



**Women's 'Life-Work': Teachers in South Australia, 1836-1906**

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## Abstract

This thesis explores women's work as teachers in various contexts from the beginning of white settlement in 1836. It also analyses the structure of the teaching family, drawing out ways in which women's teaching contributed to the economic and social status of the family, and to their own identity.

From the 1850s women colonised church and state school systems, their options mediated not only by class but also by religion, ethnicity and geographic location. The middle class teaching family was co-opted as a social and economic unit to accommodate sex-segregated schooling, and men's interests were protected by the mid-nineteenth century state. However, women found niches as licensed teachers in single-sex schools and in small country schools. Catholic schools also utilised the teaching family, but Lutheran schools excluded women as teachers.

Under the 1875 Act the state individuated wages, institutionalised married men as sole breadwinners and fostered the sexual division of labour in teaching families. Married women were marginalised as the state school system expanded and teaching became an occupation for single women. From 1867 the Catholic church introduced women religious as teachers, thereby making its schools the province of single women too. By the end of the nineteenth century the ladies' academy was the only teaching context still colonised by the traditional teaching family.

Women's agency in negotiating their teaching careers is revealed by juxtaposing biographical sketches with the narrative of structural change. The sketches document women's lives as teachers, demonstrating ways in which they negotiated the changing social and family circumstances that accompanied the expansion of school systems. I argue that when teaching became waged labour it was exposed publicly as women's work. Tensions between married men and single women escalated as both participated in the construction of teaching as a profession. Women teachers contested male dominance in the workplace and by their increasing participation in social and political life. Many women also opted to delay or reject marriage and to make teaching their life-work. I conclude that, by the early twentieth century, their public and private challenges constituted a threat to the gender order.

## Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and; that to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously written or published by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for photocopying and loan if accepted for the award of the degree.

June, 1996

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# Introduction

Jane Hillier staked her claim in the education marketplace just three months after her arrival in South Australia and made teaching her life-work.

MRS HILLIER begs to inform her Friends and the Public of Adelaide that she has opened a SCHOOL for a select and limited number of YOUNG LADIES, and from long experience in the arduous task of Education, Mrs Hillier flatters herself that her system of instruction and unremitting attention to her pupils cannot fail to be approved by the Parents of these young ladies trusted to her care.

Pavilion Cottage, near the Gilles Arcade, Currie Street.

January 20, 1838.<sup>1</sup>

Little did she know that this advertisement would assure her of a mention in education history several times over.<sup>2</sup> The colony was but thirteen months old and, although Jane's advertisement was the first for any school, other women were already teaching in a variety of contexts. Mrs Boots, 'an excellent young woman', taught the girls in a day school on Kangaroo Island while her husband, a Methodist preacher, taught the boys. Mrs McLeod gave private tuition in piano and harp, and the governor's daughter was one of her pupils.<sup>3</sup> Women were also teaching their own children or those of family members without remuneration. Although South Australia's founding investors were committed to organising an education system, other exigencies - not the least of them the colony's bankruptcy in 1841 - took precedence and for the first decade or so schooling was in private hands. Thereafter women teachers colonised state and church schools as they were established. By the end of the nineteenth century the state had become the major provider of elementary education in South Australia, and the Lutheran and Catholic churches had established separate school systems. Women also maintained niches in the education marketplace as private teachers. This study explicates the experiences and perceptions of women who taught during the nineteenth century across the full range of contexts from their own homes to state schools of 1000 students.

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<sup>1</sup> *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 20 January 1838, p. 1. Jane's teaching career will be discussed in chapter one.

<sup>2</sup> T.H. Smeaton, *Education in South Australia from 1836-1927*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1927, pp. 25-30; Louise Brown et al (eds), *A Book of South Australia: Women in the First Hundred Years*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1936, p. 106; R. J. Nicholas, 'Private and Denominational Secondary Schools of South Australia: Their Growth and Development', M.Ed. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1953, p. 12; Christopher Nance, 'The South Australian Social Experiment 1826-1877: A Study of Some Aspects of South Australia's Early Social Development', M.A. thesis, Flinders University, 1977, p. 218.

<sup>3</sup> Brown, *A Book of South Australia*, pp. 37, 106.

Women's history began with the intention of making women visible, of writing them into the historical record. In Australia, one of the early accounts of this kind of writing by women was commissioned in 1936 by the Women's Centenary Council of South Australia. This eclectic collection of articles celebrated women's achievements from the beginning of white settlement. Women teachers featured prominently as authors, editors and as subjects in this book. An article on early private schools in the colony highlighted several young ladies' schools including Jane Hillier's, and also demonstrated women's roles as teachers within families. There were also several pieces of fiction written by women teachers.<sup>4</sup> Gerda Lerner termed these projects of making women visible, 'compensatory' history. She pointed out that even when women's activities are highlighted there is no discussion of the structures and ideologies which constrain or oppress them.<sup>5</sup>

Both liberal and revisionist accounts of education history have introduced women as teachers with the advent of compulsory education and much discussion has coalesced around the 'feminisation of teaching'.<sup>6</sup> In revisionist literature this term invokes images of a mass movement of women into subordinate positions in the occupation while in liberal accounts women's presence as teachers in state school systems is an unwelcome invasion of the male domain. Researchers claim the sexual division of labour was reproduced in state schools and that teaching for women was preparation for motherhood. Some accounts have characterised women teachers as 'submissive to authority', 'lacking in ambition' and generally passive while others have identified ways in which women were oppressed by male dominated structures and resisted their subordination.<sup>7</sup> In much of the literature women were either objects or victims of men's agendas. Furthermore, they reacted to, rather than participated in the construction of these agendas.

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<sup>4</sup> Brown, *A Book of South Australia*, pp. 66, 105-108, 139, 166, 227. The Centenary Council's President, Adelaide Miethke, and Secretary, Phebe Watson had been longtime activists on behalf of women teachers in state schools. At the time of publication Phebe was quietly plotting the secession of women from the Teachers' Union. See Kay Whitehead, "Many industrial troubles are due to the presence of female labour": The Women Teachers Guild in South Australia, 1937-1942', *Historical Studies in Education*, vol. 8, no. 1, 1996. For further discussion of this book, see Patricia Grimshaw, 'Women in History: Reconstructing the Past' in Jacqueline Goodnow and Carole Pateman (eds), *Women, Social Science and Public Policy*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1985, p. 48.

<sup>5</sup> Gerda Lerner, 'Placing Women In History: Definitions and Challenges', *Feminist Studies*, no. 3, 1975, p. 5. See also Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans (eds), *Gender Relations in Australia: Domination and Negotiation*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Sydney, 1992, p. xviii.

<sup>6</sup> Alison Prentice and Marjorie R. Theobald, 'The Historiography of Women Teachers: A Retrospect' in Alison Prentice and Marjorie R. Theobald, *Women Who Taught: Perspectives on the History of Women and Teaching*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1991, pp. 5-7; Alison Mackinnon, 'A New Point of Departure', *History of Education Review*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1984, pp. 2-4.

<sup>7</sup> Compare B. K. Hyams, 'The Battle of the Sexes in Teachers' Organisations: A South Australian Episode 1937-1950' *ANZHEJ Journal*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1974, pp. 36-45 with Michael W. Apple, *Teachers and Texts: A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, New York, 1986, pp. 58-67.

It is research which places women teachers as actors, rather than spectators, at the centre of the agenda and explores their agency which provides the starting point for this study. Joan Scott defines agency as 'the attempt (at least partly rational) to construct an identity, a life, a set of relationships, a society within certain limits and with language - conceptual language that at once sets boundaries and contains the possibility for negation, resistance reinterpretation, the play of metaphoric invention and imagination.'<sup>8</sup> This thesis conceptualises women teachers as active agents in a process of social change and explores ways in which they negotiated their lives as teachers and as women. Kathleen Casey and Michael Apple, and Sari Knopp Biklen claim that studying 'women as teachers' has broken down the oppositional construction of work and family, and private and public spheres which underpinned previous interpretations of women's work.<sup>9</sup> Feminist research which privileges women teachers' perceptions and experiences has demonstrated ways in which they have integrated commitment to family and paid work both historically and currently.<sup>10</sup> The thesis will demonstrate that women teachers individually and collectively pursued their careers within the constraints of familial and institutional landscapes which, in turn, they helped construct. Furthermore, women teachers are contextualised as participants in a rapidly changing society in the nineteenth century. As the economic and political infrastructure developed in South Australia there were shifts in the modes of production, and home and workplace separated. Men's and women's places within families, and within colonial society, were renegotiated, and boundaries redrawn. These changes were evident in the occupation of teaching. The state fostered the sexual division of labour as it constructed teaching as waged labour and a profession. Men teachers were institutionalised as sole breadwinners and married women were marginalised from state schools. However, single women continued to colonise teaching as it was constructed as waged work and as it was removed to more public settings in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This thesis asks to what extent did women teachers contest the gender order - the power relations between men and women - as they negotiated their careers as waged workers and their lives as women?

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<sup>8</sup> Joan Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis', *American Historical Review*, vol. 91, no. 5, 1987, p. 1067.

<sup>9</sup> Kathleen Casey and Michael Apple, 'Gender and the Conditions of Teachers' Work: The Development of Understanding in America' in Sandra Acker (ed.), *Teachers, Gender and Careers*, Falmer Press, London, 1989, pp. 179-184; Sari Knopp Biklen, 'Feminism, Methodology and Point of View in the Study of Women who Teach', in Lyn Yates (ed.), *Melbourne Studies in Education 1993*, La Trobe University Press, Melbourne, 1993, pp. 11-18.

<sup>10</sup> Geraldine Clifford, 'Daughters into Teachers: Educational and Demographic Influences on the Transformation of Teaching into Women's Work', *History of Education Review*, vol. 12, no. 1, 1983; Ruby Heap and Alison Prentice (eds), *Gender and Education in Ontario*, Canadian Scholars Press, Toronto, 1991, p. vi.



## Literature review

In the shifting sands of research in the history of education women teachers have been discovered by liberal historians only to be vilified for their lack of 'professionalism'. They have been ignored in early Marxist accounts, then subordinated and feminised with the advent of compulsory education. Some historians have managed to delete them from labour history and then readmit them either as oppressors of working class children or as victims in state school systems. Their work has been proletarianised, deskilled and intensified. And post modernism has offered the possibility of erasing them altogether. Is there anything left to say? This feminist historian's answer is yes!

When liberal historians discuss teachers as a group they focus on men teachers, and on the development of teaching as a profession. Reforms in recruitment, training and union activity are used as markers of progress. Some literature attempts to measure professional status against criteria generated from studies of the older professions of law, medicine and the clergy.<sup>11</sup> Whatever the yardstick, teachers have fallen short of attaining 'real' professional status. Much of the research does not show how the social and economic conditions of different historical periods influenced the development of the professions.<sup>12</sup> Recent Canadian research has redressed this problem and provided a nuanced analysis of the social history of the professions, including teaching, in the nineteenth century. This work demonstrates that development was uneven and that occupational, social and financial insecurity plagued most professions. Although mention is made that the 'notion of the professional gentleman is ... a profoundly gendered concept' there is no further exploration of this issue.<sup>13</sup>

There is very little literature which considers the development of the professions in terms of gender and class.<sup>14</sup> Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's research indicates that the development of the professions, including teaching was concomitant with the expansion of the

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<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Alan Barcan, *A History of Australian Education*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1980; Anthony J. La Vopa, *Prussian School Teachers: Profession and Office 1763-1848*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1980; Asher Tropp, *The School Teachers: The Growth of the Teaching Profession in England and Wales from 1800 to the Present Day*, William Heinemann Ltd, London, 1957.

<sup>12</sup> Casey and Apple, 'Gender and the Condition of Teachers' Work' in Acker, *Teachers, Gender and Careers*, pp. 175-176; Kay Scholefield, 'A Critique of Professionalism in English Education: 1846-1918', University of Sydney Curriculum Resources Unit, Sydney, 1980, pp. 5-7.

<sup>13</sup> R.D. Gidney and W.P.J. Millar, *Professional Gentlemen: The Professions in Nineteenth Century Ontario*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1994, p. 329.

<sup>14</sup> Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, Hutchinson, London, 1987; Michael Roper and John Tosh, 'Historians and the Politics of Masculinity' in Michael Roper and John Tosh (eds), *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*, Routledge, London, 1991, pp. 1-19.

middle class and with changes in masculinity and femininity. They show how middle class men's work gradually came to be respected as the source of social and personal identity while middle class women's identity focussed on domesticity. Yet, in the occupation of teaching women maintained their economic role. Davidoff and Hall do not explore the position of women teachers. Harriet Bradley's research suggests that 'the social meanings of masculinity and femininity were also negotiated within the workplace'.<sup>15</sup> Indeed it is necessary to write women into the historical construction of discourses of teaching as a profession. This raises a number of questions for consideration in this thesis. What roles did men and women teachers play in the construction of teaching as a profession? What role did the state play in the construction of teaching as a profession? What were the consequences for gender relations?

In many respects revisionist historians have been as reluctant as liberal historians to discuss teachers.<sup>16</sup> Early revisionist accounts ignored them or treated them as ciphers. When teachers did become part of the revisionist agenda they were at first male but their class location was (and still is) the subject of lively debate. Some researchers have conceptualised teachers as working class and teaching as a labour process, and thus generated research into their working conditions. These accounts demonstrate ways in which teachers' work was restructured, deskilled and proletarianised with the advent of bureaucratic school systems in the 1870s. However this research accords teachers only limited agency in the workplace and discusses resistance mostly in the context of unionism.<sup>17</sup>

Another body of research has conceptualised teachers as members of the new middle class, a class of professional workers separate from the bourgeoisie and the working class and emerging in the late nineteenth century. Members of the new middle class utilise their education and interpersonal skills as the bases for generating income and they protect these assets through the processes of credentialism and social closure.<sup>18</sup> This literature characterises

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<sup>15</sup> Harriet Bradley, *Men's Work, Women's Work: A Sociological History of the Sexual Division of Labour in Employment*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 228-229.

<sup>16</sup> For a succinct overview of the developments in research about compulsory schooling, see Pavla Miller 'Historiography of Compulsory Schooling: What is the Problem?' *History of Education*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1989.

<sup>17</sup> Ozga and Lawn were instrumental in setting the agenda for this research in Britain. See Jennifer Ozga and Martin Lawn, *Teachers, Professionalism and Class*, Falmer Press, London, 1981; Jennifer Ozga (ed.), *Schoolwork: Approaches to the Labour Process of Teaching*, Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1988, p. xii. For perspectives on the North American situation see Andrew Spaul, 'Fields of Disappointment: The Writing of Teacher Union History in Canada', *Historical Studies in Education*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1991, p. 23 and Michael Apple, 'Work, Class and Teaching' in Stephen Walker and Len Barton (eds), *Gender, Class and Education*, Falmer Press, London, 1983, pp. 53, 60-62.

<sup>18</sup> Frank Parkin, *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1979, pp. 54-58; Barbara and John Ehrenreich, 'The Professional-Managerial Class' in Pat Walker (ed.), *Between Labour and Capital*, Harvester Press, Sussex, 1979; Magali Sarfatti Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1977.

teachers as active agents, certainly, but as among those who 'define themselves as responsible for and "representative" of society as a whole, rather than having allegiance to class interests of their students or their parents.'[emphasis in original]<sup>19</sup>

The first wave of feminist research in education history concentrated on women in secondary schools in the late nineteenth century. These teachers could be safely located in the middle class, were teaching students of similar status, were seen to have much more control over their work, and thus could also be considered as professional teachers. Early research, especially in England, retrieved some heroines (professional teachers) among women teachers in the new corporate girls' secondary schools of the late nineteenth century by contrasting them with the reputedly amateur lady teachers in young ladies' schools. In turn Marjorie Theobald's research reinstated lady teachers as professionals.<sup>20</sup>

Although feminist historians have readily attributed professional status to women teachers in the various forms of private education, they have been far more circumspect about women teachers in state schools. An exception is Noeline Kyle's research. In *Her Natural Destiny* the first generation of trained state school teachers are placed firmly on the agenda as professionals whose ambitions were very similar to their male colleagues, but whose promotion was restricted by a web of social and structural barriers designed to protect men's positions as teachers and administrators. However Marjorie Theobald claims that women teachers in late nineteenth century state schools were excluded from the profession. It could be that as the married women who are the subjects of this study were marginalised from paid employment, their places were taken by a new cohort of trained single women.<sup>21</sup>

There is nonetheless some ambivalence about the class position of elementary teachers in state schools. Women teachers are usually identified as middle class, albeit from the lower stratum.

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<sup>19</sup> Alvin W. Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class*, Continuum Books, New York, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Joyce Senders Pedersen, 'Schoolmistresses and Headmistresses: Elites and Education in the Nineteenth Century England', in Prentice and Theobald, *Women Who Taught*, pp. 37-70; Marjorie R. Theobald, 'Women and Schools in Colonial Victoria, 1840-1910', Ph.D. thesis, Faculty of Education, Monash University, 1985; Marjorie R. Theobald, 'The Hidden Profession: Women as Teachers in the Nineteenth Century Ladies' School Tradition' in Sandra Taylor and Miriam Henry (eds), *Battlers and Bluestockings: Women's Place in Australian Education*, Australian College of Education, Canberra, 1988; Marjorie R. Theobald, "'Mere Accomplishments?'" Melbourne's Early Ladies' Schools Reconsidered', *History of Education Review*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1984, pp. 15-28.

<sup>21</sup> Noeline Kyle, *Her Natural Destiny: Education of Women in New South Wales*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1986; Marjorie Theobald, 'The Administration of Gender: The Case of Victoria's "Lady Teachers"', Presidential Address, ANZHE Conference, Perth, 1994. See also Christina Florin, 'Social Closure as a Professional Strategy: Male and Female Teachers from Cooperation to Conflict in Sweden, 1860-1906', *History of Education*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1991. Florin's research will be considered later.

Frances Widdowson indicated that mid-nineteenth century pupil teachers were working class, but by the 1870s they were more likely to be drawn from the lower middle class.<sup>22</sup> Recent feminist research on the new middle class also locates women teachers as part of that class but does not specifically address their role in the creation and maintenance of the group.<sup>23</sup> Such ambivalence suggests the need for a more nuanced analysis of women teachers' social, educational and cultural backgrounds and raises an important question for exploration in this thesis. Did the expansion of church and state school systems contribute to a shift in the social class of women teachers?

Whatever the conundrums over teachers' social class, one point of agreement among education historians was that women occupied subordinate positions to men at all levels of elementary school systems. It was around this point of agreement that women were placed firmly on the research agenda. Revisionist historians designated the increases in numbers of low status, poorly paid women teachers in state systems as the 'feminisation of teaching'. Explanations for their presence settled on the fact that they were cheap and that teaching was the only acceptable occupation for middle class women. In this literature women became teachers by default and their employment was justified as preparation for motherhood. They were considered as transients in the profession whereas men were identified as career orientated professional managers in state schools.<sup>24</sup> Barry Bergen encapsulates the negative assertions about women teachers by establishing the feminisation of teaching and by arguing that their inferior training, salaries and absence of involvement in associational activity held back the advance of the profession.<sup>25</sup>

In this literature women teachers have been treated as an homogeneous group, all of whose members were equally subject to subordination and loss of autonomy. However, state schools were sex-segregated as far as possible and women teachers were placed at every level of the system from headmistresses to assistant teachers to country school mistresses in one teacher schools. Arguably status and working conditions varied enormously from one context to

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<sup>22</sup> Frances Widdowson, *Going Up into the Next Class: Women and Elementary Teacher Training 1840-1914*, Hutchinson, London, 1983; John L. Rury, 'Who Became Teachers? The Social Characteristics of Teachers in American History', in Donald Warren (ed.), *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work*, Macmillan New York, 1989, pp. 9-27.

<sup>23</sup> Kerreen M. Reiger, *The Disenchantment of the Home: Modernizing the Australian Family, 1880-1940*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1985; Judith Newton, 'History as Usual? Feminism and the "New Historicism"', *Cultural Critique*, Spring 1988, p. 110.

<sup>24</sup> Myra H. Strober and David Tyack, 'Why Do Women Teach and Men Manage? A Report on Research on Schools', *Signs*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1980. For a comprehensive overview of the argument, see Apple, *Teachers and Texts*, pp. 58-67.

<sup>25</sup> Barry H. Bergen, 'Only a Schoolmaster: Gender, Class and the Effort to Professionalize Elementary Teaching in England, 1870-1910', *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 1, 1982, pp. 12-15.

another. Headmistresses of girls' departments, as the most senior women teachers, were well placed to use their personal influence over students and staff and in personal contact with parents, headmasters and other school administrators, yet their agency in these interactions has not been the subject of systematic enquiry.<sup>26</sup> Country schoolmistresses, most of them uncertificated, have fared better. There is some research which demonstrates ways in which they negotiated the demands of family, local communities and the education bureaucracy in order to establish their careers and lives as independent women. However it does not compare them with their colleagues in urban schools.<sup>27</sup> In sum, there is a need for a more nuanced analysis of the various groups of women teachers in late nineteenth century state schools which places women's agency at the centre of enquiry and explores ways in which they negotiated their careers. Such an analysis would entail discussions of their working conditions in a variety of contexts, their personal and professional networks, and the rewards as well as the constraints of teaching.

Finally, it should be emphasised that most of the statistics on the feminisation of teaching did not include women who continued to teach outside state school systems, that is in church systems and as private entrepreneurs. Indeed women who taught in church systems have mostly been ignored in education history. However, there is evidence that women religious saw their lives in terms of a religious and a professional career. Some late nineteenth century convent academies provided more opportunities for women religious to continue careers in administration, curriculum writing and professional development than was the case in state school systems.<sup>28</sup> Currently the literature about feminisation of teaching is grappling with explanations of variance in feminisation rates in different systems and regions.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Joan Burstyn, 'Sources of Influence: Women as Teachers of Girls', June Purvis (ed.), *The Education of Girls and Women*, History of Education Society, 1985, pp. 72-73.

<sup>27</sup> John McKenzie, *Old Bush Schools: Life and Education in the Small Schools of Western Australia 1893-1961*, Western Australian College of Advanced Education, Perth, no date; Noeline Williamson, 'The Employment of Female Teachers in the Small Schools of New South Wales', *Labour History*, no. 43, November, 1982; J. Donald Wilson, "'I am ready to be of assistance when I can'": Lottie Brown and Rural Women Teachers in British Columbia', in Prentice and Theobald, *Women Who Taught*, pp. 203-229; Pamela Horn, 'Problems of the Village Headmistress in the 1880s', *History of Education Society Bulletin*, no. 26, Autumn 1980, pp. 16-19; Pat Jeffers and Jim Fletcher, 'A Teacher Full of Yesterdays', *Inside Education*, vol. 66, no. 2, 1972, pp. 9-15.

<sup>28</sup> Marta Danylewycz, *Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920*, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1987; Stephanie Burley, 'None More Anonymous? Catholic Teaching Nuns, their Schools and Students in South Australia, 1880-1925', M.Ed. thesis, University of Adelaide, 1992; Elizabeth Smyth, 'A Noble Proof of Excellence: The Culture and Curriculum of a Nineteenth Century Ontario Convent Academy', in Heap and Prentice, *Gender and Education in Ontario*, pp. 269-284.

<sup>29</sup> Prentice and Theobald, 'The Historiography of Women Teachers' in Prentice and Theobald, *Women Who Taught*, pp. 15-18; James C. Albisetti, 'The Feminisation of Teaching in the Nineteenth Century: A Comparative Perspective', *History of Education*, vol. 22, no. 3, 1993; Jean Barman, 'Birds of Passage or Early Professionals? Teachers in Late Nineteenth Century British Columbia', *Historical Studies in Education*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1990.

While the concept of the feminisation of teaching has generated many insights into the structure and processes of elementary schooling, this thesis will challenge two major assumptions which underpin the argument, the first being that teaching was men's work.<sup>30</sup> Most research into nineteenth century schooling continues to discuss elementary teaching as men's work which was taken over by women with the advent of church and state school systems. The perception of teaching as men's work has underpinned discussions of teaching not only as a profession, by liberal historians but also revisionist research which reconceptualised teaching as a labour process.<sup>31</sup> Labour historians claim that feminisation and proletarianisation fitted snugly together, and have adapted existing arguments about waged work to explain women's position. Evidence has been found of women teachers' resistance; firstly in the form of union activity; more recent research has expanded the enquiry to include their daily work. Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice have also studied the proletarianisation of the teacher's work in emerging school systems.<sup>32</sup> They conclude that the reorganisation of time, work and discipline in the school intensified the labour process. Michael Apple's treatment of teacher resistance is also wide ranging, showing many ways in which women teachers collectively and individually have fought for more control over their work as well as using the strategy of professionalism.<sup>33</sup> Although these studies have made important contributions to discussions of teachers' work, they only define women's power as the power of resistance. As Judith Newton points out this 'keeps women in a purely reactive role while assigning the construction of culture, as usual, to men.'<sup>34</sup> Danylewycz and Prentice acknowledge that they subsumed very real differences between teachers at different levels of school systems in order to write the article and they call for a more nuanced analysis of women teachers' work. Kathleen Casey and Michael Apple propose that we should study teachers' own understandings of their experiences as women and as teachers. In so doing women become subjects able to create their

<sup>30</sup> Mackinnon, 'A New Point of Departure', p. 3; Prentice and Theobald, 'Historiography of Women Teachers' in Prentice and Theobald, *Women Who Taught*, p. 23.

<sup>31</sup> Apple, *Teachers and Texts*, p. 58; Michael Apple, 'Teaching and "women's work": A Comparative Perspective', *Teachers College Record*, vol. 86, no. 3, 1986, p. 458.

<sup>32</sup> Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice, 'Teachers' Work: Changing Patterns and Perceptions in the Emerging School Systems of Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Central Canada' in Prentice and Theobald, *Women Who Taught*, pp. 136-159.

<sup>33</sup> Apple, *Teachers and Texts*, pp. 80-170. Apple's research is also eloquent testimony that there is a core of the teaching process that administrators, 'experts' and textbook specialists have been unable to wrest from women teachers, that is the daily interactions which take place inside the classroom. Here teachers still maintain a degree of autonomy, although the attacks have continued unabated to the present day. See Dean Ashenden, 'Better Schools Begin Classroom Reform: Education reformers won't get far until they overhaul the nineteenth century work practices of teaching', *Australian*, 19 October 1994, p. 13.

<sup>34</sup> Newton, 'History as Usual?', p. 102.

own histories. We need to place women at the centre of the agenda and begin with the premise that teaching was their work.<sup>35</sup>

Noeline Kyle, Christina Florin, Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice, and Marjorie Theobald have taken up this challenge in articles and reached similar conclusions. Kyle begins from the perspective of women as teachers before the advent of compulsory schooling and contends that they moved across to the state system from the smaller ladies academies.<sup>36</sup> Her research demonstrates that the Department of Public Instruction, far from embracing female recruits, attempted to 'masculinise' teaching by recruiting men indiscriminately. She shows that women were prevented from competing with men at every level of the service, beginning with training, by specific regulations and conventions. Danylewycz and Prentice demonstrate a similar situation in the case of the Montreal Catholic School Commission although they do not conceptualise it as masculinisation.<sup>37</sup>

Florin's research takes up the case of professionalisation and gender in Sweden.<sup>38</sup> She identifies women as teachers before the advent of state school systems, and begins with the premise that teaching as an occupation was equally suitable for both sexes. Florin identifies two phases of professionalisation in Sweden. The first was associational activity which began in the 1850s with elementary teachers promoting teaching as a profession and later expanded to include demands for better training. The second phase was the performance of social closure and this proceeded on two fronts. Elementary teachers protected their own status by excluding junior school teachers and unqualified teachers, almost all of whom were women. Schoolmistresses in elementary schools supported this aspect of social closure. But in order to confirm elementary school teaching as a suitable career for men Florin joins Kyle in claiming that regulations were introduced to impede competition from women teachers within the elementary school system.

Marjorie Theobald begins with the premise that teaching was women's work and exposes their bargaining power in state school systems. She claims that there was considerable apprehension about the moral safety of girls in state schools, apprehension which could only be allayed by

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<sup>35</sup> Casey and Apple, 'Gender and the Condition of Teachers' Work' in Acker, *Teachers, Gender and Careers*, p. 181; Lerner, 'Placing Women in History', p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> Noeline Kyle, 'Women's "natural mission" but Man's Real Domain: The Masculinisation of the State Elementary Teaching Service in New South Wales', in Taylor and Henry, *Battlers and Bluestockings*, pp. 25-36.

<sup>37</sup> Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice, 'Teachers, Gender and Bureaucratizing School Systems in Nineteenth Century Montreal and Toronto', *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1984, pp. 75-98.

<sup>38</sup> Florin, 'Social Closure as a Professional Strategy', pp. 17-26.

the employment of women as teachers. Women as moral guardians were essential to ensuring girls' enrolments in state schools. In Theobald's analysis women teachers are employed by design rather than default, contrary to the usual assertion of the 'feminisation of teaching' arguments. Indeed women teachers are central to the construction of nineteenth century school systems, rather than marginal. Yet, as Kyle and Florin note, women teachers did not negotiate with men on equal terrain, and nineteenth century school systems were arenas of contestation between the various groups of men and women teachers.

There is also a substantial amount of research which demonstrates that before the advent of school systems women were teaching in a variety of contexts: as mothers, governesses, private entrepreneurs and nuns. Richard Bernard and Maris Vinovskis claim that 'approximately one out of five white women in pre-Civil War Massachusetts was a school teacher at some time in her life!'<sup>39</sup> British research has exhumed a vigorous tradition of working class elementary education mostly in the hands of women teachers in common day schools and dame schools.<sup>40</sup> There is a much larger body of evidence which retrieves middle class education conducted in the private domain. Marion Amies' thesis on home education as it was perceived by nineteenth century writers has particular resonance for this study as she draws on some of the fiction of South Australian novelists who were teachers, notably Matilda Evans and Ellen Liston. In order to capture the complexity of home education she distinguishes between governesses and other women who were involved in teaching on the basis of whether they were paid for their labours. In so doing she has been able to demonstrate the blurred boundaries between women's paid and unpaid work as teachers.<sup>41</sup> Several researchers have indicated that in the mid-nineteenth century there was an expansion in the number of select girls' schools commensurate with the growth of the middle class. Thus new opportunities were created for women to generate income by teaching. Overall this research has challenged previous

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<sup>39</sup> Richard M. Bernard and Maris A. Vinovskis, 'The Female School Teacher in Ante-Bellum Massachusetts' in *Journal of Social History*, vol. 10, no. 3, 1977, p. 333.

<sup>40</sup> Phil Gardner, *The Lost Elementary Schools of Victorian England: The People's Education*, Croom Helm, London, 1984; J. H. Higginson, 'Dame Schools', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, vol. xxii, no. 2, 1974; Donald Leinster-Mackay, 'Dame Schools: A Need for Review', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, vol. xxiv, no. 1, 1976.

<sup>41</sup> Marion Amies, 'Home Education and Colonial Ideals of Womanhood', Ph.D. thesis, Monash University, 1986. For other studies of governesses see M. Jeanne Peterson, 'The Victorian Governess: Status Incongruence in Family and Society', in Martha Vicinus (ed.), *Suffer and Be Still - Women in the Victorian Age*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1973, pp. 3-20; A. James Hammerton, *Emigrant Gentlewomen: Genteel Poverty and Female Emigration, 1830-1914*, Croom Helm, London, 1979; Patricia Clarke, *The Governesses: Letters from the Colonies, 1862-1882*, Hutchinson, Hawthorn, 1985; Lucy Frost, *No Place for a Nervous Lady: Voices from the Australian Bush*, McPhee Gribble, Fitzroy, 1984.



assumptions about the ephemeral nature of non-state education by establishing women as active agents in negotiating their careers.<sup>42</sup>

In sum there are two parallel but distinct bodies of research which begin with the premise that teaching was women's work. However there is little overarching analysis which bridges the gap between women in the various forms of private education and those in church and state systems and considers them altogether. This thesis will contribute to redressing that situation by postulating teaching as women's work, at least before the intervention of church and state. It will establish the presence of women as teachers in a variety of contexts and answer a broad range of questions about them: which women teachers colonised church and state schools; what factors mediated those choices; how did the advent of church and state systems affect women's work as teachers; how did women teachers resolve the tensions generated by changes in the education landscape?

The second challenge to the feminisation of teaching argument follows from the first assumption that teaching was men's work. Most education historians assume that the sexual division of labour had occurred in teaching families well before the advent of state school systems, that all women regardless of marital status had been confined to the domestic sphere and that men were sole breadwinners. These assumptions have been so pervasive that it has been taken for granted that women who found paid employment as teachers were single and that the feminisation of teaching constituted a radical change in the nature and location of their work.<sup>43</sup> Yet there is substantial evidence to suggest that the separation of spheres occurred with great unevenness and variation in the middle class and in the working class. Wally Secombe, Louise Tilly and Joan Scott, and Sonya Rose have shown ways in which women's economic contributions changed with the development of capitalism in working class families while Leonore Davidoff, Catherine Hall and Mary Ryan have made similar cases for middle class

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<sup>42</sup> Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1975, ch. 1; Jane Errington, 'Ladies and Schoolmistresses: Educating Women in Early Nineteenth Century Upper Canada', *Historical Studies in Education*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1994; Johanna Selles-Roney, "'Manners or Morals?' or 'Men in Petticoats?'" Education at Alma College, 1871-1898', in Heap and Prentice, *Gender and Education*, pp. 247-260; James Albisetti, *Schooling German Girls and Women: Secondary and Higher Education in the Nineteenth Century*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1988.

<sup>43</sup> Those who recommend further analysis of the sexual division of labour make little mention of the differences between married and single women. See Mackinnon, 'A New Point of Departure', pp. 2-3; Prentice and Theobald, 'Historiography of Women Teachers' in Prentice and Theobald, *Women Who Taught*, p. 23.

households. In Australia Patricia Grimshaw's research on colonial households also shows that many women contributed their labour and generated income as part of a family economy.<sup>44</sup>

However, in education history there is very little literature which embraces the teaching family as an economic unit. Susan Houston and Alison Prentice indicate that teaching was a family affair in both private-venture and state-subsidised schools in the mid-nineteenth century, the husband and wife teaching team being the most common form of organisation. They note that with the spread of the public school system the teaching family was gradually replaced by individual teachers. Using manuscript census evidence, other Canadian researchers have shown that teaching became the province of married men and young single women in Ontario and that in Quebec the increasing numbers of religious teachers in closely settled areas marginalised single women lay teachers by restricting them to remote rural schools. These studies do not investigate the role of the church or state in activating these changes in the sexual division of labour.<sup>45</sup> By comparison in studies of teaching families in Victoria the experiences of married women are privileged and their interactions with the state are explored in detail. These studies provide compelling evidence that the private and public spheres intersected for most of the nineteenth century and that both married and single women were employed as state school teachers until at least the 1880s. Thereafter teaching became the domain of men and single women, but, very rarely married women.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Wally Secombe, 'Patriarchy Stabilized: The Construction of the Male Breadwinner Wage Form in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Social History*, vol. 11, no. 1, p. 55; Leonore Davidoff, *Worlds Between: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1995, pp. 7-8; Louise Tilly and Joan Scott, *Women, Work and Family*, second edition, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1987; Sonya O. Rose, *Limited Livelihoods: Gender and Class in Nineteenth Century England*, Routledge, London, 1992; Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County New York, 1790-1865*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1985; Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*; Patricia Grimshaw, 'The Experience of Women in Australasian Colonies, 1788 to 1860: The Case of New South Wales, Victoria and New Zealand', *History Forum*, vol. 4, no. 3, 1982, pp. 16-25.

