

Essay Review

When I Went to College Is Now Considered History! American Women's Participation in Higher Education in the Twentieth Century

Gina Barreca. *Babes in Boyland: A Personal History of Co-Education in the Ivy League*. Hanover, NH: University of Press of New England, 2005. 154 pp. Paper \$19.95.

Linda Eisenmann. *Higher Education for Women in the Postwar America, 1945–1965*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2006. 280 pp. Cloth \$45.00.

Stephanie Y. Evans. *Black Women in the Ivory Tower, 1850–1954: An Intellectual History*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2007. 275 pp. Cloth \$59.95.

Claudia Goldin, Lawrence F. Katz, and Ilyana Kuziemko. "The Homecoming of American College Women: The Reversal of the Gender Gap in College," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20:4 (Fall, 2006): 133–156.

Leslie Miller-Bernal and Susan L. Poulson, Eds. *Going Coed: Women's Experiences in Formerly Men's Colleges and Universities, 1950–2000*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004. 338 pp. Paper \$29.95.

Lynn Peril. *College Girls: Bluestockings, Sex Kittens, and Coeds, Then and Now*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006. 352 pp. Cloth \$16.95.

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In writing the history of women's participation in American higher education, scholars have paid considerable attention to mostly white women's experience in the nineteenth century—the period that witnessed most of the "firsts" for women, as students, graduate

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students, faculty, and administrators. In contrast, African American women's participation and the period since World War II have received less attention and thus new data and new interpretations on these topics are especially needed and welcome. The postwar era is especially significant because, shortly after the end of the war, Harry S. Truman appointed the first presidential commission on higher education.¹ The Commission called on the federal government to adopt policies which would "make public education at all levels equally accessible to all, without regard to race, creed, sex or national origin."² The Truman Commission, however, paid much more attention to barriers based on economic status, race and religion, than to gender discrimination. Indeed, the Report acknowledged that very strong opposition to women, or "anti-feminism" as it called it, blocked women's entry into higher education in the past, but stated that such discrimination was now mainly in the areas of graduate and professional school enrollment.³ The histories under review here highlight the continuities of women's experience in higher education and the shortsightedness of the Commission's assessment.

This essay discusses five recently published books and one article that collectively enhance our knowledge of postwar white women's higher education, the experience of African American women up to the mid-twentieth century, and a new perspective on the larger history of higher education using race as the primary interpretive lens. Despite sharing a similar topic, the texts vary considerably from a brief personal narrative to an economic analysis of participation rates; and from popular cultural depictions of "coeds" to "serious" history.

Stephanie Evans's *Black Women in the Ivory Tower* chronicles the first efforts by African American women to seek higher education in the United States, an area of scholarship sorely in need of new exploration. Evans provides the first book-length consideration of African American women and higher education since Jeanne Noble's pioneering effort in 1956.⁴ This book makes three important contributions. First, Evans tells the story of these pioneering women, especially their intellectual contributions which have largely been ignored in traditional histories. Second, she places these women's lives in the larger context of American higher education, using race as the primary interpretive lens. Third,

¹Published as: George F. Zook, *Higher Education for American Democracy: A Report of the President's Commission on Higher Education, Vols. I-VI* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947). This document was colloquially known as the Truman Report.

²*Ibid.*, Vol. I, 38.

³*Ibid.*, Vol. II, 39-40.

⁴Jeanne L. Noble, *The Negro Woman's College Education* (New York: Teachers College, 1956).

Evans uses the experiences of her subjects to broaden, and therefore, democratize notions about what it means to be a scholar and, consequently, how higher education could become “an effective tool for increased social equity and opportunity” (p. 2).⁵

Evans’s ambitious agenda includes an account of the first century of educational attainment (1850–1954) and follows with an analysis of African American women’s philosophies that appeared decades before such ideas have currency in the white-dominated academy. Readers unfamiliar with this body of work may be surprised to read precedents for feminist stand-point theory and elements of a postmodern approach to the construction of language and knowledge among the intellectual accomplishments of these women.

Evans provides raw data of African American women’s attendance in terms of numbers and location. Further, she paints of portrait of their experiences that are harder to quantify such as being constantly intellectually underestimated and the “contested space” on white-dominated campuses where African Americans were excluded from campus housing, eateries, clubs and other activities. Evans also startles the reader with unexpected comparisons. For example, she notes that between 1882 and 1898, 50 African American women were lynched. Juxtaposing this sad fact with college degree attainment, Evans soberly observes that “for every five black women ... with a college degree by the turn of the twentieth century, one black woman had been lynched” (p. 55).

