump Reputation, 1870 to the Present," *The Journal of American History* 66, no. 4 (March 1990): 867-87; George Cotkin, *Reluctant Modernism: American Thought and Culture, 1880-1900* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992); Nancy Cohen, *The Reconstruction of American Liberalism, 1865-1914* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).
2. John Heyl Vincent, *The Chautauqua Movement* (Boston: Chautauqua Press, 1886), 114.
3. *Ibid.*, vii.
4. Jasper L. Douthit, *Jasper Douthit's Story: The Autobiography of a Pioneer, with an introduction by Jenkin Lloyd Jones* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1905), 167.
5. "Woman. Abstract of Lecture by Dr. Vincent," *CAH* 9, no. 18 (22 August 1884), 5.
6. Theodore Morrison, *Chautauqua* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 22-23.

7. Ellwood Hendrick, *Lewis Miller: A Biographical Essay* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925), 143.

8. "Memorial Service. For the Late President of Chautauqua, Lewis Miller," *CAH* 24, no. 22 (2 August 1899), 1, 4. Theodore Morrison cites Mount Union College as the first coeducational college, but that honor actually goes to Oberlin College in Ohio, which established classes for women and men in 1833. Morrison, *Chautauqua*, 25; Barbara Miller Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 22.

9. "Lewis Miller Accepts," *Akron Beacon* (Akron, Ohio) (4 September 1878); "Lewis Miller Speaks," *Akron Beacon* (Akron, Ohio) (11 September 1878).

10. Lewis Miller, "Chautauqua's 16th Opening. August 4, 1889," in Ellwood Hendrick, *Lewis Miller: A Biographical Essay*, reprint, (Princess Anne, Md.: Yesterday, Inc., n.d.), appendix pp. k-l.

11. See Carl Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative: Fourierism in Nineteenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

12. Lewis Miller, "Normal Alumni Reunion, History of Sunday School Movement. August 15, 1890," in Hendrick, *Lewis Miller*, appendix p. n.

13. Hendrick, *Lewis Miller*, 120; Morrison, *Chautauqua*, 24.

14. For more on the Akron Plan, see Jeanne Halgren Kilde, "Spiritual Armories: A Social and Architectural History of Neo-Medieval Auditorium Churches in the United States" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Minnesota, 1991); Kenneth E. Rowe, "Redesigning Methodist Churches: Auditorium-Style Sanctuaries and Akron-Plan Sunday Schools in Romanesque Costume, 1875-1925," in *Connectionalism: Ecclesiology, Mission, and Identity*, edited by Russell E. Richey, et al. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 117-34.

15. "Bishop Vincent Makes a Statement," *CAH* 23, no. 14 (3 August 1898), 5.

16. R. M. Warren, *Chautauqua Sketches* (Buffalo: H. H. Otis, 1878), 15-17.

17. Cornelia A. Teal, *Counting the Cost, Or Summer At Chautauqua* (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1889), 210.

18. Neil Baldwin, *Edison: Inventing the Century* (New York: Hyperion, 1995), 263-65.

19. Biographical sketches of Vincent include Sarah K. Bolton, "Rev. John H. Vincent," *How Success Is Won, Twelve Biographies of Successful Men* (Boston: D. Lothrop Co., 1885), 221-45; Robert Cochrane, ed., "John Heyl Vincent," *Beneficent and Useful Lives* (New York: Ward and Drummond, 1890), 146-59; Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, "John Heyl Vincent: As I Have Known Him," *Chautauquan* (June 1912); Henry G. Jackson, "John H. Vincent," in *Famous Living Americans*, edited by Mary G. Webb and Edna L. Webb (Greencastle, Ind.: Charles Webb & Company, 1915), 473-84; Leon H. Vincent, *John Heyl Vincent: A Biographical Sketch* (New York: Macmillan, 1925); Morrison, *Chautauqua*, 17-21; Bruce M. Stephens, "Mail Order Seminar: Bishop John Heyl Vincent and the Chautauqua School of Theology," *Methodist History* 14, no. 4 (1976): 252-95; Sonja Marie Stewart, "John Heyl Vin-

cent: His Theory and Practice of Protestant, Religious Education from 1855-1922" (Ph.D. diss, University of Notre Dame, 1977); Edward A. Trimmer, "John Heyl Vincent: An Evangelist for Education" (Ed.D. diss., Columbia Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1986).

20. Vincent, "The Autobiography of Bishop Vincent," *Northwestern Christian Advocate* (1 June 1910), 683.

21. Vincent, "Autobiography" (20 April 1910), 496.

22. Vincent, "Autobiography" (29 June 1910), 815; Vincent, *My Mother: An Appreciation* (Meadville, Pa.: Flood and Vincent, 1892), 19. "Women's gifts," Palmer wrote, "so long-entombed in the church, shall be resurrected" for the redemption of humankind. Phoebe Palmer, *The Promise of the Father* (Boston: W. C. Palmer, 1859), 345. See Charles Edward White, *The Beauty of Holiness: Phoebe Palmer as Theologian, Revivalist, Feminist, and Humanitarian* (Grand Rapids: F. Asbury Press, 1986).

23. Vincent, "Autobiography" (25 May 1910), 654.

24. Vincent, "Autobiography" (4 May 1910), 562; *Ibid.* (8 June 1910), 715; *Ibid.* (6 July 1910), 846.

25. *Ibid.* (8 June 1910), 715.

26. Francis D. Nichol, "The Growth of the Millerite Legend," *Church History* 2, no. 4 (December 1952): 296-313; Gary Scharnhorst, "Images of the Millerites in American Literature," *American Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 19-36.

27. Vincent, "Autobiography" (2 November 1910), 683; *Ibid.* (2 November 1910), 562.

28. See Jean B. Quandt, "Religion and Social Thought: The Secularization of Postmillennialism," *American Quarterly* 25 (1973): 390-409; James H. Morehead, *American Apocalypse* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978); Paul S. Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992).

29. Chautauqua hymnodist Philip P. Bliss captured the postmillennial moment in these lyrics to "The Winds Are Whispering": "The new apocalypse / We wait . . . the children of a king — / We wait, in Jesus' name / Beside these altars, . . . till our hearts / Shall catch the sacred flame." "Monona Lake Assembly, 1894," 9, SHSW. See Francis C. Tucker, "The Legacy of Philip P. Bliss: Early Chautauquan Musician and Gospel Song Writer" (1989), unpub. ms., CIA.

30. Vincent would receive honorary degrees later in life, including a B.A. in 1875 from Mount Union College in Ohio (Lewis Miller was on the board of trustees), an L.T.D from Ohio Wesleyan in 1870, an L.L.D. from Washington and Jefferson College in 1885, and an L.T.D. from Harvard University in 1896. Andrew H. Mills, "A Hundred Years of Sunday School History in Illinois, 1818-1918," in *Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society* 24 (1918): 93-196, 117.

31. Vincent, "Autobiography" (10 August 1910), 1008.

32. Stewart, "John Heyl Vincent," 52; Morrison, *Chautauqua*, 17-21.

33. Vincent's other influences included Henry Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1887), William Henry Freeman-

tle's *The World as the Subject of Redemption* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1901), and William Arthur's *The Tongue of Fire; Or, the Power of Christianity* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1859), all devotional works in the testimonial tradition and, in Arthur's case, bordering on the mystical. Vincent liked this book by William Arthur so much that he assigned it as a CLSC textbook.

34. Col. J. T. Griffin, *American Sunday Schools: A Lecture* (London: Sunday School Union, 1866), 9; W. F. Paxon, "The Sunday-School; its Present and Future Power," *The Sunday-School Times* (Philadelphia) 12, no. 28 (9 July 1870), 434.

35. Morrison, *Chautauqua*, 21.

36. John Heyl Vincent to George R. Cook, 20 September 1887, MLD.

37. Trimmer, "John Heyl Vincent," 3–4; Stewart, "John Heyl Vincent," 108–27.

38. *Ibid.*, 168.

39. The "Two Years with Jesus" was a two-year course that burned biographical details about Jesus's life into the student's memory with mnemonic devices, such as the four Ds—Dates, Doings, Doctrines, Duties. Teachers were instructed to make heavy use of the blackboard, emphasizing key words as visual indexes within ongoing biblical narratives. Wardle, "History of the Sunday School Movement in the Methodist Episcopal Church," 135–37.

40. The committee formed in August 1871 included two Methodists (Vincent and Edward Eggleston), a Presbyterian, a Baptist, and a director of the American Sunday-School Union. Edwin Wilbur Rice, *The Sunday School Movement and the American Sunday School Union, 1780–1917* (Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1917), 297–300, 305.

41. Stewart, "John Heyl Vincent," 142–71.

42. The scholarship on the Lyceum movement is aging and in need of fresh interpretations. John S. Noffsinger, *Correspondence Schools, Lyceums, Chautauquas* (New York: Macmillan, 1926); David Mead, *Yankee Eloquence in the Middle West* (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951); Carl Bode, *The American Lyceum: Town Meeting of the Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956); Richard L. Weaver II, "Forum for Ideas: The Lyceum Movement in Michigan, 1818–1860" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1969); Ronald Story, "Class and Culture in Boston: The Athanaeum, 1807–1960," *American Quarterly* 27:2 (May 1975): 178–99; Donald M. Scott, "The Popular Lecture and the Creation of a Public in Mid-Nineteenth Century America," *Journal of American History* 66 (March 1980): 791–80. For a broad synthesis of Lyceums and other institutional manifestations of Enlightenment thought, see Andrew C. Rieser, "Lyceums, Chautauquas, and Institutes for Useful Knowledge," in *Encyclopedia of American Cultural and Intellectual History*, Vol. III, edited by Mary Kupiec Cayton and Peter W. Williams (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2001), 351–62.

43. J. F. Hey, "Address on the Advantages and Importance of Lyceums" (Carlisle, Pa., 1836), 3, 4, HSP.

44. Quoted in *Providence Journal* (8 April 1843), as quoted in John S. Gilkeson Jr., *Middle-Class Providence, 1820–1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 81.

45. Bode, *The American Lyceum*, 167; "Annual List of Lecturers, Readers and Musicians, Season of 1875-76," *Northwestern Lyceum Magazine* (Janesville, Wis., 1875), 2. See also James B. Pond, *Eccentricities of a Genius* (New York: G. W. Dillingham, 1900), v-vii.

46. On learned societies and mechanics' institutes, see Bruce Sinclair, *Philadelphia's Philosopher Mechanics: A History of the Franklin Institute, 1824-1865* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974); Ronald Story, "Class and Culture in Boston: The Athanaeum, 1807-1960," *American Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (1975): 178-99; Alexandra Oleson and Sanbord C. Brown, *The Pursuit of Knowledge in the Early American Republic* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

47. Redpath Lyceum Bureau, Boston, Mass., to Kate Kimball, 28 August 1885, Folder III, Kate Kimball Letters, 1885-1886, CIA.

48. Arthur E. Bestor, "The Lyceum and the Chautauqua" (unpub. ms., 1912), Chautauqua Addresses, 1912-14 folder, Box 116, AEB. To my knowledge, Bestor never appeared on the Chautauqua circuit.

49. Albert D. Vail, "The Story of the Banner of the C.L.S.C. . . . August 12, 1882" (Boston, 1883), 9, RBH.

50. Vincent, *The Chautauqua Movement*, 108, 220, 31, 20. On the conflict between religion and science, see Bruce Kuklick, *The Rise of American Philosophy: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1860-1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

51. "Between true science and the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ," averred Vincent to his friend Bishop Matthew Simpson, "there is no antagonism." John Heyl Vincent to Bishop Matthew Simpson, 10 July 1878, MLD.

52. "Salutory," *The Chautauqua Magazine* (Austin, Texas) 1, no. 1 (June 1894), 8, CHT. On adult education, broadly construed, see Clinton H. Grattan, *In Quest of Knowledge: A Historical Perspective on Adult Education* (New York: Association Press, 1955); Malcolm S. Knowles, *A History of the Adult Education Movement in the United States* (Huntingdon, N.Y.: Robert E. Krieger, 1977); Thomas Kelley, *A History of Adult Education in Great Britain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1992); Joseph F. Kett, *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties: From Self-Improvement to Adult Education in America, 1750-1990* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

53. Vincent, "Autobiography" (10 August 1910), 1008.

54. "C.L.S.C. Popular Education . . . Program for 1882-1883" (1882), 3-6, RBH.

55. Ida M. Tarbell, "Bishop Vincent and His Work," *McLure's Magazine* 5 (June 1895): 240-256, 248; Vincent, *The Chautauqua Movement*, 3; Lewis Miller, "Introduction," in Vincent, vi.

56. Lyman Abbott to John Heyl Vincent, quoted in *ibid.*, 98.

57. Henry White Warren, *Recreations in Astronomy* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1879), viii; J. Dorman Steele, *Fourteen Weeks in Human Physiology* (New

York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1879), viii; J. H. Wythe, *The Science of Life, Or, Animal and Vegetable Biology* (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1880), 6.

58. *CAH* (3 August 1886), 4, quoted in James H. McBeth, "Darwinism at Chautauqua," *Methodist History* 24, no. 4 (July 1986): 227-37, 234.

59. J. Max Hark, *The Unity of the Truth in Christianity and Evolution* (New York: John B. Alden, 1888), 26.

60. *CAH* (25 July 1893), 2, quoted in McBeth, "Darwinism at Chautauqua," 236; Hurlbut, *The Story of Chautauqua*, 263. The 1893 brochure for the Austin, Texas, assembly concluded that the "present robust condition" of Chautauquans perfectly illustrated "the doctrine of survival of the fittest." "Prospectus of the Colorado Lake Chautauqua Association" (Austin, Texas, 1893), 12, CHT.

61. "Chautauqua Week . . . West Chester, Penna., April 15-21, 1914, Memorial Hall" (1914), 12-13, Chester County, Pa., Collection, HSP. Welbourn, interestingly, contracted with the same lecture bureau as Rosani the Magician (and juggler), and the two appeared together frequently. See "Lincoln Chautauquas. Osborn, Ohio. August 23-28" (1917), 13, OHS.

62. Daniel Walker Howe, "The Evangelical Movement and Political Culture in the North During the Second Party System," *The Journal of American History* (March 1991): 1216-39, 1231. See also Richard Carwardine, "Methodist Ministers and the Second Party System," in *Rethinking Methodist History*, edited by Russell E. Richey and Kenneth E. Rowe (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1985), 134-47.

63. Paul Kleppner, *The Third Electoral System, 1853-1892: Politics, Voters, and Political Cultures* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 221-31, 232, 349.

64. Vincent, "Autobiography" (3 August 1910), 984.

65. Vincent, *The Chautauqua Movement*, 1-3, 48.

66. Most leaders of northern Methodism after the war cast their mission not as "social action" but as social redemption "without reference to fine distinctions between the personal and the social, the temporal and the spiritual." Donald G. Jones, *The Sectional Crisis and Northern Methodism: A Study in Piety, Political Ethics and Civil Religion* (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1979), 3.

67. Jasper Douthit, *Jasper Douthit's Story: The Autobiography of a Pioneer* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1908), 15.

68. *Ibid.*, 81.

69. Boston was his Mecca. He met Unitarian luminaries Charles Eliot and Edward Everett Hale during a visit in 1875, and in 1876 he trekked into the New Hampshire mountains to meet Henry Ward Beecher. *Ibid.*, 148-49.

70. *Ibid.*, 11-12.

71. Having "stripped theology to its bones," as historian Lawrence Buell put it, Unitarians could exert themselves more forcefully in their sermons; they could "rely more on their wits." Buell, "The Unitarian Movement and the Art of Preaching in 19th Century America," *American Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (May 1972): 166-90, 177, 190.

72. Douthit, “Can a Jew Be Saved?” *Our Best Words* 7, no. 3 (30 January 1886), 4; Douthit, “Good Feeling and Good Action,” *ibid.*, 4.

73. Douthit, “The Social Purity Movement,” *Our Best Words Weekly* 3, no. 9 (2 May 1889), 2; “Keep Thyself Pure,” *Our Best Words Weekly* 3, no. 9 (15 June 1889), 2; Douthit, “Sullivan and Kilrain,” *Our Best Words Weekly* 3, no. 16 (13 July 1889), 4.

74. Douthit, *The Story of a Unitarian Missionary in Southern Illinois. An Address Delivered Before the Women’s Alliances of Chicago* (Chicago: The Chicago Associate Alliance, 1898), 18.

75. Douthit, “Purity in Politics. Our Duty as Citizens. A Lesson for the Hour,” 10 October 1880, Jasper Douthit Collection, SCH.