<sup>45</sup> Susan Houston and Alison Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars in Nineteenth Century Ontario*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1988, ch. 2-3; Alison Prentice, *The School Promoters: Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth Century Upper Canada*, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1977, p. 18; Marta Danylewycz, Beth Light and Alison Prentice, 'The Evolution of the Sexual Division of Labour in Teaching: Nineteenth Century Ontario and Quebec Case Study' in Jane Gaskell and Arlene McLaren (eds), *Women and Education*, second edition, Detselig Enterprises Ltd, Calgary, 1991, pp. 33-60; Alison Prentice, 'Education and the Metaphor of the Family: The Upper Canadian Example', *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 10, no. 3, 1972, pp. 281-303.

<sup>46</sup> Marion Amies, 'The Career of a Colonial Schoolmistress', in Imelda Palmer (ed.), *Melbourne Studies in Education 1984*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1984; R. J. W. Selleck, 'A Goldfields Family' and Marjorie R. Theobald, 'Women's Teaching Labour, the Family and the State in Nineteenth Century Victoria' in Marjorie R. Theobald and R. J. W. Selleck (eds), *Family, School and State in Australian History*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1990; R. J. W. Selleck and Martin Sullivan (eds), *Not So Eminent Victorians*, Melbourne, 1984; Marjorie Theobald, 'Writing the Lives of Women Teachers: Problems and Possibilities', in Lyn Yates (ed.), *Melbourne Studies in Education 1993*, La Trobe University Press, Glen Waverley, 1993; Donna Dwyer, 'Good and Mad Women (teachers): The Case of Grace Neven', M.Ed. thesis, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, 1993; Donna Dwyer, 'Good and Mad Women (Teachers): The Case of Grace Neven' in Lyn Yates (ed.), *Melbourne Studies in Education*, vol. 29, no. 1, 1995, pp. 13-29.

Desley Deacon's research expands on the role of the state in this project.<sup>47</sup> She claims that in the 1850s and 1860s the participation of wives and daughters in the family economy and the system of local patronage gave middle class women a respected place in the public service. Deacon shows that once control of public personnel policy was centralised, men's labour market interests lay in collective solidarity with other male workers. To begin with, masculinising occupations which had formerly been considered equally suitable for men and women required the removal of married women. Single women posed more of a problem. While it was generally conceded that there should be employment opportunities for single women, it was held to be essential that men's positions be confirmed and protected. Deacon shows how the conceptualisation of women as dependents underpinned the network of practices which protected men's place in the public service. It would seem imperative to expand and apply her postulation of this organising principle: that changes in the sexual division of labour in teaching were intimately connected with the expansion of the state.

Among education historians, Bruce Curtis and Pavla Miller and Ian Davey have theorised the role of the nineteenth century state. Curtis argues that the educational state was 'constructed out of a multi-faceted process of political struggle', one aspect of which was 'persistent conflicts between men and women over access to the means of employment and over the respective social capacities of different genders.' However, he does not develop this theme in relation to teachers nor does he analyse the sexual division of labour in teaching families.<sup>48</sup> Miller and Davey's discussions about patriarchy and the origins of state schooling offer some clues as to the role of the state in restructuring families. They propose that there was a prolonged crisis of patriarchal relations during the transition from feudalism to capitalism, a crisis eventually resolved by forging a new form of patriarchy based on the household and the male breadwinner wage form. With Davidoff and Hall they note the resolution of this crisis in the doctrine of separate spheres and contend that it occurred earlier in middle class than working class households. Furthermore they propose that there was also a crisis in relations between children and adults within farming communities and proletarian families which prompted the traditional bastions of patriarchy, the churches and the state, to explore new forms of governance of children.<sup>49</sup> Arguably the state as employer in the late nineteenth century was also

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<sup>47</sup> Desley Deacon, *Managing Gender: The State, the New Middle Class and Women Workers, 1830-1930*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1989.

<sup>48</sup> Bruce Curtis, *Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836-1871*, Althouse Press, London, Ontario, 1988, p. 12.

<sup>49</sup> Ian Davey, 'Rethinking the Origins of British Colonial School Systems', *Historical Studies in Education*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1989, p. 158; Miller, 'Historiography of compulsory schooling', pp. 123-124; Pavla Miller

well placed to activate the sexual division of labour in teaching families by institutionalising the male breadwinner wage.

In order to encompass the complexity of women's lives as teachers, this thesis conceptualises them as members of families and will explore the sexual division of labour before the rise of church and state school systems. This raises further questions for investigation. How did recruitment by the church and state affect the structure of the teaching family? How and when did teaching become an occupation for single women? What were the consequences for the gender order?

Among the key concerns of feminist historians has been presenting women as actors in their own right, as autonomous individuals. In education history American researchers have led the way in this endeavour. Nancy Hoffman and Polly Welts Kaufman's studies demonstrate that women teachers were assertive and independent and did not see their careers in the same ways as education experts and commentators.<sup>50</sup> These historians along with Geraldine Joncich Clifford and Jo Anne Preston have shown that women chose teaching as paid employment for many reasons besides the obvious one of economic independence. Indeed women taught for the same reasons that motivated men.<sup>51</sup>

Clifford's research also suggests that women teachers utilised their managerial abilities acquired in the classroom in teachers' associations and more widely in other voluntary organisations. She also indicates that women teachers were involved in the late nineteenth century feminist movement. In order to fully understand the careers and lives of women teachers it is necessary to consider their capacity to achieve autonomy and influence in a range of social and political as well as school contexts.<sup>52</sup>

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and Ian Davey, 'Family Formation, Schooling and the Patriarchal State' in Theobald and Selleck, *Family, School and State in Australian History*, pp. 1-24.

<sup>50</sup> Nancy Hoffman, *Woman's "True" Profession: Voices from the History of Teaching*, Feminist Press, Old Westbury, 1981; Polly Welts Kaufman, *Women Teachers on the Frontier*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1984.

<sup>51</sup> Geraldine Joncich Clifford, "'Lady Teachers' and Politics in the United States, 1850-1930', in Martin Lawn and Gerald Grace (eds), *Teachers: The Culture and Politics of Work*, Falmer Press, London, 1987; Geraldine Joncich Clifford, 'Home and School in Nineteenth Century America: Some Personal History Reports from the United States', *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1978, pp. 19-22; Jo Anne Preston, 'Female Aspiration and Male Ideology: School Teaching in Nineteenth Century New England', in Arina Angerman (ed.), *Current Issues in Women's History*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1989, pp. 171-180.

<sup>52</sup> Clifford, 'Lady Teachers and Politics' in Lawn and Grace, *Teachers: The Culture and Politics of Work*, pp. 15-16; Geraldine Joncich Clifford, 'History as Experience: The Uses of Personal History Documents in the History of Education', *History of Education*, vol. 7, no. 3, 1978, p. 196. See also Mary Ryan, 'The Power of Women's Networks', in Judith L. Newton, Mary P. Ryan and Judith R. Walkowitz (eds), *Sex and Class in Women's History*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1983, pp. 167-183.

Sari Knopp Biklen has employed post modern analysis to study women teachers in elementary schools as autonomous individuals both historically and in the present. Her historical research uses first person accounts mainly from rural school teachers and nineteenth century fiction. She claims that 'metaphors of the autonomous person seem linked to travel rather than to stay at home and that texts were constructed so that women had no choice but to become teachers.'<sup>53</sup> However this nexus is debatable. The first person accounts are mostly of women who were living away from home and are not balanced by investigations of women living with their families. Biklen does not come to terms with the conventions of much nineteenth century fiction in which heroines begin by occupying a peripheral social position and gradually become integrated into the social order as members of families.<sup>54</sup> She also assumes that the discourse of teaching as a preparation for motherhood ordered nineteenth century women teachers' lives, and is nonplussed when she finds little evidence of such a discourse. Her assumption has been refuted by the aforementioned feminist historians. She concludes that women teachers' autonomy 'arose not specifically out of work with children, but because of what teaching as an occupation could provide women.'<sup>55</sup> Teaching provided women with sufficient financial independence to make marriage an option rather than an economic necessity. Biklen also found evidence of women teachers delaying or rejecting marriage but she did not consider whether that constituted a challenge to the gender order.

Alison Mackinnon's study of university graduates, many of whom became teachers, has explored changes in women's consciousness, in their subjectivity, as they experienced higher education. She argues that they were exposed to a range of discourses through their studies which conflicted with those of woman as 'bearer of race.'<sup>56</sup> Mackinnon studied personal documents and found considerable evidence that these women defined themselves as autonomous individuals. She triangulated these documents with demographic data and studies of their career histories to argue that higher education affected women's choices about marriage and fertility. Significant numbers delayed or eschewed marriage, some choosing to live in

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<sup>53</sup> Sari Knopp Biklen, *School Work: Gender and the Cultural Construction of Teaching*, Teachers College Press, New York, 1995, pp. 80-86, 92, 105.

<sup>54</sup> Margaret Allen, 'Three South Australian Women Writers, 1854-1923; Matilda Evans, Catherine Spence and Catherine Martin', Ph.D. thesis, Flinders University, 1991, p. 108. For further discussion, see Sarah Paddle, 'Writing Against the Clock: Theorising Current Feminist Histories' in Lyn Yates (ed.), *Melbourne Studies in Education*, vol. 29, no. 1, 1995, p. 3.

<sup>55</sup> Biklen, *Schoolwork*, p. 105.

<sup>56</sup> Alison Mackinnon, 'Male Heads on Female Shoulders? New Questions for the History of Women's Higher Education', *History of Education Review*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1990, pp. 36-47.

woman-centred communities. She concluded that women in this group were challenging the gender order in the way they constructed their lives with and without men.<sup>57</sup>

Religious identity also allowed women to assert their autonomy in a variety of teaching contexts in the nineteenth century. Catholic women religious were the most visible group of women teachers who were empowered by their faith.<sup>58</sup> Kaufman's research shows that the women teachers who colonised frontier schools were sustained by Protestant evangelical religion. There is also evidence to suggest that some women teachers in private girls' schools were similarly empowered.<sup>59</sup> Carol Dyhouse illustrates this point by comparing Miss Buss and Miss Beale. The profoundly religious Dorothy Beale portrayed herself 'as a kind of Mother Superior answerable only to a Father in Heaven' while Frances Buss, whose mission was more secular 'grappled with his lieutenants here below'.<sup>60</sup> Thus we might look to religious discourses as well as intellectual education as having potential to generate autonomy for women.

Mackinnon and Biklen's research indicates that autonomy is not simply derived from language but is also grounded in engagement with the material world. Both historians discuss ways in which women teachers' waged work in public labour markets contributed to their identity. However, much of nineteenth century women's productive activity was unpaid and carried out in the private sphere as part of the family economy. Nancy Cott suggests that it still contributed to women's autonomy: 'a person's work or productive occupation, not only earns a living and fills time but also contributes to self-definition.'<sup>61</sup> The connection between work and autonomy was simply expressed by many nineteenth century women as the desire to be 'useful and independent'.

In fact 'teaching' was one productive activity among many that women could undertake at any stage of their life cycle. It could be unpaid work within the family or it could be paid work; it

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<sup>57</sup> Alison Mackinnon, 'Awakening Women: Women, Higher Education and Family Formation in South Australia, 1880-1920', Ph.D. thesis, University of Adelaide, 1989, p. 240. See also Carol Dyhouse, *Feminism and the Family in England 1880-1939*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1989.

<sup>58</sup> Danylewycz, *Taking the Veil*; Smyth, 'A Noble Proof of Excellence' in Heap and Prentice, *Gender and Education*, pp. 269-284.

<sup>59</sup> Kaufman, *Women Teachers on the Frontier*, p. xxi; Theobald, 'Women and Education', p. 63; Mackinnon, 'Awakening Women', p. 53; Vicinus, *Independent Women*, p. 175; Ellen Jordan, 'Making Good Wives and Mothers? The Transformation of Middle Class Girls' Education in Nineteenth Century Britain', *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 4, 1991, p. 446; Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood*, p. 140.

<sup>60</sup> Carol Dyhouse, 'Miss Buss and Miss Beale: Gender and Authority in the History of Education' in Felicity Hunt (ed.), *Lessons for Life: The Schooling of Girls and Women 1850-1950*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1987, p. 33.

<sup>61</sup> Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood*, p. 20.

could take place in the private or public sphere. In order to encapsulate the complex nature of 'teaching' I define it as a productive activity which could be used to generate income and/or contribute to cultural capital. I consider that the acquisition of even the most basic literacy skills also involves the interpretation and dissemination of cultural values through the discussions and texts from which the skills are learned. In the productive activity of teaching, the transmission of cultural capital is inseparable from the transmission of specific skills.<sup>62</sup>

In defining teaching as a productive activity I divest it of the discourses of professionalism and the labour process which were discussed earlier in the literature review. Both of these discuss teaching only as waged work, and therefore masculine.<sup>63</sup> I also dissociate it from the nurturing discourse which predominated in the late nineteenth century as a justification for women's waged work as teachers. In essence the starting point for this study is that 'teaching' was a productive activity open to capture by both men and women. This raises three broad questions for exploration in this thesis. Who captured teaching in the nineteenth century and made it their work, their identity? To what extent were women who taught engaged in a quest for autonomy? How did changes in the nature and location of this particular productive activity affect the gender order?

Thus far I have surveyed a range of literature and identified niches which might be filled by a nuanced analysis of nineteenth century women teachers. In essence I will place women's agency at the centre of enquiry and study the ways in which they negotiated their lives as teachers. I will begin by analysing the structure of the teaching family, drawing out ways in which women's teaching contributed to the economic and social status of the family and to their own identity. The various contexts in which women taught will be surveyed and the factors mediating their options will be identified. This thesis will emphasise both the common experiences and the very real differences between women in terms of social class, religion, ethnicity, marital status and geographic location.

This study also examines changes in family structure which were concomitant with the establishment of school systems and describes the role of the state in fostering the sexual division of labour in teaching families. It is contended that the construction of teaching as waged labour and as a profession, heralded major changes in the nature and location of this particular productive activity and indeed in masculinity and femininity. I will write in women

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<sup>62</sup> For related discussion of the concept of cultural capital see Deacon, *Managing Gender*, p. 4; Parkin, *Marxism and Class Theory*, p. 55; Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals*, p. 19.

<sup>63</sup> For further discussion of waged work, see Davidoff, *Worlds Between*, p. 246; Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work and Family*, pp. 5-6; Bradley, *Men's Work, Women's Work*, pp. 23-24.

teachers as active agents in the professionalisation of teaching, demonstrating ways in which they participated in constructing and redefining the concept of the profession over the course of the nineteenth century. Finally I ask how these changes affected the gender order.

### South Australian research

In the general histories of South Australia there is very little literature which addresses women teachers specifically. As previously mentioned, they were relatively well represented in a book commissioned by the Women's Centenary Council of South Australia in 1936. This publication contrasts markedly with a more recent celebratory history which does not introduce women as teachers until the advent of compulsory education in 1875.<sup>64</sup>

In education history Rowland Nicholas' study of private and denominational secondary schools notes that many early schools in the colony were family affairs but he does not explore this phenomenon. He also identified several prestigious girls' schools of the late nineteenth century which have since been studied by Helen Jones and more recently by Helen Reid.<sup>65</sup> Although this research has reinstated a number of exceptional women teachers in the historical record there is no study which encompasses all of the contexts in which women taught from the beginnings of white settlement or which documents the ways in which they negotiated changes in the education landscape, in particular the advent of church and state school systems from the mid-nineteenth century.

Bernard Hyams' study of state school teachers belongs in the liberal tradition of education history.<sup>66</sup> He claims that the Central Board of Education (1852-1875) defaulted from its responsibilities to ensure satisfactory standards of education and characterises mid-nineteenth century teachers as deficient in training and teaching skills, poorly paid and captive of their local communities. In his account, reforms in training and inspection which were instituted under the 1875 Act transformed teachers into a well organised government service. However,

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<sup>64</sup> Brown, *A Book of South Australia*, pp. 66, 105-108, 139, 166, 227; Helen Jones, *In Her Own Name: A History of Women in South Australia from 1836*, second edition, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1994, pp. 73-80.

<sup>65</sup> Nicholas, 'Private and Denominational Secondary Schools'; Helen Jones, *Nothing Seemed Impossible: Women's Education and Social Change in South Australia 1875-1915*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1985, ch. 3; Helen Reid, 'Hardwicke College - A College for Adelaide Bluestockings?', Paper presented to ANZHES Annual Conference, Perth, 1994. See also Alison Mackinnon, *The New Women: Adelaide's Early Women Graduates*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986.

<sup>66</sup> Bernard Keith Hyams, 'State School Teachers in South Australia 1847-1950: A Study of Their Training, Employment and Voluntary Organisation', Ph.D. thesis, Flinders University, 1972.



they were unable to achieve professional status because they lacked autonomy over their work and because of the problem of unqualified teachers in rural areas. This is where women teachers enter the narrative. The vast majority of unqualified, rural teachers were young women, whom Hyams characterises as transients and lacking ambition as well as training. These provisional teachers outnumbered trained teachers by the turn of the century.

Hyams' assessment of provisional teachers has been challenged in more recent research which identifies the ideological and structural barriers that excluded them from the profession.<sup>67</sup> Provisional teachers are reinstated as active agents and the study demonstrates that they used a range of strategies to improve their living and working conditions and fulfil their family responsibilities. Although many were transient, a core of these women established life-long teaching careers. However, the study of provisional teachers was narrowly conceived and did not incorporate an overarching perspective of women teachers in the nineteenth century.

Revisionist historian Malcolm Vick has refuted Hyams' assessment of the Central Board of Education.<sup>68</sup> Vick highlights ways in which the changing structure of social relations shaped the development of mid-nineteenth century state education. He claims that the 1851 Act embodied a commitment to the autonomy and responsibility of the family and that the state opted for a semi-interventionist approach to educational reform by providing financial support for local initiative. The particular strength of this work is the careful documentation of changes, especially the social and political ascendancy of the urban middle class, which provided the impetus for the 1875 Act.

Vick demonstrates that the Central Board of Education promoted efficient schooling but was sufficiently flexible to encompass all manner of schools under its governance, including those that catered for middle class students.<sup>69</sup> He proposes that teachers were central to the reform agenda and that some men were professionals but he does not investigate the changing nature of the profession. This thesis will redress that situation. He notes that the Board favoured the husband and wife teaching team but he concentrates on individual men and does not adequately

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<sup>67</sup> Kay Whitehead, 'Provisional School Teachers in South Australia, 1875-1915', M.Ed. thesis, Flinders University, 1990. For a summary of the argument, see Kay Whitehead, 'Career Paths for Provisional Teachers in South Australia, 1875-1915', *History of Education Review*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1994, pp. 53-68.

<sup>68</sup> M. J. Vick, 'The Central Board of Education in South Australia 1852-1875', M.Ed. thesis, University of Adelaide, 1981.

<sup>69</sup> See also Malcolm Vick, 'Schools, School Communities and the State in Mid-Nineteenth Century New Wales, South Australia and Victoria', Ph.D. thesis, University of Adelaide, 1991, pp. 80-90, 177-194, 235-236.

demonstrate that women's teaching labour was integral to the conduct of licensed schools.<sup>70</sup> Indeed an analysis of the teaching family as proposed in this thesis will demonstrate that women teachers were central to the mid-nineteenth century state school system.

Pavla Miller's revisionist work locates the development of late nineteenth century state schooling as a project in the transformation of class and gender relations.<sup>71</sup> She agrees with Vick about antecedents of the 1875 Act and contends that the efficient schooling project proceeded on two fronts, against students and against teachers. Miller demonstrates that 'in order to remould the culture of the schools' clientele, the department moved to transform the routines and rhythms of school life'. Her treatment of working class resistance, including the use of private schools is wide ranging and working class culture is positioned as dynamic and supportive of education, albeit not that provided by the state. Ian Davey's research on the working class district of Hindmarsh supports this analysis.<sup>72</sup> Both mention that private working class schools were predominantly in the hands of women but they tend to classify all such schools as cheap 'dame' schools.<sup>73</sup> Their exposition does not allow for the existence of young ladies' schools in predominantly working class communities or indeed for the continuing middle class use of state schools. A less dichotomous view of working class and middle class education is necessary to encompass the variety of contexts in which women taught.

Women teachers are clearly not a major focus of Miller's research and teachers generally are characterised as reactive rather than proactive in the development of state education.

Miller contends that the Education Department drastically reduced teachers' autonomy at all levels from headmaster down to the provisional teacher and 'processes of deskilling and bureaucratisation were accompanied by marked changes in the gender division of labour'. She concludes that these changes were concurrent with a 'remarkable feminisation of teaching', produced in part by women's employment as cheap labour.<sup>74</sup> All of the aforementioned

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<sup>70</sup> For example, he discusses James Bassett and William Cawthorne's careers but does not mention that their wives, Mary and Mary Ann had longer careers as licensed teachers. Vick, 'The Central Board of Education', pp. 90-92. See chapter two for biographical sketches of both women.

<sup>71</sup> Pavla Miller, *Long Division: State Schooling in South Australian Society*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986.

<sup>72</sup> Miller, *Long Division*, p. 38; Ian Davey, 'Growing Up in South Australia' in Eric Richards (ed.) *The Flinders History of South Australia: A Social History*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986, pp. 371-402; Ian Davey, 'Growing Up in a Working-Class Community: School and Work in Hindmarsh' in Patricia Grimshaw, Chris McConville and Ellen McEwen (eds), *Families in Colonial Australia*, George Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1985, pp. 163-172.

<sup>73</sup> For problems of subsuming all working class schools under this nomenclature, see Gardner, *Lost Elementary Schools*, p. 15, J. H. Higginson, 'Dame Schools' and Leinster-Mackay, 'Dame Schools'.

<sup>74</sup> Miller, *Long Division*, p. 53.

criticisms apply to her analysis of this phenomenon and will not be repeated here. What is clear is that we need to look far more closely at the sexual division of labour in the years preceding the 1875 Act in order to document changes in the structure of the teaching family and, in particular, the removal of married women as state school teachers.

Although late nineteenth century provisional teachers have been studied, women teachers in urban elementary schools are shadowy figures in South Australian education history. Neither Hyams nor Miller explore them in any detail. Helen Jones' research into women's education refers to them only in relation to the teaching of domestic subjects. In so doing she shows that expertise in this area enabled a handful of women to reach influential positions in the Education Department. She also studied women in secondary schools and located them as active agents in a variety of educational and community activities.<sup>75</sup> However, there is no research which canvasses a broader role for women teachers in state elementary schools or that compares women at different levels of the education hierarchy. This thesis will reinstate late nineteenth century women teachers as active agents in the construction of the teaching profession and demonstrate how the processes of credentialism and social closure fragmented the teaching labour force.

In the South Australian context there is a unique opportunity to explore the relationships between women teachers, professionalisation, elementary and secondary schooling. The 1875 Act legislated for both elementary and secondary schooling and in 1879 the Education Department established the Advanced School for Girls to provide academic secondary schooling and preparation for university entrance. Here it was the same man, Inspector-General Hartley, who presided over the reform of girls' secondary education and state elementary schooling. Both Helen Jones and Alison Mackinnon have undertaken detailed studies of the Advanced School.<sup>76</sup> Although their principal focus is the students, they discuss the careers of the early headmistresses and teachers, noting the friendships among them and the links with other private teachers. They also claim that the Inspector-General's support for the Advanced School was crucial to its early success. Several of the Advanced School staff were recruited from state elementary schools in Adelaide but Jones and Mackinnon have not indicated whether there were associations between Advanced School staff and those in state elementary schools nor have they explored Hartley's relationship with women teachers in this context. British research suggests that secondary teachers attempted to distance themselves

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<sup>75</sup> Jones, *Nothing Seemed Impossible*, ch. 1-3.

<sup>76</sup> Jones, *Nothing Seemed Impossible*, pp. 38-65; Alison Mackinnon, *One Foot on the Ladder: Origins and Outcomes of Girls' Secondary Schooling in South Australia*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1984.

from elementary teachers thus fragmenting the profession. Penny Summerfield claims that women in secondary schools achieved relatively high salaries and status at the expense of elementary teachers in England.<sup>77</sup> In the South Australian context the opportunity is opened to unravel the networks which underpinned elementary and secondary teachers and address the issues of credentialism and social closure in relation to these groups.

The final aspect of the literature review considers the Lutheran and Catholic school systems as both of these developed concurrently with the state system in South Australia. To date there are no studies which encompass the development of all three systems. However, it is necessary to study all contexts in which women taught to understand the ways in which class, religion and ethnicity mediated their careers. The position of women teachers in each of the church systems was markedly different from the state system.

There were no women teachers in Lutheran schools until the late nineteenth century. The same situation occurred in Germany and in other German emigrant communities.<sup>78</sup> The South Australian research, meagre as it is, provides no clues as to the reasons for their absence. J. E. Zweck and J. W. Hayes are concerned to establish a strong tradition of elementary education supported by the Lutheran Synods.<sup>79</sup> Their major theme is the relation between church and state. Gender and class are not considered as categories of analysis. This thesis will establish middle class German women's presence as teachers in state and private schools and track their entry into Lutheran schools by the end of the nineteenth century.

In the Catholic school system the tightening of clerical control in the late nineteenth century expunged all lay men and women teachers and Catholic elementary schools became the province of women religious, Mary MacKillop and the Institute of the Sisters of St Joseph.<sup>80</sup> The tensions generated by this dramatic change in the Catholic teaching labour force have not been foregrounded in the literature. The development of the Catholic school system is interpreted by Ronald Fogarty in terms of church and state relations with the church assuming

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<sup>77</sup> Penny Summerfield, 'Women and the Professional Labour Market 1900-1950: The Case of the Secondary Schoolmistresses', *Women, Education and the Professions*, History of Education Society Occasional Bulletin, no. 8, 1987, p. 42. See also Bergen, 'Only a Schoolmaster', pp. 16-17.

<sup>78</sup> Albisetti, 'The Feminisation of Teaching in the Nineteenth Century', pp. 255-260; Geraldine Joncich Clifford, 'Man/Woman/Teacher: Gender, Family and Career in American Educational History' in Warren (ed.) *American Teachers*, p. 295.

<sup>79</sup> J. E. Zweck, 'Church and State Relations as they affected the Lutheran Church and its Schools in South Australia', M.Ed. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1971; J. W. Hayes, 'Education in the German Lutheran Community of South Australia 1838-1914', M.Ed. (Hons) thesis, University of Sydney, 1971.

<sup>80</sup> For a similar situation in Canada, see Danylewycz, *Taking the Veil*, pp. 17-50; Danylewycz and Prentice, 'Teachers, Gender and Bureaucratising School Systems', pp. 76-93.

responsibility because the state refused to fund denominational schools.<sup>81</sup> Marie Therese Foale's research delves into the controversies between the male clergy and Mary MacKillop over the governance of the Institute.<sup>82</sup> She shows that Mary's battles with the male clergy continued into the 1880s and that the women religious took over almost all Catholic schools. Foale does not explore the tensions thus generated between lay teachers and the women religious but she does provide a comprehensive account of the problems faced by the nuns in their daily teaching. Vin Thomas's study of Catholic lay teachers demonstrates that many joined the state system as they lost their positions.<sup>83</sup> This thesis will discuss Catholic women's options to establish teaching careers and explore ways in which they negotiated the crises surrounding the development of the Catholic school system.

This survey of the South Australian research has demonstrated the need to document the contexts in which women taught from the commencement of white settlement and to analyse the teaching family as an economic and social unit. I will explore changes in the nature and location of teachers' work as the church and state school systems were established. Comparisons will be made between women teachers in the various contexts as the education landscape changed. Above all, South Australian women teachers will be reinstated as active agents in negotiating their careers and lives as autonomous women.

Chapter one of this thesis contextualises women as teachers within the social history of the early years of the colony. In so doing I identify a range of contexts in which women taught, as well as the social class, religious and ethnic factors which mediated their options. I claim that, prior to the advent of church and state systems, teaching was predominantly women's work in South Australia. Family based emigration underwrote white settlement, and teaching was one productive activity among many by which women contributed to the family economy. I argue that women were active agents, and that their teaching not only contributed to the economic and social status of the family but also to their own identity.

Chapters two and three concentrate on mid-nineteenth century education. The 1851 Education Act is the subject of chapter two. The state promoted teaching as a profession in order to attract middle class men and women and co-opted the teaching family as an economic unit to

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<sup>81</sup> Brother Ronald Fogarty, *Catholic Education in Australia 1806-1950*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1959.

<sup>82</sup> Marie Therese Foale, *The Josephite Story: The Sisters of St Joseph: Their Foundation and Early History 1866-1893*, St Joseph's Generalate, Sydney, 1989. For the official history see Paul Gardiner, *An Extraordinary Australian: Mary MacKillop*, E. J. Dwyer, Sydney, 1993.

<sup>83</sup> Vincent Thomas, 'The Role of the Laity in Catholic Education in South Australia from 1836-1986', Ph.D. thesis, Flinders University, 1989.

accommodate the demand for sex-segregated schooling. The chapter explores the roles of both the state and the teachers in constructing the profession, and argues that the early stages of this process favoured city teachers and marginalised licensed teachers in country schools. Women continued their traditional work within the teaching family and as licensed teachers in city schools, and in remote rural schools. Indeed I argue that women as moral guardians of girls were central to the early development of the state school system. Yet the state upheld traditional patterns of family organisation by granting most licenses to men and began the process of institutionalising male privilege in policy and practice. This created the public impression that men had captured teaching and made it their work.

Chapter three sketches the mid-nineteenth century landscape as the Lutheran and Catholic churches attempted to join the state in establishing school systems. All of these systems existed side by side with all manner of private entrepreneurial schools conducted by women. Women's teaching careers individually and collectively ranged over all contexts except the Lutheran system, and opportunities were created for some while others were marginalised as each of the systems developed. In particular I study the tensions accompanying the introduction of women religious as teachers in the Catholic system from 1867. I argue that with the continuing demand for sex-segregated schooling women teachers retained their bargaining power *vis a vis* men in what was a fluid education marketplace.

Chapter four focuses on the decade surrounding the introduction of compulsory education in 1875. The chapter begins by documenting the social and political ascendancy of the urban middle class from the late 1860s and analysing its agenda for reforming middle class and working class education. Then I examine the effects on women teachers' participation in the state school system as the reform agenda was progressively implemented. In particular I identify the role of the state in fostering the sexual division of labour thus transforming the structure of teaching families. Under the 1875 Act the state as employer individuated wages; introduced the male breadwinner wage form of remuneration; and excluded most married women as teachers. Yet education administrators sponsored a cohort of married and single lady teachers and promoted them to senior positions in the girls' departments of large schools. I argue that these women exercised far more influence in matters of policy and practice than their subordinate positions would suggest. Furthermore, I argue that tensions between the sexes escalated in the workplace as teaching became waged work and the teaching family was replaced by individual employees, namely married men and single women.

Chapters five and six investigate teaching as women's waged work in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In these chapters women's quest for autonomy is exposed publicly as they colonise the school as a workplace rather than the school as a joint family enterprise. Chapter five focuses on state school teachers and examines their role and that of the state in redefining teaching as a profession. It outlines changes in recruitment, training and career paths, and more specifically considers the opportunities and restrictions for women employees. I show that the processes of credentialism and social closure operated simultaneously to entrench men's positions at every level of the system; to exclude unqualified provisional teachers (most of whom were women); to confirm the rural/urban dichotomy; and, with the establishment of the Advanced School for Girls, to initiate the divisions between elementary and secondary teachers. Yet the expansion of the state school system provided new options which enabled women teachers to lead independent lives. This chapter will identify the rewards of teaching and unravel the personal and professional networks which sustained women teachers. These women were contesting male dominance not only in the workplace but also in the private decisions they made about their lives as women. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century women teachers were acknowledged as the vanguard of a group identified as 'new women'. I argue that we should see as a challenge to the gender order the public and private decisions of these women teachers who were neither economically dependent on men nor sexually subordinate to them.

Chapter six focuses on women teachers outside the state school system and discusses their options in the context of a rapidly changing education landscape. It documents ways in which they negotiated careers as all three school systems competed for students; as the state sponsored changes in higher education; and when free state schooling was introduced in the legislation of 1891. As the state school system expanded and the Catholic and Lutheran systems consolidated, working class women teachers were progressively marginalised. Middle class women in private schools increased their bargaining power in the education marketplace by utilising state sponsored reforms in elementary and higher education. In accommodating the reforms, their work as teachers was brought under men's governance. However, women teachers in private schools as much as those in state schools challenged the gender order as they pursued their work as teachers and their lives as independent women. I argue that the emergence of this group of new women evoked public responses to marginalise them and reassert women's place in the private sphere in the late nineteenth century.

The thesis concludes with an overarching perspective of the place of women teachers in the public life of South Australia at the beginning of the twentieth century. The increasing presence

of independent single women in waged labour had disrupted traditional norms of women's place in the family household. Tensions escalated as women contested male dominance not only of the workplace but also by engaging in social and political life. I discuss women teachers' involvement in the suffrage movement and teachers' organisations. Furthermore, I demonstrate that a significant number of women were opting to delay or reject marriage and make teaching their life-work. I conclude that by the early twentieth century these private and public challenges to male dominance constituted a threat to the gender order.

### **Sources and methodology**

In order to reinstate South Australian women teachers as active agents in their careers and to explore their lives as women it is necessary to employ different sources from those that have been commonly used by South Australian researchers. The empirical evidence in this thesis can be sorted into three categories: private, semi-public and public; each of them provides a different set of perspectives on nineteenth century women teachers' lives and careers.

Personal history documents such as letters, diaries and reminiscences have been termed private sources because they were originally circulated in the domestic sphere. Extensive research at the Mortlock Library of South Australia has uncovered some teachers' writing as well as ordinary people's perceptions of their education. Personal documents give women voice and reveal women's agency in shaping their daily lives. These sources reveal 'teaching' in the midst of family life. They unearth the web of relationships which sustained women physically and emotionally but there is very little direct reference to their autonomy unless it is threatened, providing confirmation for that same observation made by Sari Knopp Biklen.<sup>84</sup> There is very little about pedagogy either. Then, as now, the classroom door remained firmly closed against the outside world!

The use of personal history documents has proved to be the key to finding out about the careers and lives of women teachers who were never associated with church or state schools. This research has also proved important in generally locating women's place in South Australian society.

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<sup>84</sup> Biklen, *Schoolwork*, p. 82; Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood*, pp. 17, 173; Lerner, 'Placing Women in History', p. 10.