Perhaps the strongest element of the book is Evans’s descriptions of specific women’s educational histories and academic careers, and her analysis and critique of their philosophies. These autobiographical accounts personalize the aggregate experiences Evans discussed earlier. Evans begins with the memoirs of Fanny Jackson Coppin, Mary Church Terrell, Zora Neale Hurston, Lena Beatrice Morton, Rose Butler Browne, and Pauli Murray. She then examines Mary McLeod Bethune’s and Anna Julia Cooper’s ideas on research, teaching, and service—the tripartite coin-of-the-realm in academe. Bethune and Cooper advanced ideas that have currency, even today, only in pockets of higher education, such as the construction of knowledge, the oppressive power of language, and the rejection of pretenses of objectivity in scholarship. Evans succinctly clarifies why the women she portrays here are not thought of as the originators of such intellectual movements: because they were “barred from the upper echelons of

⁵As this book is not yet published at the time of the submission of this review, but will be soon, galley pages were used so there is a slight chance that page numbers in the finished book could be slightly different.

higher education, membership in professional societies, and admittance into publishing houses, their ideas were not widely dispersed" (p. 157).

Throughout the book, Evans applies her critical lens with precise, stealth-like cuts through conventional depictions of higher education history. Evans' declarative, deceptively simple delivery may make her work a lightening rod for criticism, but her text is a gift for historians and students who long for alternative interpretations. For example, when describing the origins of higher education in America, Evans states:

Much of the funding for colonial academies—especially those that now make up the Ivy League—came from blood money of imperialist ventures against Asian, Native American, Latin American, and African nations and cultures. The return on the investment was the strengthening of an emerging American oligarchy.... The social significance of race was constructed, based loosely on unstable physical indicators. Ignoring significant biological and social variation, European—that is, white—studies dominated the New World academy. Fueled by an economic imperative to rationalize enslavement and world domination, whiteness was invented and, however questionably derived, rationalized by the academy in the name of science and logic (p. 28; 30–31).

Evans also nails why the immigrant experience of obtaining higher education, despite some barriers faced by religious minorities and white ethnic groups, differed from the African American experience:

There were huge rifts between European immigrants from Ireland, Russia, Germany, Poland and elsewhere; Jews and Catholics experienced similar troubles. But with promulgation of white supremacy, these groups could, at some point, assimilate and benefit from unearned race privilege in a way that communities of color could not (p. 53).

Evans ends her book on a very personal note, "This history tells my story." She describes her desire, through scholarship, to speak on behalf "underrepresented and disenfranchised populations of which I am a member" (p. 215). She is hopeful about higher education's potential to change for the better, especially by studying the lives and work of those who have struggled before, "... we may find hints of how to alleviate inequality through humane research, culturally sensitive teaching, active learning, and informed service" (p. 216). From her text to God's ear.

Eisenmann's *Higher Education for Women in Postwar American* looks at the neglected era after World War II but before the feminist movement of the 1960s is in full stride, and provides a nicely detailed portrait of mostly white women's educational issues and opportunities during these understudied years. Eisenmann argues that this era, often thought of as a nadir in feminist history, should be viewed in its own context and not compared with the more active and analytical aspects of the post-1970s feminist movement. She demonstrates how women in the late 1940s and '50s sought to change aspects of themselves to fit into

and succeed within the male-dominated world of academia; a strategy that came to be viewed by contemporary feminists as naïve or even more pejoratively, as unenlightened. But Eisenmann persuades the reader that such a disparaging dismissal is neither accurate nor fair. In fact, although someone might describe what was done for women in this era as “advocacy,” Eisenmann challenges her audience to broaden the definition of “activism” to include, not dismiss, the efforts of the post-war women educators and advocates.

Written from an institutional perspective, the book is divided into three parts: Ideologies, Explorations, and Responses. Part I examines how four ideological forces—patriotic duty, economic participation, cultural role, and psychological needs—saturated American culture, especially for the white middle class, and shaped societal expectations of appropriate gender behavior. She demonstrates how educators, even women’s advocates, were inhibited by the pervasiveness and power of the cultural expectations. One profound consequence that affected all the endeavors of educators was the societal belief that mixing childrearing with work was undesirable.