76. *Ibid.* Between 1832 and 1910, most of Shelby County’s judges, clerks, and mayors, along with fourteen of seventeen state senators, were Democratic. George D. Chafee, ed., *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Shelby County*, Vol. 2 (Chicago: Munsell Publishing Company, 1910), 684–70.

77. Douthit, *The Story of a Unitarian Missionary in Southern Illinois*, 16.

78. Douthit, *Jasper Douthit’s Story*, 158.

79. Douthit, “A Personal Letter to the Friends of the Unitarian Mission in Shelby County, Illinois,” 30 April 1897, Chautauqua—Lithia Springs file, Display Cases Box, SCH.

80. Douthit, “Sympathetic Strike. The Kind of Strike to Make,” printed sermon, n.d., in “Douthit Scrapbook,” SCH.

81. These groups include the WCTU, the Catholic Total Abstinence Association, the Methodist’s Committee on Temperance and Prohibition (established in 1892), and the Anti-Saloon League (founded in 1893). K. Austin Kerr, “Organizing for Reform: The Anti-Saloon League and Innovation in Politics,” *American Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 37–53, 38.

82. Douthit, “A Personal Letter to the Friends of the Unitarian Mission,” 3.

83. Douthit, *Jasper Douthit’s Story*, 198.

84. Brother Lamech, *Chronicon Ephratense, Transl. from the Original German by J. Max Hark* (Lancaster, Pa.: S. H. Zahm & Co., 1889).

85. See E. K. Martin, “J. Max Hark,” *Literature: A Weekly Magazine* 1, no. 41 (1 December 1888), 65–71; Robert B. Risk, “Editorial Introduction,” *Tributes of Esteem to J. Max Hark, D.D.* (1893), reprinted in *The Lancaster Daily Examiner* (Lancaster, Pa.) (2 September 1893), 8–13.

86. J. Max Hark, “Soul-Fasting,” *The Moravian* (28 February 1883), 130, Moravian Archive, Bethlehem, Pa.

87. Minutes of 28 April 1884, Minutes of the Provincial Elders Conference, 1881 to 1889; Minutes of 24 May 1886, Minutes of the Provincial Elders Conference, 1881 to 1889, Ms., Moravian Archive, Bethlehem, Pa. The chair of the PEC, Edmund de Schweinitz, found that Hagen had given “expressions to sentiments that were not only most uncharitable but also wholly contrary to the clear dictates of the Bible.” Schweinitz, undated ms., Hagen versus Hark, PEC Letters 1884, H-L, Moravian Archive, Bethlehem, Pa.

88. He chafed at having to “refrain from writing on subjects on which I have strong convictions, and feel that a church paper ought to express itself.” Hark to Schweinitz, 14 July 1885, Letters to the PEC 1885, Moravian Archive, Bethlehem, Pa.

89. Martin, “J. Max Hark,” 69–70.

90. Hark, “Public Spirit,” *Christian Culture* 2, no. 7 (September 1891), 100. A typical Hark editorial called for Lancaster to clean up the “tons of garbage . . . decaying in the back yards of our city.” J. Max Hark, “Editorial,” *Christian Culture* 2, no. 8 (October 1891), 114.

91. Hark, “A Familiar Talk on Books and Reading,” *The Pennsylvania Chautauqua Magazine* 1, no. 4 (January 1893), 107–16.

92. Jack Bitner, *Mt. Gretna: A Coleman Legacy* (Lebanon County, Pa.: Donald Blyler Printer, 1990), 65–67, 75; *The Pennsylvania Chautauquan* (Lebanon, Pa.) 13, no. 2 (January 1904).

93. “Chautauqua Extensions,” *The Pennsylvania Chautauquan and Christian Culture* 1, no. 3 (December 1892), 84–85.

94. “Our Extension Work,” *The Pennsylvania Chautauquan and Christian Culture* 1, no. 5 (February 1893), 149–50.

95. Risk, “Editorial Introduction,” 39–42.

96. Hall, “The Victorian Connection,” 574. Anne C. Rose expands on this theme in *Victorian America and the Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

97. Even Douthit, it should be noted, could be heard in 1889 railing against “the corrupt element and foreign element in the great cities that roll up the majorities against Prohibition.” Jasper L. Douthit, “The Rising Tide,” *Our Best Words Weekly* 3, no. 15 (6 July 1889), 1.

98. L. T. Townsend, *Jesuitical Influences on the Secular Press* (Boston: American Citizen Co., 1892), Microforms Room, SHSW.

99. Kimball’s figures may underrepresent the Catholic presence, as some respondents to her questionnaire may have refrained from identifying themselves as Catholic. “CLSC Statistics,” File L-9, CLSC Collection, CIA, as summarized in Mary Lee Talbot, “A School at Home: The Contribution of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle to Women’s Educational Opportunities in the Gilded Age, 1874–1900” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1997), 151. Of 952 Catholics enrolled from 1882–1891, 616 (65 percent) were men and 336 (35 percent) were women. In 1893 only 3 of the 307 CLSC members in Minnesota identified themselves as Catholic. Roll book for Minnesota, “CLSC Registration Books (1893),” Microfilm Roll 155L, CIA.

100. Also irksome to Catholics was John Hurst’s slanted treatment of Rome in his *Short History of the Reformation* (1884), indicative of a general preoccupation with Protestant theological issues and presumption of a Protestant audience. William M. Taylor, “Introduction,” in Arthur, *The Tongue of Fire*, xviii.

101. In a backhanded compliment, University of Notre Dame Professor Maurice Francis Egan praised Methodists for raising themselves “from their position as

the most illiterate of denominations by means of the Chautauqua movement.” Egan, “With Readers and Correspondents,” *The Catholic World* 49, no. 291 (June 1889), 416.

102. “The Columbian Reading Union,” *The Catholic World* 52, no. 311 (February 1891), 785.

103. “With Readers and Correspondents,” *The Catholic World* 50, no. 300 (March 1890), 839.

104. “The Columbian Reading Union,” *The Catholic World* 52, no. 311 (February 1891), 785.

105. Egan, “With Readers and Correspondents,” 416.

106. Ibid.; Edward Mountel, “With Readers and Correspondents,” *The Catholic World* 50, no. 300 (March 1890), 838.

107. “The Columbian Reading Union,” *The Catholic World* 53, 315 (June 1891), 464.

108. Katherine Aird Miller and Raymond H. Montgomery, *A Chautauqua to Remember: The Story of Old Salem* (Petersburg, Ill.: Silent River Press, 1987), 65.

109. “The Columbian Reading Union,” *The Catholic World* 55, no. 327 (June 1892), 466; “A Catholic Chautauqua,” *CAH* 13, no. 15 (5 August 1892), 1.

110. Some Catholic intellectuals had noted the “abandonment of the essential Catholic tenet that religion should shape culture rather than culture shape religion” and lamented the watering-down of their unique historical traditions into a code of ethical and moral behavior. For critics of compromise, the Plattsburgh experiment would have been a step in the wrong direction. Mel Piehl, *Breaking Bread: The Catholic Worker and the Origins of Catholic Radicalism in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 53. See also Philip Gleason, “In Search of Unity: American Catholic Thought, 1920–1960,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 65 (April 1979): 189–91; Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 321–46; Patrick W. Carey, ed., *American Catholic Religious Thought: The Shaping of a Theological and Social Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 3–70; R. Scott Appleby, “Church and Age Unite!” *The Modernist Impulse in American Catholicism* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992).

111. “The New Home of the Summer-School at Plattsburg,” *The Catholic World* 57 (April 1893), 83, 84.

112. The Catholic Chautauqua’s assertion of autonomy in the realm of adult education quickly was subsumed within the turn-of-the-century synthesis of civic culture, nationalism, progress, and consumerism. See Gary Gerstle, *Working-Class Americanism: The Politics of Labor in a Textile City, 1914–60* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989). R. Laurence Moore, citing the power of ethno-religious commitments to immigrant and native-born Americans alike, has questioned scholars’ dependence on the notion of a dominant “Protestant mainstream”: “Is the notion of Protestant hegemony a myth?” Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 21.

113. The definitive work on the Jewish Chautauqua Society is Peggy K. Pearlstein, “Understanding Through Education: One Hundred Years of the Jewish Chautauqua Society, 1893–1993” (Ph.D. diss., George Washington University, 1993).

114. “Catholic Day at Lithia,” clipping from the *Shelbyville Daily Union* (1894), in Douthit Scrapbook, SCH; “Speech of Dr. Carlos Martyn,” “Lithia Springs Chautauqua . . . Aug. 22,” newspaper clipping in “Douthit Scrapbook,” SCH.

115. As historian Jon Gjerde has argued, it took many decades for the spread of liberal institutions—Chautauqua among them—to make formerly autonomous ethnic groups adjust their visions of civic order. Gjerde, *The Minds of the West: The Ethnocultural Evolution in the Rural Middle West, 1830–1917* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

Chapter 4

1. Cecilia Elizabeth O’Leary, *To Die For: The Paradox of American Patriotism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 129–49. See David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1990) and *Towards the Abolition of Whiteness: Essays on Race, Politics, and Working Class History* (London: Verso, 1994); Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, Vol I: Racial Oppression and Social Control* (London: Verso, 1994); Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Jessie Daniels, *White Lies: Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality in White Supremacist Discourse* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Maurice Berger, *White Lies: Race and the Myths of Whiteness* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1999).

2. Ruth Frankenberg, “Local Whitenesses, Localizing Whiteness,” in *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*, edited by Frankenberg (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997): 1–34, 6, 3.

3. George E. Vincent to Mr. Floyd Wright (St. Augustine School, Raleigh, N.C.), 18 June 1900, Folder 2, George Vincent’s Letters 1890–1900, CIA.

4. Andrew A. Gunby, “A Memorial to the Louisiana Legislature on the Louisiana Chautauqua” (July 1908), reprinted in *Lincoln Parish History*, edited by Mary Frances Fletcher and Ralph L. Ropp (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Co., 1976), 92–94.

5. Booker T. Washington, “The Negro Problem in the Black Self of the South,” *CAH* 21, no. 14 (4 August 1896), 2.

6. “Prospectus of the Colorado Lake Chautauqua Association” (Austin, Texas, 1893), 8, CHT. The best discussion of nativism is still John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925* (orig. 1955) (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1988).

7. Morton White and Lucia White, *The Intellectual and the City: From Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 13–17.

8. Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890), 2; Henry Cabot Lodge, *Historical and Political Essays* (Boston, 1892), 138; "Lithia Springs Chautauqua . . . Aug. 22," n.d., in "Douthit Scrapbook," SCH; Thomas de Witt Talmadge, *The Night Sides of City Life* (Chicago: J. Fairbanks & Company, 1878), 129. On Charles Loring Brace, see Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 94-107.

9. R. M. Warren, *Chautauqua Sketches* (Buffalo, N.Y.: H. H. Otis, 1878), 20-21; Josiah Strong, "An Address," *CAH* 13, no. 5 (9 August 1888), 4.

10. E. A. Hempstead, "Shall Immigration Be Restricted?" *The Chautauquan* 8, no. 10 (July 1888), 610-12. Even the liberal *Chautauquan* editor Theodore L. Flood leaned toward the restrictionist viewpoint. The millions of "Hungarians, Poles, Italians, and Bohemians" had simply exhausted the good graces of their Yankee hosts and "stimulated a demand for the repression of immigration." Flood, "The Immigration Question," *The Chautauquan* 16, no. 4 (January 1893), 480-81.

11. John R. Commons, *Races and Immigrants in America* (New York: Chautauqua Press, 1907), 5.

12. "Bishop Henry W. Warren Writes . . .," *The Chautauquan* 5, no. 1 (October 1884), 27.

13. John George Schaal (1844-1949) was a German-born Methodist, founder and pastor of the Salem Methodist Church in Newport, Kentucky. "Schall, Rev. John G. Minutes of the establishment of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle in Cincinnati, 1880," Box 3-76, Folder 1, CHS.

14. "America's Great Typical Council," *Wisconsin State Journal*, reprinted in "Other Chautauqua Assemblies," *The Chautauquan* 35: 4 (July 1902), 400.

15. "First Annual Lakeside Chautauqua Assembly, Marinette, Wisconsin, July 27-August 6" (1897), SHSW; Victor E. Larson, "Golden Jubilee History of the Kandiyohi County Fair, 1901-1950" (1950), unpub. ms., Pamphlet Collection, MHS.

16. "Chautauqua: The Famous Summer Town on Chautauqua Lake New York" (1898), 10, SHSW; Jane Addams, "The Social Obligations of Citizenship," *CAH* 23, no. 22 (12 August 1898), 2-3; Roosevelt quoted in Rebecca Richmond, *Chautauqua: An American Place* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1943), 117; Roosevelt quoted in Herbert B. Adams, "Summer Schools and University Extension," *Education in the United States: A Series of Monographs Prepared for the U.S. Exhibit at the Paris Exposition* (Albany, N.Y.: J. B. Lyon Co., 1900), 5.

17. "Prospectus of the Colorado Lake Chautauqua Association" (1893), 2. Hearing of Theodore Roosevelt's comments, Count Ilya Tolstoy insisted on visiting Chautauqua in the hope of "furthering my understanding of the American people." Tolstoy quoted in Marian Scott, *Chautauqua Caravan* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1937), 246.

18. "America's Great Typical Council," 400; Michael Lind, *The New American Nation* (New York: The Free Press, 1995); Dr. W. L. Harvey, "Education and Patriotism," *CAH* 23, no. 16 (5 August 1898), 7.

19. Commons, *Races and Immigrants in America*, 20; Vincent Van Marter Beede, "Italians in America," *The Chautauquan* 34, no. 4 (January 1902), 424; Commons, 17.

20. David A. Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 24; Edward A. Ross, *Changing America: Studies in Contemporary Society* (New York: Chautauqua Press, 1915), 45, 48.

21. Rabbi Gries, "The Immigration Problem," *CAH* 32, no. 38 (17 August 1907), 1, quoted in Utlaut, "The Role of the Chautauqua Movement in the Shaping of Progressive Thought," 97; Jahu DeWitt Miller, "The Stanger at Our Gates," *CAH* 19, no. 27 (21 August 1894), 2; Jahu DeWitt Miller, "Grange Day. Address by Mr. J. DeWitt Miller on 'A New Face at the Door,'" *CAH* 29, no. 46 (23 August 1904), 2-3.

22. Samuel Christian Schmucker, *The Meaning of Evolution* (New York: Chautauqua Press, 1913), 261-62.

23. Hjalmar Hjorth Boyeson, quoted in Albert S. Cook, "Chautauqua: Its Aims and Influence," *Forum* 19 (March-August 1895), 691.

24. "Official Program, Third Annual Session. Janesville Chautauqua Assembly . . . July 26th to August 4th" (1907), SHSW; "Shelbyville Chautauqua Assembly . . . July 27 to August 11" (1907), 39, SCH.

25. Paul M. Pearson, "The Chautauqua Movement," *Lippincott's* 78 (August 1906), 193; David M. Steele, "Chautauqua Doings" in *Vacation Journeys East and West* (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1918), 176. Chautauqua's westward march symbolized its dreams of cultural conquest. The inaugural CLSC of 1882 named itself "The Pioneers." Its class symbol? The axe.

26. "Chautauqua Starts," *Everybody's Magazine* (15 September 1914), 33, quoted in David Mead, "1914: The Chautauqua and American Innocence," *Journal of Popular Culture* 1, no. 4 (Spring 1968): 339-56, 341.

27. Map compiled from Mary Lee Talbot, "A School at Home: The Contribution of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle to Women's Educational Opportunities in the Gilded Age, 1874-1900" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1997), 146-47, and Charles Robert Knicker, "The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, 1878-1914: A Historical Interpretation of an Educational Piety in Industrial America" (EED diss., Columbia University, 1969), 69-70. The two historians compared Kimball's figures to census data and compiled summaries by state and region:

<i>Region</i>	<i>% of CLSC</i>	<i>% of Population</i>
New England	13.8	3.6
Middle Atlantic	28.8	19.8
North Central	37.7	30.0
South	7.3	23.2
Mountain	2.1	2.3
Pacific	5.3	3.1

28. Compared with its more discrete regional neighbors to the west and south, Gregory H. Nobles has written, the Midwest seems to reside in the “comparative shadows of regional identity in the academic community.” Nobles, “Cognitive Cartography: Rethinking Regional Identity in American History,” *Reviews in American History* 27 (March 1999): 58–64, 59. But a number of scholars are working to retrieve the Midwest as a discrete but internally diverse constellation of identities deriving from the region’s complex history. See Andrew R. L. Cayton and Peter S. Onuf, *The Midwest and the Nation: Rethinking the History of an American Region* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); Edward L. Ayers, Patricia Nelson Limerick, Stephen Nissenbaum, and Peter S. Onuf, *All Over the Map: Rethinking American Regions* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

29. Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (orig. pub. 1893) (New York: Continuum, 1991), 49.