The intersection between private and public spheres is revealed in semi-public sources, so named because they were not circulated widely in the public domain but they pertain to both the private lives of teachers and their interactions in the public sphere. The Colonial Secretary and Education Department's correspondence files form the bulk of the materials in this category. The Colonial Secretary's correspondence prior to 1852 has yielded some information about teachers in the early years of the colony. Unfortunately, there are few files pertaining to the state education system between 1852 and 1875 other than some letters concerning the erection of about 100 schools and another small file of correspondence in 1875. For the period 1875 to 1900 the Council of Education and Inspector-General's correspondence files are the major sources of information about state school teachers.<sup>85</sup> These files have been particularly important in exhuming the lives and careers of those teachers (overwhelmingly women) in one teacher schools. They clearly demonstrate the exigencies of life in remote communities from the teachers' perspectives. Equally significant are the revelations of women's agency in negotiating careers which both satisfied their traditional commitments to family and to their work as teachers. In many letters women teachers were subtly challenging the equation of the public sphere as a purely masculine preserve. These documents expose ordinary women teachers as participants rather than spectators in social change, and they also demonstrate that men were not necessarily 'omnipotent oppressors'.<sup>86</sup> Indeed the file covers are revealing, as they provide many 'off the public record' observations by Inspector-General Hartley and other inspectors.

Unfortunately, the Lutheran Archives are bereft of correspondence about that system, but the archives of the Sisters of St Joseph hold a substantial amount of Mary MacKillop's correspondence as well as letters from the sisters for the period 1867 to 1900. These letters contain refreshingly frank assessments of religious and teaching life. They also reveal the tensions between women religious, priests, Catholic lay teachers and the state school system. Education Department correspondence has also been an important source of information about the Catholic and Lutheran teachers. The underlying tensions between the three systems are exposed in correspondence between state school teachers and the Inspector-General.

For the period 1875 to 1900 other semi-public records generated by the Education Department include a few Inspectors' Registers, some files about individual schools and career histories of state school teachers. Again there are gaps in the latter group of records. No records were kept of staff other than licensed teachers in state schools during the period 1852 to 1870, yet some

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<sup>85</sup> Unlike New South Wales and Victoria there are no special case files.

<sup>86</sup> Evans and Saunders, *Gender relations*, p. xix; Davidoff, *Worlds Between*, p. 240.

employed several assistants and/or pupil teachers, predominantly women. The career histories for the last quarter of the nineteenth century usually list date of birth, qualifications, school locations, salaries and promotions, and brief inspectors' comments. At the time of writing this thesis Brian Condon had almost completed a data base of more than 5000 career histories which will provide future researchers with many possibilities for statistical analysis. However, in the context of this research it is important to note the absence of many sewing mistresses, pupil teachers and monitors from these records although those who were subsequently employed as assistants are included. Of course career histories do not include the wives of male teachers whose unpaid labour was integral to the management of many small schools.

The final semi-public record is the Confidential Letterbook of the Inspector-General of Schools which contains 161 confidential letters dating from 1875 to his death in 1896. These letters not only provide some intimate details of teachers' lives and careers but also expose Inspector-General Hartley's thinking on matters personal and professional. In the Confidential Letterbook the activities of the state and individuals are entwined. Hartley marked the letters 'private' but sometimes signed them with his official title and threatened to make the contents public. Reading these letters against the grain reveals women's agency and their involvement in the emerging state. Indeed in the semi-public documents we can see ways in which the state was not only constructed out of social conflicts but it also mediated them.<sup>87</sup>

The final category consists of documents written specifically for distribution in the public sphere. From the state education system there are annual reports, inspectors' reports and the minutes of numerous Parliamentary committees. Some committee minutes are also prime sources of information about the Catholic and Lutheran school systems. The major information source about state schools and teachers prior to 1878 have been the minutes of the Central Board of Education (1852-1875) and the Council of Education (1875-1878), most of which were also published in the *Register*. They give insights into policy making especially in the early years, notably that many of the regulations were generated in response to conflicts between men and women teachers. They are also important sources for discourses of professionalism. The *Education Gazette*, a monthly publication dating from 1885 and edited by the Inspector General, is an important source of routine administrative matters, pedagogical articles and advice to teachers. It also contains the only extant reports of Teachers'

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<sup>87</sup> This valuable collection of letters has been edited and published by Brian Condon. See Brian Condon (ed.), 'The Confidential Letterbook of the Inspector-General of Schools, 1880-1914', Murray Park Sources in the History of South Australian Education, Murray Park College of Advanced Education, Adelaide, 1976. My thinking about this set of documents has been influenced by Curtis, *Building the Educational State*, pp. 9-20 and Anne Showstack Sassoon (ed.), *Women and the State: The Shifting Boundaries of Public and Private*, Routledge, London, 1987, p. 110.

Associations and the South Australian Public Teachers' Union meetings. As all state school teachers and some Lutheran teachers had access to the *Education Gazette* it is another source of discourses of professionalism.

The other public documents used in this thesis are newspapers. The daily *Register* and weekly *Observer* reported and editorialised extensively on education matters and therefore provided prominent vehicles for public opinion. They also covered the activities of the various teachers' organisations. The *Southern Cross and Catholic Herald* is the source for the early Catholic education reports and the *Lutheran Herald* and *Australian Lutheran* provide details of Lutheran teachers. Some material about women teachers has also been located in two short lived journals, the *Educational Journal of South Australia* (1857) and the *Educator* (1893) as well as the *SA Teachers Journal* (1915-1950).

Most of these public documents were routinely generated by men and reflect male perceptions of women's lives and careers. They should not be read as being identical to women's behaviour and ideas but they do help to establish the cultural milieu in which women operated.<sup>88</sup> However, some women teachers' voices are registered in this category of documents. In the main, they were middle class women who held prominent positions in the state or private entrepreneurial schools. They wrote letters to the editor and a few were witnesses at committees of enquiry. They also provided written submissions and petitioned the parliament. And they addressed meetings which were duly reported in the press. Newspapers also contained numerous advertisements for private entrepreneurial schools conducted by women. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century women teachers were staking their claim very publicly in the education marketplace and their advertisements can be 'read' for changes in education and as evidence of women's increasing visibility as teachers.

Women teachers also had a public voice as novelists. A number of South Australian women teachers either became writers or combined both careers. Among them were Matilda Evans and Ellen Liston. The themes and issues raised in their fiction have resonance in the lives and careers of many other women teachers and will be used judiciously in the following chapters.

These prominent women were openly challenging male dominance in the public sphere. By triangulating their very public voices with those from the semi-public documents and from the

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<sup>88</sup> Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood*, p. 17; Margaret Allen, 'Women in Australian History: A Reassessment of "The Real Matilda" and "Damned Whores and God's Police"', *History Forum*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1982, p. 6; Lerner, 'Placing Women in History', p. 7.

private category it is possible to privilege the lives and careers of ordinary women teachers, as well as those in high status positions.<sup>89</sup>

While research for this thesis has unearthed a treasury of information about women teachers it is necessary to acknowledge the relative silence of the voices of two groups, the first of which is that of working class women teachers. The difficulty of locating this group relates to the middle class bias of private and public records and, perhaps to the difficulties of assigning a class location to women. It is necessary to identify their cultural milieu and practices in order to locate them. This is especially so when discussing women teachers who were widowed or unmarried, and whose husbands' and fathers' occupations are unknown. In these cases, it is not possible to use the traditional method of assigning class, that is by male occupation.<sup>90</sup> This thesis will articulate the perceptions and experiences of some desperately poor teachers who were teaching working class students but whose social circles were definitely middle class. However, it is necessary to read against the grain to recover the agency of working class women teachers.

Second, the first generation of trained state school teachers have mostly eluded the net cast in this search for women's voices.<sup>91</sup> Almost all of them were single, so they are only a twig on family trees and leave no children to speak for them or preserve their memorabilia. They taught in state schools with working class girls who are also less likely to leave personal history documents. Obviously, they can not be eulogised in the celebratory histories of private schools, which are important sources of information about other single women teachers. They have no voice in semi-public documents either, because bureaucratic edict prevented all staff except headmasters from communicating directly with the Education Department. Indeed, it is ironic that the most senior women teachers, who were in charge of up to 500 girls have no voice in the correspondence files, even though untrained provisional teachers could communicate directly with the Inspector-General. A few who became headmistresses have found voice in public documents, mostly in reports of union affairs towards the end of the nineteenth century. Education Department regulations also prevented teachers from

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<sup>89</sup> Shulamit Reinharz, *Feminist Methods in Social Research*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1992, pp. 156-159; Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood*, p. 197.

<sup>90</sup> Goodnow and Pateman, *Women, Social Science and Public Policy*, p. xiv; June Purvis, *A History of Women's Education in England*, Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1991, p. xiii.

<sup>91</sup> With the exception of Inspector Blanche McNamara, these women are also missing from two excellent publications of documentary sources in South Australia; Margaret Allen, Mary Hutchison, Alison Mackinnon, *Fresh Evidence, New Witnesses: Finding Women's History*, South Australian Government Printer, Netley, 1989; Bernard Hyams, Lynne Trethewey, Brian Condon, Malcolm Vick, Denis Grundy, *Learning and Other Things; Sources for Social History of Education in South Australia*, South Australian Government Printer, Netley, 1985.

participating in political activity so they are unlikely to be key players in suffrage campaigns. Nevertheless, there is a wealth of routinely-generated information about these women teachers from which women's agency can be inferred if not confirmed by their own statements.

Lastly there is the question of methodology. The possibility of using lifeline methodology was investigated. Inga Elgqvist-Saltzman has graphed women's life histories in order to expose the winding tracks of women's education, work and reproductive activity. Lifeline methodology has generated new understandings about ways in which twentieth century women have combined full- and part-time work and study with domestic responsibilities. However, by the end of the nineteenth century most women teachers only had the option of full-time paid employment or full-time domesticity, thus lifeline methodology is limited as an analytical tool.<sup>92</sup> The major methodological problem has been how to place women teachers' voices and experiences at the centre of the discussion while at the same time acknowledging that they were mostly operating within structures where men's voices were dominant. The second problem has been to encompass the range of contexts in which individual women taught.

In essence, this thesis juxtaposes the narrative of structural changes outlined earlier with biographical sketches of women teachers. A commitment to revealing women's agency and voice as well as the complexity of their careers underpins the use of biographical sketches as a methodology. In many cases a biographical sketch is all that can be retrieved from women's lives but it enables more intimate analysis of the discourses surrounding these women and elucidates family, social and structural factors which affected their lives and careers. As Margaret Gillet notes, the use of biography can 'make old gender-based dichotomies (e.g. male/female, public/private) disappear, so that women may emerge from anonymity in a process that involves fusing the public world and the inner landscape'.<sup>93</sup> Personal and professional networks which sustained women can be unravelled in the biographical sketches. It is also possible to contextualise specific examples of the ways in which the state and the teaching profession were constructed and redefined as the result of gender conflict. Last but not least, women's quest for autonomy is revealed, especially through the use of letters and diaries. These documents show the ways in which women maintained their identity as individuals within the family context. They also indicate the spiritual sources of empowerment and the connections between work and autonomy. In the first four chapters, women's quest for autonomy is an insistent sub-theme and is contextualised principally in the biographical

<sup>92</sup> Inga Elgqvist-Saltzman, 'Gravel in the Machinery or the Hub of the Wheel?', Maud L. Edwards, Inga Elgqvist-Saltzman, Eva Lundgren, Christina Sjoblad, Elisabeth Sundin, Ulla Wikander, *Rethinking Change: Current Swedish Feminist Research*, Swedish Science Press, Uppsala, 1992, pp. 61-82.

<sup>93</sup> Quoted in Saltzman, 'Gravel in the Machinery', p. 75.

sketches. The subsequent chapters demonstrate that changes in the nature and location of women's work as teachers exposed them as autonomous individuals. Indeed women teachers as members of the group of 'new women' were being scrutinised publicly by the early twentieth century.

Documents from all three categories plus some secondary sources have been used to reconstruct the lives and careers of individual women teachers. Women from a variety of familial, cultural and religious backgrounds were selected to highlight not only the common experiences but also diversity among them. The contrasting careers of two generations of women teachers from the Jacob, Giles and Catlow families and the winding tracks of other women's careers have been revealed in separate chapters. The links are indicated in the footnotes. Wherever possible women's Christian names (rather than titles which indicate marital status) have been used to identify them as individuals. The effort entailed in actually locating some Christian names has been considerable - but rewarding, in that the search has led to further revelations about their lives. For example, the search for Miss H. Holbrook's Christian name eventually revealed that she became Mrs Hannah Turner, and I was thus helped to connect two seemingly separate sets of evidence to the same woman.

From here on the challenge lies in recovering the experiences and perceptions of women teachers in order to understand how they constructed their careers, and how they dealt with the various structures and ideologies that surrounded them. The following chapters will plot the development of the teaching profession and the growth of state and church school systems through the lives of women teachers in order to provide fresh perspectives on gender relations in the nineteenth century. In so doing, this study will not erase, but expose, the agency of Jane Hillier and her many colleagues.



# Chapter One

## Teachers in context: women's work in early South Australia

Family-based emigration underwrote the white settlement of South Australia in 1836, and from the very beginning the numerical imbalance of the sexes was less marked than in other colonies. The South Australia Act stipulated that married emigrants had to be accompanied by their spouses and children, and many were also accompanied by single relatives. While single men could emigrate alone, the regulations stipulated that single women were only accepted if they were 'protected' by a male - father, brother or responsible guardian. This policy resulted in higher proportions of married colonists and a younger age of marriage than in other colonies up to the 1880s, and was instrumental in establishing an idealised reputation for South Australia as having 'a far healthier social and moral tone than obtains in either Melbourne or Sydney'.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter considers the assumptions that underpinned the insistence on the family as the building block for white South Australian society. It will show that the dominant discourses in the colony were those articulated by English, Protestant, middle-class settlers. Most of the chapter will discuss women's contributions to the family in the early years, as well as to public life, noting in particular the importance of women's work, paid and unpaid, in establishing and maintaining the family economy. It will demonstrate that family circumstances and, more broadly, social class and ethnicity were important variables in defining acceptable women's work. The principal task of the chapter is to situate teaching as an aspect of women's work. The ensuing discussion will contextualise teaching as women's work within the family. It will show that women were primarily responsible for not only the physical care but also the moral guardianship and early literacy instruction of children inside the family. Teaching was also a productive activity, for which some women received remuneration. Like much of women's work it could be both paid and unpaid work. As paid work it generated income for the family economy; as unpaid labour it contributed to the family's cultural capital, and was important in maintaining the family's status and respectability.

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<sup>1</sup> R.E.N. Twopenny, *Town Life in Australia*, London, 1883, (facsimile edition), Penguin, Ringwood, 1973, p. 123; Carol Bacchi, 'The "Woman Question"' in Eric Richards (ed.), *The Flinders History of South Australia: Social History*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986, p. 405.

## The South Australian family unit

Edward Gibbon Wakefield, the architect of the South Australian experiment in colonisation, promoted the emigration of married couples so that men would not be required to perform 'the woman's part at home as well as the men's part in the field or workshop'. Wakefield envisaged the family as an economic and social unit, and this chapter will demonstrate that this was overwhelmingly the case in the lived experience of early colonial families. Men's status as household heads and principal breadwinners was taken for granted. Women were assumed to be economic dependents, but not ladies of leisure; rather, they would be engaged in productive activity within the vicinity of the home.<sup>2</sup> In the early to mid-nineteenth century women's productive activity could also be used to generate income for the family economy. At all levels of society, married and single women were contributing their paid and unpaid labour without loss of status, the aim of everyone's work being to secure enough to support the family. Indeed it was assumed that a 'kind of collective ethos - a notion of shared interest - informed the behaviour of individual family members'. However, within the family there was 'contention, bargaining, negotiation and domination as well as consensus about what the family interest was'. The bargaining power of household members in negotiating the family interest was mediated by factors such as gender, age and marital status.<sup>3</sup>

Given the centrality of the family unit, marriage was an important step for men and women. In the mid-nineteenth century, men's identity was bound up as much in family headship as that of women was in domesticity - hence women's subordinate status within the marriage relationship as well as society. Colonial married women, along with their English counterparts, had no independent legal status: husband and wife legally constituted one person and upon marriage the husband was entitled to all of his wife's possessions.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, when property and capital inheritance were at stake, marriage was a serious business. It was, among other things, an economic proposition which required that couples have sufficient means to support a family. Marriage was also intended to secure the moral status of both sexes. Increasingly it became the only acceptable forum for the expression of women's sexuality, and it was also

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Pavla Miller, *Long Division: State Schooling in South Australian Society*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986, p. 4. See also Helen Jones, *In Her Own Name: A History of Women in South Australia from 1836*, Second Edition, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1994, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> Louise A. Tilly and Joan Scott, *Women, Work and Family*, Second edition, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Methuen, New York, 1987, p. 9, ch. 4-6. See also Patricia Grimshaw, 'The Experience of Women in Australasian Colonies, 1788-1860: The Case of New South Wales, Victoria and New Zealand', *History Forum*, vol. 4, no. 3, 1982, pp. 18-21; Sonya O. Rose, *Limited Livelihoods: Gender and Class in Nineteenth Century England*, Routledge, London, 1992, pp. 138-140, 148; Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, Hutchinson, London, 1987, pp. 283-285.

<sup>4</sup> Jones, *In Her Own Name*, ch. 2; Grimshaw, 'The Experience of Women in Australasian Colonies', p. 22.



seen as a way of containing men's sexual adventures. Chastity and legal marriage were less rigidly upheld in working-class households. Young couples without property often did not bother about marriage until a child was born.<sup>5</sup>

The guarantee of freedom of worship attracted many emigrants whose religious belief was central to their family life. Although Anglicans were in the majority and early colonial leadership was recognisably Anglican, a substantial core of nonconformists from Britain as well as German Lutherans emigrated in search of religious freedom. Unlike the neighbouring colonies, there were few Catholics among the population. The early Methodists, Catholics and Lutherans were predominantly working class and ethnicity was also closely associated with religion. Most Germans were Lutheran and the small Catholic community was mostly Irish. However, it should be noted that most colonists did not attend church regularly, and that women were more likely to attend church than men.<sup>6</sup>

Although women were portrayed as economic dependents their role was especially seen to be that of guardians of their families' moral and spiritual values. The dominant religious discourses in the colony stressed women's spiritual equality and moral autonomy within the family. Indeed religious identity 'enabled them to rely on an authority beyond the world of men'.<sup>7</sup> It also promoted the redeeming power of work and service and supported women who asserted themselves in more public ways, namely philanthropic and reforming activities. The very same discourses, one should note, defended women's social and sexual subordination.<sup>8</sup>

The concentration of nonconformists in South Australia led to its much-polished reputation as the 'most sober and respectable province of Australia'.<sup>9</sup> Respectable men were serious minded and responsible, and supported their families through their honest industry. But women's labour and cultural capital secured the family's position, for the key determinant of respectability was the style and quality of family life. The orderly household, the tastefully-decorated home and well-dressed family members were the products of women's labour. Women also taught the manners and morals and codes of behaviour that were equally

<sup>5</sup> Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGrath and Marian Quartly, *Creating a Nation*, McPhee Gribble, Melbourne, 1994, p. 33. See also Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, pp. 225, 324; Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work and Family*, pp. 24, 37.

<sup>6</sup> David Hilliard and Arnold Hunt, 'Religion' in Richards, *Flinders History*, pp. 194-234.

<sup>7</sup> Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Women's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1977, p. 139; Margaret Allen, 'Three South Australian Women Writers 1854-1923, Matilda Evans, Catherine Spence and Catherine Martin', Ph.D. thesis, Flinders University, 1991, pp. 31-35.

<sup>8</sup> For British and American perspectives see Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, pp. 74-77; Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood*, pp. 139-140, 154-159.

<sup>9</sup> Twopenny, *Town Life*, p. 161.

important measuring sticks of respectability. In fact, single men could fall away from respectability temporarily, but retrieve it with a well-chosen marriage partner. Given women's foundational role in the pursuit of respectability, no such tolerance of moral transgressions or inappropriate public behaviour was extended to them.<sup>10</sup>

Some people inherited respectability but it could be acquired too. Wealth and the acquisition of property was a sure road, but middle class people held to the belief that investment in children's education provided important cultural capital and security against fluctuating economic fortunes. Church attendance provided similar capital as well as publicly proclaiming the ideal. Respectability cast a wide net: it encompassed the thrifty and pious from the working class, but excluded the wealthy who lived an extravagant lifestyle. In effect respectability cut across social class and was a social bond which mitigated otherwise deep divisions of religion and ethnicity.<sup>11</sup>

The following discussion will elucidate women's economic and social contributions to their families and more generally to early colonial society.

### **Women and work in mid-nineteenth century South Australia**

Prior to white settlement a number of wealthy investors were persuaded to buy land in the colony, but many of them did not actually emigrate. Instead they sent younger sons and poor relations to manage the properties.<sup>12</sup> In the Jacob family, men's opportunities were underwritten by women's capital and labour. Ann Jacob, aged twenty-one, arrived in June 1839 to join her brothers John and William. At the time neither was present in Adelaide: William, an assistant to the Surveyor General, was surveying the township of Gawler; John was bringing cattle overland from Sydney. Ann brought with her 500 pounds, a plough and some ironmongery. She purchased 500 acres of prime land at Moroороо (about 100 kilometres north of Adelaide), intending to establish a dairy farm of 100 cows. She, alone was responsible for ordering equipment from England and was amused when the account was rendered to 'A Jacob Esq'. Within three months of her arrival she had settled at Moroороо with

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<sup>10</sup> Grimshaw et al, *Creating a Nation*, p. 121; Janet McCalman, *Journeyings: The Biography of a Middle-Class Generation 1920-1990*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1993, pp. 30-31.

<sup>11</sup> Douglas Pike, *Paradise of Dissent: South Australia 1829-1857*, Longman, Green and Co, London, 1957, pp. 509-515. For British perspectives see Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 76; Keith McClelland, 'Masculinity and the Representative Artisan in Britain, 1850-1880' in Michael Roper and John Tosh (eds), *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*, Routledge, London, 1991, pp. 84-87.

<sup>12</sup> J. M. Main, 'Men of Capital' in Richards, *Flinders History*, p. 97; Pike, *Paradise of Dissent*, pp. 148-149.

John and William, originally in a three-roomed hut, minus doors and windows. She lived there for ten years.<sup>13</sup>

Ann's labour was integral to the working of this property. John and William were frequently absent in the north of the colony appropriating vast tracts of land to run cattle. Ann organised the entire dairy business including hiring staff. At first she engaged a married couple but her employees were mostly girls. When they were indisposed she actually carried out the heavy work herself, including making seventy pounds of butter in one day.<sup>14</sup>

In the early 1840s her diary records that she dealt with a steady stream of male visitors - business associates, exploration parties, agents, squatters moving north - all of whom expected to be fed.

August 31, 1841: A very busy morning with salting a bullock and baking. We had six different breakfasts in the kitchen and sitting room.

September 10, 1841: Sunday. Saw no strangers, something wonderful.

While Ann Jacob's capital and labour were important assets, she also provided cultural capital. Alliances forged with the male visitors to Morooroo were consolidated during her sojourns in Adelaide. There she visited their wives and daughters, as well as continuing her own friendships established en route to Australia. She attended significant colonial events, too: the Governor's Ball, races and theatre. She worshipped at Trinity Church, the principal Anglican church of the colony, also attended by the Governor. Ann's diary shows clearly how business, social and religious networks were interconnected. They were sealed in 1850 with her marriage to Arthur Horrocks, a neighbouring landowner.<sup>15</sup>

Jane and Margaret Bathgate arrived in 1839, intending to become farmers. Margaret died soon after their arrival, and Jane invested her capital and labour in commercial property.<sup>16</sup> She set up a first class boarding-house in Adelaide, 'a two-storeyed brick building frequented only by

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<sup>13</sup> Reminiscences of Ann Horrocks (nee Jacob), PRG 996/3, MLSA; Edwin Hodder, *The History of South Australia*, Sampson, Low and Co, London, 1893, p. 42.

<sup>14</sup> Diary of Ann Horrocks (nee Jacob), PRG 996/4, MLSA. This pattern of family hiring was disappearing during the nineteenth century. See Wally Secombe, 'Patriarchy Stabilized: The Construction of the Male Breadwinner Wage Norm in Nineteenth Century Britain', *Social History*, vol. 11, no. 1, 1986, p. 56.

<sup>15</sup> Both the Jacob and the Horrocks families were members of the colonial gentry. This pattern of gentry intermarriage was common. See Dirk van Dissel, 'The Adelaide Gentry' in Richards, *Flinders History*, pp. 333-370.

<sup>16</sup> For biographical details see Jill Statton (ed.), *Biographical Index of South Australians 1836-1885*, South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society, Adelaide, 1986, p. 95; Reminiscences of Eliza Sarah Mahony (nee Reid), V840, MLSA, p. 3.

aristocratic visitors from other colonies and the creme de la creme of Adelaide "swells".<sup>17</sup> Ann Jacob stayed there in January 1847 when she came to Adelaide for her friend Miss Bartley's wedding.<sup>18</sup> Jane Bathgate had 'a keen eye for business' and always dressed fashionably, importing her bonnets straight from Paris. Her reputation was such that she was able to survive the rumours which circulated about her *amours* even though she was an unprotected female.

The Misses Holbrook demonstrated the advantages afforded by vice-regal connections as they set up their businesses. They arrived with Governor and Lady Gawler on the *Pestonjee Bomangee* in October 1838 and one month later advertised in the *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*. Hannah discreetly advised that she was conducting 'private lessons in Music, French and Drawing or taking a limited number of young ladies to instruct in the different branches of education. Any reference required may be had from the Governor's Lady.' She also stated that she had no objection to going out as a daily governess. Immediately below, her sister advised that she had 'commenced in the Millinery, Dress and French Corset Making business, having been favoured with the patronage of the nobility and ladies where she resided, amongst whom the present Governor's lady and most of her family were included.'<sup>19</sup>

In her advertisement Hannah was tapping into the demand by middle-class parents for their daughters to be educated as ladies. Middle-class girls' education usually involved instruction in all branches of the English language, history, geography, arithmetic and some science as well as the accomplishments: music, art and modern languages. Music, in particular, was recognised as a mark of gentility in the colonies, and women who possessed this skill along with the other accomplishments were well placed to generate income should their circumstances require them to do so. Hannah Holbrook's expertise in the accomplishments was both her cultural capital and professional preparation to earn her living as a teacher in a variety of contexts.<sup>20</sup>

By virtue of their moral guardianship, women also had bargaining power *vis a vis* men in the education marketplace. Marjorie Theobald has noted that the widespread concern for the moral

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<sup>17</sup> Jane Isabella Watts, *Family Life in South Australia: Fifty-Three Years Ago*, W. K. Thomas, Adelaide, 1890, pp. 76-77.

<sup>18</sup> Diary of Ann Horrocks (nee Jacob), PRG 996/4, MLSA, 2 January, 1847.

<sup>19</sup> *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 13 October 1838, 17 November 1838; *Register*, 18 August 1926.

<sup>20</sup> Marjorie R. Theobald, 'Women and Schools in Colonial Victoria 1840-1910', Ph.D. thesis, Monash University, 1985, pp. 14, 19, 200; Bob Petersen, 'Female Accomplishments Vindicated by Several Arguments Cull'd from the Best Authorities', Paper presented to ANZHES Annual Conference, Adelaide, 1986.

welfare of girls in colonial society underpinned demands for them to be taught by women. Indeed many middle-class girls received much of their education at home and in offering to go out as a daily governess Hannah was courting parents who were choosing this option for their daughters.<sup>21</sup>

Much of women's work must be inferred through their husband's activities. Reverend Thomas Quinton Stow, a Congregationalist, was the first dissenting minister and a very popular preacher in the young colony.<sup>22</sup> Thomas, Elizabeth and their four young children lived in a tent for several months after their arrival. Like many other clergymen, Thomas supplemented his meagre income by teaching middle-class boys, and from 1838 he took in boarders to provide a more secure source of income.<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth's unpaid labour was the hidden investment in this family economy. Although she was not actually involved in instruction, the domestic duties associated with feeding and caring for the boarders devolved to her and presumably her servant(s).

The building of the chapel and schoolroom incurred heavy debts for the small congregation, and the ladies' committee was instrumental in paying for the church. Elizabeth was assisted by the ladies of the Giles family and others to organise the first bazaar held in Adelaide. The Governor's wife donated a baby's basket lined in white satin and filled with fine needlework for auction. These events were significant socially as well as financially and they demonstrated the veneer of religious tolerance in the colony. Behind the scenes, though, Thomas Stow and other dissenters had to lobby hard to achieve the promised religious freedoms, including the right to conduct marriages in the colony, a function over which the Anglican Church sought to hold a monopoly.<sup>24</sup>

Urban tradesmen and small farmers with little capital were also attracted to South Australia, and they sponsored other family members once businesses were established.<sup>25</sup> John and Jane Hillier, their four young children and their servant arrived in October 1837. The passenger list gives John's occupation as that of Agriculturalist, but there is no indication that Jane was a

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<sup>21</sup> Marjorie R. Theobald, 'Discourse of Danger: Gender and the History of Elementary Schooling in Australia, 1850-1880', *Historical Studies in Education*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1989.

<sup>22</sup> Pike, *Paradise of Dissent*, p. 257; Hodder, *History of South Australia*, pp 81-82. For biographical details of the Stow family, see Statton, *Biographical Index*, p. 1556.

<sup>23</sup> *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 29 September 1838; Robert J. Scrimgeour, *Early Presbyterians in South Australia*, Uniting Church Historical Society, Adelaide, 1992, pp. 9-10; In Canada and England clergymen also supplemented their income by teaching. See Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 120 and Susan Houston and Alison Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars in Nineteenth Century Ontario*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1988, p. 45.

<sup>24</sup> Watts, *Family Life in South Australia*, pp. 91, 127.

<sup>25</sup> Eric Richards, 'The Peopling of South Australia, 1836-1986' in Richards, *Flinders History*, p. 124.

teacher. However, she intended to teach in South Australia, bringing out books on girls' education with her. She rented Pavilion Cottage, which had previously been a wine and coffee house and also provided lodgings, and within three months of their arrival she had opened a select ladies' school.<sup>26</sup>

In accepting other girls to educate with her daughters Jane Hillier was simultaneously generating income and contributing to her family's cultural capital. Her moral guardianship and expertise in the accomplishments gave her bargaining power as a teacher, but her business began uncertainly. In April 1838 her reputation as a moral woman was threatened when she was charged with receiving stolen money. However, she was acquitted of the charge. Her school also relocated at least twice in the first few years.<sup>27</sup>

Marriage and motherhood did not preclude Jane from teaching as an income-generating activity. However, the family suffered its share of tragedy. In March 1842 the youngest son died, and in 1843 John also died. Thus Jane became the principal breadwinner in the Hillier family economy.<sup>28</sup>

By the mid 1840s Jane's school's reputation as one of the most prestigious ladies' academies in the colony was well established. By this stage Caroline and Jane Jr. had been inducted into the profession by their mother. They taught as part of the family unit, so did not receive separate earnings. The Hilliers offered 'the usual English Education' with the accomplishments of French, music and dancing. In 1848 they had fourteen boarders and thirty-five day scholars. In January 1849 Jane moved the school to the exclusive seaside location of Brighton, and advertised that they would receive young ladies from the age of six. She continued teaching until her death in 1862 at the age of sixty-two.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See Introduction for Jane's advertisement. For biographical details of the Hillier family see Statton, *Biographical Index*, p. 742; *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 12 August 1837. William Cawthorne's diary provides some details about Jane Hillier. He borrowed Hannah More's book on girls' education from her. Diary of William Anderson Cawthorne, PRG 489/1, MLSA, 10 June 1844.

<sup>27</sup> *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 28 April 1838.

<sup>28</sup> Reg Butler and Alan Phillips (eds), *Register Personal Notices*, Gould Books, Gumeracha, 1990, pp. 220, 222.

<sup>29</sup> *South Australian Almanack 1843*, Allen Publisher, Adelaide, 1843, p. 122; *South Australian Almanack 1848*, A. Murray Publisher, Adelaide 1848, p. 82; *Register*, 31 January 1849, 26 June 1857, 1 January 1859. The pattern of matrilineal induction was a common one in young ladies' schools. See Theobald, 'Women and Schools in Colonial Victoria', p. 240.

The Misses Bathgate's and Holbrook's businesses, along with Jane Hillier's, were all supported by largely invisible social, church and business networks.<sup>30</sup> Some of the bonds which linked the Hilliers and other ladies' schools can be traced through the Thomas family. Robert and Mary Thomas, their son and three daughters arrived with the first white settlers in the colony. Robert established a printing business and published the colony's first newspaper, the *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*.

The Thomas family was affluent and the women were relieved of the heavy domestic labour by servants; they were thus able to engage in the social and philanthropic activities of middle-class ladies. Mary Jr. went twice a week to music lessons with Miss Williams who kept a select ladies' school. Miss Williams and Hannah Holbrook also accompanied Mary Jr. and her sisters to Public Lectures. In turn the ladies of the Thomas family reciprocated with attendance at the end-of-term parties held at several ladies' schools, including Jane Hillier's. The Thomases had longstanding links with Jane, as she had taught their daughters in England and their grand-daughters in South Australia. Jane's son was later employed by Robert Thomas.<sup>31</sup>

All of the families mentioned above were Anglican and worshipped at Trinity Church with the Governor and Lady Gawler. The Hilliers were also Sunday School teachers. The women of the Thomas family participated in Lady Gawler's favourite philanthropic activity: with the help of a ladies' committee, she established an Infant School in Trinity Church schoolroom and installed Hannah Holbrook as the teacher. Frances Thomas was a committee member and the Thomas sisters took turns to spend a week assisting in the school.<sup>32</sup> In 1840 Hannah Holbrook married Thomas Turner. The wedding party left from Government House to be married in Trinity Church. Hannah ceased teaching at the time of her marriage, but ultimately spent at least twenty-five more years teaching in country schools. The Trinity Infant School project ceased when Lady Gawler left the colony.<sup>33</sup>

In the early years there was no widespread collective organisation of female philanthropy. The heyday of this kind of women's associational involvement came in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. However the fragmentary evidence above suggests that women's influence

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<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of similar networks in Victoria, see Theobald, 'Women and Schools in Colonial Victoria', pp. 153-158.

<sup>31</sup> Eric Richards, 'Immigrant Lives' in Richards, *Flinders History*, p. 149; Diary of Miss Mary Thomas, V1058, MLSA; *Observer*, 26 June 1886, p. 29; *Register*, 19 August 1926.

<sup>32</sup> *Register*, 16 February 1839; Louise Brown et al (eds), *A Book of South Australia: Women in the First Hundred Years*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1936, p. 43; Diary of Miss Mary Thomas, V1058, MLSA; *Royal South Australian Almanack 1840*, p. 79.

<sup>33</sup> *Register*, 18 August 1926. See Chapter two for further details of Hannah's career.

extended well beyond their families. In a small society such as Adelaide, middle-class women had direct access to colonial administrators through their family, religious and social networks. Governors' wives were important links in this web. Although it is impossible to ascertain exactly what leverage they and other women exerted in political decision making, through philanthropic activities and patronage of significant social events they nurtured the social and religious networks which underpinned colonial politics. Part of a later governor's unpopularity stemmed from the fact that he was a bachelor 'and this from a social point of view was a great drawback, as a lady should always accompany a Governor and take her place as a leader of society'.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, it was a small step to translate social contact into a business proposition. Lady Charlotte Bacon used her friendship with the governor to get her son a job with the Overland Telegraph. She recalled that this process was hard work 'as there were others who had equal claims trying for it'.<sup>35</sup> Many an economically insecure middle class man was rescued by securing a post as a government official. While these positions did not always pay well, the family income could sometimes be secured by wives and offspring's paid employment.