Part II looks at what educators and policymakers *did* about women’s education. She demonstrates how the politics of higher education and the four ideologies mentioned above influenced the members of the American Council on Education’s Commission on the Education of Women (CEW). The CEW’s three significant reports changed the national discourse on women’s education. Instead of assuming that once women had children they never wanted to return to school or the workforce again, CEW discussed the issue of “life phases” providing an opening wedge for education programs that offered women educational opportunities *after* the nest emptied. In addition to CEW, Eisenmann discusses the advocacy efforts of other professional associations and concedes that although these groups had “mixed success,” they kept attention focused on women’s educational issues. She then explores the first continuing education programs at colleges and universities and assesses their outcomes. Included is the atypical institute created at Radcliffe College and later named after its founder, Mary Bunting, who contributed one of the best phrases to describe the era: a “climate of unexpectation” (p. 195).⁶

The remaining chapters deal with a variety of different organizations and institutions dedicated to the education of women. Eisenmann adroitly interweaves the various, seemingly disparate, threads of the story using occasional biographical tidbits to illustrate how the larger story played out in individual lives. Throughout her

⁶Radcliffe College no longer exists, per se, but is now the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study.

book, Eisenmann regularly reminds the reader that the work of advocates and organizations was largely uphill because to most colleges and universities, women were “incidental students.”

Going Coed examines the decline of single-sex education, especially after the mid-1960s. In absolute numbers, coeducational colleges have educated the majority of American women, but in 1962, almost 200 women’s colleges and slightly more than eighty men’s colleges remained. By 1994, however, after what co-editors Miller-Bernal and Poulson define as the last “wave” of coeducation, there were less than sixty women’s colleges and men’s colleges had virtually disappeared. Largely for economic and demographic reasons these institutions became coeducational, with varying degrees of resistance and resentment. In a few cases, prestigious formerly all-male institutions were forced to admit women because of actual or threatened legal action from women and their allies on the grounds of equity—reminiscent of the civil-rights-based arguments for integrating formerly all-white institutions. *Going Coed* demonstrates that when the normative student at an institution is male and social attitudes regarding women’s intellectual inferiority or traditional expectations of gender roles linger, enrolling women students is only the beginning, and remains a far cry from acceptance at all levels of participation. For women in higher education today, the old axiom of “the higher, the fewer” remains a fact of life.

Co-editors Miller-Bernal and Poulson masterfully assemble a collection of stories that describe this recent wave of coeducation. The various chapters explore why institutions decided to admit women, how they prepared for women students, and the subsequent experience of the first women on the campus. Individual chapters vividly depict the institution’s history, culture, resources, and even often overlooked elements such as iconography and ritual, then explain how such unique elements influenced both the decision and implementation of coeducation. This collection is rich in its diversity of stories, including Catholic colleges, HBCUs, technical colleges, male bastions such as the University of Virginia and the Virginia Military Institute, the Ivy League, and a handful of other institutions (such as University of Rochester, Georgetown, and Rutgers) that experienced more or less resistance and greater or lesser success in welcoming women. Although the authors show how Women’s Studies courses brought women’s issues into the curriculum and how Title IX and athletics helped women students gain social status among undergraduates, the nature of the issues surrounding the first wave of coeducation—1870s—were eerily parallel to events of a century later. Perhaps the most profound observation from this entire collection is quietly stated in the Conclusion: “What is missing in this litany of reasons for adopting coeducation is a salient concern for the education of women” (p. 310).

Babes in Boyland by Gina Barreca (the author of the very funny treatise on women's humor, *They Used to Call Me Snow White ... But I Drifted*) examines the process co-education from her personal experiences.⁷ Barreca, a working-class kid from Brooklyn, entered Dartmouth in 1975, only a few years after it began admitting women. The book is a series of vignettes and snips of dialogue ("Conversations") from her experiences over four years. Barreca is wonderful at the quick, funny, and deadly accurate turn of phrase. Two favorites come early in the book: describing new freshmen as having the "startled look of refugees" (p. 30); and noting that she and her women friends were busy "colonizing" the campus, although the men did not know it yet (p. 54). Contemporary students may resonate with her struggle to support women's rights while resisting the word "feminist" until Barreca realizes that her distaste comes from a definition of the word that serves men and not her. Today's students of color may recognize her fatigue and frustration when called on to give the opinion of *all* women in situations where females comprised only a tiny number of students in the class. And perhaps any one who was ever a freshman remembers the intimidating and humbling feeling of being overwhelmed by all you do not know. I laughed out loud when Barrera's roommate confided her embarrassment when, after hearing someone in class speak of Milton's *felix culpa* in Eden, could only think that *felix culpa* meant "the cat is to blame" (p. 37).⁸ Yet, despite any stumbling blocks, four years later Barreca graduated feeling more confident, introspective, intellectual, feminist, and secure.