30. Turner, “The Middle Region,” in *Social and Economic Forces in American History* (orig. 1904), edited by Albert Bushnell Hart (New York: Chautauqua Press, 1915), 208.

31. *The Texas-Colorado Chautauqua Journal* (Denver, Colo.) 2, no. 4 (May 1900), 6.

32. *Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (1874), 496, quoted in Ralph E. Morrow, *Northern Methodism and Reconstruction* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1956), 81. See also Daniel W. Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion: The Religious Reconstruction of the South, 1863–1877* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

33. John Heyl Vincent left his views on the Civil War suspiciously vague. The Alabama-born minister did not shy away from expressing his approval of certain aspects of slavery, but he sat out the Civil War. Elected to the General Sunday School Convention in London, he spent 1861 in England and in 1862–63 toured the Continent, as well as Egypt and Palestine. References to the war were conspicuously absent from his writings and speeches, except perhaps insofar as he discussed his friendship with Ulysses S. Grant, a parishioner during his days as a pastor in Galena, Illinois.

34. *The National Sunday-School Teachers’ Assembly Held at Fair Point* (New York: Printed for the Sunday School Union, 1875), 47–48.

35. Grant had visited other Methodist camp meetings, including Round Lake, New York, in 1874.

36. “Chautauqua Scrapbook, Volume I From 1874 to 1887 Inclusive,” 13, Collection of Mrs. Adelaide L. Westcott, CIA; “A ‘Multitude which No Man Could Number . . . at Chautauqua Assembly, 1875,’” *Buffalo Express* newspaper clipping, “Chautauqua Scrapbook,” 16. See also Theodore Morrison, *Chautauqua* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 41–42.

37. Hayes was consistently in demand. Attorney G. M. Nichols of Springfield, Ohio, formed a committee to entice the Hayes family to Chautauqua in 1880. “You will meet at Chautauqua 100,000 of the best class of American people,” he prom-

ised. J. Warren Keifer to R. B. Hayes, 12 July 1879, RBH. See Timothy D. Franck, "An Historical-Descriptive Study of Rutherford Birchard Hayes and the Chautauqua" (Ph.D. diss., Bowling Green State University, 1975).

38. "Chautauqua Scrapbook," 17.

39. Emily Raymond, *About Chautauqua* (Toledo, Ohio: Blade Printing and Paper Co., 1886), 62; Albion W. Tourgee, "Oration by Judge Tourgee," *CAH* 10, no. 8 (10 August 1885), 4; "Chautauqua Notes," *Williamson County Sun* (Georgetown, Texas) (6 June 1889), 14. On the GAR, see Stuart C. McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1992).

40. Harrison John Thornton, "The White House and Chautauqua," *New York History* 27, no. 3 (July 1946): 285-305, 293.

41. Raymond, *About Chautauqua*, 72-73.

42. "The Chautauqua Cultivates Patriotism by Signal Discourses of Great Men," newspaper clipping (18 July 1894), reprinted in *Lincoln Parish History*, edited by Fletcher and Rupp, 110-11.

43. See Harold E. Davis, *Henry Grady's New South: Atlanta, A Brave and Beautiful City* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990).

44. Quoted in Doris Lanier, "The Early Chautauqua in Georgia," *Journal of American Culture* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1988): 9-18, 10; *Albany Weekly News and Advertiser* (8 March 1890), quoted in *ibid.*, 15.

45. The Hon. Seth Shephard, "The Fall of the Alamo: An Oration by Hon. Seth Shephard, of Dallas, Texas, Delivered Before the San Marcos Chautauqua Assembly, July 8th, 1889" (San Antonio, Texas, 1889), Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas.

46. Monteagle, Tennessee (1882); De Funiak Springs, Florida (1884); San Marcos, Texas (1885, moving to Georgetown, Texas in 1888); Siloam Springs, Arkansas (1885); Mount Dora, Florida (1885); Ruston, Louisiana (1890); Austin, Texas (1891); Crystal Springs, Mississippi (1892); Talladega, Alabama (1893); and Waxahachie, Texas (1898).

47. Bishop W. F. Mallalieu, "Another Chautauqua," *The Florida Chautauqua* (Cincinnati, Ohio), 1, no. 1 (January 1886), 1, OHS.

48. "A Chautauqua Journal by Ada Elizabeth Sisson," 4 July 1895, 43, CIA.

49. Jewel Handel, "The Old Confederates," *Austin Evening News* (Austin, Texas) (20 April 1894).

50. "Old Soldier's Day," "First Annual Lakeside Chautauqua Assembly. Marinette, Wisconsin. July 27 to August 6 Program Season 1897" (1897), 13, SHSW; "National Army Day," "Assembly Announcement July 10-July 28, 1900, Pacific Grove Chautauqua Assembly," 11, Pacific Grove file, CIA.

51. *The Chautauquan* (July 1893) clipping in Pacific Grove folder, CIA.

52. "Attractions and Merits of Chautauqua in 1892," in *Lincoln Parish History*, edited by Fletcher and Ropp, 101; "The Chautauqua System of Education . . . Chautauqua 1893 and the Columbian Exposition" (1893), Papers of Rutherford B. Hayes, RBH; "Congresses at the Columbian Exposition," *United States Bureau of*

Education, Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1893-94 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895), 1064-67, 1743-44.

53. On world's fairs and national identity, see Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); James Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); David E. Nye, *Narratives and Spaces: Technology and the Construction of American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 121-45.

54. "Chautauqua. Southern California" (1892), 10, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

55. "Northern Chautauqua Assembly at Chautauqua Park, Marinette, Wisconsin Program. Twelfth Annual Session" (1908), 30, SHSW; *Greenfield Journal* (1915) quoted in Frank Fr. Harris, *Hometown Chronicles* (Greenfield, Ohio: Greenfield Printing and Publishing Co., 1955), 139.

56. *New York Tribune*, quoted in Thornton, "The White House and Chautauqua," 297; McKinley quoted in *ibid.*, 301; Simpson quoted in *ibid.*, 302.

57. "The Spanish War," *CAH* 23 (June 1898), 1.

58. Theodore Westwood Miller attended St. Paul's Academy and then Yale University. He made his last war journal entry as he stood in line with Theodore Roosevelt and the Rough Riders awaiting the order to advance on Santiago. George E. Vincent, ed., *Theodore Westwood Miller* (Akron, Ohio: Richard P. Marvin, 1889), 135.

59. "Editorial," *CAH* 23, no. 14 (3 August 1898), 1.

60. J. S. Johnston, "The Race Problem at the South," *CAH* 24, no. 4 (12 July 1899), 1.

61. Nancy Hartshorn, *Nancy Hartshorn at Chautauqua* (New York: J. S. Ogilvie & Co., 1882), 140.

62. "Official Program, Third Annual Session. Janesville Chautauqua Assembly" (1907), Rock County Historical Society, Janesville, Wis.; "Chautauqua Week Special, April 21, 1914 . . . West Chester, Penna., April 15-21, 1914, Memorial Hall" (1914), 10, West Chester Collection, HSP.

63. Johnston, 3; Dr. J. W. E. [John Wesley Edward] Bowen, "Dr. Bowen's Reply to Bishop Johnston," *CAH* 24, no. 5 (13 July 1899), 1-3.

64. Miss Frances G. Bogert, Secretary, Brooklyn Chautauqua Alumni [reading circle], "1904 Minutes of the April Meeting," in Brooklyn CLSC Minute Books, CIA.

65. Clara Hinton, "Chautauqua Beats All. Composition Book 1911," Saturday, 10 July 1911, Clara Hinton Papers, Box 13, Chautauqua Notebook (1910-1912) file, SHSI.

66. John Davis, "Holy Land, Holy People? Photography, Semitic Wannabes, and Chautauqua's Palestine Park," *Prospects* 17 (1992): 241-71; "Fair Point Settles Down to Its Wonted Composure," *Jamestown Daily Journal* (12 August 1874).

67. J. E. Kittredge, "Chautauqua Archeological Society," *CAH* 8, no. 12 (17 August 1883), 6.

68. Kittredge, "Archeological Museum," *CAH* 6, no. 16 (17 August 1881), 5.
69. Kittredge, "Chautauqua Archeological Society," 6, 7. On industrial wealth and the urban museum, see Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Culture & the City: Cultural Philanthropy in Chicago from the 1880s to 1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).
70. "List of Egyptian Antiquities Cont. by the Egypt Exploration Fund, London to the Museum of Chautauqua University, September 1887," handwritten inventory in Egyptian Exploration Fund Listing folder, Chautauqua Museums Collection, CIA.
71. "Museum Tent Described as a Notable Attraction," *Jamestown Daily Journal* (Jamestown, N.Y.) (15 August 1874).
72. *Ibid.*
73. "All Afloat Again. Ninth Launching of the Chautauqua Assembly," newspaper clipping in "Chautauqua Scrapbook. Volume I From 1874 to 1887 Inclusive," 52, Collection of Mrs. Adelaide L. Westcott, CIA.
74. "Lessons in Orientalism," *CAH* 5, no. 17 (17 August 1880), 1.
75. Rudyard Kipling, "Chautauquaed," *Pioneer Mail* (1890), reprinted in *Abaft the Funnel* (New York: B. W. Dodge & Company, 1909), 188-89, 194, 203.
76. Paul A. Kramer, "Empires, Exceptions, and the Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and the United States Empires, 1880-1910," *Journal of American History* 88, no. 4 (March 2002): 1315-53, 1353.
77. Frederick Starr, *Some First Steps in Human Progress* (Meadville, Pa.: Flood and Vincent, 1896), 9; Arthur Judson Brown, "A Reading Journey Through Korea," *The Chautauquan* 41 (August 1905), 508.
78. Brooklyn Chautauqua Alumni, 1906 Minutes of the January Meeting, in Brooklyn CLSC Minute Books, CIA.
79. Letter printed in *Pacific Grove Review* (1 July 1893), reprinted in "A School for Chinese Children," in E. C. Davis, "Down the Piney Path: News from the Pacific Grove Review, 1896-1902" (n.d.), Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
80. On the history of Chinese fishermen in California, see Arthur F. McEvoy, *The Fisherman's Problem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 75-103; Nancy Wey, "Chinese Americans in California," in *Five Views* (Sacramento: California Office of Historic Preservation, 1988), 103-58.
81. Sandy Lydon, *Chinese Gold: The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region* (Capitola, Calif.: Capitola Book Company, 1985), 351.
82. In April 1905 the Chinese villagers took on the added burden of 150 refugees from the San Francisco earthquake. Hard-shelled company men pressed ahead with the eviction, insisting that "something must be done to show the Chinese that we mean business." *Ibid.*, 359-360.
83. After a two-year struggle, the last villagers left Point Alones in 1907 for a new location at McAbee Beach not far away. The planned real estate development never materialized, and the site was later donated to the University of California for a marine laboratory. *Ibid.*, 365-76.

84. Some accounts accused the Pacific Improvement Company of intentionally setting the fire, including Mariano Catbagan, Jr., “Pacific Grove’s Chinatown” (June 1980), unpub. ms.; John Woolfenden, “Chinese Village Flourished Along Monterey Bay,” *Monterey Peninsula Herald* (21 October 1972). Sandy Lydon has concluded that the fire was probably accidental. See also Augusta Fink, *Monterey: The Presence of the Past* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1972), 166–74.

85. Lydon, 365–66.

86. “Causes of Lynching,” *CAH* 24, no. 16 (26 July 1899), 5.

87. H. E. Townsend, “A History of the Louisiana Chautauqua” (M.A. thesis, Louisiana State University, 1929).

88. Henry J. Mason, “A Black Chautauqua,” *Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life* 7 (August 1929), 241–42.

Chapter 5

1. Zona Gale, “Katytown in the Eighties,” *Harper’s Magazine* 157 (August 1928), 288–94, reprinted in *Portage, Wisconsin and Other Essays* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929), 29–30.

2. *Ibid.*, 34, 28, 34–36.

3. *Ibid.*, 41–42.

4. See Linda Gordon, *Woman’s Body, Woman’s Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America* (New York: Grossman, 1976); Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); Nancy Cott, “What’s in a Name? The Limits of ‘Social Feminism’; or, Expanding the Vocabulary of Women’s History,” *Journal of American History* 76 (December 1989): 809–29; Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890–1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

5. See Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820–1860,” *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2, pt. 2 (Summer 1966): 151–74; Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catherine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1976); Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: “Woman’s Sphere” in New England, 1780–1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Nancy A. Hewitt, *Women’s Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York, 1822–1972* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); Lori D. Ginzburg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women’s Associations in American History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991).

As a category of analysis, “separate spheres” is best treated not as an objective portrayal of social practice but as a rhetorical device used by Victorian men and women to conceal an unsettling reality—that in an industrial age, women’s public presence would continue to grow. Paula Baker, “The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780–1920,” *American Historical Review* 89

(June 1984): 620-47; Michael McGerr, "Political Style and Women's Power, 1830-1930," *The Journal of American History* 77, no. 3 (December 1990): 864-85; Baker, *The Moral Frameworks of Public Life: Gender, Politics, and the State in Rural New York, 1870-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

6. Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914* (New York: Homes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1980), 5.

7. Austie K. Wurster, "Women in Chautauqua" (1951), unpub. ms., Thornton Papers, RCC; Carolyn DeSwarte Guifford, "Progress and Advance in Every Womanly Direction: Women at Chautauqua, 1874-1878," delivered at the Main Street as Mainstream Symposium, Adrian College, 13-15 September 1984, Adrian, Michigan; Virginia Scharff, "Beyond the Narrow Circle: Women and Chautauqua, 1874-1898" (University of Arizona, 1983), 4, unpub. paper in author's possession. Agricultural historian Julie R. Nelson's study of several Iowa circles confirmed that women in the CLSC "subtly expanded woman's sphere and renegotiated gender interactions." Julie R. Nelson, "A Subtle Revolution: The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle in Rural Midwestern Towns, 1878-1900," *Agricultural History* 70, no. 4 (Fall 1996): 653-72, 665.

8. For women in midcentury charitable associations, "the rhetoric of female benevolence concealed authority that they wielded in the distribution of resources and services in their communities." Ginzburg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence*, 65.

9. John Heyl Vincent, *The Chautauqua Movement* (Boston: Chautauqua Press, 1886), 7.

10. Vincent quoted in Theodore Morrison, *Chautauqua: A Center for Education, Religion and the Arts in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 43.

11. Vincent to Frances Willard, 21 October 1876, Special Letter file, CIA.

12. Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, *The Story of Chautauqua* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1921), 78.

13. The figure of 80 percent to 90 percent is based on the conclusions of five statistics studies since 1969. See Charles Knicker, "The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, 1878-1914: A Historical Interpretation of an Educational Piety in Industrial America" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1969); Catherine Kleiner, "Chautauqua and Women: Ladies, Learners, and Leaders, 1874-1920" (M.A. thesis, Duke University, 1989); Stephanie Rath, "Through the Golden Gate: Women and the Chautauqua Movement in Nineteenth-Century America" (B.A. thesis, Yale University, 1995); Mary Lee Talbot, "A School at Home: The Contribution of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle to Women's Educational Opportunities in the Gilded Age, 1874-1900" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1997), 133-53; and this author's analysis of the "CLSC Registration Books (1893)," Microfilm Roll 155L, CIA.

14. See Rath, "Through the Golden Gate," 13-14.

15. Editorial, *The Chautauqua Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (July 1905), WRH.

16. One-quarter of those circles, according to Kate Kimball, Executive Secretary of the CLSC, were located in towns of less than 500 in population, one-half in

towns from 500 to 3,500, and one-quarter in cities of more than 3,500 residents. See Knicker, "The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, 1878-1914," 93-94.

17. Arthur E. Bestor to George E. Vincent, 16 May 1901, 2, Fundraising (Chautauqua) 1901-1914 folder, AEB.

18. Compiled from Series H 327-38, *Historical Statistics of the United States. Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington: Bureau of the Census, 1961), 211-12 by Mary Talbot. Talbot, "A School at Home," 152-53.

19. Donald J. Bogue, *The Population of the United States* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1959), 113-15, 162-66, 130; Kristine M. Davis, "The Chautauqua Idea: Building Educational Fellowship Through Symbol and Community," *The Western Journal of Speech Communication* 47 (Fall 1983): 396-410, 398.