Almost all of the women mentioned thus far managed households which included at least one servant. In fact domestic servants were the most numerous female emigrants, apart from those who emigrated as a family unit. Some families brought their long-serving staff with them. The mutual bonds are evident in the Giles family's relationship with their trusted servant Patty. When Patty's fiance was killed they shared her grief, reduced her workload and taught her to read and write. Literacy was a valued commodity in early colonial days. In purely pragmatic terms, literacy provided access to the written word in the Bible and newspapers and enabled written communication with far-flung relations, friends and business associates.<sup>36</sup> It could also be used to generate income. Like many other working-class women, Patty utilised her literacy skills to earn her living as a teacher for a short period. Later she returned to the Giles family and remained with them until her marriage.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Hodder, *History of South Australia*, p. 208. For a late nineteenth century example of the influence that could be wielded by Governors' wives, see Alexandra Hasluck (ed.), *Audrey Tennyson's Vice-Regal Days: The Australian Letters of Audrey Lady Tennyson to her Mother Zacynta Boyle, 1899-1903*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1978, pp. 44-45.

<sup>35</sup> Letters of Lady Charlotte Bacon, PRG 541, MLSA, 10 September 1870.

<sup>36</sup> Bernard Hyams, Lynne Trethewey, Brian Condon, Malcolm Vick, Denis Grundy, *Learning and Other Things: Sources for a Social History of Education in South Australia*, Government Printer, Adelaide, 1985, p. 10.

<sup>37</sup> Watts, *Family Life in South Australia*, pp. 68-70, 90. For a comprehensive discussion of working-class women as teachers in England, see Phil Gardner, *The Lost Elementary Schools of Victorian England: The People's Education*, Croom Helm, London, 1984.



Many emigrants engaged servants prior to embarkation. This was a risky business for both parties, and the 'servant problem' is a common theme in the writing of middle-class settlers.

The difficulty of hiring a good servant is almost insurmountable as these inestimable treasures according to colonial custom only hire for a week and they are ready to leave their mistress in the lurch when it suits their convenience to take higher wages or a more agreeable situation.<sup>38</sup>

From the servants' perspective, few colonial households were large enough to enable them to specialise in high-status skilled positions such as cook. Instead, their mistresses demanded that they do all of the work of a lowly general servant. The net result was that servants did move frequently in order to 'better themselves', especially in times of labour shortages. The high marriage rate also contributed to their mobility. Most servant positions were live-in, rather than daily help. Therefore, when servants married and set up their own family unit they almost invariably had to leave their employer's household.<sup>39</sup>

Apart from the English, the largest and most visible ethnic group to emigrate to South Australia arrived from Germany. The first German settlers were sponsored by G F Angas and emigrated to escape religious persecution. Those who followed came for economic reasons. Angas was the largest individual landowner in the colony and he sold land to the Germans at vastly inflated prices, leaving some farming families indebted to him for upwards of thirty years.<sup>40</sup> The German communities at Klemzig and Hahndorf were soon the major suppliers of fresh produce to Adelaide, and other settlements were established in the Barossa Valley and northern agricultural lands. By 1846 the Germans constituted eight per cent of the population and comprised mainly peasants and artisans.<sup>41</sup>

There were significant differences between British and German cultural traditions and, importantly, in women's work. German women undertook the same domestic duties as English women, plus they continued their traditional tasks of spinning and weaving as part of

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<sup>38</sup> Robert Harrison, *Colonial Sketches or, Five years in South Australia, with Hints to Capitalists and Emigrants*, Hall Virtue, London, 1862, (Austaprint Reprint, 1978), p. 5; Twopenny, *Town Life*, p. 55.

<sup>39</sup> Dorothy Gilbert, 'Country Life in the Later Nineteenth Century: Reminiscences by Dorothy Gilbert', *South Australiana*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1973, p. 61; Reminiscences of Mrs. Mary Thomas, V588, MLSA, p. 105; Jones, *In Her Own Name*, pp. 51-54, 60-63; Grimshaw et al, *Creating a Nation*, pp. 80-85. For further discussion about domestic servants' skills see Deborah Oxley, 'Packing Her (Economic) Bags: Convict Women Workers', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 26, no. 102, April 1994, pp. 62-65.

<sup>40</sup> A. Brauer, *Under the Southern Cross: History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1956, pp. 1-17, 31, 35; Pike, *Paradise of Dissent*, pp. 130-131; Main, 'Men of Capital' in Richards, *Flinders History*, p. 98.

<sup>41</sup> *South Australian*, 17 March 1846; David Schubert, *Kavel's People: From Prussia to South Australia*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1985, pp. 87-88; Ian Harmstorf (ed.), *Some Information on South Australian German History*, South Australian College of Advanced Education, Adelaide, 1985, pp. 2, 19, 55.

their normal routine.<sup>42</sup> Both German and British women performed agricultural labour on family farms, but in British families men usually took farm produce such as eggs, milk and vegetables to market. In German families this was women's work. Thekla Staude and others regularly carried baskets of goods from Hahndorf through the hills to Adelaide. In the summertime they would start out at midnight and return by the next evening, and in the winter the return journey took two days.<sup>43</sup>

German girls were prized as domestic servants by British colonists and many spent periods in domestic service to learn English as well as generate income. They had reputedly been well-trained at home in domestic skills, especially sewing, and also worked hard. They were also widely employed as seasonal agricultural workers, helping with the harvest and digging potatoes. Young German women also established a reputation as skilled shearers. However, there is no evidence that British women were employed as labourers on other farms.<sup>44</sup>

German women were highly visible in the public sphere, as is evidenced by contemporary accounts.<sup>45</sup> While their labour has been valorised by historians, and rightly so, their activities transcended the boundaries of acceptable women's work and threatened both their status as women and also that of their menfolk. Concerns that hard labour in the fields was unsexing were first registered in relation to German women.

It is much to be regretted that they are obliged to work so hard, but it appears natural to them and, therefore, is not irksome, as the English generally fancy ... But it is, nevertheless, a pity to see, at any time, the fairest part of creation thus degraded, and so far removed out of their legitimate province of their duties. Though women, in some respects, may be subordinate still nature never intended that they should therefore become slaves.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Eda Sagarra has also shown that German women at all levels of society did more household work than would have been the case in England. Eda Sagarra, *A Social History of Germany, 1648-1914*, Methuen and Co., London, 1977, p. 380.

<sup>43</sup> E.R. Simpson, *The Hahndorf Walkers and the Beaumont Connection*, Beaumont Press, Adelaide, 1983; Brown, *A Book of South Australia*, p. 47.

<sup>44</sup> Letters of Lady Charlotte Bacon, PRG 541/1, MLSA, 20 January 1871; Diary of Francis Davison, 1842-1847, A906, MLSA, 5 July 1845; Margaret May's Letters, PRG 131/2, MLSA. By this period women in England were not employed as agricultural labourers either. Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 274.

<sup>45</sup> Watts, *Family Life in South Australia*, pp. 94-98; J. W. Bull, *Early Experiences in South Australia*, E.S. Wigg and Son, Adelaide, 1884, pp. 90-91; Schubert, *Kavel's People*, pp. 135-140; Reminiscences of Thomas Bowman, D5834(L), MLSA.

<sup>46</sup> *South Australian*, 17 March 1846. For further discussion of the position of German women, see Elsie Birks to Miss Vivian, February 1897, Letters and Reminiscences of Elsie Birks, D2861(L), MLSA. See also Marilyn Lake, 'Helpmeet, Slave Housewife: Women in Rural Families 1870-1930' in Patricia Grimshaw, Chris McConville and Ellen McEwen (eds), *Families in Colonial Australia*, George Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1985, pp. 173-185.

Although British colonists praised the Germans for their sobriety and industry, working class German families were never fully accepted as respectable citizens because of the demands made on German women.

Lutheranism was also an important determinant of women's role in German families. It upheld the importance of the family but also accorded male clergy autonomy in articulating the Word of God. The Pastor's word was law in many communities. Women were granted spiritual equality within the family but denied any public roles associated with the Lutheran church. Unlike other Protestant churches Lutheranism nurtured no tradition of public female philanthropy. Women had no voice in church and community affairs. It was believed that a true understanding of Lutheranism could only be obtained by reading and understanding the Scriptures. Thus education was an important aspect of German community life.<sup>47</sup> In South Australia, German settlers continued the tradition of appointing a male member of the community as teacher and his duties included conducting the choir and other pastoral tasks.<sup>48</sup> Given this nexus between church and school, mid-nineteenth century German communities excluded women from generating income by teaching .

In sum, women at all levels of early colonial society engaged in productive activity, some of which generated income for the family economy. A few women contributed capital; many laboured as part of a family enterprise and did not receive individualised income. The substance of their work varied according to social class and ethnicity, as well as family circumstances. German women emigrants undertook a different range of employment from the predominantly British population, although there was some overlap in the area of domestic service.

Teaching was one of many productive activities undertaken by women in the mid-nineteenth century. Those with sufficient cultural capital taught middle-class girls, while literate working class women set up dame and day schools. Women's moral guardianship and skills in the accomplishments gave them bargaining power in the education marketplace. Their domestic and teaching labour was often unpaid but underpinned the teaching family as an economic unit.

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<sup>47</sup> Sagarra, *A Social History of Germany*, p. 407; Catherine M. Prelinger, *Charity, Challenge and Change: Religious Dimensions of the Mid-Nineteenth Century Women's Movement in Germany*, Greenwood Press, New York, 1987, pp. 1-3.

<sup>48</sup> Ian Harmstorf, 'Guests or Fellow-Countrymen: A Study in Assimilation, an Aspect of the German Community in South Australia, 1836-1918', Ph.D. thesis, Flinders University, 1987, pp. 38-39; James Van Horn Melton, *Absolutism and the Eighteenth Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988, p. 38.

Women's cultural capital was also integral to the family status. They utilised their social and religious networks to enhance their families' economic and social status and respectability. Through these networks women were also contributing to the public life of the colony.

### **Economic fluctuations and the family economy**

The early years of white settlement were good years for some colonists. Land speculation was rife, and squatters ranged far and wide within the more fertile parts of the colony. Adelaide grew rapidly and Governor Gawler spent liberally. However, when the economic depression descended in 1840 many colonists suffered severely. While a few colonists were cushioned by their wealth, fifteen per cent of the population was receiving Government rations in 1841 and many others negotiated the parlous tightrope between poverty and destitution. Governor Gawler was replaced by Governor Grey, whose strategy was to force men into the country as a cheap labour force to establish a viable agricultural industry.<sup>49</sup> While this undoubtedly benefited those who were wealthy enough to employ waged labour, Benjamin Boyce found his wages reduced by half. However without the encumbrance of a wife and family he was able to move frequently from job to job, returning to Adelaide 'to be a mongst the young whemen' and 'av a bit of a spree for ten pounds'. For a time he spent his money as fast as he earned it but by July 1842 he had accumulated a few possessions and was beginning to contemplate marriage. In September 1843 he married Louisa Thomson, whom he had met on board the ship to Australia. She had given birth to their son five months earlier. In 1844 he wrote that he was 'gittingh a cumfortuble livingh' as there was plenty of work for labouring men.<sup>50</sup>

The mixed fortunes of two middle-class Quaker families in the early 1840s demonstrate that large families were often an asset in difficult times. Bridget and John Hack and their six young children arrived in South Australia in 1837. John's early business ventures were flamboyant and disastrously speculative. In partnership with his brother Stephen and brother-in-law Henry Watson he was heavily involved in cattle dealing (doing business with John Jacob), merchandising and land speculation.

At first the Hacks lived in Adelaide and their business was conducted from premises next door to their home. Bridget supervised some of the business and, although assisted by two servants, carried out many household tasks. According to John her most time consuming task

<sup>49</sup> Grimshaw et al, *Creating a Nation*, p. 86.

<sup>50</sup> Tony Stimson, 'Benjamin Boyce to his family' in *Historical Society of South Australia Newsletter*, no. 68, January 1987, pp. 14-19.

was sewing; 'but poor child she has as much as her fingers can do keeping our boys clothed, for she makes nearly all the clothes for the family, mine included.' The family regularly increased in size and the household almost came to a standstill for the three weeks Bridget stayed in her room after each child was born.

The Hacks valued education and as soon as they arrived in the colony found a tutor for their sons. Somehow Bridget found time to teach their daughter Louisa. Later the boys were sent to Thomas Stow's school and Louisa to a young ladies' school. When one of the children died, the family moved to the healthier town of Mount Barker where John built a school and installed James MacGowan as teacher.

Bankruptcy in 1843 forced dramatic changes in the Hack family. By mid-1844 they had returned to Adelaide, penniless. The servants were dismissed and the children's schooling ceased. Bridget and Louisa (aged thirteen) were responsible for all the household tasks, mending, and the care of the seven younger children (and of John, who was ill). When they could not manage all of the domestic tasks they sent the washing out but could not afford to pay the washerwoman. For a time, the family's only income was from the two elder boys' job of carting goods to and from the port. Their business partners, Henry and Charlotte Watson were saved from the same fate by Charlotte's inheritance, on which they lived until the Governor appointed Henry as Chief Clerk in the Customs at Port Adelaide.<sup>51</sup>

By comparison the May family (Joseph, Hannah and eleven children), who were Hack's neighbours at Mount Barker, survived the depression with careful management and the income and labour contributed by the young adult members. The men worked in the fields and occasionally laboured for wages on neighbours' farms. The adult daughters divided the household tasks to release their elderly mother and induct the younger girls 'into regular and businesslike habits'. One took responsibility for educating the younger girls who were withdrawn from school, while another was in charge of the cheese-making - eighty to hundred pounds of it per week. Each daughter had a degree of autonomy in her work and there was some discord in the family when one brother tried to interfere in the cheese-making! Women's labour in the gardens kept the family table well stocked with fresh fruit and vegetables while their egg sales paid for extra 'fiddle-faddle groceries'; it was the men, of course, who took this produce to market. Some casual labour was employed to help with the washing and churning, and the May women occasionally worked in the fields on the family farm during harvest. The women did all of the sewing and tailoring for the family, as well as making straw hats for the

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<sup>51</sup> Letters of John Barton Hack, PRG 456/1, MLSA.

men. In more prosperous times much of this enormously time-consuming work did not normally devolve to middle class women. Margaret May wrote 'sometimes we wish for time to do a little in the ornamental fancy way, but that is quite out of the question at present'.<sup>52</sup>

Domestic work and economic activity blended for the women of the Hack and May families. Much of their work was associated with the provision of food and clothing. They generated income with some of their labour and saved expenditure with other tasks. However, financial need and family circumstances created different work patterns for married and single women in each household. Bridget Hack worked while her children were young and then when family misfortune required it, while Hannah May's workload was reduced once her children were old enough to shoulder the burden. In both families the single women's work was continuous.

Margaret May was acutely conscious of her class position and her letters provide useful insights into the ways women's social interactions marked out family status. In spite of their heavy workload the May women occasionally received visitors but their own visiting schedule was strictly regulated. They did not pay return visits to any women considered beneath them and shunned most of the tenant farmers in the district. Margaret praised the Germans as industrious colonists but was critical of their table manners and their use of old women as farm labourers. She was very critical of her fellow Quakers, the Hacks. While she could understand the enormous pressures on the family, she blamed John for not doing his part as household head in managing the family finances prudently, thereby allowing the children to complete their education. Bridget did not escape opprobrium either, firstly for her dirty house, secondly for her poor moral guardianship and thirdly for making her daughter work so hard. 'Louisa Hack, instead of running about with her brothers amongst the men and thereby occasioning sad remarks on her behaviour and severe reflections on her mother for not keeping her under the least restraint, is now a complete drudge'. The May women did not contact Bridget Hack, but John attended Quaker meetings when he was in the district.<sup>53</sup>

The Hacks' lifestyle both before and after their economic misfortune endangered their respectability, while Henry Watson's Government position enabled him to 'maintain his family respectably'. Stephen Hack returned to England and retrieved his respectability with a well-chosen marriage. John Hack wrote 'I have not discouraged Stephen's return to England now because I was well assured that he would not settle down into a character which I could wish to see him without he was married which I believe is the only remedy for that sort of personal

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<sup>52</sup> Margaret May's Letters, PRG 131/2, MLSA.

<sup>53</sup> Margaret May's Letters, PRG 131/2, MLSA.

carelessness for which Stephen has been rather remarkable - as well as for other foibles which a single life rather encourages than represses.<sup>54</sup> Of course the May family closed ranks during hard times and ensured that their respectability remained untarnished.

Like rural families, those in Adelaide struggled through the depression years when unemployment was rife. Georgina Cawthorne and her seventeen year old son William arrived in Adelaide in May 1841 to meet up with her husband. By the time they arrived he, a Master Mariner, had disappeared, and they heard nothing of him for over two years. Georgina set up a little day school in the heart of Adelaide and struggled to make ends meet for some years. (The schoolroom converted to William's bedroom at night).<sup>55</sup> In Mrs Cawthorne's school, Georgina taught the girls and William assisted her by teaching the boys. This division of labour was typical in mixed schools and reflected contemporary anxieties about the moral fragility of girls. When a child rumoured that William wanted to kiss the girls, Georgina (as moral guardian and principal teacher) dealt with the resultant fracas with the parents, while William waited in another room.<sup>56</sup>

The Cawthornes' students were mostly from working class homes and William despaired about their clientele.

A niggardly collection of Butchers, Bakers, public-house keepers, Hostlers, Grocers, Watercarriers and Shoemakers' children can be found in our select school. But what can we do? either Starve or teach them. Never mind the money is the same colour as rich people's.<sup>57</sup>

Working-class families valued the acquisition of literacy skills, but schooling had to accommodate the need for children to contribute to the family economy, and frequent changes of residence as families pursued work. The Cawthornes' students attended irregularly, and

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<sup>54</sup> Quaker relations in England ceased all contact with the Hack and Watson families after the bankruptcy. (It was normal practice for Quakers to ostracise bankrupts from their communities.) Letters of John Barton Hack, PRG 456/1, MLSA.

<sup>55</sup> Diary of William Anderson Cawthorne, PRG 489/1, MLSA. William did not write much about his mother and it is not clear that she was in charge of the school. (He focussed on his own youthful anxieties.) However in the almanacs it is Georgina, not William, who is recorded as the principal teacher. See *Australian Almanack*, 1846-1850. This distinction has not been established in other research. See Ian Brice, 'Reluctant Schoolmaster in a Voluntarist Colony - William Cawthorne's Diary, 1842-44', Paper presented to ANZHES Annual Conference, Perth, 1994.

<sup>56</sup> Diary of William Anderson Cawthorne, PRG 489/1, MLSA, 8 June 1843, 27 August 1843. For further discussion of single-sex schooling see Theobald, 'Discourse of Danger', pp. 29-37.

<sup>57</sup> Diary of William Anderson Cawthorne, PRG 489/1, MLSA, 25 October 1842, 2 August 1843, 10 November 1843, 29 November 1843.

they experienced some difficulty collecting outstanding fees. One of their students later recalled that in his brief period of schooling, from 1842 to 1848, he attended five schools.<sup>58</sup>

Given their unreliable source of income, the Cawthornes' financial circumstances were probably as precarious as their students' families. At one stage they did not know how they would survive the Christmas break without the school fees to pay their rent. Georgina despaired and was sometimes ill, so left William in charge. William occasionally found other employment as a clerk, so Georgina sometimes coped with the school alone. In 1842 they contemplated moving to Brighton, near the sea, but abandoned the idea, as they thought it would be too far from the centre of population to attract students. In 1844 the Protector of Aborigines offered them the positions as schoolmaster and matron of the Aboriginal school for a salary of fifty pounds a year. After careful thought they refused the offer:

their objections being: by acceding to the views of the Governor we should lose a little of our respectability ... it would be very laborious in that native children have never been at school ... profits would be little ... our time would be constantly employed - never have any spare time ... lastly the situation is not permanent.<sup>59</sup>

Respectable William had to borrow a pair of trousers for this interview with the Governor!

Although the Cawthornes were impoverished, their social and religious networks were middle-class and Anglican. Both Georgina and William belonged to the Total Abstinence Society. William was the Superintendent of Trinity Church Sunday School, so Jane Hillier and her Sunday School teacher daughters were under his management. Membership of Trinity Church served him well, for it gave him personal contact with the Governor. Reverend Farrell also 'put in a good word' to assist his job applications.<sup>60</sup> William spent his spare time reading voraciously and observing and sketching the Aborigines and other aspects of colonial life. He was later consulted as an expert by the wealthy artist, George French Angas.<sup>61</sup>

By 1845 the colony's economic recovery was in train, and the Cawthorne school had increased substantially to forty-eight students. However, the year was a tumultuous one, for first news of their husband and father was not good. They heard that he had attempted to remarry in India in 1843. Then in April 1845 he reappeared in Adelaide 'haggard ... given to drink ... without

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<sup>58</sup> Diary of William Anderson Cawthorne, PRG 489/1, MLSA, 2 November 1842, 16, 20 January 1843, 2 August 1843; *Register*, 10 August 1926. For working-class commitment to schooling see also Miller, *Long Division*, ch. 3-4.

<sup>59</sup> Diary of William Anderson Cawthorne, PRG 489/1, MLSA, 11 November 1842, 14 December 1843, 6 March 1844.

<sup>60</sup> Diary of William Anderson Cawthorne, PRG 489/1, MLSA, 11 August 1844, 15 November 1844.

<sup>61</sup> Brice, 'Reluctant Schoolmaster', pp. 72, 78; J. Kerr (ed.), *The Dictionary of Australian Artists: Painters, Sketchers, Photographers and Engravers to 1870*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1992, pp. 141-142.



a single farthing' [emphasis in original]. He accumulated debts, disgraced the family and finally put to sea in October, leaving Georgina six months pregnant and almost forty-two years old.<sup>62</sup>

Georgina and William continued this school until he married his cousin Mary Ann in 1848. Georgina moved to Glenelg, by the seaside, and established a day school (which continued until some time in 1851), while William and Mary Ann taught in the original school. By this stage, Georgina's errant husband had returned to South Australia and she was released from income generating labour when he became the lighthouse keeper at Cape Willoughby on Kangaroo Island.<sup>63</sup>

William kept a diary from October 1842 until 1846 as a 'service to posterity', and his perspective on work and family life provides insights into the discourses of the period.<sup>64</sup> While fortune pushed him to the confines of poverty he aspired to be a 'learned man' and a 'gentleman'. He showed no firm commitment to the occupation of teaching and 'performed its duties cheerfully outwardly but despairingly inwardly'. In his more positive moments he mused about a range of other middle-class occupations including librarian, editor of a newspaper, clergyman, marine surveyor and philosopher.<sup>65</sup> There is no indication that he saw these occupations as requiring specialist training. Rather, they could be accessed through a broad education. To this end he was desperately trying to teach himself Latin and improve his own general education. (He actually borrowed books from Jane Hillier.) While William was terribly anxious about his current position, he was always cocksure of his intellectual capacity. He might well have been pleased had he seen Bishop Short's pithy comment (in a private letter) about 'that literary celebrity Cawthorne'. It was not until his school numbers increased substantially in 1845 that he confidently announced 'I soon expect to be the greatest Pedagogue in South Australia'.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Diary of William Anderson Cawthorne, PRG 489/1, MLSA, 1 February, 15 March, 22 April, 12 May, 7 October, 3 November 1845.

<sup>63</sup> Georgina Cawthorne to Colonial Secretary, GRG 24/6/1848/1882; South Australian Government Gazette (hereafter SAGG), 17 January 1850, p. 49; W. C. Cawthorne to Colonial Secretary, GRG 24/6/1851/1329. See next chapter for William and Mary Ann's careers as state school teachers.

<sup>64</sup> Diary of William Anderson Cawthorne, PRG 489/1, MLSA, 22 October 1842, 30 August 1843.

<sup>65</sup> Diary of William Anderson Cawthorne, PRG 489/1, MLSA, 29 November 1842, 31 March 1843, 9, 20 June 1843.

<sup>66</sup> Diary of William Anderson Cawthorne, PRG 489/1, MLSA, 23 November 1842, 9 October 1843, 1 February 1845; Bishop Short's letters to his daughter Millicent, PRG 160/22, MLSA.

Although work was part of William's identity, real manhood was intimately connected to marriage and family life.<sup>67</sup> William argued that he was in a critical period of his life: that is, youth. Just before his nineteenth birthday he wrote 'the age eighteen to twenty-five is the most impossible period of a man's life - yes it is that portion of his existence when any pretty face attracts not only his attention but his heart also' [emphasis in original]. Six days later he recorded that he 'trembles and quakes at the period of life I have now just begun, the "marriage" period'.<sup>68</sup> William's thoughts contrast greatly with those of Benjamin Boyce, who enjoyed a bit of a spree with the young women. For William, true manhood was not to be gained through sexual adventure but by self control. He was disgusted when 'Old Noonan, a schoolmaster not above a dozen yards from us' was convicted of indecent assault of a nine-year old girl pupil.

Oh that my lusts, my inclinations and propensities may never lead me into the thick mazes of shame and reproach - May Providence shield me from the temptations of the world for I am but human nature.<sup>69</sup>

William's dealings with young women were as uncertain as other aspects of his life. He lost his heart briefly to the bootmaker's daughter, but was never tempted by Scotch Bella and the other local prostitutes.<sup>70</sup> Caroline Hillier was his major preoccupation for several months during 1844 and 1845, but his attempts to dominate this relationship were unsuccessful. William believed that religious commitment demonstrated a person's morality, and Caroline as a Sunday School teacher was initially constructed as a moral woman. However, when she did not respond to his advances, preferring instead those of his artist friend George French Angas, she was characterised as a temptress. William dissected her every move, in fact her every glance, and portrayed her as haughty, insincere, and manipulative.<sup>71</sup> The only clue to Caroline's perspective was a comment relayed back to William that she thought 'he wanted everyone under his thumb!' When she steadfastly rejected his overtures he inveighed against her, her mother and her sister in his diary, casting slurs on their honesty and their morality. He apparently knew about Jane Hillier's court appearance, although it had occurred years before

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<sup>67</sup> For discussion about the importance of marriage, see Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, pp. 114, 325; E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era*, Basic Books, New York, 1993, p. 90.

<sup>68</sup> Diary of William Anderson Cawthorne, PRG 489/1, MLSA, 2 January 1845, 15 October 1843, 21 October 1843.

<sup>69</sup> Diary of William Anderson Cawthorne, PRG 489/1, MLSA, 9 November 1843.

<sup>70</sup> Diary of William Anderson Cawthorne, PRG 489/1, MLSA, 30 September 1843, 15 December 1843. Many women turned to prostitution during the economic depression. See Jones, *In Her Own Name*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>71</sup> Diary of William Anderson Cawthorne, PRG 489/1, MLSA, 8 December 1842, 3-25 June 1844. William's thoughts are similar to those quoted in Rotundo, *American Manhood*, pp. 104-106. See also Michael Roper and John Tosh, 'Introduction: Historians and the Politics of Masculinity' in Roper and Tosh, *Manful Assertions*, pp. 1-10.

his arrival in the colony. He was also jealous of Jane's successful select school. These invectives continued until his sixteen-year old cousin Mary Ann arrived in the colony. On 21 December 1845 he persuaded her to become a Sunday School teacher, and their courtship commenced with a kiss.<sup>72</sup> William's diary lapsed soon after.

William rarely wrote about his mother, but when he did so she was portrayed as the ideal woman 'Yes she is a woman as much as a mother and wife - Unselfishness - charity - ready forgiveness and kindness marks her woman's character'. But he was unable to reconcile this vision with her sexuality. On 3 November 1845 he recorded:

What a year of trouble!!! There is a subject that I have especially abstained from alluding to. It is one which from the commencement has been a thorn in my mind and painful to a degree - one of the heavy calamities that have so lately visited us. I allude to the fact that my mother is enceinte and has been so since April - this event I view with the most unfavourable eye. It seems to me unnatural that twenty one years should elapse between my birth and another. As soon as ever this creature is born I depart [emphasis in original].<sup>73</sup>

He makes no further mention of this impending event but he did not carry out the threat.

In William's idealised world, true manhood and true womanhood were realised in marriage. He imagined the 'blessings of civilisation' as a family in a parlour. 'Father sits with a book "The duty of man" ... daughter at the pianoforte ... son poring over some philosophical book ... mother clasping youngest daughter while with fond affection looks around and beholds her family'. What a stark contrast to his real world at the time. Men's duties included providing economic and emotional support for their families, and William castigated his father for not doing so - 'How dare he leave my mother like this!' While William clearly believed that a man should support his family, there are no indications that he saw his role as being the sole breadwinner or that married women should be excluded from income-generating activities. In reality his mother and then his wife contributed to the family's income for at least twenty-five years.<sup>74</sup>

In sum, the fluctuating fortunes of all the families mentioned in this section mirrored those of the South Australian economy. While family circumstances varied, there were at least two members in each family who could contribute labour and income to the family economy. Women's work was integral to the family's survival as an economic and social unit. Although

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<sup>72</sup> Diary of William Anderson Cawthorne, PRG 489/1, MLSA, 10 June 1844, 18 June 1844, 22 February 1845, 21 December 1845.

<sup>73</sup> Diary of William Anderson Cawthorne, PRG 489/1, MLSA, 13 February 1843, 3 November 1845.

<sup>74</sup> Diary of William Anderson Cawthorne, PRG 489/1, MLSA, 4 November 1842, 13 February 1843. For similar discourses, see Rotundo, *American Manhood*, p. 12; Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 285; Rose, *Limited Livelihoods*, pp. 76-77; Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work and Family*, pp. 44, 136.

family members worked for common goals, the sexual division of labour was evident and there were further differences between married and single women's contributions. However, marriage did not debar women from participating in income generating activities. All of the families mentioned thus far managed to survive the economic depression without recourse to public charity and when the economy improved they began to prosper, albeit to varying degrees.

### **Women outside the family unit**

If the line between poverty and destitution was a thin one in some families, it was infinitely narrower where there was no male household head. Marilyn Lake and Farley Kelly have commented that desertion and poverty were characteristic of female colonial experience.<sup>75</sup> While high male occupational mobility and high mortality rates are contributing factors, other circumstances such as the mining boom could wreak havoc on family life. The discovery of copper at Burra in South Australia in 1845 had signalled the colony's economic recovery. Yet it does not seem to have had the same devastating effect on family life as was caused by the Victorian gold rushes. Thousands of men deserted their families in 1850 and 1851, some for long periods, some never to return.<sup>76</sup>

While the gold rushes exacerbated the problem of desertion, the casual labour market meant that many men were frequently absent from home. Louisa Boyce, for example, was alone for months on end while Benjamin followed seasonal agricultural work. Temporary desertion was not merely the province of the working-class, either. It was common practice for Government officials, especially Inspectors and men of the gentry, like John Jacob to roam far and wide supervising their business ventures while leaving their families in Adelaide. It was women who kept the family unit together.<sup>77</sup>

The consequences of permanent desertion could be disastrous. Deserted wives and poor widows with young children were, as always, the women who faced the most economic insecurity and had the least protection from the law.<sup>78</sup> Perhaps the colonial situation was

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<sup>75</sup> Marilyn Lake and Farley Kelly (eds), *Double Time: Women in Victoria - 150 Years*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, 1985, p. xi.

<sup>76</sup> Hodder, *History of South Australia*, pp. 199, 258-259; Jones, *In Her Own Name*, p. 5.

<sup>77</sup> Shirley Fisher, 'The Family and the Sydney Economy in the Late Nineteenth Century' in Grimshaw et al, *Families in Colonial Australia*, p. 157; Twopenny, *Town Life*, p. 91.

<sup>78</sup> Patricia Grimshaw and Charles Fahey, 'Family and Community in Nineteenth-century Castlemaine' in Grimshaw et al, *Families in Colonial Australia*, p. 102.

exacerbated because many had no extended family networks to rely on, having left them in Britain. There were no family or community networks to apply social and moral pressure on men to carry out their duties as household head either.

In May 1846 Mary Bull's husband died, leaving her with a young child to support and no money. In June, her attempt to open a small school with a partner was not successful and, in July, she applied to the Governor for rations. It was decided to grant her relief until her friends could set her up as a boarding-house keeper. Apparently this venture was unsuccessful and she returned to school teaching. The Bulls had converted to Catholicism some years earlier and in August 1847 Bishop Murphy employed Mary to take charge of the 'Catholic Female School.' However in November he dismissed her.

Mary continued to earn her living as a teacher and in 1848 she had attracted thirty students. For some years her day school moved back and forth from various locations in Adelaide and Gawler and her income from fees was unreliable. In 1853 Bishop Murphy lent her fifteen pounds. At the time her school had just twelve boys and three girls in attendance; there were 'wretched forms', no teacher's desk and instruction was limited to reading, writing and arithmetic. In 1855 Mary again applied to the Government for rations.<sup>79</sup>

When married women with young children became sole breadwinners through widowhood or desertion, their means of keeping the cold hand of charity out of their lives were very limited. Domestic service was rarely an option, since most servants lived in their employer's household. Furthermore, mothers with dependent children could not consider this option, or factory work when it became available, unless they could arrange child-care. In order to keep their family together they had to generate income from their own homes. Taking in boarders, students, washing or needlework were the common means of piecing together a living. Realistically, though, a successful remarriage and the formation of a new family economy gave the happiest solution.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Mary Bull to Colonial Secretary, GRG 24/6/1846/931; Mary Bull to Colonial Secretary, GRG 24/6/1848/521; Mary Bull to Colonial Secretary, GRG 24/6/1850/529; Mary Bull to Colonial Secretary, GRG 24/6/1855/29; Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 86, 590, 1041; Vincent Thomas, 'The Role of the Laity in Catholic Education in South Australia from 1836 to 1986', Ph.D.thesis, Flinders University, 1989, pp. 72-74.

<sup>80</sup> Rebecca Harris, 'Penny-Pinching Activities - Managing Poverty under the eye of Welfare' in Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans (eds), *Gender Relations in Australia: Domination and Negotiation*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Sydney, 1992, p. 291. See also Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work and Family*, pp. 51-52, 125.

The complicated lives of Harriet and Richard Symonds illustrate women's subordinate status and limited opportunities; they also powerfully demonstrate that men had so many more economic choices than women when they left the family unit. In 1836 Richard arrived in South Australia as a surveyor with Colonel William Light, a position secured for him by his wealthy merchant family in London.<sup>81</sup> He had fallen in love with Fanny Lipson on board ship and intended to propose to her. His family approved the match - the Lipsons were an influential family - but they advised Richard to delay the marriage until he was economically secure. This marriage did not eventuate. Richard speculated wildly in land, lost a fortune and was soon heavily in debt and unemployed. His family's increasing alarm was compounded when he unexpectedly announced that he had married Harriet, a widow with a two-year-old daughter. Harriet was pregnant when they married. Herbert, 'a seven months baby', was followed by Stanley and Hayley within four years. The family was left in Adelaide for months when Richard moved to Tasmania. After they joined him he took up teaching for about four years, until dismissed because of indebtedness. Their return to South Australia in 1849 did not improve their economic circumstances and Harriet and the children parted from him in 1857. He was insolvent at the time. This marriage break-up was acrimonious to say the least but the law was on Richard's side and he took all their goods and chattels. Harriet's desperate letters indicate that she was unable to do needlework to earn a living, and she begged for the return of the furniture so she could take in boarders. Stanley and Hayley's letters accused him of treating them badly, of being 'a drunken sot', and they demanded money to buy groceries. At Harriet's request Reverend Russell tried to mediate but Richard attempted to sue him for libel! Harriet eventually did take in boarders, but in 1858 she actually begged Richard to return to the family. This did not happen and Harriet's ultimate fate is unknown. Richard's life thereafter seemed to be a merry-go-round of insolvency and intemperance, punctuated by temporary employment as a surveyor, teacher, accountant, Census Collector and manager. Occasionally he received financial assistance from his bewildered sister Eliza, a teacher in London.