Some of Barreca's most poignant memories are less about gender per se and more about class. She comes to think of herself as a "foster child" of Dartmouth's affluence and generosity (p. 67) and notes early on:

But nothing—no class, no exam—was as hard as social life. . . . It was not only girls who found it hard to get a handle on the place; Dartmouth was divided by class as well as by gender (p. 36).

Of course, the author used her humor to survive. When informed by a snobby sorority woman that some of the good breeding surrounding the author was bound to rub off, Barreca retorted, "Not if I don't touch anything!" (p. 68).

Ultimately, her personal narrative is somewhat unsatisfactory because it is hard to feel that her experiences at Dartmouth, despite its relatively longer resistance to coeducation, were much different from

⁷ Regina Barreca, *They Used to Call Me Snow White—But I Drifted: Women's Strategic Use of Humor* (New York: Viking, 1991).

⁸ *Felix culpa* is Latin for "happy fault" or "fortunate fall"; a religious term referring Adam and Eve's fall and the loss of the Garden of Eden.

other colleges that had been coeducational for decades. My alma mater granted its first baccalaureate degree to a woman in 1869, yet the exclusion from campus leadership positions, the derisive comments from male students and faculty, only praising the “sons” of *alma mater* in the school song, the feeling that “girls weren’t really welcome,” and the use of a particular form of humor to survive were apparently as common on my campus as they were at Dartmouth. Like other bright young women in college in the 1970s (and maybe still), Barreca felt her budding feminist consciousness compete with the impulse to be accepted socially and of interest to young men. And thinking that it is always easier to “fit in” than “to stand out” (p. 43), she both envied and despised the ubiquitous “Susie Sorority” caricature that seemed to epitomize the perfect college woman. This book is a quick and humorous read, but contributes little to the historical narrative of postwar higher education for women.

College Girls by Lynn Peril shares some of the limitations of Barreca’s memoir. Peril’s book is mostly a lighthearted romp through the history of how “college girls” have been portrayed in various popular media including books, magazines, and movies, whom Peril acknowledges “may not resemble those who populated campuses” (p. 12). Because her sources almost always used the moniker “girls” instead of “women,” Peril apologetically notes that she, too, will use the diminutive. With those caveats, the author provides a general history of women in higher education. Peril was conscientious enough to consult the work of historians and thus her dates and facts are essentially correct—except for her assertion that Vassar was, unquestionably, the *first* women’s college, implying complete agreement about what constituted a “college” education for men or women in the mid-nineteenth century. To some extent, this error stems from the sources on which she relies. While legitimate, some are now quite dated and therefore do not reflect any new findings or interpretations from the last two decades of scholarship.⁹ But Peril is a journalist and makes no pretensions to be a professional historian.

⁹For general histories of higher education, they used Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962) and the less dated, but unremarkable, Christopher J. Lucas, *American Higher Education: A History* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), instead of the newer and more comprehensive, John R. Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004). For background information on women’s educational history, the most cited volumes were: Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women’s Colleges from their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s* (New York: Knopf, 1984); Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1980); and Barbara M. Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).

Once past the historical overview, the reader is treated to 300 pages of anecdotes, vignettes, photographs, and fun facts on topics such as freshman orientation; campus rules; fads and fashion; athletics and health; social etiquette; advertising; dating, husband-hunting, and sex. Some are quite funny. My favorites include health warnings from Dr. William Lee Howard stating that building muscular arms may cause a student to “ruin her womanly powers” (e.g. capacity to reproduce), which Peril restates as “a frightening vision of the uterus broken loose from it’s strings like an out-of-control Macy’s Parade balloon” (p. 241). Some of the advertisements are funny in their outrageousness, whether aimed at non-students who wanted to look like “Coeds” or at college girls offered products to improve their lives, such as Lovable Bra ads of the 1950s promising “a boost” in popularity and grades (p. 133).