20. Kathleen Underwood, *Town Building on the Colorado Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 89-92.

21. Talbot, "A School at Home," 142.

22. Kleiner, "Chautauqua and Women," 26; Talbot, "A School at Home," 138-40.

23. "Women's Clubs—A Symposium," *The Arena* 6, no. 33 (1893): 362-88, 379, quoted in Theodora Penny Martin, *The Sound of Our Own Voices: Women's Study Clubs, 1860-1910* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), 100.

24. David Starr Jordan, "The Higher Education of Women" (1902), quoted in George Cotkin, *Reluctant Modernism: American Thought and Culture, 1880-1900* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), 79; Edward Clark, *Sex in Education; or, a Fair Chance for the Girls* (Boston: Osgood and Co., 1873), 133, 79.

25. L. T. Townsend, *The Bible and Other Ancient Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Chautauqua Press, 1889), 45.

26. Amory Dwight Mayo, *Southern Women in the Recent Educational Movement in the South* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1892), 65; T. Dewitt Talmadge, "Imaginary Ailments of Women," *Ladies Home Journal*, reprinted in *Williamson County Sun* (Georgetown, Texas) (1 January 1890), CHT.

27. John Habberton, *The Chautauquans: A Novel* (New York: Robert Bonner's Sons, 1891), 43.

28. Joseph Hergesheimer, "The Female Nuisance in Literature," *Yale Review* 10 (July 1921), 718.

29. The following circles were used in this case study: Hiawatha CLSC (Hiawatha, Kansas), East Cleveland Literary and Scientific Circle (Cleveland, Ohio), Women's Literary Club (Pontiac, Michigan), Philomanthian Circle (Farmer City, Illinois), Ruskin CLSC (Shelbyville, Illinois), Excelsior CLSC (Excelsior, Minnesota), Pacific Grove CLSC (Pacific Grove, California), Chautauqua Circle (Crookston, Minnesota), Shakespeare Club (Maysville, Missouri), and Point O' Woods CLSC (Point O' Woods, New York).

All the circles included men and women except for three female-only clubs in Pontiac, Shelbyville, and Maysville. Women led these three circles plus Hiawatha, Crookston, and Pacific Grove. On Hiawatha, see Eva Moll Diary, 8, SML; on East Cleveland, see records of the East Cleveland Literary and Scientific Circle, WRH;

on Pontiac, see Thaddeus D. Seeley, *History of Oakland County*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1912), 266-67; on Farmer City, see "Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, Farmer City, Ill. Minutes, 1885-1886," 19, Manuscripts Department, ISHL; on Shelbyville, see records of the Ruskin CLSC, SCH; on Excelsior, see Ella Stratton, "Minutes of the CLSC—Class of 1890. Organized at Excelsior—Oct. 4, 1886. Redeeming the Time," HCH; on Pacific Grove, see "Chautauqua Assembly, Summer School of Science . . . Pacific Grove, Monterey, Cal., Session of 1888" (San Francisco, Calif., 1888), 12, Rare Books, HLC; on Crookston, see "C.L.S.C. Chautauqua Circle 1[8]92-93, Crookston, Minnesota," Stephens (Andrew D.) Papers, 1887-1924, MHS; on Maysville, see Lora R. Lockhart, ed., *Preserving Yesterday for Tomorrow: A History of DeKalb County, Missouri* (Maysville, Mo.: DeKalb County Historical Society, 1981), 73; on Point O' Woods, see "The Chautauqua by the Sea. Second Season of the Long Island Chautauqua at Point O' Woods" (Patchogue, New York, 1895), Long Island Studies Institute, Nassau County Museum, Hempstead, N.Y.

30. "East Cleveland Literary and Scientific Circle. Cleveland, Ohio. Records, 1878-1882," Mss. 389, WRH.

31. Stratton, "Minutes of the CLSC," 4.

32. J. G. Fitch, "The Chautauqua Reading Circle," *The Nineteenth Century* 24 (July-December 1888): 487-500, 490.

33. Mary H. Field, *Kate Thurston's Chautauqua Circles* (Meadville, Pa.: Flood and Vincent, The Chautauqua-Century Press, 1891), 17. Historian Julie R. Nelson's study of a Wilton, Iowa, circle has also found that women assumed "the most active and visible roles" in managing the group's affairs. Nelson, "A Subtle Revolution," 666.

34. "East Cleveland Literary and Scientific Circle, Cleveland, Ohio Records, 1878-1882," 125, Mss. 389, WRH; "East Cleveland Literary and Scientific Circle," 157; "Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, Farmer City, Ill. Minutes, 1885-1886," 19.

35. "Northern Chautauqua Assembly, Marinette, Wisconsin, Fifth Annual Session" (1901), 3, SHSW; "Circle Notes," *Mabtomedi Chautauqua Herald* 1, no. 5 (February 1888), 45, MHS.

36. See Lori D. Ginzburg, "'Moral Suasion Is Moral Balderdash': Women, Politics, and Social Activism in the 1850s," *Journal of American History* 73, no. 3 (December 1986): 601-22.

37. "C.L.S.C., Madison, Wisconsin, March 3, 1892," 1-2, SHSW.

38. *Ibid.*

39. Gale, "Katytown in the Eighties," 27.

40. Vincent, *The Chautauqua Movement*, 209, 217.

41. *Ibid.*, 168, 247, 119, 170.

42. *Ibid.*, 39.

43. *Ibid.*, 170, 239. On CLSC rituals, including class names, emblems, flowers, circle mottoes, songs and songbooks, badges, pins, festival days, memorials, recognition days, rally days, and banners, see Talbot, "A School at Home," 208-37.

44. J. G. Fitch, "The Chautauqua Reading Circle," *The Nineteenth Century* 24 (July-December 1888), 490-91.

45. At the time this work went to press, laudable efforts were under way to preserve the delicate silk banners from decay. See June Miller-Spann, "Preserve the Past for the Future: The Conflict Between Preservation and Traditional Use of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle Banners," *Museums and Society* (Museum Studies Program, Buffalo State College, Buffalo, N.Y.) 1, no. 1 (Summer 2001), 1-57.

46. Albert D. Vail, "The Story of the Banner of the C.L.S.C. Told at the First Commencement of the C.L.S.C. at Chautauqua, NY, August 12, 1882" (New York: Chautauqua Press, 1883), 3-5, RBH.

47. Gale, "Katytown in the Eighties," 26-27.

48. From the Papers of the Chautauqua Circle of Atlanta, Woodruff Library, Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia, quoted in Anne Ruggles Gere, *Intimate Practices: Literary and Cultural Work in U.S. Women's Clubs, 1880-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 196-97. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham stresses the double-edged commitment of black clubwomen to the concept of "respectability," a commitment that sometimes trumped efforts to promote racial solidarity. Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

49. Cornelia Adele Teal, *Counting the Cost, Or a Summer at Chautauqua* (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1889), 88; Mary Scates to Kimball, n.d., quoted in Kleiner, "Chautauqua and Women," 43; Rebekah E. Pinger to Kimball, 2 October 1893, quoted in Kleiner, 43; *The Chautauquan* 1, no. 8 (May 1881), 370, quoted in Scharff, "Beyond the Narrow Circle," 36.

50. Michele Newman has argued that women's suffrage arguments "depended on redefining what it meant to be a white female citizen." Newman, *White Woman's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 56.

51. Olive Ruth Jefferson, "The Southern Negro Women," *Chautauquan* 18, no. 1 (October 1893): 92, 93.

52. See program brochures in California folder, CIA; Pennsylvania folder, Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, N.Y.; Parks-Laurel Park file, HNM.

53. From 1901 to 1905, 101 of 293 (34.4 percent) names appearing on assembly brochures were of women; 1906 to 1910, 164 of 387 (42.4 percent); 1911 to 1915, 186 of 390 (47.4 percent); 1916 to 1920, 169 of 326 (51.5 percent). See Chautauqua files, SCH.

54. "Splendid Program," *The Shelbyville Democrat* (20 July 1905).

55. "A Great Success Was the A.M.E. One-Day Chautauqua Last Sunday," *The Shelbyville Democrat* (25 July 1902). Hard times had beset Shelbyville's dwindling black population. In 1900 sixty-two African Americans lived in Shelbyville; by 1920, urban migration, mainly to St. Louis and Chicago, had reduced that number to thirty-three. "1900 Census, Book 3," SCH; "Shelbyville City, wards not organized," 1920 census folder, SCH.

56. The widely circulated manifesto announcing the creation of the "Woman's National Temperance League" frequently invokes Chautauqua but never mentions the Methodist Church, thus emphasizing its common identity with Chautauqua as a firmly Protestant yet ecumenical institution. Jennie F. Willing, "Woman's National Temperance League," *Centennial Temperance Volume* (New York: National Temperance Society and Publication House, 1877), 688. For summaries of the WCTU's origins in Chautauqua, see Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, *The Story of Chautauqua*, 62; Ruth Bordin, *Woman and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty, 1873-1900* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1981), 35-36.

57. Kate Field, "Social and Political Crimes of Utah," *CAH* 10, no. 10 (12 August 1885), 7.

58. "Chautauqua and Kate Field," *Our Best Words Weekly* 3, no. 17 (27 July 1889), 2, SCH.

59. George E. Vincent to Kate F. Kimball, 19 June 1889, Folder 11, Kimball Correspondence 1888-89, Kimball Collection, CIA.

60. "Woman. Abstract of Lecture by Dr. Vincent," *CAH* 9, no. 18 (22 August 1884), 5.

61. John Heyl Vincent, "Letter to Rev. J. M. Buckley—1894," reprinted in *Why Women Do Not Want the Ballot* (Boston, 1903), privately printed, Rare Books, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

In 1898 Vincent carried on a running debate on the meaning of the term *emancipation* with Ida H. Harper, Susan B. Anthony's biographer. Vincent would "emancipate woman by limiting her burdens of responsibility." He claimed to be "a believer in woman's full equality with man, in power, in responsibility, in dignity, in worth, but having a sphere of her own to fill and make effective." In her monumental biography of Susan B. Anthony, Harper identified Vincent as one of the nation's foremost antisuffragists and noted that the "vast majority" of Chautauquans favored suffrage. Vincent to Harper, 4 January 1898, 1-2, Harper Collection; Vincent to Harper, 24 December 1898, 1-2, Harper Collection, HLC; Ida Husted Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony* (Indianapolis: The Bown-Merrill Company, 1898), 708.

62. Buckley had already picked battles with churchwomen on the suffrage issue. After an especially virulent antisuffrage diatribe at Chautauqua in 1890, Sarah Jane Corson Downs, a WCTU member at the Ocean Grove assembly in New Jersey, took umbrage. Downs wrote Buckley to protest "this unwarrantable attack. . . . Is it not about time that this crusade against women should cease?" She concluded: "May God forgive you!" Quoted in Jacob Bentley Graw, *Life of Mrs. S. J. C. Downs* (Camden, N.J.: Gazette Printing and Publishing House, 1892), 124-29.

63. Anna Howard Shaw, *The Story of a Pioneer* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1915), 257-59.

64. Susan B. Anthony to George E. Vincent, 25 March 1898, Ms. Collection, Special Collections Department, University of Iowa Archives, Iowa City, Iowa; Anthony to George E. Vincent, 7 April 1900, Famous People Letters, Folder A; Mrs. Eleanor Phillips to John Heyl Vincent, 27 March 1900, Famous People Letters,

Folder C; George E. Vincent to Mrs. George Phillips, 7 June 1900, Famous People Letters, Folder C, CIA.

65. "Woman's Day. Addresses By Three Noted Woman Suffragists," *CAH* 25, no. 5 (14 July 1900), 1, 5-6.

66. Vincent, "Autobiography," *Northwest Christian Advocate* (13 April 1910), 464.

67. Farwell T. Brown, *Ames: The Early Years in Word and Picture* (Ames, Iowa: Huess Printing, Inc., 1993), 160.

68. Habberton, *The Chautauquans*, 152.

69. Austin, *Earth Horizon*, 103.

70. Hurlbut, *The Story of Chautauqua*, 72.

71. Isabella "Pansy" Alden, *Four Girls at Chautauqua* (Boston: D. Lothrop Company, 1876); Alden, *The Chautauqua Girls at Home* (Boston: Lothrop Publishing Co., 1877). See Virginia Scharff, "Beyond the Narrow Circle," 14-28.

72. Isabella Macdonald Alden, "The Centreville C.L.S.C.," *CAH* 5, no. 12 (11 August 1880), 3, 7; Isabella "Pansy" Alden, *The Hall in the Grove* (London: Ward, Lock & Co., 1880).

73. Sheldon used this plot formula for his 1899 Chautauqua story "Lend a Hand," a brief narrative about a poor couple whose passion for the CLSC warms the heart of a curmudgeonly old judge. Filled with gratitude, the judge sends them to Chautauqua for their honeymoon. " 'Lend a Hand.' A Chautauqua Story by Rev. C. M. Sheldon—A Synopsis of the Story," *CAH* 29, no. 6 (14 July 1899), 5.

74. "Chautauqua Assembly . . . Pacific Grove, Monterey, Cal., Session of 1888," 12.

75. Mary H. Field, *Kate Thurston's Chautauqua Circles* (Meadville, Pa.: Flood and Vincent, The Chautauqua-Century Press, 1891), 5.

76. Habberton, *The Chautauquans*, 160, 191, 215.

77. Anna E. Hahn, *Summer Assembly Days* (Boston & Chicago: Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society, 1888), 27-29, 59.

78. *Ibid.*, 76, 90, 159, 203.

79. *Ibid.*, 112, 115, 239.

80. Flood fought in the infantry at Antietam and Chancellorsville, rising to the rank of lieutenant. After the war he moved to Meadville, Pennsylvania, to take up pastoral work. Impressed with John Heyl Vincent and Lewis Miller's efforts at Chautauqua Lake, he agreed to edit *The Chautauqua Assembly Herald*. In 1880 he gave up ministry altogether to edit the new, nationally distributed *The Chautauquan*.

81. Theodore L. Flood, "Woman's Place and Work in the World," *CAH* 5, no. 1 (June 1880), 1-2; Flood, "Editor's Note Book," *The Chautauquan* 4 (1883-84), 308; Flood, "Editor's Outlook," *The Chautauquan* 6 (1885-86), 113.

82. "The Chautauquan and Its Editor," *Review of Reviews* 4, no. 19 (August 1891), 87-88. On the "Woman's Council Table," see Knicker, "The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, 1878-1914," 297-300, and Scharff, "Beyond the Narrow Circle," 37-51.

83. Kate Kimball to Miss Clara E. Miller, 18 April 1892, Miller, Clara E. Mss., CHS; Hugo Münsterberg, *The Americans* (New York: McLure, Phillips & Co., 1905), 384.

84. "A Word to the Public" in boxed set "Progressive Chautauqua Cards, Educational, Social, Entertaining" (Chautauqua Publishing Association, Chicago, 1897), in author's possession.

85. Kleiner, "Chautauqua and Women," 26.

86. Hurlbut to Kimball, 17 July 1889, 1, Famous People Letters, Folder H; W. A. Duncan, 2 May 1887, 2-3, Famous People Letters, Folder K, CIA.

87. Vincent to L. S. Stowe, 6 June 1885, Folder I, Kimball CLSC Letters, 1884-1885, MA to ZZ, Kimball Collection, CIA.

88. Frank Chapin Bray, "Kate F. Kimball, Life Sketch of Executive Secretary of C.L.S.C.," *The Chautauquan Weekly* 10, no. 22 (25 January 1917), 3.

89. On her formal salutations, see Kleiner, "Chautauqua and Women," 22-23; Kate F. Kimball to James A. Woodburn, 27 May 1891, 1-2, LIU.

90. Frank Chapin Bray, "Chautauqua's Mother Superior," *The Independent* (7 July 1917), 22.

91. Kleiner, "Chautauqua and Women," 25; John Heyl Vincent to Kate Kimball, 5 October 1888, 2, Famous People Letters, Folder T-U-V, CIA. Ida Tarbell wrote that "most of the women who frequented Chautauqua were more or less in love with [Vincent] . . . but most of his audience would have preferred to die rather than reveal their secret passion." Tarbell, *All in the Day's Work* (New York: Macmillan, 1939), 70.