I wish indeed in writing that you could tell me that you were able to get remunerative employment ... I'm glad to hear that my little gift was of some use ... Your letters have never explained any of your troubles fully and the cause of them for want of a full explanation has always been a mystery to us.<sup>82</sup>

To be sure, Richard Symonds had endangered his respectability with a profligate lifestyle, and there was virtually nothing his family on the other side of the world could do about it.

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<sup>81</sup> For biographical details, see Statton, *Biographical Index*, p. 1570. All of the other details of Richard and Harriet's life have been pieced together from an uncatalogued box of Richard's letters and memorabilia. See Richard Gilbert Symonds, PRG 268, MLSA.

<sup>82</sup> Eliza Symonds to Richard Symonds, 18 February 1869, PRG 268, MLSA.

In the mid-nineteenth century most unmarried women lived in family units as daughters or servants. Those who, for whatever reason, left the family household were very vulnerable to material hardship and sexual exploitation.<sup>83</sup> Catherine Hart was totally alone in South Australia in 1844 and turned to Governor Grey to find employment. Lady Grey employed her to do some needlework and recommended her work to her friends. However, Catherine was forced to sell her valuables and plead for further assistance, this time to open a school: 'I have abilities to benefit my fellow creature. I wish to be usefully employed and at the same time earn an honest independent support.' Catherine's plea provides a rare explanation of the meaning of work for women. It was not only economically important, it also contributed to her identity. In nineteenth-century women's writing, the desire to be useful and independent was canvassed openly in times of crisis when their autonomy was threatened. Otherwise, it is an insistent sub-theme. One is left to ponder Catherine's feelings in the late 1840s and early 1850s as she repeatedly had to rely on rations from the Destitute Board.<sup>84</sup>

Both the moral and economic dilemmas concerning unprotected single women were played out in the late 1840s when many young Irish women, fleeing the potato famine, were brought to South Australia as domestic servants. However, many of the Irish immigrants were skilled as agricultural labourers rather than domestic servants and thus had great difficulty finding employment. Unlike Catherine Hart, they did not have the marketable skills of sewing and literacy. The plight of these women received a great deal of attention, as it was reputed that many had turned to prostitution. There were vehement attacks on the Orphan Board for failing to protect them and on the Emigration Board for sending 'unsuitable labour'. Their arrival also exposed the problems of lack of living accommodation. Many ended up in the overcrowded Destitute Asylum between jobs and some were indeed forced into prostitution.<sup>85</sup>

German and Irish women's skills in farmwork were deemed inappropriate skills for women. While German girls' training in domestic skills in their own homes gave them bargaining power as domestic servants, Irish girls reputedly lacked these skills and were disadvantaged in the labour market. Their class position and lower standard of literacy also prevented them from

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<sup>83</sup> Grimshaw, 'The Experience of Women in Australasian Colonies', pp. 20-22. See also Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work and Family*, pp. 31, 35.

<sup>84</sup> Catherine Hart to Colonial Secretary, GRG 24/6/1845, letters numbered 45, 65, 151; Catherine Hart to Colonial Secretary, GRG 24/6/1851/2948; Catherine Hart to Colonial Secretary, GRG 24/6/1852/1216. For similar statements about the meaning of work see Ida Dawson's diary, 16 February 1898, quoted in Katie Holmes, *Spaces in Her Day: Australian Women's Diaries, 1920s - 1930s*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1995, p. 2.

<sup>85</sup> Jones, *In Her Own Name*, pp. 52-54; Marion Aveling and Joy Damousi (eds), *Stepping Out of History: Documents of Women at Work in Australia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney 1991, pp. 39-41; Grimshaw et al, *Creating a Nation*, p. 87; Oxley, 'Convict Women', pp. 57, 64-66.

accessing employment generated by knowledge of the accomplishments, and they had - of course - the added heavy disadvantages of being Irish and Catholic in a decidedly English and Protestant community.

The problems experienced by women outside the family unit demonstrate once more the fragility of women's economic and social position. There was only a limited range of acceptable income-generating activities for them in the mid-nineteenth century. Teaching not only generated income but also contributed to their autonomy and respectability. It enabled women to be both useful and independent.

The biographies of these unprotected women also underline the economic and social importance of the family unit in South Australia. Few families survived on a single income. At least two sources of labour and income were necessary to ensure subsistence. Productive tasks performed by women within the home provided the basic necessities of food and clothing, saved expenditure and generated income. Women's work was absolutely essential to the family's economic survival.

### **Women's work and children's education**

In the mid-nineteenth century, the pattern of almost universal marriage along with limited means of controlling fertility meant that children were an inevitable consequence of marriage. Women spent much of their married lives pregnant and caring for children. Yet, in the discussion to date, this aspect of women's lives has not been identified as a discrete task. Rather, children were incorporated into ongoing activities in the household. As Tilly and Scott note of early industrial England and France, 'after the birth of a baby, in the list of household priorities the care of children ranked quite low. Work, the provision of food for the family had first claim on married women's time'.<sup>86</sup> Sewing also made enormous demands on colonial women's time. In many families women also combined income-generating activities with child-rearing, withdrawing only when the children were old enough to contribute to the family economy.

Although mothers were primary carers for children in all but the wealthiest of households, good motherhood did not entail constant attention to children, nor was childhood a period of lengthy dependency. Most children were inducted into the family economy at an early age.

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<sup>86</sup> Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work and family*, p. 58.



However, the processes of reconstructing childhood and motherhood were gathering momentum, especially in middle-class families. Yet women's increased status within their family as a consequence of their responsibility for children's welfare was not supported in law in South Australia: throughout the nineteenth century, women did not have full legal responsibility for their own children.<sup>87</sup>

Just as mothers' time was not totally devoted to child care, fathers were not entirely divorced from it either. John Hack's letters to his mother in England often recorded the joys and anxieties of fatherhood. There was great tension as each of Bridget's confinements approached and such relief when she and the child survived. He proudly recorded aspects of the children's appearance and their achievements. His anguish was palpable at the death of their daughter. In times of children's illness both parents shared the bedside vigil.<sup>88</sup> Working-class fathers' letters also proudly told of their children's achievements:

my Deare littel boy William he is a fine littel boy and so is my boy timmy and Emmen grow a nice girl and she can nurse the baby so nice and fetch in the wood and wash up the deches and do many littel things she is soon going to school now the weather is setin fine.<sup>89</sup>

In homes where religious observance was important, parents shared the responsibility for inculcating these values although fathers usually led the family prayers. Ellen Mankey recorded that 'Father and Mother gave us a good moral training - taught us to say our prayers, read the Bible and learn the church catechism'.<sup>90</sup> According to Lutheran tradition parents had equal obligation to read and interpret the Scriptures and teach the catechism. Otto Tepper recalled that after supper his family's evenings were occupied with religious instruction, story books and reading the German newspapers.<sup>91</sup>

Aside from religion, women's responsibilities included passing on the manners and morals required to maintain the family's status. It was mothers who were instrumental in setting the

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<sup>87</sup> Jones, *In Her Own Name*, pp. 20, 41; Bacchi, 'The "Woman Question"' in Richards, *Flinders History*, pp. 405, 411; Ian Davey, 'Growing Up in South Australia' in Richards, *Flinders History*, pp. 371-402. See also Carolyn Steedman, 'Prisonhouses' in Martin Lawn and Gerald Grace (eds), *Teachers; The Culture and Politics of Work*, Falmer Press, London, 1987, pp. 121-122.

<sup>88</sup> Letters of John Barton Hack, PRG 456/1, MLSA. See also Grimshaw and Fahey, 'Family and Community in Nineteenth Century Castlemaine' in Grimshaw et al, *Families in Colonial Australia*, p. 103.

<sup>89</sup> Letters of William Purling, D4468(L), MLSA, July 1864.

<sup>90</sup> Ellen Mankey's Reminiscences, D3845/1(L), MLSA, p. 5.

<sup>91</sup> Reminiscences of J.G. Otto Tepper, PRG 313, MLSA.

standards of dress and personal cleanliness, table manners and general codes of behaviour which were the test of respectability.<sup>92</sup>

Literate mothers also taught their children to read. The acquisition of literacy began at about the age of three, when children learnt their letters, and they were gradually taught to read. The available evidence suggests that the early stages of formal instruction were almost entirely in the hands of women.<sup>93</sup> From Joseph Vercoe's perspective this skill was acquired effortlessly:

He had no memory of struggling with his alphabet but was given to understand that he learned his letters at his mother's knee, who would point to the letters as she read her newspaper, or her Bible or some other book, and gradually not as a task but as a pleasant past time the art or rather the science of reading was imperceptibly acquired.<sup>94</sup>

Nora Young, a mother, had a different perspective! She chose to teach her sons to read before sending them to the most prestigious boys' school in the colony, and to provide all of her daughters' elementary education at home. Her letters to her sister are a poignant illustration of the enormous emotional and physical investment by women in child bearing and rearing.<sup>95</sup>

In 1855 Nora and Charles Burney Young arrived in South Australia and bought a house in Walkerville (now a suburb of Adelaide). Charles established extensive pastoral, agricultural and mining interests in the colony and was founder of the Kanmantoo vineyards. He was often absent from the family home supervising the various properties. In her reminiscences Nora wrote that she had suffered 'a lonely life, for my husband was frequently away on surveying trips and I could not accompany him.'<sup>96</sup>

In 1870 Nora was thirty-five and since her marriage at the age of seventeen had had at least eight pregnancies.<sup>97</sup> Their eldest son had just completed his schooling and, to Nora's dismay,

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<sup>92</sup> Grimshaw et al, *Creating a Nation*, pp. 121, 127. See also Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, pp. 170, 330-340, 399; Prelinger, *Charity, Challenge and Change*, p. 3.

<sup>93</sup> Malcolm Vick, "'Their Paramount Duty': Parents and Schooling in the Mid Nineteenth Century" in Marjorie R. Theobald and R. J. W. Selleck (eds), *Family, School and State in Australian History*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1990, p. 183; Noeline Williamson, 'The Feminisation of Teaching in New South Wales: A Historical Perspective' in *Australian Journal of Education*, vol. 27, no. 1, 1983, pp. 34-35. See also Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 235; Patricia A. Schmuck, 'Women School Employees in the United States' in Patricia A. Schmuck (ed.), *Women Educators: Employees of Schools in Western Countries*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1987, p. 75; Houston and Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars*, p. 6.

<sup>94</sup> Early Recollections of Sir Joseph Vercoe, PRG 322/6, MLSA, p. 11.

<sup>95</sup> Nora's Letters date mainly from the period 1870-1872 and are found in the same collection as those of her mother, Lady Charlotte Bacon. See Letters of Lady Charlotte Bacon, PRG 541, MLSA.

<sup>96</sup> Quoted in Brown, *A Book of South Australia*, p. 56.

<sup>97</sup> For biographical details see Statton, *Biographical Index*, p. 1755 and Brian Samuels, 'Lady Charlotte Bacon' in *Historical Society of South Australia Newsletter*, no. 91, November 1990, pp. 12-15.

was undecided about his future. The second son had died and the following two boys were attending St Peter's College. Nora was endeavouring to educate the remaining four children at home, and each was at a different stage of formal instruction.

Nora [daughter aged seven] is a good little thing and very useful. I teach her and Arthur [aged nine] every morning from 9-1 and in the afternoon I have to work so I don't get much time to read or visit. I shall be glad when I can send Arthur to school but he is so backward and so difficult to teach that I wish to keep him until he can read well, he is quick at Arithmetic and writes pretty well but learning by heart seems his stumbling block, not to Nora, she learns with the greatest of ease and is fond of learning, she gets on well with her music but at present I have not the time that she requires, because I won't let her practice alone, she will get into bad habits. Olive is of course too young yet to learn. I try to teach Harry [aged three] but he plays and calls the letters by all the wrong names, and when he comes to 'q' he calls it cucumber.<sup>98</sup>

Nora was acutely concerned about her daughter's education and moral welfare and refused to expose her to even mildly worldly influences. 'Girls here are apt to grow up what they call Colonial, but in other words vulgar and so I feel it necessary to be so very careful with Nora especially as she is so quick and picks everything up so quickly.' Nora decided that she would 'attend to her [daughter's] general education' but send her to 'masters for music and other things she can learn in that way' until she was old enough to attend lessons in the higher branches of Arithmetic, Latin and Scripture conducted by their clergyman, Reverend Dove [emphasis in original]. Nora was anxious that her daughter learn other accomplishments besides music, and in 1872 began to teach her French.<sup>99</sup>

Although Nora Young was relieved from heavy household tasks by two good domestic servants, involvement in her children's education left her with little time to pursue the social activities of middle class ladies. However, she maintained her contact with the Anglican church and referred to Reverend and Mrs Dove as her closest friends. She felt 'stiff and awkward in society, especially at Government House. She was acutely embarrassed by her brother's spendthrift lifestyle and her own mother's eccentric mode of dress and behaviour. Lady Charlotte Bacon had come to South Australia after her husband's death, and was looked upon affectionately as quite a character. In contrast to Nora, she was a great favourite at Government House and used her social connections to secure Government employment for Nora's brother.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Letters of Lady Charlotte Bacon, PRG 541, MLSA, Nora Young to Mrs Hext Boger, 17 July 1870.

<sup>99</sup> Letters of Lady Charlotte Bacon, PRG 541, MLSA, Nora Young to Mrs Hext Boger, 10 September 1870, 10 September 1871, 2 January 1872.

<sup>100</sup> Letters of Lady Charlotte Bacon, PRG 541, MLSA, Nora Young to Mrs Hext Boger, 27 November 1866, 10 September 1870, 8 November 1870, 20 June 1872.

Overlaying all of Nora's anxieties was a constant dread of further pregnancies. In November 1866 she expressed her dismay about her seventh pregnancy. "I began to think there would be no more as Nora is now 3 ½'. Alas, Harry was born and then Olive. In 1870 she again hoped there would be no more children. 'If I don't my hands will be free as these get older'. In 1871 she was pregnant again and expressed her anxiety about the impending birth. Her fears were tragically realised when the baby was born with a hare lip and, unable to breastfeed, slowly died in a January heatwave. It would seem that this was Nora's last pregnancy.<sup>101</sup>

The regular timetable for instruction as described by Nora Young was upheld in many middle class colonial homes. In households like the Mays where there were several adult women a division of labour occurred, with one of the women taking control of the formal lessons. Similarly, in the Clark family Mary, aged four was being taught to read by her mother while Caroline, the elder daughter, taught other school-age siblings.<sup>102</sup> Marion Amies' research also indicates that instruction occurred regularly (six days a week, with a month's holiday at Christmas) and consisted of formal lessons in the mornings, afternoon recreation and evening amusement or family gatherings. The pattern of instruction was the same whether the women were paid for their labour not.<sup>103</sup> While many families used the unpaid labour of mothers and elder daughters, the wealthy Gilbert and Randall families employed governesses. Both families employed nursery governesses for the young children, and then governesses with specific expertise in the accomplishments as the daughters grew up and the sons were sent to boarding school. Some stayed for many years and were part of the family. Miss Cohn spent nine years with the Gilberts until the last of the daughters was ready for a final year at finishing school. She shared in family recreation and was in demand as an accompanist in the evenings. Eliza Randall's children were flower girls for their governess, whose wedding took place at Glen Para, the family home. Eliza and Mrs Forde remained friends for many years, providing mutual support in times of family crisis.<sup>104</sup>

However, as Governor Young noted in correspondence with the Female Middle Class Emigration Society in London, few colonial families were sufficiently wealthy to employ governesses for their children.<sup>105</sup> The more likely scenario was that middle-class families

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<sup>101</sup> Letters of Lady Charlotte Bacon, PRG 541, MLSA, Nora Young to Mrs Hext Boger, 27 November 1866, 23 May 1870, 5 December 1871, 2 January 1872, 27 January 1872.

<sup>102</sup> Reminiscences of Caroline Emily Clark, PRG 989/9, pp. 115, 117.

<sup>103</sup> Marion Amies, 'Home Education and Colonial Ideals of Womanhood, Ph.D. thesis, Monash University, 1986, pp. 127-134.

<sup>104</sup> Mrs David Randall's Reminiscences, A907, MLSA pp. 17-27; Gilbert, 'Country Life in the Later Nineteenth Century', pp. 57-70.

<sup>105</sup> A. James Hammerton, *Emigrant Gentlewomen: Genteel Poverty and Female Emigration, 1830-1914*, Croom Helm, London, 1979, p. 95.

would use a combination of home education provided by the women of the family, day or boarding schools and hourly-paid instructors. Education was as spasmodic in middle-class families as it was in the working class, in that both boys and girls moved from school to school as family circumstances changed. Decisions about children's education were often affected by the family's fluctuating economic circumstances. This was certainly the case with the Hack and May families, both of whom withdrew their children from school during the depression. When the Hack family recovered economically the younger children were sent back to school.<sup>106</sup> By that stage there were sufficient adult contributors to the family economy to be able to afford more lengthy dependency for the younger family members.

The above points are also illustrated in the case of the Jacob family. John Jacob married Mary Cowles in 1848 and they moved to Woodlands, a property not far from Morooroo where Ann Jacob had established her dairy farm some years previously.<sup>107</sup> For about the first twenty years of their marriage John continued his nomadic life as a squatter in the north of South Australia. He was absent from Woodlands for months on end, and able to communicate with his growing family only by letter. Fortunately, he was home during a scarlatina epidemic to share the bedside vigil when their son Denis died. Mary was effectively in charge of the daily working of the household and their children's education, although it is unclear what teaching role their beloved nursemaid, Hannah Beck, had in the family. While they lived at Woodlands the eldest daughters, Sarah and Annie, were educated mostly at home but sometimes joined their friend Olive Richman for lessons. Prior to her emigration to South Australia Mary had spent time as a governess in France, and she taught the accomplishments of French and music to her daughters as well as providing their general education. The boys were sent to nearby Stanley Grammar School from the age of nine.<sup>108</sup>

In the early 1860s John's herds were decimated by a drought and the family moved to Adelaide in 1865. The boys were sent to St Peter's College, and Mary negotiated with the Headmaster, Reverend Farr, to give Sarah confirmation lessons. (The Jacob family were devout Anglicans.) Sarah also had private tuition in French from Mr Marvel and in Singing from Mrs Palmer.<sup>109</sup> However the family struggled to afford the desired education for their children. In March 1866 John wrote to Mary, 'I fully agree with you that if the Moonta [Mine] gives us extra Dividends that Sarah and Annie too should be afforded any advantages we can give them in their

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<sup>106</sup> Letters of Cooper Searle, D2781(L), MLSA. Six Hack children are entered in the Ledger for Cooper Searle's school in 1848-1849.

<sup>107</sup> For biographical details of John Jacob's family see Statton, *Biographical Index*, p. 820.

<sup>108</sup> Mary Jacob's Diaries, PRG 558/2, MLSA. Mary kept a diary from 1862-1882 and from 1864 it is written in French. See 14 April 1862, 25 August 1862, 1 April 1863.

<sup>109</sup> Mary Jacob's Diaries, PRG 558/2, MLSA, 28 November 1865, 31 January 1866, 2 February 1866.

education'. And in November he wrote again: 'Tell the Boys I shall look forward anxiously at the Paper which will contain the Exam report of the College, and shall hope to see their names mentioned there. I hope we shall be able to send them again next year and will if possible'.<sup>110</sup>

Almost imperceptibly the women of the Jacob family turned to teaching as an income generating activity. In 1869 John wrote 'I'm glad to hear that Sarah has another scholar. I wish her score could be increased to a score'. The family moved to Mt Gambier in 1870 where John had been appointed Clerk of the Local Court. He went there beforehand to find a house with room enough for a schoolroom. Mary and her daughters intended to establish a school for young ladies and John sought their advice before securing a property.<sup>111</sup> Mary conducted 'Winnold House' for some years during the 1870s and was assisted by Sarah, who also gave private tuition in music and Annie, whose expertise was French. The younger daughters, Caroline and Nellie, were scholars. Mary was also a Sunday School teacher and actively involved in other Anglican church activities.<sup>112</sup>

Mary's diary and letters during this period indicate that she was encouraging her daughters to be useful and independent. In providing them with religious principles that supported women's autonomy (and the redeeming power of work) and an education in the accomplishments, she had contributed to their cultural capital and given them a means to achieve these ends. She reminded Caroline 'one thing that you have to consider is you have nothing to depend on but your own exertions, you have no independent friends to fall back on when you may be disabled to any extent from working'.<sup>113</sup>

The Jacob family returned to Adelaide in 1888 but continued their involvement in education. Mary took in boarders, students who attended the Advanced School for Girls and all of her daughters ultimately became teachers.<sup>114</sup>

Mary Jacob died in 1894. One way or another teaching had been her life-work. As an unmarried woman she had spent time in paid employment as a governess. As a mother she had

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<sup>110</sup> Letters of John Jacob received by his wife Mary, 1856-1878, PRG 558/19, MLSA, 9 March 1866, 25 November 1866, 26 May 1867.

<sup>111</sup> Letters of John Jacob received by his wife Mary, 1856-1878, PRG 558/19, MLSA, 31 August 1869, 26 September 1869.

<sup>112</sup> Mary Jacob's Diaries, PRG 558/2, MLSA. The school was in operation at the end of 1873 but Mary's diaries lapse until 1880.

<sup>113</sup> For example, see 23 June 1880, 21 June 1881, 5 August 1881, Mary Jacob's Diaries, PRG 558/2, MLSA; Helen Jones, *Nothing Seemed Impossible: Women's Education and Social Change in South Australia, 1875-1915*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1985, p. 12.

<sup>114</sup> *Observer*, 12 January 1889. See chapter five for further details of Caroline's career at the Advanced School and Tormore House.

been responsible for the early literacy instruction of her own eight children and then played a major role in teaching the accomplishments to her daughters. She had incorporated this into the full range of household tasks. In John's temporary but protracted absences from the family unit she had used the intangible quality of 'influence' to ensure that their children's inheritance would be their manners and morals, education and religious principles. The Jacob family was never impoverished but their economic fortunes fluctuated. Education and religion were their permanent assets. Mary used her own expertise in the accomplishments to generate income for the family economy and to induct her daughters into the teaching enterprise. In her advancing years she contributed her unpaid labour to the family economy by taking students as boarders. She did not live long enough to witness her daughter Caroline using her educational inheritance very publicly to become one of the most influential headmistresses in South Australia.

## **Conclusion**

White settlement in South Australia was underpinned by family migration, and the first generation of colonists was attracted by promises of economic and social advancement as well as religious freedom. The family was both an economic and social unit, and work and home life were inseparable in most people's lived experience. The dominant discourses - those of British, Protestant, middle-class colonists - articulated women's moral autonomy and supported them as productive members of families. Women's cultural capital was also integral in establishing the colony's reputation for respectability. Yet the same discourses assumed men's status as household heads and enshrined their dominance in legislation.

Women, as well as men, worked and generated income because their families needed them to do so in order to survive, or to maintain or improve a precarious social position. Erratic earnings meant that few families could survive on a single source of labour and income. All men, and most single women, expected to contribute to the family economy on a regular basis, either with capital or individual earnings, or by labouring as part of a family team. Married women's work varied according to family circumstances. Some married women participated in income-generating activities throughout their lives, while others did so only when there was a pressing need for their labour or cash income.

Teaching was just one income-generating activity among many used by married and single women across the social spectrum to contribute to the family economy. Teaching also contributed to women's identity as autonomous individuals. Indeed, it was a productive

activity that enabled women to be useful and independent. In the early days the only women who were effectively debarred from generating income by teaching were German women. At the most basic level, the only requirement to begin teaching was a degree of personal literacy and the intangible art of teaching. Working-class women used these skills to conduct dame schools and day schools. However, the higher one's cultural capital the more possibilities there were to generate income across a variety of contexts. Middle-class women utilised their expertise in the accomplishments to undertake teaching as daily or resident governesses, in day schools and in select ladies' schools. Women's moral guardianship also gave them bargaining power *vis a vis* men in the education marketplace.

For men, teaching was one choice among many which clustered around the use of their own education. These included accountant, clerk, clergyman, surveyor, newspaper editor and so on. However it should be noted that men did not combine teaching and farming as seems to have been the case in North America.<sup>115</sup> The dry climate and mild winters made farming full-time work in all seasons in Australia.

In essence, incalculable numbers of married and single women invested their time in teaching. They imparted the first lessons in literacy, incorporating them into the multitude of ongoing activities that constituted women's domestic role. They taught the manners and morals which contributed to the family's cultural capital in their own homes, in Sunday Schools and as philanthropists. Many women passed on their expertise in the accomplishments to their daughters and sisters, thereby contributing to their family's status and respectability. And some women did all of the above with other people's children as paid work. Teaching, paid and unpaid, was assuredly women's work in mid-nineteenth century South Australia.

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<sup>115</sup> Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood*, pp. 30-34; Houston and Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars*, p. 66.



## Chapter Two

### The teaching family and the state in the mid-nineteenth century

In South Australia there was a broad consensus among the architects of the first white settlement and the leaders of colonial society about the need for schooling working class children. To this end the South Australian School Society was formed, mainly at the instigation of George Fife Angas.<sup>1</sup> At the first Annual General Meeting Chief Justice Cooper said

I shall not enter into the question of whether general education is desirable or whether it is the duty of the more wealthy part of the community to assist in the education of their poorer neighbours. These are questions which I think of as long since settled. The question for our consideration is whether the system of education pursued by this society is on the whole the best that our circumstances will permit, and I think it will be easy to show that it is.<sup>2</sup>

That this was not a universally shared opinion is evident in the failure of the only school established by the Society. Its appeal for subscribers did not elicit the desired result and working class children did not attend in large numbers or regularly. In the first year of operation some were expelled for irregular attendance; others moved schools or to the country or were inducted into the family economy. In effect, they used this school in the same manner as any of the other schools discussed in the previous chapter. The 1841 economic depression did not help matters either. Both working class and middle class children were withdrawn from schools to work and to generate income in order for their families to survive. The school closed in 1843, not long after the poverty-stricken schoolmaster appealed to the Governor for bread (literally) to feed his family.<sup>3</sup>

The next attempt by the state to intervene in the education of working class children was Governor Robe's 1847 Ordinance, which provided assistance up to forty pounds per annum to those teachers with twenty or more pupils aged between six and sixteen. In the following years there was a flurry of activity as men and women attempted to tap into this more secure source of income to supplement their tuition fees. Jane Hillier's select school was assisted as well as Mary Bull's day school and the Cawthornes' schools. According to Joseph Ryder, a teacher, the Ordinance 'induced a great many people to start schools all around me, and I had to work hard to maintain my numbers, each of these mushroom

<sup>1</sup> T.H. Smeaton, *Education in South Australia from 1836-1927*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1927, pp. 17-25; George E. Loyau, *Notable South Australians*, Carey, Page & Co., Adelaide, 1885, Facsimile Edition, Austaprint, 1978, p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> *Register*, 4 May 1839.

<sup>3</sup> R.D. Goutmann, 'The Relationships between Politics and Education in South Australia, 1834-1875', Ph.D. thesis, University of Adelaide, 1979, p. 83.

schools taking away one or two children'.<sup>4</sup> However, the Ordinance was widely criticised for not reaching the children it was designed to cater for. Not only were middle class schools being assisted but very few country schools were able to meet the minimum requirement of twenty scholars. The other major criticisms related to the inferior quality of teachers and instruction.<sup>5</sup>

In 1851 the newly-elected Legislative Council initiated an enquiry into education and enacted legislation to rectify these perceived problems. Under the 1851 Act the state opted to provide financial support for local initiative. Communities were expected to establish schools and to secure teachers, who would be licensed so long as they provided non-sectarian instruction. Teachers were granted a minimum stipend of forty pounds to supplement their tuition fees. Provision was made for destitute scholars to receive free instruction and books in any licensed school. The Act provided building assistance of 200 hundred pounds grant-in-aid to erect schoolrooms where local communities could not bear the entire cost alone.<sup>6</sup>

This chapter focuses on the teachers who were licensed under the 1851 Act and identifies niches that were accessed by women in the new state school system. To accommodate the demand for sex-segregated schooling, the state co-opted the teaching family as a social and economic unit. Women's paid and unpaid labour and moral guardianship within the teaching family, as licensed teachers in city schools and in small country schools, underpinned the development of the system. However, the state upheld traditional patterns of family organisation by granting most licenses to men and institutionalising their interests over women's in policy and practice. This created the impression that teaching was men's work.

In the mid-nineteenth century teaching was also promoted as a profession in order to attract middle-class men and women into state schools. Although the ideal of the professional teacher was articulated with men in mind, this chapter will demonstrate that some women were included as members of the group. As women negotiated places in licensed schools they were participating in the construction of the profession and in the expansion of the nineteenth century state. In the early stages of professionalisation, city teachers, men and

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<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey H. Manning, *Hope Farm Chronicle - Pioneering Tales of South Australia, 1836-1870*, Gillingham Printers, Adelaide, 1984, p. 84; South Australian Government Gazette (hereafter SAGG), 17 January 1850, p. 49.

<sup>5</sup> Malcolm Vick, 'The Central Board of Education in South Australia 1852-1875', M.Ed. thesis, University of Adelaide, 1981, pp. 121-122; Bernard Keith Hyams, 'State School Teachers in South Australia 1847-1950: A Study of their Training, Employment and Voluntary Organisation', Ph.D. thesis, Flinders University, 1972, pp. 9-26.

<sup>6</sup> Vick, 'The Central Board of Education', p. 3; Pavla Miller, *Long Division: State Schooling in South Australian Society*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986, pp. 24-25.

women, were able to advance their status by marginalising licensed teachers in country schools.

### **The state and the profession of teaching**

The Government appointed an honorary Board to supervise the operation of the 1851 Act. It was one of many such Boards and Committees which were to comprise the expanding state in the mid-nineteenth century. The Central Board of Education (hereafter called the Board) consisted of seven unpaid members. All Board members originally appointed were prominent middle class men, and most were Anglican. The Board enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy and flexibility in formulating policy and regulations, although the Act did not allow it to establish schools on its own initiative.<sup>7</sup>

Two salaried inspectors were also members of the Board. Dr William Wyatt was appointed Chief Inspector and held this position until 1875. He had arrived in South Australia with his wife in the 1830s, and had already held a number of Government posts. The Wyatts were Anglicans and worshipped at Trinity Church. Although Wyatt had no specific educational qualifications, he had been active in attempts to provide education for the poor in England and had been a subscriber to the South Australian School Society.<sup>8</sup> The letter of appointment advised him to avoid sectarian issues and recommended that he peruse the Reports of the Poor Law Commissioners and of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education. The letter concluded:

His Excellency desires me to say, that he does not consider it necessary to give you any detailed instructions as to your duties since the office being a new one, His Excellency placing every confidence in your zeal and abilities, thinks it better to leave you to the exercise of your own judgement upon them.<sup>9</sup>

When William Wyatt and the other middle class men of the Board were granted these kind of discretionary powers, much of what they valued became the basis of policy and practice. Yet they did not operate in a vacuum. Wyatt and the Board dealt with individual men and women as well as the newly formed Preceptors' Association, and during the course of these negotiations formulated and readjusted their ideas, jettisoning some and institutionalising other discourses. The mid-nineteenth century state was being constructed out of these struggles. Women as licensed teachers, and as members of teaching families, had input into this contested domain. However, where their interests conflicted with those

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<sup>7</sup> Vick, 'The Central Board of Education', pp. 50-51, 131-132.

<sup>8</sup> Smeaton, *Education in South Australia*, pp. 58-69.

<sup>9</sup> Colonial Secretary to William Wyatt, GRG 24/4/1851/122.

of men, men's interests usually prevailed.<sup>10</sup> The following discussion will unravel the discourses surrounding licensed teachers and then outline women's involvement in mid-nineteenth century state schools.

In his first report Inspector Wyatt repeated a common perception of teachers, that is, that many had 'embarked on the business of tuition, regarding it as a profitable speculation or even a *dernier resort*'.<sup>11</sup> Joseph Ryder, a trained teacher, had been told much the same thing when he arrived in the colony in 1849: 'Oh said [Mr Geo Rolfe], That is but poor work. Adelaide is full of little Schools and when a person can get nothing else to do, they start teaching'.<sup>12</sup> And in a private letter in 1850, Bishop Short remarked, 'There has been a perfect rush of Teachers of all sorts to the Colony. They and surveyors are plenty as blackberries' [emphasis in original].<sup>13</sup> Clearly there was no shortage of teachers for the working class in mid-nineteenth century South Australia.

However, in Inspector Wyatt's report, and the discussion which took place in the Select Committee of Enquiry into Education, a certain kind of teacher was desired to inculcate the habits of order and obedience into working class children. The productive activity of 'teaching' was being portrayed as a profession, the aim being to attract people 'of suitable character' into the state system. All of the witnesses and correspondents were prominent middle class men, mainly teachers and members of the clergy. Their evidence was simultaneously classed and gendered. They spoke and wrote as middle class men eager to construct teaching as a respectable occupation for men.<sup>14</sup> Teaching was to be a full-time life-work in which a man earned the principal element of an income. To this end the Board's regulations prevented teachers from holding any other Government offices. The professional teacher was respectable, a man of sober habits, a person of sound moral

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<sup>10</sup> Pavla Miller, 'Historiography of Compulsory Schooling: What is the Problem?', *History of Education*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1989, pp. 134-136. My thinking about the state has also been influenced by Anne Showstack Sassoon (ed.), *Women and the State: The Shifting Boundaries of Private and Public*, Routledge, London, 1987, pp. 109-110; Bruce Curtis, *True Government by Choice Men?: Inspection, Education and State Formation in Canada West*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1992, pp. 6-10; Bruce Curtis, *Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836-1871*, Althouse Press, London, 1988, pp. 12-16; Desley Deacon, *Managing Gender: The State, the New Middle Class and Women Workers, 1830-1930*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1989, pp. 3, 17; Alison Mackinnon, 'The State as an Agent of Demographic Change? The Higher Education of Women and Fertility Decline 1880-1930' in *Journal of Australian Studies*, Special edition, no. 37, La Trobe University Press, Melbourne, 1993, pp. 58-61.

<sup>11</sup> SAGG, 7 August 1851, p. 557. This discourse was common in other countries. See Mary Jo Maynes, *Schooling in Western Europe: A Social History*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1985, pp. 62-63, 68-69; Susan Houston and Alison Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars in Nineteenth Century Ontario*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1988, pp. 101-102, 170.

<sup>12</sup> Diary and Reminiscences of Joseph Ryder, SRG 95/185, MLSA.

<sup>13</sup> Augustus Short to Millicent Short (wife), 24 May 1850, PRG 160/53, MLSA.