Not all of Peril’s stories are humorous; some offer poignant reminders that women of color, Jewish or Catholic women, lesbians, or any woman who was both female and “other,” faced sexism coupled with racism, anti-Semitism, or xenophobia, etc. One that stood out was the story of Carrie Lee, an African American student entering Smith College in 1913. Not trying to “pass,” but simply not disclosing her race in her admissions essay, Carrie Lee arrived on campus to face intolerance from her roommate, exclusion from campus housing, and permission to live in a Northampton boarding house *only* if she came and went through the back door. After intervention by the NAACP, she lived with a sympathetic professor. Smith officials polled the other Seven Sister colleges and found that only Wellesley College had a non-discrimination policy in housing or admissions, but histories of Wellesley confirm that the white students still in engaged in racist, ridiculing behavior in the guise of humor or entertainment (p. 68).

Perhaps more disconcerting than poignant is her chapter on the dilemma of the intelligent woman, “Book Smart or House Wise? What to Study.” Here Peril quotes a wide array of material showing both serious (e.g. content of Women’s Studies courses) and frivolous (e.g. advertising copy) examples of opinions on questions that never quite seem to disappear: Are women as intelligent as men?; Do men and women have innate predilections toward different disciplines?; Do women need a different form of education than men?; If a woman looks or acts “too smart” will she lose the man of her dreams? In perhaps the most sobering section of the book, the author cites current manifestations of these social attitudes, such as the 2003 television interview of women graduates of the Harvard Business School. The women stated that they do not drop the “H-Bomb”—mentioning their degree—early in a relationship with a man out of fear that there will be no more dates. The women were also

acutely aware that the opposite was true for men, for whom a Harvard Business degree increases his attractiveness.¹⁰

Claudia Goldin, et al.'s article, "Homecoming of American Women," provides a statistical accompaniment to the historical texts discussed here regarding the rates of participation among postwar college women. No doubt catalyzed by recent media attention on the "problem" of women outnumbering men as undergraduate students, the authors first demonstrate that the gender ratio favored males before 1900. For three decades, 1900–1930, the ratio was close to 1:1. Men outnumbered women again until around 1980 when women became—and remain—a statistical majority of undergraduates nationally. The authors offer evidence and grounded-speculation about the social and economic factors that may have favored one gender over the other in terms of deciding to attend college. The nuances over time are interesting, but can be summarized by saying that an important factor is the desirability of the "non-college" option. In difficult economic or social times (the Great Depression or the Vietnam Era), staying in college was more attractive to men than during relatively good times when even a high school diploma or some colleges was adequately rewarded in the labor market. Women, on the other hand, are less likely to earn good wages with only a high school education, so the economic returns of attending college are greater proportionately, and the opportunity costs of attending (forgone wages she might have earned working instead of going to college), are less.

The authors further assert that the surge in women's participation of the last twenty years or so can be explained by three factors: young women are marrying later; they generally expect to participate in the labor market; and they are not derailed off of the college tract as children to the same extent as their male classmates—boys are almost three times as likely to be diagnosed as ADHD and have much higher rates of criminal activity, characteristics that make college attendance less likely.

Among the many collective contributions of these works, three stand out. First, as a narrative style, most authors follow presentations of aggregate data with biographical information depicting how the larger trends played out in individual lives. This device provides the reader with an "identified life" rather than a "statistical life" and personalizes the issues under study.¹¹ Second, these texts make it clear that despite constituting a statistical majority, women are still not the primary

¹⁰An interesting study on this topic is, Dorothy C. Holland and Margaret A. Eisenhart, *Educated in Romance: Women, Achievement, and College Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

¹¹Doris J. Malkmus, "Nineteenth-Century Coeds and the Value of an 'Identified' Life," *Perspectives on the History of Higher Education* 25 (2006): 145–155.

concern of coeducational institutions and the climate was, and still is, chilly.¹² Further, many women who combine being female with a second form of “otherness” face obstacles on both counts. Third, despite the efforts of innumerable bright and talented educators, policy-makers, and benefactors, the situation for women at the end of the twentieth century bears an uncomfortable number of parallels to the issues for women at the end of the nineteenth century. Consider, for example, that many institutions became coeducational for reasons that had little to do with a commitment to women’s education.