92. The lily was a common image in nineteenth-century romantic poetry. In *The Song of Hiawatha*, a popular play among Chautauquans, Henry W. Longfellow used the lily to a frankly erotic effect in "Hiawatha's Childhood," *The Song of Hiawatha* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1855), 112: "And Nokomis warned her often. . . . 'Oh, beware of Mudjekeewis, Of the West-Wind, Mudjekeewis; Listen not to what he tells you; Lie not down upon the meadow, Stoop not down among the lilies, Lest the West-Wind come and harm you!' But she heeded not the warning. . . . And the West-Wind came at evening. . . . Found the beautiful Wenonah, Lying there among the lilies, Wooed her with his words of sweetness, Wooed her with his soft caresses, Till she bore a son in sorrow, Bore a son of love and sorrow. Thus was born my Hiawatha."

93. Wrote George E. Vincent, "We cannot, in justice to Dr. Flood, impair at all the advertising value of the 'Chautauquan.'" George E. Vincent to Kimball, 5 December 1888, Folder 11, Kimball Correspondence 1888-89 Sa-Y. Charles Knicker has asserted that Kimball forced Flood's resignation because, in her view, he made too much money, was offensively patriotic, and had lost his writing edge. Knicker, "C.L.S.C.: A Century of Self-Improvement: Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle," *Lifelong Learning* 3:6 (February 1980): 20-23, 22. While my reading confirms Knicker's interpretation of Kimball's objections to Flood, I was not able to find any evidence that Kimball possessed enough power to force a major personnel change.

94. "Beloved Woman Will Be Buried Here Wednesday," *Shreveport Journal* (10 February 1927), quoted in *Lincoln Parish History*, edited by Mary Frances Fletcher and Ralph L. Ropp (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Co., 1976), 125-27.

95. "Gov. Bob Taylor to Lecture at 12 o'clock, July 6th" (1898), newspaper article, reprinted in Fletcher and Ropp, *Lincoln Parish History*, 112-13.

96. "Mrs. Pennybacker has lived under the two regimes of the Woman's Club," wrote a colleague in 1916, "the one, of ostracism and suspicion; the other, of power and recognition." Helen Knox, *Mrs. Percy V. Pennybacker: An Appreciation* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1916), 139. In 1912 Pennybacker and Mrs. Robert A. Miller became the first female members of the Chautauqua Institution's Board of Trustees. In addition to presiding over the Chautauqua Woman's Club from 1917 until her death in 1938, Pennybacker served on the boards of numerous war-effort committees during World War I and was a member of the Democratic National Committee in 1919-20.

97. Other members of the Woman's Department included Mrs. John A. Logan, Mrs. Maj. John Wesley Powell, Mrs. Leland Stanford, and Ida Harper. "The National Chautauqua of Glen Echo . . . Washington, D.C." (1890), 6-7, unpub pam., MLD.

98. The Vincent Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Club of Indianapolis, formed in 1908, focused exclusively on literature until it became affiliated with the Local Council of Women in April 1916. By November 1919, it had become a member of the Indiana Federation of Clubs. "Minutes 1908-1927," Folder 9 of "Vincent Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Club Minutes, 1908-1973," Collection #M 505, BV 2492-95, Indiana Historical Society—Manuscripts & Archives, Indianapolis.

99. Tarbell, *All in the Day's Work*, 64-96.

100. R. E. Adorr to Grace O. Farrington, 21 July 1890, Correspondence 1870-1899 file, P494 Gray (James and Family) Papers, Box 2, MHS; Isabella M. Alden to Whom It May Concern, 1891, in Correspondence 1870-1899 file, Gray Papers, Box 2; Frederick W. Hyde to Whom It May Concern, 2 September 1891, in Correspondence 1870-1899 file, Gray Papers, Box 2, MHS.

101. On domestic ideology, see Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1980); Colleen McDannell, *The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840-1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

102. J. D. Adams, "Solomon at Ezion-Geber" in E. H. Stokes, *Ocean Grove. Its Origin and Progress* (Philadelphia: Published by the Order of the Association, Press of Haddock & Son, 1874), 69.

103. Lizzy to Helen, postcard, 10 August 1909; Lizzy to Helen, postcard, 20 July 1909, Chautauqua, Ohio folder, OHS. See Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," *Signs* 1, no. 2 (Autumn 1975): 1-30; Nancy Cott, "Passionless-

ness: An Interpretation of Victorian Sexual Ideology, 1790-1850," *Signs* 4, no. 2 (Autumn 1978): 219-36.

104. "Chautauqua Notes," *Williamson County Sun* (Georgetown, Texas) (6 June 1889).

105. Charles A. Parker, *Pitman Grove, New Jersey, 1870-1900: Through a Tiffany Window* (Woodbury, N.J.: Gloucester County Historical Society, 1984), 31.

106. One inspired woman at the Mahtomedi assembly outside St. Paul, Minnesota, somehow scribed the letters "CLSC" into a lily pond. "The Mahtomedi Chautauqua Assembly—1887," *Mahtomedi Chautauqua Herald* 1, no. 1 (October 1887), 7, MHS.

107. Field, *Kate Thurston's Chautauqua Circles*, 174.

108. "Hedding Camp Ground Centennial, 1862-1962," 10, broadside, NHH.

109. In September 1907 the Woman's Club of Lincoln proposed to erect an administration building on Chautauqua grounds. Geisel Hall, as it was eventually named, was built in 1910. Vernon Deacon Lile, "History of the Lincoln Chautauqua Association of Lincoln, Illinois" (M.A. thesis, State University of Iowa, 1938), 19-20, 40-43.

110. Glenn Howard Darling, "The Chautauqua in Black Hawk County, Iowa" (M.A. thesis, State University of Iowa, 1936), 22, 24; "Seventh Annual Assembly. Greenfield Tri-County Chautauqua . . . August 1st to 11th, Inclusive, 1912" (Greenfield, Ohio, 1912), 1, PA Box 10, OHS.

111. The white middle-class women of the western home missionary movement "offered a typically Victorian solution to the problem of female victimization: the emancipation of women through the extension of the Christian home." Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue*, 69.

112. "Dear Editor," *Mahtomedi Chautauqua Herald* 1, no. 5 (February 1888), 41, MHS.

113. "Delevan Lake Assembly" (1901), 2, SHSW.

114. Lile, "History of the Lincoln Chautauqua Association of Lincoln, Illinois," 19-20.

115. "The Connecticut Valley Sunday School and Chautauqua Assembly" (1894), 3, Parks-Laurel Park file, HNM.

116. Virginia Mullery, *This Land of Lakes and Rivers: Lake County, Illinois* (Waukegan, Ill.: Windsor Publications, 1989), 36.

117. Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender, 1875 to the Present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 28.

118. Lile, "History of the Lincoln Chautauqua Association of Lincoln, Illinois," 12-13, 50-51.

119. "Wins Honor Degree," *Kalamazoo Gazette* (Kalamazoo, Mich.) (5 June 1925), Jones, Nellie Sawyer (Kedzie) file, KPL; Jack Bitner, *Mt. Gretna: A Coleman Legacy* (Lebanon County, Pa.: Donald Blyler, 1990), 157-58. See Rima Apple, "Constructing Mothers: Scientific Motherhood in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *Social History of Medicine* 8 (1995): 161-78.

120. Emma P. Ewing, "Cooking and Culture," *CAH* 23, no. 2 (20 July 1898), 2–3.

121. "The H's vs. the R's," newspaper clipping, n.d., Minutes of the Domestic Science Club, 1900–1905, Scrapbook No. 8, Woman's Club Collection, SCH.

122. Winifred Douthit, "Administration of Mrs. Mary M. D. Rhoads," and Douthit, "Administration of Mrs. Belle C. Tackett," in Catherine Price Auld, "History of Shelbyville Woman's Club from 1900–1938," Vol. 1, 1900–1912, Woman's Club Collection, SCH.

123. Marjorie O'Harra, *Ashland: The First 130 Years* (Jacksonville: Southern Oregon Historical Society, 1981), 70; *Ashland Tidings* (Ashland, Ore.) (1 March 1909), quoted in O'Harra, *Ashland*, 79.

124. Jeanne Halgren Kilde, "The 'Predominance of the Feminine' at Chau-tauqua: Rethinking the Gender-Space Relationship in Victorian America," *Signs* 24, no. 2 (Winter 1999): 449–86.

125. Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Two Political Cultures in the Progressive Era: The National Consumers' League and the American Association for Labor Legislation," in Linda K. Kerber, Alice Kesler Harris, and Sklar, *U.S. History as Women's History: New Feminist Essays* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 37; Baker, "The Domestication of Politics," 644.

Chapter 6

1. Edward E. Hale to Jesse L. Hurlbut, 27 July 1889, Famous People Letters, Folder H2, CIA.

2. Lawrence Cremin, *The Genius of American Education* (New York: Random House, 1965), 6–7; David B. Tyack, "The Tribe and the Common School: Community Control in Rural Education," *American Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (March 1972): 3–19, 16; Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974).

In recent decades scholars have unearthed new insights into the efforts of elites to use education as a means of legitimating industrial and consumer capitalism. Joseph F. Kett has described the educational professionals' "flight from Arnoldian culture" and their preference for the pragmatic, instrumental model of education pioneered by John Dewey. Wrote Kett: "The idea that education should lift the individual beyond the material concerns of everyday life into a realm of beauty and ideal truth began to decline during [the 1890s]; by 1900 it was in retreat and by 1910 in shambles." Robert Wiebe, "The Social Functions of Public Education," pt. 1, *American Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1969): 147–65, 157; Mary O. Furner, *Advocacy and Objectivity: A Crisis in the Professionalization of American Social Science, 1865–1905* (Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1975); Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Joseph F. Kett, *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under*

Difficulties: From Self-Improvement to Adult Education in America, 1750–1990 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 223, 180.

Joan Shelley Rubin's work on "middlebrow culture" stood virtually alone against the historiographical consensus on the importance of professionalization. The purveyors of middlebrow, Rubin has argued, took what "highbrow" museum and symphony philanthropists viewed as a privilege of breeding and refinement and repackaged it for popular consumption. In so doing, they postponed the collapse of the Arnoldian ideal in the age of professionalization. My reading of the Chautauqua movement supports Rubin's important qualification to the wider historiographical focus on professionalization. Joan Shelley Rubin, *The Making of Middle/Brow Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

3. Matthew Arnold is too frequently invoked in the scholarship on popular pursuits of knowledge between 1870 and 1920. Kett and Rubin, in particular, have relied on him as a symbol of a widely held, sentimental ideal of self-culture, the abandonment of which (after 1900, for Kett; gradually after 1920, for Rubin) paralleled the structural transformation of the urban school and signaled a revolution in thinking about the social role of education. Rubin's *The Making of Middle/Brow Culture* (1992) includes an early chapter on Arnold and the Unitarian educational ideal. The index to Kett's *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties* (1994) lists thirty-three references to Arnold and the Arnoldian ideal, more than the references to Ralph Waldo Emerson (ten), Edward Everett (seven), and Will Durant (three) combined. Arnold is crucial to Kett's declension argument. Of the six chapters in Kett's book on the period from 1870 to 1930, five refer to Arnold in the introductory paragraphs.

However, the emphasis on Matthew Arnold is out of proportion with his actual influence over consumers of U.S. popular education. If Chautauqua exemplified the Arnoldian ideal, then Arnold's vogue in U.S. popular education, and the alleged trauma of rejecting it, has been overstated. Matthew Arnold's name rarely appeared in Chautauqua lectures or publications. Moreover, Arnoldian and vocational models of education were frequently combined on the Chautauqua platform. If Arnoldians believed that one must not profit materially from education, then here, too, Chautauquans failed to meet the standard. The institution premised its very existence on training prospective teachers for success in the competitive educational labor market. While Chautauqua won little respect among some specialists and intellectuals, for every disillusioned William James there was an enthusiastic Richard T. Ely willing to use Chautauqua as a platform to spread his vision of the republic.

4. Robert Louis Utlaut, "The Role of the Chautauqua Movement in the Shaping of Progressive Thought in America" (Ph.D. diss, University of Minnesota, 1972), 33–42, 86–90, 131. A brief and concise interpretive summary of education at Chautauqua is Harold W. Stubblefield, "The Idea of Lifelong Learning in the Chautauqua Movement" *Adult Education* 31, no. 4 (Summer 1981): 199–208. Richard T. Ely discussed his special affection for Chautauqua in his autobiography *Ground Under Our Feet* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 79–87.

5. "Georgetown CLSC," *Williamson County Sun* (Georgetown, Texas) (30 January 1890), CHT.
6. Rexford G. Tugwell, *The Light of Other Days* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1962), 61.
7. Edward Everett Hale to Dr. [George] Vincent, 31 August 1886, Famous People Letters, Folder H, CIA.
8. John Appleton to John Heyl Vincent, 12 July 1884, quoted in Charles R. Knicker, "The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, 1878–1914: A Historical Interpretation of an Educational Piety in Industrial America" (EED diss., Columbia University, 1969), 65; John Heyl Vincent to Frank N. Barrett, Esq., 5 November 1883, 2, MLD.
9. Mrs. C. Von Koch, "Chautauqua: Growth of Popular Education," *The Chautauquan* 67, no. 3 (August 1912), 188.
10. Albion W. Small and George E. Vincent, *An Introduction to the Study of Society* (New York, 1894).
11. F. B. Tarbell, Harry Pratt Judson, Richard Burton, S. H. Clark, Edward Capps, Horace Spencer Fiske, Shailer Mathews, and Frederick Starr. Knicker, "The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, 1878–1914," 79.
12. M. H. Miller, "Chautauqua as the Wisconsin Idea," *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters* 52 (1963): 159–68.
13. Chautauqua books "should be written by a man with a national reputation," wrote the younger Vincent, so long as that person was not an "extremist." George E. Vincent to Ely, 19 October 1888, Correspondence of Richard T. Ely, Microfilm 924, Reel 2, SHSW.
14. "Editorial," *Nation* 49 (19 September 1889), 87–88; T. V. Cromwell to Ely, 13 April 1889, Correspondence of Richard T. Ely, Microfilm 924, Reel 2, SHSW.
15. College students taking Roman history at the University of Virginia in the 1880s used the same textbook as the one assigned in the CLSC. Kett, *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties*, 165–66.
16. The rise of summer schools also figured importantly in the equation. See Edgard W. Knight, *Fifty Years of American Education* (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1952), 207–8.
17. William Rainey Harper to Ely, 27 December 1889, Correspondence of Richard T. Ely, Micro 924, Microforms, SHSW. Chautauqua University produced only a score or two of graduates. It straggled on for another six years after Harper's departure, finally relinquishing its state charter in 1898.
18. W. W. Willoughby, "The History of Summer Schools in the United States," *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year 1891–92*, Vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894), 935–36. On university extension in the United States, see George M. Woytanowitz, *University Extension: The Early Years in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: National University Extension Association and the American College Testing Program, 1974). More on George Vincent's work with university extension at Minnesota can be found in James Gray, *The University of Minnesota* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1951), 208.

19. Richard G. Moulton, "University Extension: A Series of Articles on Various Phases of the Movement," *Book News* 9 (May 1891): 339–80.

20. Richard G. Moulton, "A Lecturer's Notes on the Working of the University Extension" (Philadelphia, 1890) in bound volume, NYPL; "Ten Years—Report of the American Society for the Extension of University Teaching, 1890–1900" (Philadelphia, 1901), NYPL; "Our Extension Work," *The Pennsylvania Chautauquan and Christian Culture* 1, no. 5 (February 1893), 149–50.

21. "The National Chautauqua of Glen Echo—Washington, D.C." (1890), 5, Chautauqua file, MLD.

22. Ocean Park Assembly, Maine; Bay View, Michigan; Mt. Gretna, Pennsylvania; Waterloo, Iowa; Point O' Woods, New York; Hedding, New Hampshire; Rock River, Illinois; Round Lake, New York; Old Salem, Illinois; and Winona, Indiana.

23. Katerine Aird Miller and Raymond H. Montgomery, *A Chautauqua to Remember: The Story of Old Salem* (Petersburg, Ill.: Silent River Press, 1987), 104–12.

24. Kenneth Cmiel, *Democratic Eloquence: The Fight Over Popular Speech in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1990), 176–205, 238–57.

25. Ely had asked Wright to support Chautauqua. John H. Wright to Ely, 27 October 1888, Correspondence of Richard T. Ely, Microfilm 924, Reel 2, SHSW.

26. Furner, *Advocacy and Objectivity*, 85; "Constitution, Bylaws and Resolutions of the American Economic Association" (New York, 1885), 4, SHSW. On the AEA and Chautauqua, see Furner, 121–24.

27. "Notes," *Annals of the American Academy* 3 (1892–93), 667.

28. Edward W. Bemis, Carroll D. Wright, Frederick B. Hawley, James H. Canfield, J. R. Commons, Henry W. Farnum, and R. R. Bowker endorsed the site. See Correspondence of Richard T. Ely, Micro 924, Reel 4, Microforms, SHSW.