<sup>14</sup> Report from the Select Committee of the Legislative Council appointed to consider the Propriety of bringing in a General Education Measure, *South Australia: Votes and Proceedings* (hereafter SAV&P), Legislative Council, 1851, pp. 1, 3, 5, 7-8; Vick, 'The Central Board of Education', p. 108; SAGG, 26 April 1860, p. 364.

character; a man whose behaviour and appearance exemplified the values he sought to instil in working class children. These attributes implied a particular style and quality of family life. Professional teachers were married men whose identity depended as much on their family life as their work. As members of the middle class, the spokesmen were anxious to make their version of the middle class family prevail throughout society. Finally the teacher expressed his professionalism not only in the way he conducted his work and family life, but also in his commitment to elevating the moral tone of society. Teaching working class children was far too important an activity to be left in the hands of those motivated by profit or merely earning a livelihood.<sup>15</sup>

There was very little discussion about women teachers at the Select Committee, yet it was taken for granted that schooling would be sex-segregated and that women would teach the girls. Furthermore, it was decided that, where there were enough students to establish two schools, separate licences would be granted for girls' and boys' schools. Thus spaces were created for women to continue their traditional work in this new teaching context. However, the Act did not provide specifically for differences in remuneration and male teachers' obligations to establish and support a family were implied in some stinging criticism about stipends. The small stipend of forty pounds per annum was criticised as being a 'woman's wage' and the critic went on to ask 'Why should our Government pay for woman's services at the same rate as an educated and efficient male teacher, who has more to do with his money, if he be a man at all?' [emphasis added].<sup>16</sup>

Inspector Wyatt realised that the vast majority of schools would be one teacher schools. He stated that the ideal licensed teacher for these schools was a married man and that the education of the girls would devolve upon his wife. In essence he co-opted the teaching family as an economic and social unit to accommodate the need for sex-segregated schooling. In so doing he portrayed men as household heads and principal breadwinners, and women as moral guardians, and contributors of paid and unpaid labour to the family economy. Indeed his thinking here reflected and powerfully enforced the traditional dominant patterns of family organisation in the colony. In effect, the mid-nineteenth

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<sup>15</sup> For further discussion of discourses of professionalism see R.D. Gidney and W.P.J. Millar, *Professional Gentlemen: The Professions in Nineteenth Century Ontario*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1994, pp. 5, 205-207; Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America*, Norton and Co., New York, 1976, pp. 7, 80, 86, 111-112; Houston and Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars*, pp. 182-184; Curtis, *Building the Educational State*, pp. 218, 225, 228; Geraldine Joncich Clifford, 'Man/Woman/Teacher: Gender, Family and Career in American Educational History' in Donald Warren (ed.), *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work*, Macmillan, New York, 1989, p. 321; Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, Hutchinson, London, 1987, pp. 229-230.

<sup>16</sup> *Register*, 30 August 1853.

century state and the teaching profession were being created around the prevailing ideas of gender difference.<sup>17</sup>

An important aspect of professionalisation was the establishment of a Normal School. Inspector Wyatt wrote that tuition was a 'science' as well as an art and that its practitioners would require specific instruction and training as in the case of other professions. To this end it was proposed to establish a Normal School to train and educate 'persons of both sexes in the qualifications, intellectual and moral, necessary to make good and efficient teachers'. The consensus was that the Normal School should accept equal numbers of men and women. It was pointed out that women teachers should acquire the same certificates as men. Bryant Waymouth, formerly the Organising Master of the Normal School in Chester, also spoke about the usefulness of women as teachers of literacy in Infant Schools. The discussion surrounding this proposal was not whether or not young women should be accepted but whether the sexes should be separated in the Normal School, and it was agreed that the admixture of the sexes, especially between the ages of twelve and sixteen, was unwise. Contemporary anxieties about the moral fragility of girls were reflected in discussions here. Indeed it was this discourse of moral danger which underpinned the decisions to make the Normal School, indeed the whole system, sex-segregated as far as possible. Women teachers as moral guardians of girls and teachers of literacy were to be central participants in the development of the state school system.<sup>18</sup>

Although Inspector Wyatt was strongly in favour of training in a Normal School there was a current of opinion that people could access the profession by virtue of their own education. The Preceptors' Association included a number of teachers who had been trained in England and others whose pedagogical knowledge was gained as a result of their reading.<sup>19</sup> Evidence presented to the Select Committee indicated that the requirements for entry into the profession were still a matter of negotiation in the mid-nineteenth century; and ultimately both groups were acknowledged as professional teachers. Furthermore, the Normal School legislated for in the 1851 Act was soon abandoned by the Board because it would be too expensive.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Report from the Select Committee of the Legislative Council appointed to consider the Propriety of bringing in a General Education Measure, SAV&P, Legislative Council, 1851, p. 17. In New South Wales the family was co-opted similarly in country post offices. See Deacon, *Managing Gender*, pp. 1, 27-35.

<sup>18</sup> Report from the Select Committee of the Legislative Council appointed to consider the Propriety of bringing in a General Education Measure, SAV&P, Legislative Council, 1851, pp. 1, 3, 5, 7-8; SAGG, 7 August 1851, p. 557; Marjorie R. Theobald, 'Discourse of Danger: Gender and the History of Elementary Schooling in Australia, 1850-1880', *Historical Studies in Education*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1989.

<sup>19</sup> *Register*, 5 March 1851, 15 April 1851; Vick, 'The Central Board of Education', p. 115.

<sup>20</sup> *Register*, 9 April 1862. A similar situation existed in Victoria. See Marjorie R. Theobald, 'The Administration of Gender: The Case of Victoria's Lady Teachers, 1850-1900', Presidential Address, ANZHES Annual Conference, Perth, 1994, p. 3.

The Select Committee accorded licensed teachers occupational autonomy. They were responsible for the employment of their staff of assistants and pupil teachers, and they also decided the questions of teaching method and curriculum content. Inspector Wyatt identified the inspector's role:

The duty of the Inspector would be to see that the education of the children was attended to, without any regard to a particular system. I consider that if any master had a system of his own, provided that he could show that his pupils made a proportionate advancement, the Inspector should be satisfied with the condition and progress of the school.<sup>21</sup>

Inspector Wyatt was firmly committed to the ideology of self-improvement and sought to advise, cajole and admonish inefficient teachers; but he mostly resisted suggestions which might undermine their occupational autonomy. However, there was the expectation that teachers would 'arrange their scholars into two, three, four or five classes, in accordance with the lesson books of the Irish National Society or those of the British and Foreign School Society'. The Act provided for the establishment of a Book Depot from which teachers could purchase the prescribed texts. As others have pointed out, this form of organisation was suited to urban areas where large schools could be established.<sup>22</sup>

In effect, teaching was no longer a set of skills which could be turned to generate income, but a profession requiring mastery of a body of scientific knowledge as well as the art of tuition. Middle class men and women would both be involved in this project in roughly equal numbers, but not on the same terms. Teaching would be a profession where respectable men could confirm their masculinity with modest economic independence and public status as well as family headship. Respectable women accessed the profession of teaching by virtue of their cultural capital, which included moral guardianship; as teachers of literacy; and as contributors to the family economy. Yet, as the previous chapter demonstrated, teaching was no new domain of women's endeavour. Rather, they would continue their traditional work in a different teaching context, that is in the licensed school. At first, marriage was not a barrier to their employment as licensed teachers and women teachers were not treated by the Board as a source of cheap labour.<sup>23</sup> In sum, when the state moved to construct teaching as a profession in order to attract people of suitable character to educate working class students, women were included by design not default.

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<sup>21</sup> Report from the Select Committee of the Legislative Council appointed to consider the Propriety of bringing in a General Education Measure, SAV&P, Legislative Council, 1851, p. 15; SAGG, 19 August 1852, p. 509.

<sup>22</sup> SAGG, 26 April 1860, p. 378; Miller, *Long Division*, p. 31. The forms of school organisation were similar to those adopted in Canada. See Houston and Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars*, pp. 235-237.

<sup>23</sup> See also Theobald, 'The Administration of Gender', p. 7; Mineke van Essen, 'Female Teachers in the Netherlands 1827-1858' in Patricia A. Schmuck (ed.), *Women Educators: Employees of Schools in Western Countries*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1987, p. 147.

## The teaching family in the city

When the Central Board of Education assumed control in May 1852 there were 115 teachers licensed under the legislation of 1847. By the end of the year the number of licences had been reduced to sixty-nine. The criteria by which teachers were licensed were never fully explained but a careful reading of the Board's minutes indicates that the procedures established in the first few months laid the foundations for the following twenty-five years. There was a rush of applications and the Board's first priority was to exclude from the profession 'those persons who unworthily fill situations they are in no way fitted for'.<sup>24</sup> Among the early applicants were several teachers mentioned in the previous chapter: they suffered a variety of fates. Catherine Hart was refused a licence because she was unable to establish a school. Mary Bull was one of many teachers whose applications were refused because their schools were too small and/or inefficient. (Mary did manage to gather enough children to be licensed briefly in 1853.)<sup>25</sup> The Board's minutes are sketchy but there are indications that working class women who were conducting dame or common day schools in the city were mostly denied licences. A case in point was Sarah Smith, who ran a grocer's shop as well as teaching young children. In the Board's opinion she was 'an illiterate woman ... in every way unfit to be licensed'.<sup>26</sup> At the other end of the social scale, Jane Hillier was refused a licence because her school was too select and not open to children of all classes. Other applicants were refused licences because of their doubtful moral character.<sup>27</sup>

Given that one of the basic tenets of the Act was to make schools accessible to all children regardless of location, the Board decided to license only a few relatively large single-sex schools in Adelaide and to use much of its funds to license schools in less populous rural areas. Thus a niche was created for women of suitable character to colonise city schools. There were always more women than men licensed in Adelaide.<sup>28</sup> The reasons for this phenomenon lie not only in the preference for sex segregated schooling but also in the strongly held belief that the first lessons of literacy were women's work. Inspector Wyatt said as much when he complained that the efficiency of some men's schools was reduced because students were beginning school without having learned their letters. He advocated

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<sup>24</sup> *Register*, 7 February 1850.

<sup>25</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 86, 157, 590.

<sup>26</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 438. It was common practice for working class women to generate income from a range of productive activities. See Phil Gardner, *The Lost Elementary Schools of Victorian England: The People's Education*, Croom Helm, London, 1984, p. 126.

<sup>27</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 158, 160.

<sup>28</sup> Hyams, 'State School Teachers', p. 52. For a similar situation see Geraldine Joncich Clifford, 'Lady Teachers and Politics in the United States, 1850-1930' in Martin Lawn and Gerald Grace (eds), *Teachers: The Culture and Politics of Work*, Falmer Press, London, 1987, pp. 6-7.



the establishment of infant schools to relieve men from this encumbrance so that they would be able to get on with the business of teaching boys over the age of seven in large, efficient schools.<sup>29</sup>

From the outset, the Board granted separate licences to husbands and wives where there were sufficient students to establish single sex schools. William and Mary Ann Cawthorne (along with several other married couples) were among the first applicants to the Board and their licences were granted immediately.

William and Mary Ann had married in 1848 and Mary Ann took over the Cawthorne's original school from her mother-in-law Georgina.<sup>30</sup> Mary Ann's girls' school was licensed from 1852 to 1865, and she was accorded the same occupational autonomy as her husband. She accepted girls and boys from the age of three, their son's age in 1852, and gave them the first lessons in literacy. From about the age of seven the boys went to William's school; the girls continued with Mary Ann, who provided them with an English education. Her fees of five shillings per month precluded the attendance of very poor children. Mary Ann was an excellent pianist and taught singing to some of her thirty or so students. A report in 1860 noted that the school was 'well conducted by an assiduous and intelligent mistress'.<sup>31</sup>

Domestic responsibilities seemed to provide no impediment to Mary Ann's membership of the teaching profession. During the time she was a licensed teacher she gave birth to four more children, provided them with the first lessons in literacy, and began their music education. Mary Ann spent the first seventeen years of her marriage contributing her labour and income as a licensed teacher to the Cawthorne family economy.<sup>32</sup>

By 1852 William had well and truly shed the youthful uncertainties about work and family life that had filled his diary in the early 1840s. He was now a married man with a family, and he was one of Adelaide's leading schoolmasters. In 1848 he had established the 'Adelaide Grammar School' and offered instruction in the higher branches of Greek and Latin. In so doing he shed the working class students he had been teaching with his mother

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<sup>29</sup> SAGG, 15 February 1855, p. 131.

<sup>30</sup> See chapter one for Georgina and William's careers in the 1840s.

<sup>31</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 30, 8671; SAGG, 17 August 1851, p. 558; SAGG, 16 February 1854, p. 128; SAGG, 26 April 1860, p. 367.

<sup>32</sup> One of her sons, Charles (1854-1925), later became a noted musician and conductor of 'Cawthorne's Orchestra'. See Malcolm Fox, 'Music Education in South Australia, 1836-1984' in Andrew McCredie (ed.), *From Colonel Light to the Footlights: The Performing Arts in South Australia from 1836 to the Present*, Pagel Books, Adelaide, 1988, p. 384; Jill Statton (ed.), *Biographical Index of South Australians 1836-1885*, Adelaide, South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society, 1986, p. 253.

in favour of middle class boys.<sup>33</sup> In 1852 he became headmaster of the boys at the Pulteney Street schools. The Board considered these schools, originally established by the Anglican church, to be the best licensed schools in the colony. William's active membership of the Anglican church had helped him to win the position as headmaster. In 1855 he resigned (amidst controversy) and his new licensed school, the Victoria Square Academy, was reputed to be 'among the few that are really worthy in Adelaide'.<sup>34</sup> (Yet he employed the profligate Richard Symonds as a teacher of Surveying in 1861!<sup>35</sup>)

William and Mary Ann were not trained teachers but they had many of the other attributes which denoted professional status. William's extensive knowledge of educational matters and his school's reputation enhanced his status. The Cawthorne's family life and social networks signified their membership of the middle class and the Board had confidence in their ability to instil middle class values in their students. Aside from his school duties, William was the secretary of the Preceptors' Association in 1851, and he was also one of two schoolmasters appointed to the Board in 1852. As one of Adelaide's leading schoolmasters and a public figure by virtue of these positions, William Cawthorne was well placed to promote the profession to the wider community. Mary Ann's influence was registered in more subtle ways: through her family networks, and through her religious and social networks.<sup>36</sup>

There were several single women among licensed teachers in Adelaide. Some were widows and some, like Georgiana Light, never married.<sup>37</sup> She first applied for a licence at Wilton in 1853 but her application was deferred in order to elicit more details about the school. The Board was under the impression that she was a governess to a family. The Board agreed to license her if a suitable schoolroom was provided but this licence application lapsed.<sup>38</sup>

From 1855 to 1857 Georgiana was licensed as headmistress of the girls at the Pulteney Street schools. When the Normal School plan lapsed for want of funds these schools were used as a *de facto* training institution. In 1856 Georgiana was in charge of three large classes of girls, and was acknowledged as a highly qualified and successful teacher by the

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<sup>33</sup> W.A. Cawthorne to Colonial Secretary, GRG 24/6/1848/620. See chapter one for William's thoughts on work and family life.

<sup>34</sup> *Register*, 29 June 1852, 13 October 1855; SAGG, 26 April 1860, p. 367.

<sup>35</sup> Prospectus for the Victoria Square Academy, PRG 489/1, MLSA. See chapter one for a sketch of Richard's life.

<sup>36</sup> William resigned from the Board after one year. His involvement in the Preceptors' Association will be considered later in this chapter.

<sup>37</sup> I have been able to confirm few details of Georgiana's private life. It is most likely, however, that she and other family members worshipped at Trinity Church as well.

<sup>38</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 824, 843, 858.

Board and the school trustees. When sudden ill health forced her retirement in March 1857, the school trustees acknowledged her labours and success by a gratuity of ten pounds.<sup>39</sup>

In 1858 Georgiana opened her own school in the Trinity Church Sunday School rooms and was licensed straightaway. She remained there until her resignation at the end of 1876. In the late 1860s Georgiana's school was enormous by the standards of the day with up to 130 students enrolled. She taught drawing and singing as well as all the elements of an English education and Inspector Wyatt stated that she was one of the most highly qualified women teachers in the colony.<sup>40</sup>

Georgiana did not work alone. As a licensed teacher she was responsible for the employment of her staff and, for some years at least, she was paid an allowance for pupil teachers in addition to her stipend. However, the Board did not keep records of school personnel besides the licensed teachers in the early years so it is impossible to ascertain the names or numbers of staff who worked in her school.<sup>41</sup> The inferential and anecdotal evidence suggests that in the 1850s and 1860s most of the assistants and pupil teachers in licensed schools were women. When the Board began to collect this data in the early 1870s, women's presence as the overwhelming majority of assistants and pupil teachers was confirmed. In 1870, for example, Georgiana Light employed two female pupil teachers in her school.<sup>42</sup>

By the mid-1850s Inspector Wyatt had softened his original stance on some of the attributes of professional teachers and accepted that both well-educated teachers like Mary Ann and William Cawthorne and trained teachers like Georgiana Light were members of the profession. In the main he was confident that the Board was able to license teachers of suitable character in large schools and by the end of 1853 the editor of the *Register* also agreed that 'the profession of teaching is rapidly ceasing to be the *dernier resort* of broken down tradesmen and unprotected females'.<sup>43</sup> Inspector Wyatt's report in 1856 noted that forty-one licensed teachers had been trained in England and he added that 'many others, by self-training and study will be found in no respect inferior to the most competent trained teachers'.<sup>44</sup> By this stage the plan to establish a Normal School had been replaced by one

<sup>39</sup> W.R. Ray, *Pulteney Grammar School 1847-1972*, Adelaide, Pulteney Grammar School, 1973, pp. 23-27.

<sup>40</sup> SAGG, 26 April 1860, pp. 366-367.

<sup>41</sup> SAGG, 4 March 1858, p. 179. After a twenty-two year career, age and ill-health led to Georgiana's retirement in 1876 and she was granted a retiring allowance. See *Register*, 24 February 1858; SAGG, 26 April 1860, pp. 366-367; minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 3356, 4509; minutes, Council of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 1809.

<sup>42</sup> Board of Education Report, South Australian Parliamentary Papers (hereafter SAPP) 1871, no. 22, pp. 2, 12.

<sup>43</sup> *Register*, 16 December 1853.

<sup>44</sup> SAGG, 21 February 1856, pp. 118, 124.

for a cheaper Model School where well-educated applicants and pupil teachers could be prepared for certification. Although land was purchased in 1860, the Model School was not built until 1873. Meanwhile the Pulteney Street schools served the purpose.

Prominent among well-educated professional teachers was Frances Sheridan. She arrived in South Australia late in 1849 with her semi-invalid husband John and four young children. In February 1850 Frances opened a school at Mackinnon Parade in lower North Adelaide where the population was 'poor, ignorant, miscellaneous and fluctuating'. In London John had been editor of the *Morning Advertiser* and the family had socialised in refined literary circles. Here in South Australia Frances recorded that in her neighbourhood, contemptuously called Irish or German town, 'the incorrigible wildness in the children is aggravated by the inordinate carelessness and apathy of the parents'.<sup>45</sup> The nature of her clientele, in particular their irregular attendance, posed problems for Frances throughout her long career. It also posed problems for the Board in defining the attributes of a professional teacher.

In 1852 Frances applied for a license and was promptly refused as the school was inefficient. She was a prolific correspondent with the Board over the next year, and she even sought the Governor's assistance in order to be granted a licence. It was granted in February 1853 but by August Inspector Wyatt was already reporting that her school was inefficient, principally because she was using individualised instruction. He examined the students and found them deficient in Arithmetic and Reading. Frances' daughter stood out as the most proficient reader in the school. Several threats were made to withdraw her licence and in 1854 she was not re-licensed until March.<sup>46</sup>

Teachers like Frances Sheridan posed a particular problem for the Board. She had the cultural capital required to enhance the status of the profession and she was catering for precisely the group of students for whom the legislation had been formulated. The Board was also reluctant to withdraw her licence because she was the principal breadwinner in the Sheridan family economy. Yet Frances Sheridan's working class students attended irregularly, so she was unable to classify them and use efficient teaching methodology. Worse still, the students brought all manner of textbooks to school instead of the recommended Irish National and British and Foreign School Society readers. Inspector Wyatt thought her inefficiencies stemmed from the 'very low character of most of the pupils'. He and the Board agreed with Frances that the root of the problem was 'parental

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<sup>45</sup> Mrs. F.K. Sheridan to Colonial Secretary, 24 June 1852, GRG 24/6/1852/1821; Loyau, *Notable South Australians*, pp. 277-278.

<sup>46</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 56, 156, 240, 314, 368, 391, 446, 601, 622, 884, 939, 1035, 1042, 1090, 1131.

apathy' - ignorant parents kept their children from school for short-term economic gain and professional teachers were reduced by local circumstances to conducting their schools inefficiently. While Inspector Wyatt exhorted the teachers to do all that they could to encourage regular attendance and organise their students into classes, he stressed that teachers were not to be blamed for circumstances beyond their control.<sup>47</sup>

Frances Sheridan's agency in pursuing her teaching career with the state was instrumental in the Board's readjustment of the concept of the 'professional teacher' to allow the inclusion of those whose inefficiencies stemmed from circumstances beyond their control. There were several licensed teachers in the same position as Frances, but she was one of the Board's most persistent and vocal correspondents. In effect, Frances was eventually considered to be a member of the profession even though her school was not classified 'efficient'. Exemplary personal conduct, the style and quality of family life, and commitment to working for the wider good of the community were as important in defining professional membership in the mid-nineteenth century as conduct of the school. Frances had the aforementioned qualities in abundance and after the first anxious years her license was renewed annually without demur.

In 1855 John Sheridan seemed to regain his health (temporarily as it turned out), and he applied for a separate licence at Mackinnon Parade. His application was refused, but Frances was granted an increase in stipend on account of her husband's assistance: her status as licensed teacher and principal breadwinner was upheld therefore. Until John's death two years later, Frances was licensed, with John as her assistant and the average attendance increased to sixty students of both sexes. Large numbers of destitute scholars (educated at the Board's expense) attended her school. Throughout the 1860s Frances' school maintained its numbers but, although she was considered 'a persevering and efficient mistress' the character of her pupils prevented the school from attaining a high status. After John's death both of her daughters assisted in the school. From the 1860s, however, they were also advertising lessons for young ladies in the accomplishments at Mackinnon Parade. It is not possible to determine precisely how the Sheridan family enterprise was organised but they were undoubtedly generating income by teaching both working class and middle class children.<sup>48</sup>

Meagre as it certainly was, Frances' income from teaching was the key to the family's economic survival, while her cultural capital ensured the family's middle class status.

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<sup>47</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 884; SAGG, 21 February 1856, p. 123; SAGG, 26 April 1860, pp. 364-365.

<sup>48</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 1831, 6824, 7020, 8452, 3825; SAGG, 26 April 1860, pp. 366-67; *Register*, 4 January 1865, 6 July 1872, 1 July 1879.

Besides performing her school duties she raised four children, two of whom later occupied 'notable positions in the colony'. She contributed frequently to the press on political subjects and was a seat holder at Christ Church, North Adelaide. Frances, as head of the Sheridan teaching family, was able to maintain its genteel status through her association with the state as a licensed teacher.<sup>49</sup>

A problem faced by ambitious teachers was that licensed schools had to be open to all classes, but that middle class children were more likely to exhibit the appropriate behaviour required for efficient teaching and examination success, thereby increasing the teacher's professional status. Middle class children also provided a more secure income, as they attended more regularly and could afford to pay higher fees. Their use of licensed schools in the city was confirmed in 1861 at a parliamentary enquiry into education when it was revealed that the fees charged at some licensed schools all but excluded working class students. James Hosking, a leading teacher, argued that these fees were necessary because school rents were high and teachers 'have to obtain sufficient remuneration to maintain a respectable position'.<sup>50</sup> The Select Committee concluded that there was no need for major changes to the 1851 Act, but several adjustments were made. Among them was the decision to set a maximum fee of one shilling per week in licensed schools. Several teachers who were charging more than one shilling lost their licences as a result, including William Cawthorne. William then moved into the publishing business. Mary Ann continued as a licensed teacher for three more years.<sup>51</sup>

The long-term effect of this regulation is debatable, as there is evidence throughout the 1860s and 1870s that middle class children were attending schools conducted by licensed teachers. Frances Sheridan's school and a number of others were catering for both middle class and working class students, but it is difficult to ascertain precisely how their schools were organised. By using the labour of family members, it would seem that they were able to cater for both groups of students and thereby generate a much more respectable income than the Board's records would suggest. The question of middle class use of state schools will be expanded in the following chapters.<sup>52</sup>

In sum, under the 1851 Act, middle class women accessed Adelaide schools as licensed teachers in girls' schools and they were also responsible for the early literacy instruction of

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<sup>49</sup> Loyau, *Notable South Australians*, pp. 277-278; B. Condon (ed.), *Newspaper Clippings Books of the Church of England in South Australia*, vol. iv, Murray Park College of Advanced Education, Adelaide, 1976, p. 861.

<sup>50</sup> Report of the Select Committee of the House of Assembly, SAPP 1861, no. 131, p. 16.

<sup>51</sup> Vick, 'Central Board of Education', p. 352; SAGG, 26 April 1860, p. 364; Report of the Select Committee of the House of Assembly, SAPP 1861, no. 131, pp. 16-18.

<sup>52</sup> Incomes of School Teachers, 1873-4, SAPP 1877, no. 259, p. 4.

young boys. In fact there were more women than men licensed as teachers in Adelaide and their schools were underpinned by a predominantly female labour force. Women licensed teachers were accorded the same autonomy as their male counterparts in the conduct of their schools. They dealt directly with the Inspectors and the Board and their agency in negotiating their careers contributed to the process of defining the attributes of the professional teacher.

Membership of the profession of teaching was loosely defined. Although the Board favoured trained teachers, it also accepted well-educated men and women, and revised its definition to include some whose inefficiencies in teaching could be attributed to circumstances beyond their control. Professional teachers were also expected to uphold their status as members of the middle class by their personal conduct and family life, and by their commitment to working for the good of society as a whole.

In the mid-nineteenth century marriage was no barrier to women's participation in the state school system, or to membership of the profession. Women incorporated their family responsibilities with their work as teachers, thereby continuing their traditional contributions to the family economy. Indeed it appears that the 1850s and 1860s was the era when more married women found niches in state schools than would ever be the case in the late nineteenth century.

### **The teaching family in the country**

Inspector Wyatt knew that his vision of efficient schooling with large single sex schools and students arranged in classes would not be achieved until some time in the future.<sup>53</sup> The only large towns outside Adelaide were the mining towns of Burra, Kapunda, Moonta and Wallaroo. There were several licensed teachers in each of these places. In smaller towns where there were sufficient students to form two schools the Board licensed a teacher of each sex.

At Willunga James Bassett, a 'scholarly gentleman', and his wife, Ann had established a boys' boarding school, Buckland House Academy, in 1847.<sup>54</sup> James was licensed under the 1847 Ordinance but struggled to meet the minimum requirement of twenty students. In

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<sup>53</sup> SAGG, 2 March 1854, p. 176.

<sup>54</sup> Reminiscences of Maud Aldam, PRG 391/1, MLSA. The Bassetts had previously conducted a school at Mount Barker. See *Register*, 2 September 1843, *Southern Australian*, 2 January 1844.

1849 he complained that the attendance regulation disadvantaged country schools because parents required their children's labour. The petition was not entertained.<sup>55</sup>

In 1852 Ann Bassett died, leaving James to care for two young children and to negotiate with the newly formed Board for a licence. His application was not successful because he was also Clerk of the Local Court. He was the first teacher to fall foul of the Board's regulation that teachers were not allowed to hold any other Government offices. This regulation was widely criticised in the *Register* and local communities also supported the practice of teachers holding more than one position. Everyone well knew that teaching was not a lucrative occupation and if teachers had other sources of income besides fees they would be more easily able to maintain their respectability. James had a long battle with the Board over this issue, and asked the Governor to intercede on his behalf. The Governor refused and James finally resigned as Clerk to keep his licence.<sup>56</sup>

James married Mary Murrell, a widow, in May 1853 and in July she applied for a separate licence. The Board was concerned about the effect this would have on his numbers but Mary and James agreed to accept separate licences at the minimum stipend. Throughout the 1850s and 1860s they were licensed separately at their Willunga schools. James taught up to sixty boys and Mary's school accepted only girls until the early 1860s, when a few boys were also enrolled. Her daughter Fanny was born in 1854 but lived only a few months. She gave birth to sons in 1855, 1857 and 1859, and the introduction of boys into her school coincides with her own sons reaching school age. James and Mary's contributions to the state school system were acknowledged by Inspector Wyatt in 1860. 'Mr and Mrs Bassett have taught under the Board from its establishment, during which their schools have been conducted in the most creditable and satisfactory manner'.<sup>57</sup> In 1862 the Bassetts built a new school at their own expense. At the time it was recorded that 'the new schoolroom occupies a very prominent position as to site and character, and is an ornament to the east end of town'.<sup>58</sup>

Willunga was a substantial country town, and James and Mary were able to take advantage of the Board's preference for single-sex schools. Both made teaching their life-work. Examination days at Buckland House were attended by local notables and confirmed the Bassetts' status as professional teachers. Aside from school, they enhanced their

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<sup>55</sup> For biographical details of the Bassett family see Statton, *Biographical Index*, p. 91; James Bassett to Colonial Secretary, 24 February 1848, GRG 24/6/1849/1521.

<sup>56</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 30, 152, 227, 1060, 1098; *Register*, 20 July 1852, 28 July 1852.

<sup>57</sup> SAGG, 26 April 1860, pp. 376-377.

<sup>58</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 796, 804, 116, 3136, 3252; Martin Dunstan, *Willunga: Town and District 1837-1900*, Lynton Publications, Adelaide, 1979, p. 60.



reputations by taking their places in the community as good citizens. James was an 'excellent violinist' and belonged to the local band, and Mary participated in the social activities of middle class ladies. Both were stalwarts of the Methodist church. In sum, the Willunga community and the Board agreed that the Bassetts were ideal teachers.<sup>59</sup>

The majority of settlements in South Australia were smaller than Willunga, and could only support one state school. For these schools Inspector Wyatt's decided preference was for a married man.

I think their moral character should be entirely without stain, and that they should be married men, especially as schools in the country must consist of both sexes and the supervision would in some measure be entrusted to the female as well as the master.<sup>60</sup>

Rural communities supported Inspector Wyatt's preference for husband and wife teaching teams in mixed schools. When trustees advertised for teachers they stated their requirements succinctly: 'a Married Man preferred - the Wife to Teach the Girls.'<sup>61</sup> Men teachers were cognisant of community opinion and when they applied to school trustees for employment they took pains to assure them that their wives or daughters would assist at the school. For example, in 1863 Augustus Winter applied to become the teacher at Goolwa school. He wrote 'Should my application prove successful my exertions as a teacher would be supplemented by my wife and daughter; they have assisted me in the feminine department during the last fourteen years'.<sup>62</sup>

Applications for assistance in building also stressed that boys and girls would be taught separately. The usual proposal was that a new building would be used by the master for the boys, leaving the old one for the mistress and the girls. Henry Parsons successfully argued his case for a new school at Strathalbyn in 1863.

Many parents who send daughters to school complain of the distance they will have to send them when the school is transferred to another room.  
Boys and girls both can work better when by themselves.  
Several senior girls of the township would much like to come to the school were it not that it is a mixed school.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Dunstan, *Willunga: Town and District*, pp. 65, 72. For further discussion of professional teachers' role in the community see Gidney and Millar, *Professional Gentlemen*, p. 207; Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism*, pp. 7, 172-174.

<sup>60</sup> Report from the Select Committee of the Legislative Council appointed to consider the Propriety of bringing in a General Education Measure, SAV&P, Legislative Council, 1851, p. 17. The husband and wife teaching team was the preferred model in New South Wales and Canada. See Noeline Kyle, *Her Natural Destiny: Education of Women in New South Wales*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1986, p. 6; Houston and Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars*, p. 200.

<sup>61</sup> *Register*, 12 January 1871, 5 January 1867, 28 April 1852.

<sup>62</sup> Augustus Winter to Trustees of Goolwa school, GRG 18/113/34.

<sup>63</sup> Henry Parsons to Central Board of Education, 20 July 1863, GRG 18/113/38.

At the time there were sixty-seven boys and thirty-nine girls attending Henry's school. When the new school was built and separate licences were issued, the number of girls increased. This imbalance of boys and girls at Strathalbyn was repeated in mixed schools throughout the colony. In South Australia, as elsewhere, there were always more boys than girls enrolled in mid-nineteenth century state schools.<sup>64</sup>

In essence, both the Board and local communities (who, after all, actually appointed the teachers) wanted men and women as teachers at every level of schooling - the husband and wife teaching team for mixed schools, and for single-sex schooling where numbers made it feasible, and the presence of older girls made it essential. If there was no guarantee of a woman's presence in the school the licensed teacher's livelihood was threatened. When George Needham's wife left him, the parents insisted that he employ a female assistant or they would withdraw their daughters.<sup>65</sup> Women do not appear in the statistics - they only provide the names of licensed teachers - but they were the hidden investment in state schools.

James and Henrietta Jolly's chaotic careers in Adelaide, and later in the country, show how men's careers were underpinned by women's labour and moral guardianship. James came to South Australia as a young man having spent time in England and the West Indies as a Surgeon's Assistant. In Adelaide he continued this occupation until charged with embezzling wine, sugar and brandy from a hospital in 1841. While on bail he absconded from the Colony, leaving behind his wife Henrietta (whom he had married only in September that year). After sixteen months' absence he returned to South Australia and was acquitted of the charges in July 1843. By October 1844 James and Henrietta were conducting a school for working class children in Waymouth Street in the centre of Adelaide, the proceeds of which were 'exceedingly trifling and uncertain'.<sup>66</sup>

In 1852 James applied to the Board for a licence at St Andrews school in Walkerville, then a working class suburb of Adelaide. He was promptly refused because of his doubtful moral character: he had, after all, absconded from the Colony all those years before. So began his prolific correspondence with the Board. He also contacted the Governor, who refused to enter into the dispute. Finally Henrietta was licensed in late 1852, on the

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<sup>64</sup> Board of Education Report, SAPP 1864, no. 18, pp. 8, 10. See also Kyle, *Her Natural Destiny*, p. 6, Theobald, 'Discourse of Danger', p. 33.

<sup>65</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 5147, 8981.

<sup>66</sup> Henry Watson to Colonial Secretary, 8 April 1842, GRG 24/6/1842/138; Clerk of Supreme Court to Colonial Secretary, 24 July 1843, GRG 24/6/1843/856; James Jolly to Colonial Secretary, 24 June 1844, GRG 24/6/1844/668; James Jolly to Colonial Secretary, 8 October 1844, GRG 24/6/1844/1149.

understanding that she 'would have the entire control and management of the school'.<sup>67</sup> At the beginning of the following year, however, the licence was granted to James without explanation from the Board. Henrietta continued teaching as his assistant.