These works also share some omissions. Obviously, gender was an important interpretive lens, and race was considered by some authors, but there was not much disaggregation by class and/or sector of higher education. What would be different if the intersections of race, gender, *and* class were examined? This seems especially missing in the article by Goldin and colleagues—does the national pattern they observe hold true in all sectors or does it look different if comparing, for example, the male-to-female ratios in community colleges and elite universities? Are favorable rates of female attendance at less elite institutions skewing national data?

Another concern is the insufficient analysis of the influence, if any, of the Truman Commission Report in the immediate postwar period or the influence of post-1970s developments in feminist theory, gender equity efforts, and/or the presence of more women on campuses as students, faculty, and administrators on the later decades. Eisenmann and Evans look closely at contributions of women and organizations throughout the time periods they cover (up to the 1960s or so), but only Eisenmann discusses the Report and its potential consequences in any depth. In fact, it is the scant attention women receive in the Report that leads Eisenmann to refer to them as “incidental students.” It is staggering to read in the Report that “anti-feminist” feeling in the academy had largely dissipated and discrimination existed mostly in the graduate and professional schools when the scholarship of the authors cited here demonstrate so convincingly that all was not well. The “a-bit-of-visibility-leads-to-thinking-that-gender-is-no-longer-an-issue” phenomenon is still a concern. Just recently when a group of aspiring women leaders were meeting in Washington DC under the auspices of the American Council Education heard that Harvard University had selected

¹²First coined in 1982 by Bernice (Bunny) R. Sandler and Roberta Hall, the term “chilly climate” meant that the environment for women in college classrooms was not as warm and welcoming as the environment for men. The most recent iteration of this research illustrated that things were not much better by the mid-1990s. See Bernice R. Sandler, Lisa A. Silverberg, and Roberta H. Hall, eds., *The Chilly Classroom Climate: A Guide to Improve the Education of Women* (Washington, DC: National Association for Women in Education, 1996).

its first woman president, some of the women “expressed fear that all the references to half of the Ivy League being led by women would convey a false impression that gender equity in higher education had been “solved” while they consider that decidedly not to be the case.”¹³

The rest of the authors discuss issues up to present, but they speak little about the impact of the various post-1970s programs, initiatives and efforts designed specifically to increase women’s participation and success in higher education. Can historical scholarship be used to examine efforts of the past with an eye toward identifying strategies for future success in eliminating gender, race, or class barriers? The author of one chapter in, *Going Coed*, for example, mentioned that Title IX and women’s athletics helped undergraduates gain social acceptance, but the author did not discuss anti-Title IX backlash or the uselessness of using Title IX as a strategy for institutions that have virtually no athletic programs. Yet such institutions—typically the non-elite two- and four-year colleges—enroll large numbers of women, people of color, and students from low-income backgrounds.

One final thought: the works cited here concentrate primarily on the latter part of the twentieth century, but several (Evans, Peril, Goldin, and various authors in the Miller-Bernal and Poulson volume) also include overviews of women’s history before World War II. Sources used for this material are dated—they are not wrong, per se, but because of their age, they do not include the scholarship of the last twenty years. For example, recent scholarship in women’s history has given more attention to the Academy Movement demonstrating that antebellum understanding of what constituted a college education was not uniform and the notion that any institution labeled a college was distinct from and more advanced than one called an academy is simplistic and inaccurate. Further, more recent scholarship has moved beyond students to include the history of women as faculty and administrators.¹⁴ As historians, we are aware of recent articles, monographs, and books that either analyze events not discussed in early work or re-consider earlier work based on more recent findings. And yet, such work apparently has reached only an audience of specialists. We are challenged now to find ways to make current work more broadly assessable and potentially replace outdated standards.

¹³Scott Jaschik, “What Harvard’s Choice Means,” *Inside Higher Ed Electronic Newsletter*. Retrieved on 2/12/2007 at: <http://insidehighered.com/news/2007/02/12/harvard>.

¹⁴See footnote #7 for a list of the works most commonly cited. The academy movement is discussed thoroughly, for example in Nancy Beadie and Kim Tolley, eds., *Chartered Schools: Two Hundred Years of Independent Academies in the United States, 1727–1925* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2002).