29. Davis R. Dewey to Ely, 10 January 1892, Correspondence of Richard T. Ely, Micro 924, Reel 4, Microforms, SHSW. E. R. A. Seligman opposed the site. Adams, Franklin H. Giddings, Frank Taussig, James Hadley all refused to attend. George Gurston of *The Social Economist* stated he was "decidedly opposed" to Chautauqua. E. R. A. Seligman to Ely, 29 December 1891; George Gurston to Ely, 29 December 1891.

30. See Frederick M. Rosentreter, *The Boundaries of the Campus* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957), 1–15.

31. "I have put 'Prepared by Dr. James A. Woodburn' under the heading, Circular No. 1," he assured his student. Adams to Woodburn, 22 September 1890, LIU.

32. Adams to Woodburn, 28 October 1891, 2, LIU; Herbert B. Adams to James A. Woodburn, 8 April 1892, LIU.

33. Rudyard Kipling, "Chautauquaed," *Pioneer Mail* (1890), reprinted in *Abaft the Funnel* (New York: B. W. Dodge & Company, 1909), 180–203, 188, 196. "One never gets to believe in the proper destiny of woman until one sees a thousand of 'em doing something different." Kipling, 203.

34. William James to Mrs. James, 31 July 1896, in *Letters of William James*, edited by Henry James (London: Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., 1926), 43-44; William James, "What Makes a Life Significant" in his *Talks to Teachers on Psychology* [1899] (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 150-67, 155, 152, 155, 154. As Alan Trachtenberg has observed, James identified a central flaw in Vincent's Chautauqua idea. Instead of meeting the challenges of urban dysfunction head on, it simply "sealed itself off from those realities." Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 144.

35. Quoted in Burleigh Taylor Wilkins, *Carl Becker: A Biographical Study in American Intellectual History* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press and Harvard University Press, 1961), 26, 13.

36. Edward Eggleston, "Formative Influences," *The Forum* 10 (November 1890), 281, 285, quoted in Holman Hamilton, "Introduction" to *The Circuit Rider* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1970), v-xiv, vi. His conversion to Darwinism came in a series of violent realizations, a "long and painful struggle for emancipation from theological dogma." Quoted in Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion, Volume 1: The Irony of It All, 1893-1919* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 49.

37. Quoted in William Randel, *Edward Eggleston* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1963), 153-54.

38. In 1894 reformer, university extension advocate, and Chautauqua lecturer Charles Zueblin decried the overspecialization of the graduate student. Zueblin left the University of Chicago in 1908 to pursue a career as an independent lecturer, frequently at Chautauquas. Kevin Mattson, *Creating a Democratic Public: The Struggle for Urban Participatory Democracy During the Progressive Era* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 28-29.

39. Historians have given ample attention in recent years to the revitalization of masculinity in turn-of-the-century bourgeois culture. Using Theodore Roosevelt as the primary example, Gail Bederman showed how the Victorian ideal of manliness, focusing on "sexual self-restraint, a powerful will, a strong character," gave way to modern masculinity, connoting "aggressiveness, physical force, and male sexuality." Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 18-19. On the crisis of masculinity, see John Higham, "The Reorientation of American Culture in the 1890s," in *The Origins of Modern Consciousness*, edited by John Weiss (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1965), 25-48; Elliott J. Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare Knuckle Prizefighting in America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986); Gail Bederman, " 'The Women Have Had Charge of the Church Work Long Enough': The Men and Religion Forward Movement of 1911-12 and the Masculinization of Middle-Class Protestantism," *American Quarterly* 41 (September 1989): 432-65; Judy Hilkey, *Character Is Capital: Success Manuals and Manhood in Gilded Age America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

40. David M. Steele, "Chautauqua Doings," in *Vacation Journeys East and West* (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1918), 181-82.

41. Albert S. Cook, "Chautauqua: Its Aims and Influences," *Forum* 19 (March-April 1895), 690; A. R. (Palican Rapids, Minn.) to Mrs. R. F. Kimball, 5 December 1882, Misc. CYFRU folder, Kate Kimball Correspondence 1879-1883, CIA.

42. James Gray to Grace Farrington, 30 June 1893, Correspondence 1870-1899 file, Gray (James and Family) Papers, Box 2, MHS.

43. Mary Merritt Swift and Emmons J. Swift Diary, 17 July 1882, Emmons J. Swift Diary, Krock Library Rare Books and Manuscripts, Cornell University Library, Ithaca.

44. "Chautauqua Lake on the Erie Railroad" (1908), SHSW.

45. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), 98-99, 11. Gilman's 1904 lectures at Chautauqua questioned the biological basis of male dominance. Gilman, "Woman's Place," *CAH* 29, no. 48 (25 August 1904), 1, 6, 7, 8; Gilman, "Society and the Baby," *CAH* 29, no. 49 (26 August 1904), 1, 5, 8.

46. Editorial, *Exeter Gazette* (Exeter, N.H.) (11 September 1891), 4, NHH.

47. William Blaikie, *How to Get Strong and How to Stay So* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1879), 9, 14, 20, 42, 28.

48. E. F. H., "The Story of an Adventurer," *The Overland Monthly* 5 (April 1885), 385-86.

49. Ruth M. Sparhawk, "A Study of the Life and Contributions of Amos Alonzo Stagg to Intercollegiate Football" (Ph.D. diss., Springfield College, 1968), 41, quoted in Hal A. Lawson and Alan G. Ingham, "Conflicting Ideologies Concerning the University and Intercollegiate Athletics: Harper and Hutchins at Chicago, 1892-1940," *Journal of Sport History* 7, no. 3 (Winter 1980): 37-67, 42. William Rainey Harper, who worked with Stagg at Chautauqua, tapped the football star to direct athletics at the University of Chicago in 1892. See Lawston and Ingham, 41-46. Also prominent at the assembly was Yale All-America baseball player A. H. Sharp.

50. Dr. J. H. Kellogg, "The Gospel of Health," *CAH* 23, no. 29 (20 August 1898), 3, 6, 7.

51. See Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

52. T. J. Jackson Lears, "Being Prepared," *American Quarterly* 36:4 (Fall 1984): 566-74, 570; David I. MacLoed, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and Their Forerunners, 1870-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 44.

53. A. E. Ballard, "The Boys," in *Ocean Grove*, edited by E. H. Stokes (Philadelphia: Published by the Order of the Association, Press of Haddock & Son, 1874), 56; "Editorial," *The Pennsylvania Chautauquan and Christian Culture* 1, no. 1 (October 1892), 21-22, HSP.

54. Roland Mueller, "The Chautauqua in Winfield, Kansas," *Kansas Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (Summer 1983): 13-31, 23; "1902 Program of Winona Assembly, Winona Lake, Indiana" (1902), 39, SHSW.

55. Lears, "Being Prepared," 570.

56. “Winona Year Book, Season 1910, Winona Lake, Indiana,” 39–40; Miller and Montgomery, *A Chautauqua to Remember*, 111; “Eighth Annual Session of the Southern Ohio Chautauqua. Georgetown, Ohio. August 7th to 16th, 1914,” 29, OHS; “Winona Year Book, Season 1910,” 39–40; Fred M. Hansen, “A Chautauqua Farm Boys’ Camp,” *Rural Manhood* 1, no. 10 (October 1910), 12; “Mountainair Chautauqua Association. 6th Annual Assembly” (1913), Mountainair Vertical File, CSR. In exchange for their efforts to preserve “good order upon the grounds,” the boys clubs at the original assembly were “entitled to a place in public processions.” Frank Chapin Bray, *A Reading Journey Through Chautauqua* (Chautauqua, N.Y.: Chautauqua Institution, 1905), 94, 89.

57. Harrison John Thornton, “The White House and Chautauqua,” *New York History* 27, no. 3 (July 1946): 285–305, 300.

58. Bray, *A Reading Journey Through Chautauqua*, 99.

59. “The Advantages of Tent Life,” *The Texas-Colorado Chautauqua Journal* 1, no. 2 (April 1900), 13.

60. Judith J. Phillips, “Enlightenment, Education and Entertainment: A Study of the Chautauqua Movement in Kentucky” (M.A. thesis, University of Louisville, 1985), 15.

61. “Carmel Grove Chautauqua Assembly and Camp Meeting” (Hooper, N.Y., 1900), SSD, p.v. 145, no. 3, NYPL.

62. “Delevan Lake Assembly” (1902), 14, SHSW; “Lectures by Albert Boynton Storms,” n.d., Folder 1, Robert Lohrie Collected Lyceum Brochures, SHSWA; “Sixteenth Annual Session of the Galesburg Chautauqua” (1915), 31, Chautauquas vertical file, ISHL.

63. Stephen M. Frank, *Life with Father: Parenthood and Masculinity in the Nineteenth-Century American North* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). Chautauqua’s masculine styles parallel those expressed in the Muscular Christianity and Religion Forward Movements, ecumenical organizations that flourished in mainstream Protestantism in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

64. Baker Family Papers, 1895, 24–36, Vol. 5 to 1909, Vol. 7, Mss. 924, CHS.

65. Baker Family Papers, 1912, Vol. 8 to 1919, Vol. 8, Mss. 924, CHS.

66. Athena Vrettos has argued that bodies constituted “a set of collective stories middle-class Victorians told about their social and material relations.” Vrettos, *Somatic Fictions: Imagining Illness in Victorian Culture* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1995), 3.

67. Significantly, Clark co-authored his book *Principles of Vocal Expression* (1897) with William B. Chamberlain of the Chicago Theological Seminary. Solomon Henry Clark, “The New Elocution,” *CAH* 20, 5 (29 July 1895), 5, 11. See Dorothy Siedenburg Hadley, “Oral Interpretation at the Chautauqua Institution and the Chautauqua School of Expression, 1874–1900” (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1956); Mary Margaret Robb, *Oral Interpretation of Literature in American Colleges and Universities* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1968); Cmiel, *Democratic Eloquence*.

68. “The Connecticut Valley Sunday School and Chautauqua Assembly—1896” (1896), 2, Parks-Laurel Park file, HNM.

69. Ann Wagner, *Adversaries of Dance: From the Puritans to the Present* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 249–51.

70. L'Abbé Delaumosne, *Delsarte System of Oratory* (New York: E. S. Werner, 1893), xxvi, xxvii.

71. Genevieve Stebbins, *Delsarte System of Dramatic Expression* (New York: E. S. Werner, 1888), 28. “I abhor all that is affected,” exclaimed Delsarte’s daughter, Marie Delsarte-Gerald. Adèle M. Woodward, “Delsarte’s Daughter in America,” quoted in Delaumosne, 56.

72. Nancy Lee Chalfa Ruyter, *Reformers and Visionaries: The Americanization of the Art of Dance* (New York: Dance Horizons, 1979), 16–30.

73. “Sunday at the Camp” (1896), newspaper clipping in Douthit Scrapbook, SCH.

74. William Lawrence Slout, *Theatre in a Tent: The Development of a Provincial Entertainment* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1972), 53; R. Alan Hedges, “Actors Under Canvas: A Study of the Theatre of the Circuit Chautauqua, 1910–1933” (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1976), 32–33.

75. Clark, “The New Elocution,” 11.

76. Ida Elizabeth Sisson, “A Chautauqua Journal by Ida Elizabeth Sisson,” 5 July 1895, 46, CIA.

77. Emily M. Bishop, *Americanized Delsarte Culture* (Chautauqua, N.Y.: Published by Emily M. Bishop, 1895), 35.

78. Theodore Morrison, *Chautauqua: A Center for Education, Religion, and the Arts in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 152–53.

79. Paul later became high school speech and drama teacher in Indiana. Elaine Carol Main, “‘Miss Paul’ Hits the Glittering Chautauqua Trail,” *The Palimpsest* 66, no. 4 (July/August 1985): 129–42, 136.

80. “Official Program. Second Annual Session. Janesville Chautauqua Association” (1906), SHSW.

81. Theodore L. Flood, “Editor’s Outlook,” *The Chautauquan* 3, no. 8 (May 1883), 478; William T. Harris, “Our Public School System,” *The Chautauquan* 8, no. 5 (February 1888), 278–80; Harris, “Our Educational System,” *The Chautauquan* 15, no. 1 (April 1892), 16–20.

82. John Dewey, “Social Duties of the School,” *CAH* 25, no. 15 (24 July 1900), 5; Dewey, “How Shall the School Best Fulfill Its Social Responsibility,” *CAH* 25, no. 16 (25 July 1900), 7.

83. “Salaried Positions for Learners. By Our Plan—International Correspondence Schools, Scranton, Pa.” (1900), in bound volume SST, p.v. 2, NYPL; “International Correspondence Schools, Scranton, Penna. Their Method of Teaching Industrial Science” (1901), 4–5, in bound volume SST, p.v. 2, NYPL.

84. Fred W. Hackforth to C. G. Watson, 12 February 1894, quoted in Sheila M. Sherow, “The Pennsylvania State College: A Pioneer in Non-Traditional Agri-

cultural Education” (Ed.D. diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1989), 85; Watson to Hackforth, quoted in Sherow, 85.

85. “Chautauqua Platform Program of 1890.—Georgetown, Texas” (1890), 4, 14, CHT.

86. “Programme of the Monona Lake Assembly held at Lakeside, Madison” (1889), 26, SHSW.

87. “State Teachers’ Reading Circles,” *United States Bureau of Education, Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1887–88* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1889), 1066–67. Teacher examinations at Bay View, Michigan, are discussed in Keith Fennimore, *The Heritage of Bay View, 1875–1895* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1975), 103.

88. “Chautauqua’s Growth,” *Mabtomedi Chautauqua Herald* 1, no. 11 (August 1888), 116, MHS.

89. Eugene Willard Troth, “The Teacher Training Program in Music at Chautauqua Institution, 1905–1930” (Ph.D. diss, University of Michigan, 1958), 91, 175, 290, 292.

90. Patricia Lewis Strickland, “The Louisiana Chautauqua: Grounds for Educational and Cultural Change, 1890–1905,” *North Louisiana Historical Association Journal* 24, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 12–32.

91. Such was the case in 1895 when the County Board of Education of Los Angeles County passed a resolution commending the summer normal at the Long Beach Chautauqua Assembly to the county’s teachers. “Announcement. Thirteenth Annual Session . . . Long Beach Chautauqua Assembly . . . July 18–August 18, 1898” (1898), Rare Books, HEH.

92. *Big Stone Headlight* (16 July 1903), quoted in Michael R. Schliessmann, “Culture on the Prairie: The Big Stone Lake Chautauqua,” *South Dakota History* 21, no. 3 (1991): 247–62, 259.

93. Stephanie Rath, “Through the Golden Gate” (B.A. thesis, Yale University, 1996), chart I.

94. “Winona Year Book, Winona Lake, Indiana” (1910), 9, 10, SHSW.

Chapter 7

1. Jacob A. Riis, “The Real Chautauqua,” *New York Herald* (15 August 1897). See Riis, *The Making of an American* (New York: Macmillan, 1901).

2. Dixon, Lake Bluff, New Piasa, Chester, Lithia Springs, Havana, Urbana, Petersburg, Pontiac, Delevan (Wisconsin), Madison. Thereafter, activity concentrated in south-central Illinois, where assemblies were more densely packed than anywhere in the country. At least twelve assemblies served south-central Illinois by 1907. Mary Frances Bestor Cram, *Chautauqua Salute: A Memoir of the Bestor Years* (Chautauqua: Chautauqua Institution, 1990), 2.