The Board was in a very difficult situation here. James was a well-educated married man and considered teaching to be his profession. He was ambitious, fond of quoting Pestalozzi's work and an activist in the Preceptors' Association. His attempts to become a licensed teacher were supported by the influential editor of the *Register*.<sup>68</sup> In many respects he was well placed to meet the Board's requirements of professionalism. However, his doubtful moral character is only part of the reason for the Board's scepticism about his suitability. People like James and Mary Bassett engaged in robust debate with the Board without penalty because their correspondence was underpinned by discourses of duty and thus did not pose a threat to the Board's governance. James Jolly constantly badgered the Board and never took "no" for an answer. Inspector Smith once commented that it would be better not to reply to James's letter as it only encouraged him to write two more!<sup>69</sup> James Jolly was basically ungovernable and, for this reason, the Board was always cautious in its assessment of his suitability to be a licensed teacher.

The Jollys spent eight years at Walkerville and were embroiled in endless disputes with the school trustees, other teachers in the district and the Board. The issues ranged from denominational teaching to making false claims about destitute scholars. In 1854 and 1857 Henrietta applied to be licensed separately from James. On both occasions her applications were refused but James' stipend was increased by ten pounds on account of her assistance in the school.<sup>70</sup>

From 1860 to 1862 James and Henrietta conducted separate schools at Payneham, a little further east of Walkerville. Henrietta attended a Board meeting and successfully argued that she should be licensed separately from James. They had between thirty and forty students in each school and this period seems to have been one of remarkable calm in their careers.<sup>71</sup>

For reasons unexplained, they moved to the small country locality of Encounter Bay in 1862 and remained in this district for the rest of their lives. James was a licensed teacher there and for some time they enjoyed the confidence of the local community. Henrietta

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<sup>67</sup> James Jolly to Colonial Secretary, 16 June 1852, GRG 24/6/1852/1746; minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 72, 116, 149, 163, 328, 364.

<sup>68</sup> *Register*, 18 February 1850, 15 April 1851, 20 July 1852, 7 December 1852, supplement pp. 1-2.

<sup>69</sup> *Register*, 8 April 1857.

<sup>70</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 897, 898, 917, 1008, 1026, 1203, 1474, 1511, 1409, 1432, 1870, 3438, 3439, 3450, 3458, 3494, 3552, 3581, 3903, 3951, 3914.

<sup>71</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 5218, 6282, 6316, 6349, 6350.

actually applied twice for a separate licence at Encounter Bay and continued to conduct a private school there when James became the licensed teacher at nearby Port Elliot in 1866.<sup>72</sup>

At Port Elliot numbers dwindled and he finally resigned in 1870. By this stage it is clear that both the Board and parents of the district had lost confidence in James. In late 1870 the parents at Hindmarsh Valley objected to his conducting the school temporarily when the licensed teacher was ill. From 1872 to 1874 he was embroiled in an almost comical dispute at Port Victor. Both the Board and the school trustees wanted James Bates appointed as the licensed teacher. James Bates, however, had been accused of cruelty to one of the boys and the parents had withdrawn their children in protest. He managed to procure a schoolroom but attracted no students. Meanwhile James Jolly had gathered about forty children, many of them were very young, and was teaching them in a blacksmith's shop which had no floor and was not weatherproof! The Board continually refused to license James Jolly, even when he found better accommodation. This impasse was finally resolved with the appointment of Emily Bennett as licensed teacher in place of James Bates.<sup>73</sup> The Jollys conducted a small private school at Encounter Bay until their deaths in 1881.<sup>74</sup>

Henrietta Jolly's name only appears in the records as a licensed teacher for two and a half years, yet it would seem that she contributed to the family economy as a teacher for more than thirty years from 1844. Her sporadic dealings with the Board demonstrate the part which gender considerations played in the licensing system. Initially she was licensed, no doubt as 'moral guardian', at Walkerville. Later she was able to benefit from the Board's preference for single sex schools when she was licensed separately from James at Payneham. But when they moved into the smaller community of Encounter Bay she was disadvantaged by the Board's clear preference for men as licensed teachers in communities containing only one school. Yet her labour and moral guardianship were continuous and always underpinned James' career.

Although men predominated as licensed teachers in the country, women did find a niche in licensed schools that were too small to support a married man and his family. Such was the case with Elizabeth Rogers. She was licensed to conduct a tiny school at Little Para Plains from November 1854 until April 1856, when it was revoked because of insufficient numbers and the financial stringencies felt by the Board. The parents protested

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<sup>72</sup> Anthony Laube, *Schools and Schoolmasters: Early Schools at Encounter Bay and Victor Harbor*, Southern Coast Christian School, Victor Harbor, 1986, pp. 4, 11.

<sup>73</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 6918, 6966, 7047, 9025, 9048, 381, 1238, 1791, 1916, 1933, 2109, 2115, 2126, 2201, 2249, 2265, 2546.

<sup>74</sup> George E. Loyau, *The Representative Men of South Australia*, Adelaide, Howell, 1883, Facsimile Edition, Austaprint, 1978, pp. 146-147; Laube, *Schools and Schoolmasters*, p. 7.

immediately, arguing that several students would be left without the means of education, and over the next five months both they and Elizabeth kept up a steady stream of correspondence with the Board, agitating for a licence. Late in September 1856 Elizabeth attended a Board meeting to plead her case. Although she was not re-licensed, it was decided to pay her a part of the stipend, as she had tried desperately to keep the school open until June.<sup>75</sup>

Elizabeth then moved to Adelaide and opened a school in the working class suburb of Thebarton in June 1857. Throughout 1856 several licence applications from men in that district had been refused. Elizabeth, however, experienced no difficulties in securing a licence at Thebarton when she applied. In fact, she was preferred to another applicant, Mr Holmes. It can be assumed that she established her school at the suggestion of the Board, who were keen to license a woman at Thebarton and thus pursue the policy of separate schools for boys and girls in populous areas. Under the 1851 Act, the Board was not empowered to appoint teachers to schools, but it did advise suitable teachers of existing vacancies.<sup>76</sup>

During 1857 her daughter Sarah was a pupil teacher at the Pulteney Street schools, where Georgiana Light was headmistress. In 1858 Sarah moved to her mother's school at Thebarton as an assistant, but the Board refused to grant Elizabeth the appropriate increase in stipend. The Rogers then used the relatively common strategy of leaving the least-experienced teacher in the licensed school while the more experienced member of the family attempted to establish a new school. Sarah took control of Thebarton and was licensed there in 1858, and Elizabeth set up a small school at Athelstone, then a rural district close to Adelaide. Elizabeth resigned in 1862 and Sarah continued as a licensed teacher at Thebarton until her resignation in 1866.<sup>77</sup>

In May 1852 Hannah Turner's (nee Holbrook) licence application for Little Para Plain was passed without demur. This may have been because the school was too small to support a married man, but Hannah's considerable cultural capital was no liability. Her time as teacher of young ladies and in Lady Gawler's infant school prior to her marriage had established her reputation as a teacher of suitable character. Since her marriage to Thomas Turner in 1840 she had had five children, three of whom were still living. She was licensed

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<sup>75</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 1497, 1541, 3039, 3045, 3117, 3132, 3214, 3225.

<sup>76</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 3359, 3373, 3374; Vick, 'The Central Board of Education', p. 213.

<sup>77</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 3685, 3997, 5114, 5142, 6502, 9020.

at this location for three years; although there were about forty students enrolled; the average attendance typically was much lower.<sup>78</sup>

Hannah and her family's whereabouts from 1855 to 1858 are unknown, but in July 1858 she contacted the Board about the possibility of being licensed at Stockport, north of Adelaide. At the time, the Board was in the midst of a dispute about the newly erected Stockport school. Some of the trustees alleged 'grave charges' about the incumbent teacher, Mr Dell, and wanted him removed, while other trustees supported him. The Board informed Hannah that it would only license a man at Stockport. It always stipulated that schools built under the grant-in-aid scheme be provided rent free and tried to license men in these schools. In effect this compensated men teachers for their low stipends. The Board supported Mr Dell but declined to enter further into the dispute. The trustees employed a private teacher in the new school room while Mr Dell struggled to keep the old school open. In January 1859 he left the district and without fuss Hannah was licensed in the new school. Rural communities preferred married men but they also wanted teachers whose morals were irreproachable. Women's moral guardianship gave them bargaining power in this contested domain of the mixed school.<sup>79</sup>

By now Hannah had six children living, the youngest of whom was only six months old. In its 1859 report the Board recognised Hannah as an efficient teacher who was not responsible for 'the irregularity of attendance and other causes' which rendered the school unsatisfactory. Like Frances Sheridan, Hannah was recognised as a professional teacher by the Board even though her school was inefficient. The local community referred to her as 'our respected schoolmistress'.<sup>80</sup> In the following years enrolments stabilised and Hannah was licensed at Stockport from 1859 to 1881. Her mixed school averaged about twenty-five students and her youngest daughter was a pupil teacher there in the 1870s.<sup>81</sup>

Hannah's family circumstances are difficult to ascertain in any detail. Her husband did not die until 1885, but it seems that he was not associated with the family from the early 1860s. She probably coped with the vicissitudes of parenting alone.<sup>82</sup> In 1861 her fourteen year old son severed his big toe with a shovel when he was digging a pit and almost died from

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<sup>78</sup> See chapter one for Hannah's early life in the colony as Hannah Holbrook. For biographical details, see Statton, *Biographical Index*, pp. 1633, 1684; Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 59, 284.

<sup>79</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 4077-4080, 4087, 5038, 5065, 5160, 6239. Charges of 'indecent conduct against some of the female scholars' were proven against Mr Dell at his next school. See minute no. 8264.

<sup>80</sup> SAGG, 26 April 1860, pp. 372-373; *Register*, 25 March 1861.

<sup>81</sup> Council of Education Report, SAPP 1877, no. 34, p. 37.

<sup>82</sup> The marriage notices for her children state that they were the son and daughter of Mrs. Turner. It is very unusual to see a woman's name mentioned in this context. See Reg Butler and Alan Phillips (eds), *Register Personal Notices*, vol. 3, Gould Books, Gumeracha, 1990, pp. 100, 144.

an infection. Her eldest daughter died a few months after the birth of a first child in 1867, and Hannah actually resigned early in 1881 to care for her widowed son-in-law. When he died in July 1881 the residents of Stockport requested that she be reappointed to the school. However, the request was denied - because Hannah had been paid a retiring allowance. Like most country teachers, Hannah's income from teaching was never enough to allow her to save for her old age. In September 1885 she reapplied to the Education Department for employment with a poignant statement which implied that her autonomy, and her livelihood, were under threat:

Since resigning my position as teacher I have tried several occupations but haven't the strength for them and I cannot starve or live on charity when I am able to earn my living. Trusting to your great kindness to me in the past and hoping to hear favourably from you.

Yours very obediently  
Hannah Turner<sup>83</sup>

Her letter was again supported by the residents of Stockport. She was offered employment if she repaid her retiring allowance!

From advertising lessons for young ladies one month after her arrival in the Colony to the later struggle to keep the cold hand of charity at bay, Hannah Turner's teaching career had spanned the gamut of nineteenth century women's experience as teachers. She taught because she needed the income, and to maintain her own and her family's dignity and respectability. She had made it her life-work, moving across several teaching contexts - including the new one of the licensed school, where her cultural capital was sufficient for her to be considered a professional teacher. In the mid-nineteenth century, marriage and family responsibilities were no barrier to her becoming an obedient servant of the state. Hannah had enjoyed the confidence of the Board and her local community. As late as 1926 she was remembered as 'the teacher at Stockport', still a significant person in this small wheat-farming community.<sup>84</sup>

In sum, women's income, labour and moral guardianship as licensed teachers, and as members of teaching families, underpinned the state school system in the country as well as Adelaide. In substantial country towns separate licences were issued to men and women teachers. However, most places could only support one state school and the husband and wife teaching team was co-opted to accommodate the need for sex-segregated schooling. Women's labour and moral guardianship as members of teaching families was essential to the economic success of these schools, for their presence secured girls' attendance and tuition fees. Although married men predominated as licensed teachers in the country, mixed

<sup>83</sup> *Register*, 25 March 1861; Residents of Stockport to Inspector General, 20 October 1881, GRG 18/3/1881/4354; Hannah Turner to Inspector General, 19 September 1885, GRG 18/3/1885/3895.

<sup>84</sup> *Register*, 18 August 1926.

schools were a contested domain. Individual women of suitable character like Hannah Turner were supported by the Board and by their local communities. They also found niches as licensed teachers in schools that were too small to remunerate a husband and wife teaching team. In essence, men dominated numerically as licensed teachers but women were the hidden investment in the state school system.

### Teaching as men's work

Minutes of Board meetings and its reports were published in the *Register* and in the early years the Board was under intense public scrutiny. In February 1853 an editorial about the Inspector's report generated some correspondence concerning women as licensed teachers. At the time, they constituted almost fifty per cent of those licensed and the correspondent advocated the employment of more men lest teaching would 'seem like a female occupation.'<sup>85</sup> In August 1853 the issue was raised again in relation to Adelaide schools where twenty-two women and nine men were licensed. However these concerns about numbers soon dissipated. The Board engineered the licensing of men teachers and in many cases women were only licensed pending the entry of a suitable husband and wife teaching team.<sup>86</sup> In 1856 women still outnumbered men in Adelaide; the numbers were approximately equal in locations where two licences were granted, but in the country only eighteen out of seventy-eight licensed teachers were women. Taken overall, the percentage of licences held by women fell steadily to about twenty per cent by the early 1870s.<sup>87</sup> On the face of it teaching had become men's work. Yet, as the previous discussion demonstrated, men's schools were family enterprises and women's labour and moral guardianship were integral to the schools' success.

The institutionalisation of male privilege in the state school system was more than a matter of numbers. It was generally accepted that men should teach older boys, but at the local level the case was not clear cut, and women contested this practice. In the country, where individual women proved that they were capable of handling older boys, they were also supported as licensed teachers. In 1870, for example, the Board received a petition from a

<sup>85</sup> *Register*, 15, 22, 28 February 1853, 9 March 1853.

<sup>86</sup> See, for example, Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 1560, 1613, 1652, 3392, 4047; Malcolm Vick, 'Community, State and the Provision of Schools in Mid-Nineteenth Century South Australia', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 25, no. 92, 1992, p. 58.

<sup>87</sup> *Register*, 30 August 1853, 1 September 1856; Hyams, 'State School Teachers', p. 51; Malcolm Vick, 'Class, Gender and Administration: the 1851 Education Act in South Australia', *History of Education Review*, vol. 17, no. 1, 1988, p. 34.



small group requesting a man teacher at Mount Pleasant. The Board told Elizabeth Freeman, the long-standing licensed teacher, to employ a male assistant.<sup>88</sup>

In Adelaide, however, the conflict between men and women over teaching boys was eventually resolved by a regulation which favoured men. In 1853 it was reported that Eliza Foulger's school was 'injuriously affected by the presence of a number of boys of considerable age', and she was told her licence would be withdrawn if she continued to accept boys over the age of seven. Eliza protested that the 'immediate dismissal of all the boys will cause great injury to the school': she could not afford to lose the boys' fees. Eliza was allowed to keep her current students but agreed not to accept any more older boys. After this conflict with Eliza the following edict was recorded in the minutes:

Resolved that the Board being desirous of preventing as much as possible the admixture of the sexes in the schools of female teachers that for the future the presence of Boys over the age of seven years in the licensed female schools of the City of Adelaide and the Suburbs be not sanctioned. <sup>89</sup>

However, some women teachers continued to enrol older boys and in 1861 the Board incorporated this resolution into the new regulations. This did not occur without protest. William Cawthorne argued that the regulation was 'a great hardship and a positive loss to female teachers'. He contended that the Board should not interfere in this matter so long as the parents were satisfied with their children's schooling. The Board replied that the regulation was for the benefit of students, not self-serving teachers. However, Martha Taplin's suggestion that men teachers should be subject to a corresponding restriction regarding the age and sex of students was not entertained, the Board noting that 'there would be considerable objections to her suggestion'.<sup>90</sup> In city schools this regulation clearly protected the economic interests of men teachers. In effect, this was an important step in the institutionalisation of male privilege in the state teaching service.

In the 1850s bonuses for successful teaching were paid - mainly to men but some women also received this payment. Under pressure to reduce expenditure, the Board decided to fix women's stipends at the minimum of forty pounds in 1861. Elizabeth and Sarah Rogers were among those who protested against the new regulation, but to no avail.<sup>91</sup> Men teachers continued to receive the bonuses and, because their schools were generally larger than women's, they were also more likely to receive the allowances for pupil teachers and assistants. By the late 1860s more than half of the women teachers were earning less than

<sup>88</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 1202, 1240. For similar cases, see nos 8926, 664.

<sup>89</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 688, 700, 713, 724, 725.

<sup>90</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 3405, 3415, 5046, 5064, 6380, 8100, 8110, 8127, 8143.

<sup>91</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 6503.

eighty pounds per annum, compared with twenty per cent of the men. Only four women earned more than 125 pounds compared with fifty-six men. At the time there were 100 women and 208 men licensed as teachers.<sup>92</sup> This situation operated not only to men's economic advantage but also reinforced the notion that they were more efficient teachers than women.

However, there is evidence to suggest that men's efficiency as teachers was a matter of some dispute. The question of teacher quality perturbed administrators of the state school system in the mid-nineteenth century. Inspector Wyatt was a consistent advocate for licensed teachers and he hoped that in time they would undermine their rivals in private schools, thereby increasing the size and efficiency of state schools. He maintained that licensed schools in the country, where men predominated as teachers, were more efficient than private schools. Yet, in an effort to provide state schooling as widely as possible, the Board licensed many country schools with less than twenty students.<sup>93</sup> As the previous discussion indicated, these small schools were the province of women teachers because they were too small to support a married man. This reinforced yet again the notion that women teachers were inefficient. However, the smallest country schools also became the repository for men like James Jolly who battled to maintain the Board's confidence. It went even further and licensed some men teachers of blemished character only because they had families to support. James MacGowan Jr was a notorious drunkard, yet he was licensed in a variety of places because he had a family.<sup>94</sup> The parents of Tothill's Belt made no bones about asking that James be re-licensed 'out of sympathy with his wife and children alone'. The same situation occurred at Williamstown, but the parents did not complain about the 'master being useless as his livelihood depended on his retaining his situation'.<sup>95</sup> While the Board readily accused parents of supporting private teachers for whom teaching was a last resort, its own practices created the potential for precisely the same allegations.

Notwithstanding the experience of respected teachers like Hannah Turner and James and Mary Bassett, the dominant discourse in the 1850s constructed country schools and teachers as a problem. In the Board's opinion, many schools were too small to attract teachers of suitable character. Furthermore, teachers were unable to classify students and teach efficiently in the same manner as in the large city schools. Inefficient country schools therefore prevented the implementation of a uniform system of instruction in licensed schools even though the appropriate materials were available at the Book Depot. This was

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<sup>92</sup> Report of the Select Committee of the House of Assembly into the Working of the Education Act, SAPP 1868-69, no. 56, p. 109.

<sup>93</sup> Vick, 'Community, State and the Provision of Schools', p. 56.

<sup>94</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 2015, 4303, 4335.

<sup>95</sup> I. Harvey to Central Board of Education, August 1875, GRG 50/2/1875/665; Residents of Williamstown to Council of Education, September 1876, GRG 50/3/1876/1656.

not a simple gender dichotomy although women teachers' inefficiency was implied in much of the discussion.

In the late 1850s licensed teachers in Adelaide reconstituted the Preceptors' Association and joined in the condemnation of country teachers. The original association had lasted only a few months between 1851 and 1852. William Cawthorne tried to revive it in 1854 and it was finally achieved only in 1857. The second Preceptors' Association included private as well as licensed teachers, but was dominated by men who were licensed teachers in city schools. Women in city schools were also included but there are no extant membership lists from which to identify their names. Men teachers dominated meetings and their interests prevailed. There was not a murmur of protest from the Preceptors' Association on the matters of women's stipends or the regulation concerning boys over the age of seven.<sup>96</sup>

The short-lived *Educational Journal of South Australia*, although not the official organ of the association, was established at the same time and was the subject of volatile debate in the first few meetings. Apparently, William Cawthorne was peeved that he had not been asked to be the editor and he demanded clarification of the relationship between the two committees. His 'genius for irregular discussion' was finally curbed by the institution of formal meeting procedure. He resigned as secretary of the Preceptors' Association but retained his membership.<sup>97</sup>

The first issue of the journal made a point of placing women teachers on its agenda.

The importance of Female Education will not be forgotten. Remembering that the children of South Australia are under instruction by women as well as men, we shall consider their requirements from their own point of view. Recognising the distinctive peculiarities of womanly gifts and duties, we shall do all that in us lies to help teachers of that sex to a right appreciation of what they have to do, and a right conception of the means by which they may be enabled to do it effectively.<sup>98</sup>

The journal's concession to women teachers was two long articles taken from 'The Ladies Companion' about governesses in private homes. Given that very few women were employed in this context, these articles seem rather out of place.<sup>99</sup>

The Preceptors' Association was the main vehicle by which city teachers attempted to establish their status publicly as members of a profession in the late 1850s.<sup>100</sup> Reports of its

<sup>96</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 1061; Hyams, 'State School Teachers', pp. 136, 147.

<sup>97</sup> *Educational Journal of South Australia*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1857, pp. 1-2, no. 3, p. 23.

<sup>98</sup> *Educational Journal of South Australia*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 1.

<sup>99</sup> *Educational Journal of South Australia*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 18-19, vol. 1, no. 7, pp. 51-52.

<sup>100</sup> A similar strategy was adopted by teachers in Sweden and Canada. See Christina Florin, 'Social Closure as a Professional Strategy: Male and Female Teachers from Cooperation to Conflict in

meetings were published in the *Register*, and several members were also regular correspondents. Besides publicising their own work as teachers, members lobbied the Board to introduce measures 'to arrive at greater uniformity of system in teaching and a higher educational standard' in the state school system. Edward Wickes, the Board's secretary, often attended the Association's meetings, and some of its recommendations were incorporated into the Board's policy and practice. The Board was asked to set up classes for licensed teachers and to establish a circulating library of educational books, but these ideas were rejected for want of funds. The Preceptors' Association also advocated the classification of licensed schools into infant, elementary and grammar. Presumably the leading men teachers expected to find their niche in the high-status city grammar schools. The Board agreed with the idea, but decided that its implementation should follow the establishment of the Model School.<sup>101</sup>

The Preceptors' Association lobbied consistently for a more rigorous inspection of schools on the basis that it would raise the status of state school teaching. City schoolmasters demanded that Inspector Wyatt clearly distinguish 'those with superior qualifications' from other licensed teachers in his reports, all of which were published in the *Register*. In effect their lobbying was calculated to enhance their professional status at the expense of country teachers. Inspector Wyatt steadfastly maintained that it would be unfair to classify teachers in this manner when much of their inefficiency stemmed from causes beyond their control. Here he was also protecting the professional reputations of people like Frances Sheridan and Hannah Turner. However, he did cooperate in the plan of establishing an annual public examination for boys from the best licensed and private schools in the city. These events and their results received plenty of publicity for men teachers.<sup>102</sup>

When the demands for more rigorous inspection and classification of schools were rejected, the Preceptors' Association successfully argued for the introduction of examinations as a prerequisite for a license. It stated that entrance examinations would increase public confidence in licensed teachers by guaranteeing that only competent teachers were licensed by the Board.<sup>103</sup>

From 1859 all new licenses were probationary pending an inspection and a written examination at the school. The examination was a measure of the teacher's own level of

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Sweden, 1860-1906', *History of Education*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1991, pp. 22-23. See also Gidney and Millar, *Professional Gentlemen*, p. 234.

<sup>101</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 4011, 4070, 5113, 5207.

<sup>102</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 5207; *Educational Journal of South Australia*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1857, p. 30.

<sup>103</sup> *The Educational Journal of South Australia*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1857, p. 10; no. 5, p. 39; no. 10, pp. 74-75.

education and did not include pedagogical knowledge. It allowed middle class applicants with a high level of education to access the state teaching profession and excluded most working class teachers. In effect, the state and licensed teachers were cooperating to introduce 'credentialism as a form of exclusionary social closure.' Frank Parkin claims that the introduction of examinations was the chief means by which emerging professions were able to control the supply of entrants, thereby creating privileged positions for a few members and denying access to many. The introduction of examinations was potentially an important step in the construction of teaching as a middle class occupation.<sup>104</sup>

In reality some teachers (mostly women) in the small country schools held probationary licenses for several years because their schools were too remote to receive an inspectorial visit. The Board also decided to examine new applicants only, rather than those already licensed, so the examination system initially did not weed out inferior teachers in the manner anticipated by the Preceptors' Association.<sup>105</sup>

In sum, the mid-nineteenth century state institutionalised men's interests in a variety of ways. The Board clearly favoured men as licensed teachers and supported their economic interests by paying their stipends at higher rates, and ensuring that boys over the age of seven did not attend women teachers' licensed schools. Women teachers were also characterised as more inefficient because their schools were smaller. However, the previous discussions have shown that women as teachers of girls were central, rather than marginal, to the development of the state school system. Notwithstanding the state's bias in favour of men teachers, women negotiated places as licensed teachers, and as assistants and pupil teachers in state schools, and the contradictory practices of the state were evident in the way individual women of suitable character were supported in a variety of contexts.

Some women were also included as members of the profession. In the mid-nineteenth century the state and city teachers promoted their vision of the professional teacher as the model for all. Teachers in Adelaide schools had access to the most favourable conditions for efficient teaching. They had access to the Board through its Secretary's attendance at the Preceptors' Association meetings, and through the inspectors who visited their schools more frequently than those in the country. Aside from teaching they had *entree* into urban social and religious networks which underpinned status and respectability. Although men's interests were at the heart of the matter, women in city schools were also involved in the

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<sup>104</sup> Frank Parkin, *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1979, pp. 44-58. See also Deacon, *Managing Gender*, p. 4; The effects of credentialism became increasingly obvious in the late nineteenth century. See chapter five.

<sup>105</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 6155; Vick, 'The Central Board of Education', p. 248; Hyams, 'State School Teachers', p. 45.

conflicts which generated the construction of teaching as a profession. In essence, professionalisation in the 1850s and 1860s was a process of constructing teaching as a middle class occupation and city schools as the bastion of professional teachers, men and women.<sup>106</sup>

## Conclusion

Sonya Rose states that nineteenth century employers 'patterned their workforces and hiring practices, structured work opportunities and managed their enterprises in ways that expressed pervasive meanings of gender difference, class relations and a developing ideology of family life'.<sup>107</sup> This was certainly the case in South Australia, as we have seen, where the leaders of Colonial society chose to intervene in the education of working class children. The mid-nineteenth century state co-opted the middle class teaching family as the ideal unit to accommodate the need for sex-segregated schooling. Traditional patterns of family organisation were upheld by the device of granting most licences to men teachers as household heads and principal breadwinners in the family economy, and protecting their positions. Women's presence in licensed schools was legitimated by their cultural capital as moral guardians of girls and as teachers of literacy, and by their need to contribute income and labour to the family economy. The mixed schools conducted by most male teachers were underpinned by a predominantly female labour force, usually family members. Middle class women also staked their claim as licensed teachers in city schools and in small rural communities, and were accorded the same occupational autonomy as their male counterparts. In essence, women who moved into this new teaching context contributed their cultural capital, their labour and their income to the family economy in much the same way as those who taught in other contexts.

Ideologies about gender and class underpinned the discourses of professionalisation too. In the 1850s and 1860s the state courted men and women teachers with appropriate social capital in order to construct teaching as a profession. The major focus was on promoting teaching as a life-work, a full-time occupation, in which respectable married men could achieve public status and a modest economic independence. Members of the profession were also required to display middle class status through the quality of family life and conscientious performance of public duties, as well as conducting school. However the attributes of the ideal teacher were still a matter of negotiation and the agency of middle class women in pursuing their work was reflected in the changing discourses. In the mid-

<sup>106</sup> See also Deacon, *Managing Gender*, pp. 4-8, 220.

<sup>107</sup> Sonya O. Rose, *Limited Livelihoods: Gender and Class in Nineteenth Century England*, Routledge, London, 1992, p. 34.

nineteenth century city teachers, men and women, through their individual and associational activity, as well as their access to the press and to the Board, marked out and advanced their status as members of the profession, at the same time marginalising licensed teachers in country schools.

Finally, in the flurry of publicity that accompanied the development of the state school system, it was the voices of men which predominated. Men dominated the statistics as licensed teachers; Inspector Wyatt wrote reports that focussed on men; the state institutionalised men's interests; and the men of the Preceptors' Association generated column inches in the press. This chorus of public evidence suggests that men in South Australia had captured teaching and made it their work! Or had they?

## Chapter Three

### The education landscape in the 1850s and 1860s

In the 1850s and 1860s the licensed school as an institution did not dominate the education landscape nor did men dominate as teachers, as the Board's statistics would have us believe. According to the 1861 census there were 262 men and 456 women teaching in the colony and there were a few more private than licensed schools. As Malcolm Vick notes these statistics probably underestimate the numbers of women who generated income by teaching.<sup>1</sup> Working class women who conducted dame schools in conjunction with other income generating activities may not have been recorded, nor were those who taught their own children or those of family members at home.

In designating schools as licensed or private, the census not only obscured the variety of schools that existed in the colony but also marked out state schools as an homogeneous category. However, licensed schools were not substantially different from the host of other schools which made up the education landscape. Most of them were conducted in private homes or multi-purpose buildings.<sup>2</sup> Licensed teachers who placed advertisements in the newspapers did not mention that they were government assisted and there is nothing in the wording to distinguish them from other teachers. Where elementary schooling is discussed in mid-nineteenth century reminiscences government assistance is rarely mentioned either. Most school experiences are identified with a particular teacher rather than an institution. Sir Joseph Verco's detailed reminiscences about his schooling are a case in point. He writes warmly about his early schooling with Miss Tilney and then his transfer to Mr Haire's school. Both were licensed teachers during the period of his attendance but that is not mentioned at all. His reminiscences indicate that Miss Tilney's school was a seminary for young ladies and Mr Haire's a grammar school for young gentlemen.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter explores the education landscape in the mid-nineteenth century from the point of view of women teachers. The demand for sex-segregated schooling was as strong as ever and women's careers, individually and collectively, ranged over a variety of contexts

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<sup>1</sup> Schools Statistical Return, SAPP 1861, no. 98, p. 4; Malcolm Vick, 'Community, State and the Provision of Schools in Mid-Nineteenth Century South Australia', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 25, no. 92, 1992, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup>SAGG, 12 February 1857, p. 144; Bernard Keith Hyams, 'State School Teachers in South Australia 1847-1950: A Study of their Training, Employment and Voluntary Organisation', Ph.D. thesis, Flinders University, 1972, p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> Early Reminiscences of Sir Joseph Verco, PRG 322/6, MLSA, pp. 11-14, 19; Schools under the Education Board, SAPP 1860, no. 174, p. 2.



in Adelaide and in the country. The Lutheran and Catholic churches endeavoured to establish school systems, and I examine the opportunities and constraints that arose for women as these church systems, as well as the state and other private entrepreneurial schools, competed for students. Women teachers maintained their bargaining power *vis a vis* men in what was a fluid education market place. However factors such as social class, religion and ethnicity continued to mediate women teachers' careers.

### **Women teachers in city schools**

The education landscape in the city of Adelaide was diverse and for many teaching was still one productive activity among many that generated income for the family economy. In the Meyers family, Mrs Meyers sold 'Real Worcestershire Sauce' at one shilling a bottle, and Miss Meyers conducted a young ladies' school. Both of these businesses were conducted from the same premises in Pulteney Street.<sup>4</sup> There were many tiny schools established by women who literally took in a handful of students to educate with their own children.<sup>5</sup> The number of licensed schools in the city also climbed steadily in the 1850s and many unsuccessful applicants continued to conduct their schools and badger the Board for licences.

One of the most persistent applicants was Mary Best. Mary had been abandoned by her husband Anthony in 1844. The Bench of Magistrates awarded her one pound per week alimony and she announced the resumption of her former occupation.

Mrs Best, many years accustomed to tuition in Sydney will be happy to give lessons at home or abroad on the pianoforte and Spanish guitar, and also in the French Language. Mrs Best proposes to commence a select Ladies School on or before Michaelmas next.<sup>6</sup>

By March 1845 the alimony payments were thirty pounds in arrears and Anthony had taken the common path of simply leaving the colony to escape the law. In desperation Mary appealed to the Governor for assistance. Apparently Anthony had illegally transferred property to the woman with whom he was cohabiting. The Governor declined to intervene and advised Mary to take legal action herself.<sup>7</sup> Clearly she was unable to afford to do so.

<sup>4</sup> *Register*, 14 January 1871.

<sup>5</sup> See advertisements in *Register*, 25 September 1854, 9 May, 14 July 1855, 5 May 1857.

<sup>6</sup> *Register*, 6 July 1844.

<sup>7</sup> Mary Best to Colonial Secretary, GRG 24/6/1845/394; Colonial Secretary to Mary Best, GRG 24/4/1845/814. For further discussion of women in Mary's predicament see Helen Jones, *In Her Own Name: A History of Women in South Australia from 1836*, Second edition, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1994, p. 10.



Mary continued to advertise her select school, drawing the public's attention to its 'healthy location', the 'handsome prizes' awarded at the examinations, and outlining a range of accomplishments as extras. She managed to secure government assistance under the 1847 Ordinance and reported that twenty-two students were enrolled. When Inspector Wyatt visited her school in 1851, however, he discovered that she had been submitting false returns, and he reported that the school was 'scarcely in operation'.<sup>8</sup>

Mary's first application for a licence under the 1851 Act was refused on the grounds that there were more efficient girls' schools in the neighbourhood and because of her deceit. She reapplied and was refused on account of her 'doubtful moral character.' Mary agitated for a licence until the mid-1850s but she no longer advertised in the newspapers.<sup>9</sup>

Young ladies' schools have until recently been treated as an undifferentiated mass and have been marginalised as ephemeral, costly and pretentious. Schools of indeterminate quality, like Mary Best's have been characterised as typical of all schools in this category and Mary's desperate attempts to obtain a livelihood as a teacher have been considered the norm for proprietors. However, more nuanced analyses of these schools in Victoria reveal that they existed on a continuum of social prestige and some were providing young ladies of the middle class with an intellectually rigorous education in the English language and the accomplishments.<sup>10</sup> In South Australia, Caroline Carleton's school stood in stark contrast to Mary Best's.

Caroline had emigrated with her husband Charles and two infants in 1839. Tragically both children died on the voyage to South Australia. The Carletons' early years in the colony were uncertain as several of their business ventures failed, and the family moved frequently. Charles left Caroline and their five young children in Adelaide while he went to the Victorian goldfields where he was employed as an assayer and medical dispenser. He had previously spent some time at the Kapunda Mines in South Australia in the same capacity. After he returned to Adelaide he eventually became Superintendent of West Terrace Cemetery in 1855.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *South Australian*, 1 January 1847; *Adelaide Times*, 1 January 1849; *Murray's South Australian Almanac 1848*, p. 82; SAGG, 7 August 1851, p. 558.

<sup>9</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 56, 102, 158, 224, 470, 1113, 1962.

<sup>10</sup> Marjorie R. Theobald, "'Mere Accomplishments?'" Melbourne's Early Ladies' Schools Reconsidered', *History of Education Review*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1984, pp. 15-28; Ailsa G. Thomson Zainu'ddin, "'The Poor Widow, the Ignoramas and the Humbug": An Examination of Rhetoric and Reality in Victoria's 1905 Act for the Registration of Teachers and Schools', *History of Education Review*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1984, pp. 29-42.