3. David T. Glick, "The Independent Chautauquas Then and Now," *Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Herald* 13, no. 2 (1984), 43.
4. Frank Chapin Bray, *A Reading Journey Through Chautauqua* (Chautauqua, N.Y.: Chautauqua Institution, 1905), 15, 111-12.
5. "First Annual Lakeside Chautauqua Assembly. Marinette, Wisconsin" (1897), 23, SHSW.
6. David E. Nye, *Electrifying America: Social Meanings of a New Technology* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1991), 54; Editorial, *Exeter Gazette* (Exeter, N.H.) (14 August 1891), 4, NHH.
7. "Trolley Road Open. Cars Now Run Regularly to Jamestown," *CAH* 29, no. 3 (4 July 1904), 1.
8. "Chautauqua. Long Beach, California" (1908), rear inside flap, Rare Books, HLC. On streetcars and entertainment, see George W. Hilton and John F. Due, *The Electric Interurban Railways in America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), 3-44.
9. Thomas Bender, *Towards an Urban Vision: Ideas and Institutions in Nineteenth Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 187.
10. See Stanley K. Schultz, *Constructing Urban Culture: American Cities and City Planning, 1800-1920* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988); William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); Jon C. Teaford, *The Twentieth-Century American City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). On the city beautiful movement at Chautauqua, see Jeffrey Simpson, *Chautauqua: An American Utopia* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), 50-65.
11. See Harry Francis Mallgrave, ed., *Otto Wagner: Reflections on the Raiment of Modernity* (Santa Monica: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1993).
12. J. Massey Rhind, "Sculptor," in Albert Kelsey, "Making Chautauqua a Model," *The Chautauquan* 32, no. 5 (August 1903), 457-58.
13. Bender, *Towards An Urban Vision*, 187.
14. "Official Program, Hedding Chautauqua, Season of 1902, August 4-23," 1-2, Hedding, NH file, CIA; Bray, *A Reading Journey Through Chautauqua*, 107.
15. The first in Shelbyville, Illinois, was the one thousand-volume lending library established by Jasper Douthit. "Important Facts for the Friends of Lithia Springs Chautauqua" (Lithia, Illinois, 1902), 5, in Chautauquas [official programs . . .] file, ISHL.
16. See George S. Bobinski, *Carnegie Libraries: Their History and Impact on American Public Library Development* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1969); Abigail A. Van Slyck, *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries and American Culture, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
17. Ron Blaze, "The Library, the Chautauqua, and the Railroads in De Funiak Springs, Florida," *The Journal of Library History* 22, no. 4 (Fall 1987): 377-96, 383.

18. See David Schuyler, *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 310.

19. “Prospectus of the Colorado Lake Chautauqua Association” (1893), 9, CHT.

20. Long’s Park (1900), Williamson Park (1924), Buchmiller Park (1924), Buchanan Park (c. 1924), Sixth Ward Memorial Park (1926). My thanks to John W. W. Loose, Historian, Lancaster County Historical Society, for providing me with this information.

21. Newton Bateman and Paul Selby, eds., *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Christian County* (Chicago: Munsell Publishing Co., 1918), 821.

22. “Department of Education, The City of New York. Bulletin of Free Lectures to the People” (103), pamphlet in bound volume SST, p.v. 2, NYPL; John S. Noffsinger, *Correspondence Schools, Lyceums, Chautauquas* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1926), 137–40.

23. The University of Oklahoma, working with the Oklahoma Department of Health, sponsored a traveling “community institute,” featuring lectures on “Community Health,” “Child Training,” and “Educational Plays.” “Coming. University of Oklahoma, To Your Community for an Institute,” (n.d.) Folder 1, Robert Lohrie Collected Lyceum Brochures, SHSW-A; Noffsinger, *Correspondence Schools, Lyceums, Chautauquas*, 136.

24. “Official Program, Hedding Chautauqua, Season of 1902,” 1–2.

25. “Operating Table 1904–1929,” in Chautauqua Budgets 1904–29, Box 112, AEB.

26. Memo from George E. Vincent to Clement Studebaker, C. D. Massey, Melvil Dewey, et al., 11 July 1910, in Fundraising (Chautauqua) 1901–1914 folder, Box 112, AEB.

27. “CLSC Endowment” notes in Fundraising (Chautauqua) 1901–1914 folder in Box 112, AEB. Bestor envisioned a new administrative building paid for with Studebaker money, big enough to “dominate the plaza” and “emphasize the permanent administrative basis of the institution.” Frank Chapin Bray to Arthur E. Bestor, 16 March 1911, 1–2, in Fundraising (Chautauqua) 1901–1914 folder, Box 112, AEB.

28. James Quirk to C. M. Smith, 19 November 1895, Chautauqua file, WCH; “Account of Assembly Program Season 1895,” Chautauqua file, WCH.

29. Glenn Howard Darling, “The Chautauqua in Black Hawk County, Iowa” (M.A. thesis, State University of Iowa, 1936), 17; Jasper L. Douthit, “How Real Chautauqua Flourishes,” *Our Best Words* 28, no. 9 (September 1907), 1, in Our Best Words box, SCH; “The Chautauqua for 1911,” in “Albia Chautauqua Association. Albia, Iowa” (1911), Box BL 264, SHSI.

30. W. E. Hardy to Kate Kimball, 12 August 1892; W. E. Hardy to Kate Kimball, 5 July 1892, Kate Kimball Letters 1891–1892, Folder 3, CIA.

31. “Lake Chautauqua Reached via the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern Railway” (1898), 25–29, SHSW-L.

32. Francis C. Waid, “Ottawa Chautauqua Assembly” (1889), in “Souvenir,” privately pub. diary, excerpted at <<http://www.rootsweb.com/pacrawfo/Excerpts/souvenir-main.htm>>.

33. “Lake Chautauqua Reached,” 25–29.

34. “Oakwood Amusement Park Drew Thousands,” newspaper article from 22 September 1940 clipping in scrapbook “Parks—Kalamazoo,” 14, Subject File, KPL.

35. “The Connecticut Valley Sunday School and Chautauqua Assembly, Eighth Annual Session” (1894), 5, Parks-Laurel Park file, HNM.

36. “Connecticut Valley Sunday School and Chautauqua Assembly. Twenty-First Annual Session” (1907), 4–7, Parks-Laurel Park file, HNM.

37. Washington Gladden, “Christianity and Popular Amusements,” *Century Magazine* 29 (1884–85), 392, 389–90. As historian Richard Wightman Fox has argued, a “decisive transformation in the American Protestant sensibility” took place in the nineteenth century as Protestants came, reluctantly, to accept theater, dancing, card playing, baseball, amusement parks, and moving pictures. “By 1920 most of the mainstream liberal churches had not only sanctioned attendance at theatrical events but even brought theatrical programming into the church.” Richard Wightman Fox, “The Discipline of Amusement,” in *Inventing Times Square: Commerce and Culture at the Crossroads of the World*, edited by William R. Taylor (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1991): 83–98, 84, 86.

38. Edwin Holt Hughes, “Our Mistaken Legislation on Amusements,” *Methodist Review* 106 (September 1923), 720.

39. William Lawrence Slout, *Theatre in a Tent: The Development of a Provincial Entertainment* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1972), 56. At least one commentator noted the irony of Chautauqua’s “right-handed introduction of pageants and moral interludes and the left-handed opposition to the theatre.” Percy H. Boynton, “Summer Schooling,” *The Independent* 86 (26 June 1916), 519–20.

40. See Gay Zenola MacLaren, *Morally We Roll Along* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1938); R. Alan Hedges, “Actors Under Canvas: A Study of the Theatre of the Circuit Chautauqua, 1910–1933” (Ph.D. diss., The Ohio State University, Dept. of Theatre, 1976), 40–43.

41. Drew Allan Kent, “The Circuit-Chautauqua Produced Play: Reading Historic Plays as Cultural Scripts of Social Interaction” (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1992), 184–85.

42. James L. Cabot, “Chautauqua Was Important Entertainment at Epworth,” *Ludington Daily News* (Ludington, Mich.) (14 July 1994).

43. Matthew A. Beemer noticed the shift away from religious and educational programming toward entertainment in 1897–1898. Beemer, “The Florida Chautauqua as Text: Creating and Satisfying a Disposition to Appropriate Cultural Goods in Northwest Florida” (Ph.D. diss., Speech Communication, Louisiana State University, 1997), 114–15.

44. The fact that two independent assemblies staged the same two plays in 1899 suggests that both were relying on a lecture bureau—probably Redpath—to provide the entertainment. “Delevan Lake Assembly” (1899), 3, SHSW; Helen Gladstone Nau, “The Chautauqua in Des Moines County, Iowa” (MA thesis, State University of Iowa, 1937), 19.

45. Editorial, “The Lesson of Chautauqua,” *The Burlington Hawkeye* (Iowa) (4 July 1897), quoted in Nau, “The Chautauqua in Des Moines County, Iowa,” 10. Two years later, a writer in the same newspaper, asserting that “the principles of chautauqua require something elevating and instructive,” doubted that the people would accept the juxtaposition of a “serious lecture with a sugar-coating of negro minstrelsy or comic opera. . . .” Editorial, *The Burlington Hawkeye* (12 July 1899), quoted in Nau, 20.

46. Slout, *Theatre in a Tent*, 56.

47. In 1897 the Northern Chautauqua Assembly in Marinette, Wisconsin, sent advertising manager E. C. Whalen to Chicago to arrange for that year’s program with the Redpath bureau. I suspect that this was not the first time that an assembly relied on a bureau list to provide most or all of its program. Howard Emich, “The Fabulous Story of Chautauqua and Its Life in Marinette—The Turn of the Century Thirst for Knowledge,” *Marinette County Historian* (Marinette, Wis.) 9, no. 2 (August 1984): 2–7, 2.

48. Jasper L. Douthit, “Meeting of the International Chautauqua Alliance,” *Our Best Words* 19, no. 12 (December 1901), 2, SCH. The location of ICA meetings must have been a point of contention. When it was held in Chicago in 1907, ICA’s own president, M. B. Pilcher of Nashville, could not attend. By comparison, at the 1911 meeting in Des Moines, a contingent of four delegates from the Ames Chautauqua Assembly made the relatively short trip. Douthit, “Meeting of the International Chautauqua Alliance,” *OBW* 27, no. 11 (November 1907), 2, SCH; Farwell T. Brown, *Ames: The Early Years in Word and Picture* (Ames, Iowa: Hues Printing, 1993), 160.

49. Douthit, “Which Do You Choose?” *Our Best Words: Supplement* (24 July 1901), 2, SCH; Brown, *Ames*, 162; Harry S. McLarran, “A Flying Fish: A History of the Independent Chautauqua Assembly Movement for the Chautauqua Network” (1994), 364–65, unpub. ms., CIA.

50. Jasper L. Douthit, “What Is a True Chautauqua Assembly?” *OBW* 41, no. 2 (July–August 1921), 2, in *Our Best Words* by Jasper Douthit Box, SCH.

51. Daniel Frohman, *Memories of a Manager: Reminiscences of the Old Lyceum and of Some Players of the Last Quarter Century* (London: William Heinemann, 1911), 158.

52. Everett Ludley, “It Always Has” (circa 1987), Webster City, Iowa, in Box BL 314, SHSI. See Michael Kramme, “If It’s a Cass Show It’s a Good Show,” *Palimpsest: Iowa’s Popular History Magazine* 75, no. 4 (Winter 1994): 184–91.

53. Mark Swan, *Her Own Money* (New York: Samuel French, 1915); Roi Cooper Megrue and Walter Hackett, *It Pays to Advertise* (New York: Samuel French, 1917); Edward E. Rose, *Cappy Ricks: A Comedy in Three Acts* (New York: Samuel French, 1923).

54. Winchell Smith, *Turn to the Right: A Comedy in a Prologue and Three Acts* (New York: Samuel French, 1916). See also Slout, *Theatre In a Tent*, 79; Drew Allan Kent, "The circuit-Chautauqua produced play: Reading historic plays as cultural scripts of social interaction" (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1992).

55. Bruce Barton and Russell Conwell, "Conversation Between a Young Man and an Old Man," *American Magazine* 92 (July 1921), 13-15. See Leo P. Ribuffo, "Jesus Christ as Business Statesman: Bruce Barton and the Selling of Corporate Capitalism," *American Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (Summer 1981): 206-31.

56. "William Rainey Bennett," (n.d.), Folder 1, Robert Lohrie Collected Lyceum Brochures, SHSWA.

57. Margaret Case Harriman, "He Sells Hope," *Saturday Evening Post* (7 August 1937), 30; Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1936), 78.

58. Jay Burrows of the Northern Alliance, quoted in John D. Hicks, *The Populist Revolt* (orig. 1931) (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), 129. See Lois Scoggins Self, "Agrarian Chautauqua: The Lecture System of the Southern Farmers' Alliance Movement" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1981).

59. S. W. Weller, D.D., "Southern California Chautauqua Assembly," *The Land of Sunshine* 5 (June-November 1896), 79-80.

60. Irving Fisher, to Paul M. Pearson, 21 August 1923, in Chautauqua Institute file in MSC 150, Box 525, RCC; E. A. Ross to Paul M. Pearson, 10 September 1923, in Chautauqua Institute file in MSC 150, Box 525, RCC. On the Chautauqua circuit, reflected one commentator in 1931, "the progressive politicians of the new political day expounded their reform platforms." Harold U. Faulkner, *The Quest for Social Justice, 1898-1914* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931), 203. See Robert S. MacArthur, "Chautauqua Assemblies and Political Ambitions," *World To-Day* 9 (October 1905), 1074-76.

61. "1902 Program of Winona Assembly, Winona Lake, Indiana" (1902), 23, SHSW.

62. "Patterson Springs Chautauqua. Second Annual Assembly" (Tuscola, Ill., 1907), 4, Chautauquas vertical file, ISHL.

63. "Mountainair Chautauqua Association 6th Annual Assembly" (1913), Mountainair Vertical File, CSR.

64. H. E. Byram, "Address of H. E. Byram, President, Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway Co., Central Iowa Chautauqua Association" (1913), SHSW.

65. Victoria Case and Robert Ormond Case, *We Called It Culture* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1948), 107-9. See "The Secretary of State and the Chautauqua Circuit," *Outlook* 105 (27 September 1913), 158-60; Paul W. Glad, *The Trumpet Soundeth: William Jennings Bryan and His Democracy, 1896-1912* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960); Michael Kazin, "The Forgotten Forerunner," *Wilson Quarterly* (Autumn 1999): 24-35.

66. George E. Mowry, "The California Progressive and His Rationale: A Study in Middle Class Politics," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 36 (1949): 241–50; Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York: Knopf, 1955); Samuel P. Hays, "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 55 (1964): 159–69. Class continued as a primary category of analysis in the 1960s and 1970s, as social historians added new characters to the drama of Progressive reform. See John D. Buenker, *Urban Liberalism and Progressive Reform* (New York: Scriber, 1973). For an engaging critique see Daniel T. Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," *Reviews in American History* 10 (December 1982): 113–32. More recently, Alan Dawley has reoriented discussion away from Hofstadter's "status anxiety" paradigm toward issues of social justice, citizenship, and state power. Alan Dawley, *Struggles for Justice: Social Responsibility and the Liberal State* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).

67. Otis L. Graham found half of the Progressives surviving into the 1930s were raised in small towns, 20 percent on farms. Graham, *An Encore for Reform: The Old Progressives and the New Deal* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1967), 201–3.

68. Hal S. Barron, *Mixed Harvest: The Second Great Transformation in the Rural North, 1870–1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 193–94. See also David Blanke, "Sowing the American Dream: Consumer Culture in the Rural Middle West, 1865–1900" (Ph.D. diss., Loyola University, 1996).

69. Algernon Crapsey, charged with heresy in 1906 by the Episcopal Church for similarly controversial stances, eventually resigned from the cloth and took to the Chautauqua circuit to popularize his liberal interpretation of Scripture. See Ferenc Morton Szasz, *The Divided Mind of Protestant America, 1880–1930* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1982), 25–32. Liberal theologians insisted that "religious ideas must not remain stagnant, divorced from the new forces transforming modern culture and ideas." George Cotkin, *Reluctant Modernism: American Thought and Culture, 1880–1900* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), 4.

70. Jasper L. Douthit, "Representative Liberal Christians, and the Reformation of the Nineteenth Century," Shelbyville, Ill., 3, 4, 12, "Chautauqua, Lithia Springs" File, Display Cases box, SCH; Douthit, "Did the Whale Swallow Jonah?" *OBW* 7, no. 4 (13 February 1886), 3.

71. Quoted in Paul Pearson, "The Chautauqua Movement," *Lippincott's Magazine* 78 (August 1908), 192.

72. Seymour S. Tibbals, *Miami Valley Chautauqua* (Chautauqua, Ohio: Miami Valley Chautauqua Association, 1946), 25–26; Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender, 1875 to the Present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 24.

73. "Twenty-second Annual Program of the Rock River Assembly" (1909), 2, and "Thirty-third Season of the Rock River Assembly" (1920), 2, Rock River Assembly—Programs file, DPL; Schumacher, "From Camp Meetings to Memories," 55; "The International Federation of Christian Workers," advertisement reprinted

in *The Benton County Pioneer* (Siloam Springs, Ark.) 18, no. 4 (Fall 1973), 26. Circuit entertainment fare was discontinued at a camp meeting in Lena, Illinois, after it was decided that it detracted from the “religious atmosphere” of the place. Almer Pennewell, *The Methodist Movement in Northern Illinois* (Sycamore, Ill.: The Sycamore Tribune, 1942), 295.

74. Donald L. Graham, “Circuit Chautauqua, a Middle-western Institution” (Ph.D. diss., State University of Iowa, 1953), 193.

75. Donald L. Graham, “Aspects of the Chautauqua Movement in the Mid-West,” seminar paper in Harrison John Thornton’s American Social and Economic History course, State University of Iowa, May 1952, 22–23, copy in Walker—Chautauqua Collection, Box 2, SHSI.

76. David L. Clark, “‘Miracles for a Dime’: From Chautauqua Tent to Radio Station with Sister Aimee,” *California History* 57, no. 4 (1978–1979): 354–63.

77. Edwin E. Aubrey, “Dean Mathews’ Contribution to Theology,” in “Shailer Mathews” (1941), 13, Books Collection, CIA.

78. Shailer Mathews, *The Individual and the Social Gospel* (New York: Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1914), 67, 20, 15, 4.

79. Shailer Mathews, *Scientific Management in the Churches* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1912), 21.

80. Case and Case, *We Called It Culture*, 73; Howard Mumford Jones, *The Age of Energy: Varieties of American Experience, 1865–1915* (New York, 1971), 200. Merely presenting a “band, an animal show, a magician . . . and a preacher for Sunday’s sake,” wrote Frank Chapin Bray scornfully, did not a Chautauqua make. Bray, “Social and Ethical Ideas in Summer Assemblies,” *Chautauquan* (July 1907), 171.

81. Case and Case, *We Called It Culture*, 5, 28–31.

82. See Robert A. McCown, “Records of the Redpath Chautauqua,” *Books at Iowa* 19 (November 1973): 8–23.

83. Charles F. Horner, *Strike the Tents* (Philadelphia: Dorrance & Co., 1954), 69.

84. Lincoln’s business was later absorbed into the Loar Independent Chautauqua. “Announcement. Midland Chautauqua. 1901. Des Moines, Iowa July 2 to 16,” in Box BL 264, SHSI; McClarran, “A Flying Fish,” 365.

85. The circuit was a national phenomenon, organized into regional units by the bureaus. The Alkahest and Radcliffe bureaus, for example, coveted the South. Competition with the Chicago-based Redpath men sometimes evoked sectional animosities. S. R. Bridges, President of the Alkahest Chautauqua System, promised that his “Southern institution with Southern ideals” would provide an “infinitely stronger program” with better service at less cost. “Dear Mr. and Mrs. Chautauquan,” opens a letter from S. Russell Bridges, undated, Alkahest Lyceum System file, MSC 150, Box 552, RCC. On Pearson, see J. T. Flynn, “This Quaker Professor Entertains Millions of People: P. M. Pearson, Founder of Swarthmore Chautauqua,” *American Magazine* 102 (September 1926): 58–59.

86. Not all managers agreed on the intent of the code. Redpath manager Harry P. Harrison once described the Manager’s Code as merely “a gentleman’s agree-

ment that could be terminated by notice from either party.” Harry P. Harrison to Loring Whiteside, 24 February 1920, in Central Community Chautauqua System file, MSC 150, Box 524, RCC. See “Lyceum Code. Issued by The Lyceum Managers’ Association of America” (circa 1914), Lyceum Mgrs. Ass’n file, MSC 150, Box 614, RCC.

87. Like industrial laborers, performers complained of the long hours, low pay, and monotony of their work. Worn down by constant quarreling with team members, a grueling travel itinerary, and ill health, violinist Helen Katz called it quits early after twenty-five performances—in as many towns, in as many days—for a circuit in 1916. By contrast, sought-after lecturers had greater control of their schedules and made as much as \$2,000 per year. “Robeson, Helen (Katz) Diary. June 11–August 31, 1916. Diary of Summer Chautauqua Experience,” in Box BL 69, SHSL.

88. Allen E. Denton to Redpath Chautauqua System, 28 March 1924, in Community Chautauquas file in MSC 150, Box 563, RCC.

89. “Eighth Annual Session of the Southern Ohio Chautauqua” (Georgetown, Ohio, 1914), 3, PA Box 197–7, OHS.

90. Harry Dunbar to Arthur C. Coit, 13 October 1915, in Dunbar, Harry file, MSC 150, Box 563, RCC. The Old Salem Chautauqua in nearby Petersburg, Illinois, overlapped with the circuit show in nearby Jacksonville, prompting one Jacksonville committee member to insist that “it will be necessary to have a program which is just as attractive as theirs.” Carl Black to James H. Shaw, 6 July 1912, in “Illinois and Illinoisans, 1876–1976,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 69, no. 4 (November 1976), 262–64.

91. Katharine Aird Miller and Raymond H. Montgomery, *A Chautauqua to Remember: The Story of Old Salem* (Petersburg, Ill.: Silent River Press, 1987), 160–65.

92. *The Chautauqua Quarterly* 5:1 (July 1905), WRH; Kate F. Kimball, “Chautauqua Assemblies as Centers for Religious Instruction,” *Religious Education* 1 (1906), 57; Herbert B. Adams, “Chautauqua in Education Extension in the United States,” *U.S. Bureau of Education, Report of the Commission, 1899–1900*, Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900), 13; Hugo Münsterberg, *The Americans* (New York: McLure, Phillips & Co., 1905), 384; Pearson, “The Chautauqua Movement,” 191.

93. Glick, “The Independent Chautauquas Then and Now,” 43.

94. E. H. Blichfeldt, “What Chautauqua Is Not,” *The Chautauquan* 67 (June–August 1912), 194–202.

95. Eleanor Burhorn, “Strike of Coal Miners at Pana, Illinois, 1898–1899” (M.A. thesis, Washington University, 1940).

96. Editorial, *The Shelbyville Democrat* (22 September 1904), SCH.

97. “Official Vote of Shelby County, Illinois, November 8th, 1904,” *The Shelbyville Democrat* (17 November 1904), SCH.

98. See primary documents included in special issue of *Shelby County Ancestors: Historical Genealogical Society Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (July 1996).

99. “Dr. Westervelt Recalls 60 Years,” newspaper clipping, Westervelt vertical file, SCH.

100. “Commercial Club to Entertain at Smoker,” *The Shelbyville Democrat* (29 October 1914), SCH.

101. “Partners in Town Business,” *The Shelbyville Democrat* (12 September 1912), SCH.

102. “When the little germ of municipal reform has come to life,” said Mayor Bivins of Shelbyville, “and the golden rule of municipal sanitation has come to stay, then, and then only, can we show you the ‘City Beautiful.’” “Men of Finance in Annual Meeting,” *The Shelbyville Democrat* (22 June 1911), SCH.

103. “Gas Plant Proposition,” *The Shelbyville Democrat* (27 July 1911), SCH.

104. “Condensed Program. Shelbyville Chautauqua, at Fair Grounds Park, 15 Full Days,” *The Shelbyville Democrat* (17 July 1902), SCH.

105. “Satan is always shrewd enough when he goes hunting, to have good people as decoys to catch the unwary.” Douthit, “Which Do You Choose?” *Our Best Words. Supplement* (24 July 1901), 1–2, SCH.

106. Jasper L. Douthit, *Jasper Douthit’s Story* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1905), 207.

107. See list of county histories in Andrew C. Rieser, “Canopy of Culture: Chautauqua and the Renegotiation of Middle-Class Authority, 1874–1919” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999), 464–65, fn 41.

108. “Shelbyville Has Talent,” *The Shelbyville Democrat* (7 August 1913), SCH.

109. Douthit to George W. Fox, 24 October 1910, 2, in Lithia Springs Chautauqua file, SCH.

110. Douthit to William J. Eddy, 17 April 1913, 2, in Lithia Springs Chautauqua file, SCH.

111. “Reasons for and Objects of Speakers Training Camp for Education in Patriotic Service . . . Issued by the National Security League” (Chautauqua, N.Y., 1917), SHSW; *The Chautauqua Quarterly* (Chautauqua, N.Y.) 14, no. 1 (January 1919), in F9X C501C1, WRH.

112. Mrs. Percy V. Pennybacker, “What Our Country Asks of Its Young Women” (Chautauqua, N.Y., 1917), SHSW-L.

113. President Woodrow Wilson to Montaville Flowers, 14 December 1917, Manuscripts Collection, Special Collections Department, University of Iowa Archives, Iowa City, Iowa; “1918 Program, Travers-Wick system, Belleville, [Wis.] Jul 24–28,” Travers-Wick Chautauqua System folder, M93–262, SHSWA. The Chautauqua, boasted an Illinois assembly, “will be a Paul Revere to arouse our patriotism. . . .” “Official Program Twentieth Annual Assembly Hoopeston Chautauqua Association” (1917), in Chautauquas [Official Programs . . .] file, ISHL.

114. Vernie Deacon Lile, “History of the Lincoln Chautauqua Association of Lincoln, Illinois” (M.A. thesis, State University of Iowa, 1938), 87; “The Rock River Assemblian. Thirty First Season of the Rock River Assembly” (1918), 2, in

Rock River Assembly—Programs file, DPL; Lile, “History of the Lincoln Chautauqua Association of Lincoln, Illinois,” 90.

115. James Shaw to Harry Harrison, 16 May 1919, in Shaw, James H. file in MSC 150, Box 563, RCC.

116. “Galesburg Chautauqua. Knox Campus, Galesburg, Illinois” (1920), in Chautauquas [Official Programs . . .] file, ISHL.

117. Sinclair Lewis, *Main Street* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1920), 237–39.

118. Allen D. Albert, “The Tents of the Conservative,” *Scribner’s Magazine* 72, no. 1 (July 1922): 54–59, 55; Willard H. Wright, “Los Angeles—The Chemically Pure,” *The Smart Set* 39, no. 3 (March 1913), 107–14. See also Louis J. Alber, “Does the Public Want Quality?” *System* 39 (March 1921), 434–44.

119. B. Bliven, “Mother, Home and Heaven,” *New Republic* 37 (9 January 1924), 172–75; Carl D. Thompson, “Is the Chautauqua a Free Platform?” *New Republic* 41 (17 December 1924), 86–88; Anne S. Ety, “What’s Wrong with Chautauqua?” *Drama* 14 (March–April 1924), 213–14.

120. Noffsinger, *Correspondence Schools, Lyceums, Chautauquas*, 130. See A. E. Wiggam, “Is the Chautauqua Worthwhile?” *Bookman* 45 (June 1927), 399–406; H. Hibschan, “Chautauqua Pro and Contra,” *North American Review* 225 (May 1928), 597–605; Edward C. Lindeman, “After Lyceums and Chautauquas,” *Bookman* 45 (May 1927), 246–50.

121. Charles Lummis to Mary Hunter Austin, 24 November 1904, quoted in Esther Lanigan Stineman, *Mary Austin: Song of a Maverick* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 64.

122. Austin, “The Town That Doesn’t Want a Chautauqua,” *New Republic* 47 (7 July 1926), 195–97. Austin emerged as a leading anti-Chautauqua voice and was besieged with requests from editors to write follow-up articles. *The Independent*, once allied with *The Chautauquan*, asked her to write two thousand words on the “culture-boosting plant something like Chautauqua being planned near your home.” Christian Herter, *The Independent*, to Mary Hunter Austin, 28 May 1926, Austin Papers AU 3221, Manuscripts, HLC. See also E. F. Devine, “Other Towns That Do Not Want Chautauqua and Why; Reply to Ms. Austin,” *New Republic* 48 (1 September 1926), 46–47.

123. Austin, “Speech of Mary Austin Before the National Popular Government League on the Burson Bill” (1923), 14, speech draft, Austin Papers AU 51, Manuscripts, HLC.

124. Austin, “Life at Santa Fe” (1932), 10, article draft for *South Atlantic Quarterly* (July 1932), Austin Papers AU 298, Manuscripts, HLC.

125. Thomas W. Duncan, *O’Chautauqua* (New York: Coward, McCann, Inc., 1935), 218.

126. Masters theses include Darling (1936); Eddy (1938); Jones (1935); Frances (1939); Renner (1935); Lile (1938); Nau (1937); Waterman (1937); Wick (1937). See “Assemblies and Circles: Unpublished Theses and Dissertations” sec-

tion of the bibliography. The estate of circuit entrepreneur Keith Vawter left Vawter's personal papers to Thornton, who donated them to the University of Iowa library. The Redpath-Chicago Bureau files were added to the collection in 1951. See McCown, "Records of the Redpath Collection."

127. Davis R. Dewey to Richard T. Ely, 10 January 1892, Correspondence of Richard T. Ely, Micro 924, Reel 4, Microforms, SHSW.

128. Edward J. Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 223.

129. Case and Case, *We Called It Culture*, 235.

Conclusion

1. Eduard Lindeman, *The Meaning of Adult Education* (New York: New Republic, 1926), 11, 38, 39.

2. Maynard Lee Daggy, "The Sacredness of the Secular," *The Chautauqua Journal* (Urbana) 2, no. 3 (June 1900), 27–28.

3. Floating debt from bond issues was almost Chautauqua's undoing. By 1925, the bonded indebtedness had grown to nearly \$190,000, the bulk of which was due to be repaid to its owners in 1931. The Depression forced the Institution to issue more debt to pay off old debts and new deficits. In 1933, facing a cash shortage of \$75,000 to keep the Institution solvent for another year, Arthur E. Bestor considered applying for help to Hoover's Reconstruction Finance Corporation until the first round of loans "revealed none even approximating the character of a loan to an educational or religious institution." At the end of that season, unable to pay the interest on a debt that had now grown to \$785,000, the Institution was forced into receivership. A fund-raising firm hired to review its finances concluded that, in the words of Theodore Morrison, "the financial plight of the Institution resulted from the extensive building and improvement projects of the twenties, not from operating losses, which might have implied mismanagement." "Land Development Problems," 14 November 1925, in Chautauqua Budgets 1904–29 file, Box 112, AEB; "Memorandum on the Financial Situation of Chautauqua Institution," 2, in Budgets 1930–33 file, Box 112, AEB; Theodore Morrison, *Chautauqua: A Center for Education, Religion and the Arts in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 106.

For the next four years, Chautauqua's survival hung in the balance. Samuel M. Hazlett, president of the Reorganization Corporation, "consulted the receivers, worked on the bondholders, and pumped friends of Chautauqua for gifts and pledges." The cottagers also helped out. Until then, cottagers leased the lands on which their homes rested; they did not own. In exchange for outright title to their land, they contributed 20 percent of the assessed value of their properties. A last-minute donation from John D. Rockefeller saved the Institution from foreclosure at the end of the 1936 season. Also in that year, the New York State Legislature

amended the charter to prevent presidents from getting the Institution into financial hot water by authorizing too many capital projects. The amendment put business operations in the hands of the trustees, while giving the president authority over the cultural program. The charter was also amended to create the Chautauqua Utility District, empowering the Institution to levy taxes for sewage disposal, electricity, and water. This is the system under which Chautauqua operates today. Morrison, *Chautauqua*, 106–9.

4. Morrison, *Chautauqua*, 227.

5. Ellen Wilson Meyer, “Tales from Tonka: The Story Behind Chautauqua,” *Wayzata Weekly News* (Excelsior, Minn.) (11 April 1983), 4.

6. The National Science Foundation has been holding Chautauqua-type short courses for college teachers since at least 1979.

7. See Leonard P. Oliver, “Chautauqua and the State Humanities Programs: The Quest for Quality and Audiences,” *The Michigan Connection* (Winter/Spring 1984), 1, 12–13, 16–17. Using an NEH grant, the Councils for the Humanities in California and Oregon staged a series of traveling circuit Chautauquas in towns that originally hosted them in the 1910s and 1920s. Gaye LeBaron, “A Revival of the Early-Century Tent Chautauqua,” *The Press Democrat* (12 July 1992).

8. CitySpin.com Orlando site (2003), <<http://www.cityspin.com/orlando/citykids/citykids.htm>>. On the New Urbanists’ debt to the assembly format, see Michael Wayne Miller, “The American Camp Ground Community: An Urban Nucleus as Basis for Modern Community Planning” (M.S. thesis, Mississippi State University, 1996).

Notes to Appendix B

1. Former CLSC official Jesse Hurlbut put the figure at 8,400. Hurlbut, *The Story of Chautauqua* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1921), p. 136.

2. Interpolated estimate.

3. Edward Everett Hale, “The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle,” *Century Magazine* 31 (November 1885), p. 149.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Interpolated estimate.

7. Interpolated estimate.

8. Interpolated estimate.

9. W. W. Willoughby, “The History of Summer Schools in the United States,” *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year 1891–92*, Vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894), p. 931.

10. Interpolated estimate.

11. Interpolated estimate.

12. Interpolated estimate.

13. Interpolated estimate.

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