<sup>11</sup> Notes on Mrs Caroline Carleton, GRG 56/76/5, p. 1.

By this stage Caroline had established her reputation as a popular poet and regular contributor to Adelaide newspapers. She was truly an accomplished lady: she sang well and played the piano and harp, she was skilled in the French and Italian languages and was studying Hebrew. Apparently she composed the poem 'Song of Australia' while she was sitting on a bench in the cemetery in 1859. This poem was later set to music by Carl Linger.<sup>12</sup>

Caroline's real role at West Terrace Cemetery was only revealed when Charles died in 1861 after a long illness. For three years prior to his death Charles had been totally incapacitated and Caroline had managed the entire business alone, including supervising the workmen, organising renovations, and dealing with two difficult police enquiries. When she notified the Chief Secretary of her husband's death, she requested that she be appointed as superintendent. Her letter cited

the advanced state of public opinion in England respecting the employment of educated women in railway, telegraph and law offices, taking into consideration the established character and position of your memorialist, together with the isolated and peculiar nature of this office, she can see nothing to prevent her from filling it, with credit to herself, and benefit to the public.

The Chief Secretary rejected her request outright with the statement that the position 'required an oversight and decision such as no lady of education could be expected to possess.' Caroline appealed again, citing all the duties she had performed during her husband's illness, and concluding, '[d]id this office involve any publicity I should shrink from the appointment, but standing so distinctly from all other government officers I cannot but think the novelty of the application, its only valid objection.' The mid-nineteenth century state accepted women as teachers and postmistresses but not in most other areas of the public service. Caroline's appeal was rejected and within a few weeks she and her children had vacated the premises and moved to North Terrace.<sup>13</sup>

The families of salaried professional men like Charles Carleton, whose incomes ended with their deaths, were particularly vulnerable members of the middle class. Men in salaried positions, especially in Adelaide's burgeoning public service, were unable to build up a patrimony for their dependents and widows were often left without a livelihood.<sup>14</sup> Like so many middle class women in her position, Caroline turned to teaching, and opened a

<sup>12</sup> *Register*, 4 May 1928; Robert Nicol, 'Caroline Carleton - A lady of no education?', *Historical Society of South Australia Newsletter*, no. 85, 1989, p. 8. Caroline's poetry is featured in Louise Brown et al (eds), *A Book of South Australia: Women in the First Hundred Years*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1936, p. 54.

<sup>13</sup> Nicol, 'Caroline Carleton', pp. 9-10. A similar employment situation existed in New South Wales. See Desley Deacon, *Managing Gender: The State, the New Middle Class and Women Workers, 1830-1930*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1989.

<sup>14</sup> This was also the case in England. See Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, Hutchinson, London, 1987, pp. 268-269, 277.

boarding and day school for young ladies. Brief advertisements for her school appeared in the *Register* throughout the 1860s and early 1870s. These advertisements provided no details of the curriculum but merely advised commencement dates, vacancies for boarders and shifting addresses. Young ladies' schools were subject to the vagaries of the rental market, but proprietors also relocated of their own accord to be nearer their clientele. Caroline's school moved at least three times. Her daughters also taught in the school and remembered her correcting school work in the evenings.<sup>15</sup>

Caroline Carleton's own standard of education constituted more than adequate preparation for the tasks at hand and the school's survival in a competitive education market is a further indicator that she was meeting the requirements of her students and their parents. Her reputation as an accomplished lady, and possibly her literary skills, gave her bargaining power. It is likely that she secured students privately through her social and church networks.<sup>16</sup> Young ladies' schools were also able to offer religious as well as secular instruction. This gave them a competitive advantage over state schools. Although there are no lists of distinguished alumni from Caroline's school - the accomplishments were, after all, designed to be deployed in the private sphere - its reputation for excellence lasted into the early twentieth century.<sup>17</sup>

The metropolitan area of Adelaide included suburbs ranging from the prestigious seaside location of Brighton, where Jane Hillier had relocated in the late 1840s, to Hindmarsh, the largest and poorest working class district in the colony. Working class demand for education was reflected in the number of schools in Hindmarsh, most of which were conducted by women. According to the 1861 census three men and four women were licensed teachers and there were two male and ten female private teachers.<sup>18</sup>

There was great variety among the licensed schools in this district. Thomas and Ann Lawton's single sex schools were reported as 'useful', and 'very suitable to the class of children attending them.' Clarissa Kelley received high praise from Inspector Wyatt for the conduct of her young ladies' school. 'Mrs Kelley's school is remarkable for the orderly and respectful demeanour of the pupils, whose studies are extended to the higher branches of female education'. However, Thomas Adcock's mixed school suffered from

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<sup>15</sup> *Register*, 3 January 1863, 12 January 1865, 6 January 1868, 6 July 1872.

<sup>16</sup> The family's close links with the Anglican church were confirmed when one of her daughters married a clergyman.

<sup>17</sup> *Register*, 14 July 1874; *Education Gazette*, 16 July 1909, p. 170. For further discussion of lady principals see Marjorie R. Theobald, 'Women and Schools in Colonial Victoria 1840-1910', Ph.D. thesis, Monash University, 1985, pp. 1, 5, 208; Marjorie R. Theobald, 'Women's Studies in Colonial Victoria' in David Stockley (ed.), *Melbourne Studies in Education 1989-1990*, La Trobe University Press, Glen Waverly, 1990, p. 18.

<sup>18</sup> Schools Statistical Return, SAPP 1861, no. 98, pp. 2-4.

'extraordinary fluctuations in attendance ... the results of Mr Adcock's teaching are not so satisfactory as they might otherwise have been.'<sup>19</sup>

Thomas Adcock's licensed school had probably been under siege for some years. Although men's schools were protected from women's licensed schools by the regulation which prevented women from teaching boys over the age of seven, they had no protection from women who conducted private schools. In 1856 a letter to the editor of the *Register* from 'Verax of Hindmarsh' had complained about women teachers 'drawing off ten or twelve boys from the established schoolmaster'.<sup>20</sup> The Board's annual report in 1856 also delivered a scathing indictment of parents who supported these cheaper private schools, and the teachers who conducted them.

Children are thus kept at home to assist in the accumulation of wealth, or for the sake of a trifling saving, are sent to schools of the lowest description such as now abound under the charge of persons whom poverty, misfortune or extravagance, has forced into the ranks of teachers, and who tempt the niggardly parent by the smallness of the weekly fee - ranging from 6d to 2d. The legitimate income of the qualified tutor is thus grievously diminished while the youth are brought up in ignorance.<sup>21</sup>

However, schools were embedded in the networks of local patronage and parents chose the school, licensed or private, which suited their purposes. Women as traditional teachers of literacy were well placed to meet working class demands for this skill. Although the Board continued to lay charges of incompetence against cheap private schools, the census provides some support for women's success as teachers of literacy. If children under the age of five are excluded from calculations, only about nine per cent of South Australia's population could not read in 1861.<sup>22</sup>

Women as teachers of the accomplishments also competed with male licensed teachers who conducted mixed schools. This matter was raised in the Preceptors' Association in 1857.

There cannot well be a more fallacious test of merit in the schoolmaster than the mere number of pupils in attendance. This must vary with local circumstances. It must often depend on the master's power and opportunity of privately soliciting the good will of the parents ... In other cases the introduction of a few trumpery 'accomplishments', as they are called will tell more, with ignorant parents, in favour of a school, than great defects in the more essential part of instruction will tell against it.<sup>23</sup>

In essence both working class and middle class women teachers maintained their bargaining power *vis a vis* men teachers in Adelaide schools. All manner of private schools flourished throughout the metropolitan area. Schools conducted by women existed on a

<sup>19</sup> SAGG, 26 April 1860, pp. 368-369.

<sup>20</sup> *Register*, 19 January 1856. See also 1 September 1856.

<sup>21</sup> SAGG, 21 February 1856, p. 118.

<sup>22</sup> Census of South Australia, 1881, SAPP 1882, no. 74, p. 140.

<sup>23</sup> *Educational Journal of South Australia*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1857, p. 10.

continuum of social prestige, and the boundaries were blurred between state schools and young ladies' schools of various descriptions. Women had the competitive edge in the education marketplace for a variety of reasons besides their moral guardianship. Working class women taught literacy skills cheaply and efficiently, and it is likely that they were also utilised as child-minders. Middle class women appealed to those parents who wanted their daughters to be educated as ladies. Their expertise in the accomplishments and their prerogative to offer religious as well as secular instruction enabled them to establish successful teaching enterprises.

### **Women teachers in the country**

In the settled districts of the colony licensed and private schools of many hues also existed side-by-side. In substantial country towns there were often two single-sex state schools and a number of private schools, mostly conducted by women, while smaller settlements could claim one of each category. On the margins of white settlement property owners employed tutors or governesses to teach their own children and those of their farmhands and shepherds.

Ellen Liston commenced her teaching career as a governess on the remote west coast of the colony. The Liston family had emigrated to South Australia in 1850 and built Idsworth Cottage on what is still named Liston Terrace, Parkside, a suburb close to the centre of Adelaide. Ellen had received a wide-ranging home education, and it was not until the deaths of both parents and the marriages of all her siblings, that she turned to teaching. Apparently it was not economic necessity that prompted her to choose this life-course, but the desire to be independent.<sup>24</sup>

In 1869 she became governess to the Hamp family on Nilkerloo Station. The journey by boat to Port Lincoln and then mail coach took almost three days, and Ellen was not impressed with references to her as 'Hamp's governess' along the way. Having spent her life cocooned within the family, this independent venture was a stressful experience.<sup>25</sup>

By all accounts Ellen participated actively in station life. Besides teaching the five Hamp children, she helped with the mustering and shearing, supervised the station in Mr Hamp's absence and even assisted at the birth of the Hamps' youngest son. In a letter home she wrote:

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<sup>24</sup> Ellen A. Harwood (ed.), *Pioneers: Stories by Ellen Liston*, Hassell Press, Adelaide, 1936, pp. vii-ix.

<sup>25</sup> Elliston Centenary Committee, *Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay: Elliston 1878-1978*, Elliston Centenary Committee, 1978, pp. 1-3.

The baby was born at two o'clock with nobody but Mrs Hamp and myself, in a terrible state of anxiety, present. Thank goodness all was right and I washed and dressed the baby boy in a fashion. I must have grown very weak minded lately, for when Mrs Hamp lay moaning I only saved myself from fainting by lying on the floor outside the door and when the woman came I was fool enough to cry. Mr Hamp expressed the utmost gratitude and brought me a present from town.<sup>26</sup>

Ellen stayed at Nilkerloo for five years and the nearby town of Elliston is said to have been named after her. Between 1874 and 1876 she was a state school teacher. Thereafter she spent the remainder of her life as the Post and Telegraph Mistress at the small town of Marrabel.<sup>27</sup>

Ellen also generated income as a writer, and in the nineteenth century her fiction was quite well known in the colony. She wrote at least one novel and several short stories while she was the governess at Nilkerloo. Ellen's fiction has resonance in this thesis for it canvasses contemporary discourses about governesses, and exposes accomplished women's bargaining power.

The short story *Louey and I* began with Nora Carlon and her cousin Louey answering advertisements for governesses. Nora who had been 'well educated, although possessed of few of the accomplishments of the age', was taking up governessing after her parents' deaths. She knew that she would be unable to command high wages or a position in or near the city because she lacked expertise in the essential accomplishment of music. Furthermore, the selection process wounded her dignity as she was cross-questioned about her own education by people of lesser status. Louey, who was already an experienced governess, warned Nora of the perennial problems of status incongruence and occupational insecurity.

This teaching, this running about from pillar to post after children that can't earn or won't learn - who must not be spoken crossly to nor corrected. One is always liable to be snubbed or buried alive, and as certainly as you get nicely suited so certainly does the family remove to another colony, or get insolvent, or something happens.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Elliston Centenary Committee, *Across the Bar*, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 3422, 4639; Minutes, Council of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 1565; Incomes of School Teachers, 1875-1876, SAPP 1878, no. 42, pp. 3, 10; Report of the Council of Education, SAPP 1877, No. 34, p. 41; Harwood, *Pioneers*, pp. x-xi; SAPP 1878, no. 2, p. 56.

<sup>28</sup> Ellen Liston, 'Louey and I' in Harwood, *Pioneers*, pp. 9-13. Governesses who emigrated with assistance from the Female Middle Class Emigration Society expressed the same concerns. See Patricia Clarke, *The Governesses: Letters from the Colonies 1862-1882*, Hutchinson, Hawthorn, 1985, p. 22; M. Jeanne Peterson, 'The Victorian Governess: Status Incongruence in Family and Society' in Martha Vicinus (ed.), *Suffer and Be Still - Women in the Victorian Age*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1973, pp. 3-20.

Louey was an accomplished lady and not surprisingly she secured the best of the available positions. Nora, with great anxiety, set off on the long journey to her position. When she was referred to as 'Marsh's governess' she felt "'like a bale of merchandise' and the threat to her autonomy was palpable. Although she found the work as governess difficult, she maintained her independent spirit. The children were 'neither rude nor uproarious', and 'very fair scholars', and she also became 'excellent friends' with her employers.<sup>29</sup>

In Ellen's fiction an important paradox of the accomplishments curriculum is evident. While it was specifically designed for non-vocational purposes, expertise in the accomplishments, especially music, gave women superior bargaining power in the labour market and enabled them to earn their living in a dignified and respectable manner. Letters to the Female Middle Class Emigration Society are eloquent testimony to the economic advantages of the accomplishments curriculum. Accomplished middle class women were able to negotiate careers in much more congenial surroundings such as Adelaide or large country towns than those who lacked these skills.<sup>30</sup>

Matilda Jane Evans (nee Congreve) became a licensed teacher soon after her arrival in South Australia and spent about half of her long career in country schools. Besides this she was the first woman novelist to be published in South Australia.<sup>31</sup> Her career and her fiction offer valuable insights into the education landscape, especially in the country, in the 1850s and 1860s.

Matilda and her family emigrated in 1852 after Mr Congreve had lost his money in disastrous business ventures. Although Matilda and her sister Emily were both well educated and accomplished ladies they described themselves variously as servants and needlewomen in order to get assisted passages to the colony.<sup>32</sup>

Matilda gathered twenty-four students at the family home in North Adelaide and was granted a licence by the Board in September 1852. According to Inspector Wyatt her resignation in April 1854 was caused by ill-health, 'mainly arising from the want of proper

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<sup>29</sup> For a similar situation, see Lucy Frost, *No Place for a Nervous Lady: Voices from the Australian Bush*, McPhee Gribble, Fitzroy, 1984, pp. 193-196.

<sup>30</sup> Marjorie R. Theobald, 'The Hidden Profession: Women as Teachers in the Nineteenth Century Ladies' School Tradition' in Sandra Taylor and Miriam Henry (eds), *Battlers and Bluestockings: Women's Place in Australian Education*, Australian College of Education, Canberra, 1988, p. 24; Clarke, *The Governesses*, pp. 134-135.

<sup>31</sup> Barbara Wall, *Our Own Matilda: Matilda Jane Evans 1827-1886, Pioneer Woman and Novelist*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1994, p. 5.

<sup>32</sup> Wall, *Our Own Matilda*, pp. 11-17.



and sufficient school accommodation which had previously compelled her to decline taking several additional pupils.<sup>33</sup>

She moved from Adelaide to Yunkunga, near the hills town of Mount Barker, where she was licensed in a school built by Mr Walter Paterson. She stayed eighteen months and lived in a tiny dwelling attached to the schoolroom. When her resignation was forwarded to the Board, Mr Paterson requested a male teacher. However the Board doubted whether the school would be big enough to remunerate a husband and wife teaching team.<sup>34</sup>

By the middle of 1856 Matilda had opened a school in Mount Barker, by now a well established country town with three licensed and several private schools. She was licensed there for four years and her first and most popular novel, *Marian*, was published in 1859. Matilda's school was substantial and was subject to the regulation preventing her from accepting boys over the age of seven. In 1859 she had six boys and thirty-nine girls enrolled, and besides the basic subjects she taught singing, drawing and languages. She also advertised her school in local newspapers and took in boarders. The advertisements typically did not mention that it was a licensed school. Although her school had to be open to all students in order to maintain government assistance it displayed many of the characteristics of a young ladies' school. The fees definitely precluded the attendance of poor children.<sup>35</sup>

In February 1860 Matilda married Ephraim Evans, a widowed Baptist minister with two children aged five and three. Within three years she had given birth to two sons and her husband had died, leaving her in impoverished circumstances with four children under the age of nine to support.<sup>36</sup>

By January 1864 Matilda had established a private boarding and day school for young ladies at Angaston in the Barossa Valley. In Angaston there were two licensed teachers: Edward Nesbit conducted a large boarding school for boys and Richard and Maria Thomas were licensed in a mixed school. According to the 1861 census there were also three private schools, only one of which was conducted by a woman.<sup>37</sup> In this *milieu* Matilda Evans had bargaining power on account of her moral guardianship, and her expertise in the

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<sup>33</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 449, 455; SAGG, 18 July 1854, p. 592; Wall, *Our Own Matilda*, pp. 19, 30.

<sup>34</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 2071; Wall, *Our Own Matilda*, pp. 25-27.

<sup>35</sup> SAGG, 26 April 1860, pp. 374-375; Wall, *Our Own Matilda*, pp. 29-32. Young ladies' schools were also located in large country towns in New South Wales. See Noeline Kyle, *Her Natural Destiny: Education of Women in New South Wales*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1986, pp. 36-38.

<sup>36</sup> Wall, *Our Own Matilda*, pp. 32, 55-64.

<sup>37</sup> SAGG, 24 April 1860, pp. 372-373; Schools Statistical Return, SAPP 1861, no. 98, pp. 2-4.

accomplishments. She was also an active member of the local Baptist church and used her church networks to attract pupils. Alice Latham and her cousin attended Matilda's school as day scholars, and worshipped at the same church. After she left school, Alice also conducted an 'Infant School' in which a handful of scholars learnt their 'ABCs'. Indeed, the education landscape at Angaston was a complex mosaic.<sup>38</sup>

At the end of 1868 Matilda sent her two step-children back to their relatives in England, and she and her two sons returned to Adelaide. Here she established 'Angaston House', a private school for young ladies in North Adelaide, by now a substantial middle class suburb. Her first advertisement welcomed both boarders and day scholars, 'trusting that by unremitting attention to their moral and intellectual improvement to merit the same patronage she had hitherto obtained in the colony.' She advertised frequently in the *Register* in the 1870s, offering 'the usual branches of English' with music, French, German and drawing. Her school increased in size and moved to larger premises in 1873 and again in 1880.<sup>39</sup>

Matilda gave up teaching in 1883 because of ill-health and died in October 1886, aged fifty-nine. The obituary in the *Observer* said little about her long teaching career but more about her literary achievements as a 'pleasant writer of homely stories full of the highest aspirations.'<sup>40</sup>

Matilda's experience as a teacher for nearly thirty years resonates in her fiction. Seven of her novels and some short stories deal with teaching in detail, and most of her writing about schools pertains to the period before the advent of compulsory education in 1875. The government school and, sometimes, a private school, along with the church, store and hotel, was a common feature of the country towns in her novels. However, her portrayal of the education landscape was incomplete. There were no dame schools, Catholic or Lutheran schools in her fiction. She certainly shared the contemporary middle class prejudices about the Germans and the Irish Catholics that were outlined in chapter one.<sup>41</sup>

Matilda's novels demonstrate ways in which the discourse of moral danger underpinned decisions about children's schooling and ultimately about which teachers would be

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<sup>38</sup> Wall, *Our Own Matilda*, pp. 68-69; Drafts of letters by Alice Latham 1878-79, PRG 281/32, MLSA. Alice Latham's Diary and Miscellaneous Letters, PRG 281/31, MLSA. Alice wrote fondly about Matilda and commented on her delicate health. Alice also owned at least two of Matilda's novels. See chapter six for details of Alice's teaching career.

<sup>39</sup> Wall, *Our Own Matilda*, pp. 83-87, 93-94; *Register*, 31 March 1870, 6 July 1872, 16 January 1882.

<sup>40</sup> *Observer*, 30 October 1886; Wall, *Our Own Matilda*, pp. 96, 100-101.

<sup>41</sup> For further comment about Matilda's portrayal of these groups, see Margaret Allen, 'Three South Australian Women Writers, 1854-1923: Matilda Evans, Catherine Spence and Catherine Martin', Ph.D. thesis, Flinders University, 1991, p. 168.

patronised in country communities. Parents did not send their daughters to a school unless there was a woman teacher in attendance. The heroine of Matilda's first novel, Marian Herbert, became a governess to two young girls whose mother refused to send them to the male teacher's licensed school because it was mixed.<sup>42</sup> Where the licensed teacher was a married man, his daughters or his wife taught the girls in Matilda's fiction. In *Emily's Choice* the licensed teacher was a young unmarried man and the mothers pressured Emily, the minister's wife, into teaching their daughters privately in her own home.<sup>43</sup>

The scenario of a male licensed teacher and a female private teacher was common in rural communities and at the local level men's dominance as teachers was by no means assured. The complaints from men about women's private schools are testimony to that.<sup>44</sup> However, the Board steadfastly maintained that licensed schools in the country, most of which were conducted by men, were better than private schools which it characterised as 'principally kept open by females who are not at all suited to the purpose but manage to eke out an existence by collecting a few pupils'.<sup>45</sup> Yet country parents as much as those in the city favoured the segregation of boys and girls nearing puberty. When the licensed school was mixed they could solve the dilemma by sending girls to the woman teacher who was conducting a private school. Men certainly had not captured teaching in the mid-nineteenth century.

### **Women teachers as autonomous individuals**

Women's autonomy was a strong theme in Ellen Liston's and Matilda Evans' fiction. Ellen Liston's heroines resisted life courses which denied them autonomy. Some invoked religious discourses as the source of their empowerment. In *How a woman kept her promise* Mrs Rawood expounded women's role:

Yes; I would like to see you able to take your stand in the position I think God intended you for; as a helpmeet for the men of your families - be they fathers, husbands, brothers, or sons - to train, to raise, to encourage, to elevate, to ennoble, to advise, to assist; and so play your true part in advancement and civilization. Our sex has always been credited with the power to do a vast deal of good and evil. When we have better knowledge we shall have greater power, more for good and less for evil.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> All of Matilda's fiction was published under the pseudonym but her identity was well known. Maud Jeanne Franc, *Marian: or the Light of Some One's Home*, Sampson, Low, Marston and Co., 1859, p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> Maud Jeanne Franc, *Emily's Choice: An Australian Tale*, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, London, 1867, pp. 240-247.

<sup>44</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 1698, 1812, 1873, 6600, 8497, 540.

<sup>45</sup> Select Committee on the Estimates, SAPP 1855-56, no. 158, Question 5153. See also *Register*, 24 April 1856.

<sup>46</sup> Ellen Liston, 'How a Woman Kept Her Promise' in Harwood, *Pioneers*, p. 72.

Religious identity also gave Matilda Evans' heroines independence and the spiritual source of their empowerment was Protestant evangelical religion. Matilda's principal female characters claimed God as their authority more so than Ellen Liston's, and their moral and spiritual influence extended over all family members. All of Matilda's fiction conveyed a strong religious message and she stridently advocated the temperance cause in several novels. Her women characters were also empowered by 'a sense of vocation - particularly in being active and useful in the world'. Work, productive activity, contributed to their identity. In essence Matilda advocated a style of life which would enable women to be useful and independent.<sup>47</sup> As mentioned in chapter one, women teachers' diaries and letters allude to their quest for autonomy only when it is threatened. Matilda's fiction elaborates the theme in relation to women teachers.<sup>48</sup>

Matilda's readers were presented with teaching as a respectable occupation, though not a lucrative one. All of her teachers were middle class: "*poor*, certainly, but refined and well-educated" was her preferred analysis of the teacher's position [emphasis in original].<sup>49</sup> Teaching was a full time occupation, and Matilda portrayed it as a profession rather than a last resort. In *Beatrice Melton's Discipline*, Mr Melton's death left the women of the family to fend for themselves. Teaching was their first and honourable choice rather than a last resort.

There was but one thing to be done; what is there indeed that an educated woman can do but teach? There is so little left for them in the struggle for life. Thank God that so many can do this, well and efficiently [emphasis in original].<sup>50</sup>

Teaching brought an income and a measure of dignity and independence. Marian Herbert, for example, accepted a position as a governess immediately after her arrival in the colony saying 'I want a home - I cannot stay with my friends; I wish to be useful and independent.' (In real life Catherine Hart and Hannah Turner had expressed precisely those needs in their letters.) Marian was able to 'bring Christianity, education and culture to the lives of a colonial family', all the while maintaining her independent spirit.<sup>51</sup>

In Matilda's fiction, work and home were inseparable. Teaching was placed in the context of a family economy where married and single women contributed their labour and

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<sup>47</sup> Allen, 'Three South Australian Women Writers', pp. 41, 66, 109-111, 190. See also Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1977, pp. 20, 140.

<sup>48</sup> Ellen Liston's fiction was not only less voluminous than Matilda's but also features fewer women teachers.

<sup>49</sup> Maud Jeanne Franc, *Master of Ralston*, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, London, 1885, p. 17.

<sup>50</sup> Maud Jeanne Franc, *Beatrice Melton's Discipline*, Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 1880, p. 11.

<sup>51</sup> Franc, *Marian*, p. 15; Allen, 'Three South Australian Women Writers', p. 110.

generated income without loss of status. Emily, a minister's wife and the most reluctant of all the schoolmistresses, contemplated the upcoming tasks thus:

work was not disagreeable to her; there was nothing either painful or degrading in the kind of work she was about to take up. Degrading! no, indeed - anything but that; and Emily began to rejoice that not only could she assist in adding to the income and rendering her husband's home cheerful and bright, but that it had also become her mission gently to lead forward young and ignorant minds into the fields of knowledge [emphasis in original].<sup>52</sup>

However, in teaching families where there were sufficient adult members, the wife did not usually teach. Rather, she looked after the household and the boarders while other family members were found in the classroom.

All schools, licensed and private, were quiet and orderly places, with well established routines and students 'organised and arranged in classes', albeit sometimes with difficulty. This was the model of efficient teaching promoted by the Board. Matilda did not engage in the contemporary negative discourses about governesses or the accomplishments in her fiction either. Her schools for young ladies were not portrayed as pretentious or ephemeral. Rather, education was intellectually rigorous and strictly moral. Aside from music which was only to be deployed in the private sphere, no other accomplishments were mentioned. Education prepared girls for their future role in companionate marriage.<sup>53</sup>

Matilda's novels provide a rare example of discord within the teaching family. Mr Valma was a highly educated man, but too scholarly for a licensed school in the country. He also neglected his duties to his family, and to the community, as he was so engrossed in his books. Mr Valma 'was excellent at organising and arranging; it was the dull routine of ordinary school-work that was irksome to him.' His daughter Netta did most of the teaching. 'There were times when more than half the duties of the school devolved upon her, and at all times she was her father's faithful assistant; he would have been lost without her.' Rose, the youngest daughter also assisted in the school and their mother was responsible for the domestic duties in the household. Teaching was hard work for Netta. Several times in this novel she was found pouring over slates and books in the evenings. Yet there was still an element of flexibility in the conduct of the school and once she dismissed her pupils early with the comment 'I believe I am as glad to be free as the children. My head aches badly.' During the summer break she had to add up the school

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<sup>52</sup> Franc, *Emily's Choice*, p. 252. See also Marion Amies, 'Home Education and Colonial Ideals of Womanhood', Ph.D. thesis, Monash University, 1986, p. 72.

<sup>53</sup> Franc, *Beatrice Melton's Discipline*, p. 34; Franc, *Emily's Choice*, p. 262; Maud Jeanne Franc, *Vermont Vale*, Sampson Low, Marston and Co., London, 1867, pp. 5, 110. For further discussion, see Marjorie R. Theobald, 'The Accomplished Woman and the Propriety of Intellect: A New Look at Women's Education in Britain and Australia, 1800-1850', *History of Education*, vol. 17, no. 1, 1988, pp. 22-35.

accounts, prepare a report for the 'Board of Education', write up the new rules and order the schoolbooks, all because her father had no inclination to do so. Yet Netta was an autonomous woman. She had her own opinions and carefully weighed up her options. Netta maintained her independent spirit and finally accepted an offer of marriage from a like-minded man. In Matilda's fiction the heroines were useful and independent as single women and within companionate marriage.<sup>54</sup>

In reality, it is impossible to ascertain whether the exploitation of assistants and pupil teachers was commonplace in schools but there are isolated instances of these tensions between male licensed teachers and female staff in the Board's minutes, though never among family members. The internal dynamics of mid-nineteenth century teaching families were not exposed to public scrutiny.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, Matilda's fiction shows women teachers as being happier in their work when they shared the duties with other women than when they worked alone in a school. As Beatrice Melton contemplated her sister's marriage, 'the future looked desolate and blank ... Together, our schoolwork had been pleasant enough; it bore another aspect when I thought of working alone.'<sup>56</sup>

Matilda's fiction also captured some of the tensions between women's teaching and their other duties. These tensions were focussed most sharply in *Emily's Choice*. Emily, the country minister's wife and mother of an infant daughter, taught to augment the family's meagre income and provide the girls with an alternative to the male licensed teacher. She dreaded leaving the baby with the maid while she was teaching. 'It seemed to her that the duties of her home and the duties of her school continually clashed and wrangled.' She felt that she was unable to do justice to either of these vocations and, on top of that, she often had to deal with parish issues in her husband's absence. Caring for ailing relatives was another problematic situation for several women teachers in Matilda's novels. In teaching families, one member assumed responsibility for the school while another looked after the patient, but where teachers worked alone this division of labour was impossible. Milly Ashwin gave up her school to care for her sister.<sup>57</sup> A different set of tensions were evident in Netta Valma's life. She was secretary of the ladies' committee formed to organise a charity bazaar, but her school duties prevented her attendance at day time meetings. Milly Ashwin too, stated that she would be happy to relinquish her pupils 'and engage in works of usefulness - works connected with the Church which wear and tear and engrossment of

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<sup>54</sup> Franc, *Master of Ralston*, pp. 17, 32, 125, 166, 198, 243, 246, 253-254.

<sup>55</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 931, 967.

<sup>56</sup> Franc, *Beatrice Melton's Discipline*, pp. 46, 98.

<sup>57</sup> Franc, *Emily's Choice*, pp. 264, 273; Franc, *Beatrice Melton's Discipline*, p. 46; Maud Jeanne Franc, *John's Wife*, Sampson Low, Marston and Co., London, 1874, p. 6.

school life utterly preclude.' Matilda's fiction is a reminder that women teachers had less freedom to participate in philanthropic activities which took place during working hours.<sup>58</sup>

In sum, Matilda Evans' fiction provides a middle class woman's perspective of the mid-nineteenth century education landscape. It demonstrates the blurred boundaries between private and state schooling as well as women's bargaining power *vis a vis* men. Teaching was women's work. Matilda's women teachers were professionals, and the labour of teaching was difficult, but empowering. She also showed ways in which middle class women negotiated their lives as members of families and, as teachers, identifying tensions which are rarely elaborated in official or private correspondence. Empowered by their faith and a commitment to doing their duty in the world, Matilda's women teachers were able to lead useful and independent lives.

Matilda wrote and published throughout her teaching career and she was a well known author by the 1870s. Many of her novels were serialised in newspapers and those published as books were often given as Sunday School prizes. Her novels were well publicised, affordable and widely read in Australia in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. They were also readily available in Britain. In her own subtle, but nonetheless public way, Matilda Evans advocated the most positive of the contemporary discourses about women as teachers.

### **The Catholic school system**

In the mid-nineteenth century many women teachers like Matilda Evans were sustained by their faith in God. They attended church regularly and used their church networks to secure students. They provided religious as well as secular instruction in their schools although they were not officially sponsored by a particular denomination. However, the most visible group of women teachers who were empowered by religion, were those who taught in the Catholic schools.

In South Australia the small Catholic community was mainly Irish and working class, and Bishop Murphy was dismayed by the state of education when he arrived in the colony in 1843:

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<sup>58</sup> Franc, *John's Wife*, p. 70; Franc, *Master of Ralston*, p. 232; Wall, *Our Own Matilda*, p. 100.

The children are growing up in profound ignorance of the first rudiments of their religion, or what is worse they are imbibing false doctrine in Protestant and Methodist Schools.<sup>59</sup>

Bishop Murphy provided Catholic schools in the 1840s by recruiting devout lay teachers from Sydney and paying their stipends and house rents. He also supported sex-segregated schooling through the employment of husband and wife teaching teams. Although he publicly stated that he would not allow Catholic children to attend licensed schools, he did not intervene when Catholic teachers whom he had sponsored applied for the government stipend.<sup>60</sup>

When Bishop Murphy died in 1860, he was replaced by Bishop Geoghegan who was equally perturbed about education affairs. 'There is not a spot great or small in the British Empire - Great Britain or the colonies, where schools supported from the public purse are so wholly protestant.'<sup>61</sup> In the two years that he was actually resident in the colony, he established a School Fund for the support of Catholic lay teachers. By 1863 the School Fund was assisting at least fifteen schools, several of which were conducted by women, and was itself funded by grants from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Europe. Local priests had jurisdiction over the schools in their parish but there was no prescription of school organisation or curriculum content by the central authority. In the mid-1860s Catholic schools catered for about one quarter of the Catholic students in the colony.<sup>62</sup>

The Catholic school system was completely reorganised after Bishop Sheil's arrival in South Australia. In April 1867 he and Father Woods unveiled their plan for the administration and staffing of Catholic schools. The system was to be controlled by a Director General, Central Council of clergy and laity, and local Boards. Woods as Director

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<sup>59</sup> Father Murphy to Father Geoghegan, 14 November 1843 in Brian Condon (ed.), *Letters and Documents Supporting Historical Studies of the Catholic Church in Australia*, vol. 1, South Australian College of Advanced Education, Magill, 1984, n.p.

<sup>60</sup> Vincent Thomas, 'The Role of the Laity in Catholic Education in South Australia from 1836-1986', Ph.D. thesis, Flinders University, 1989, pp. 64-72, 467; Brian Condon (ed.), *The Journal of Francis Murphy, the First Catholic Bishop of Adelaide*, South Australian College of Advanced Education, Magill, 1983, pp. 81-138; Margaret M. Press, *From Our Broken Toil: South Australian Catholics 1836-1906*, Lutheran Publishing House Adelaide, 1986, pp. 51-78.

<sup>61</sup> Bishop Geoghegan to Monsignor Woodlock, 25 July 1860 in Condon, *Letters and Documents*, vol. 2, n. p.

<sup>62</sup> Helen M. Sheedy, 'The Sisters of St Joseph and Catholic Education in South Australia, 1867-1874', B.A.(Hons), University of Adelaide, 1969, pp. 3-6; Marie Therese Foale, 'The Sisters of St Joseph: Their Foundation and Early History', Ph.D. thesis, University of Adelaide, 1987, p. 13; Brother Ronald Fogarty, *Catholic Education in Australia 1806-1950*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1959, vol. 2, pp. 222-224; Brian Condon, 'A Church in Entropy: Catholic Adelaide, 1868-1873', *Historical Studies in Education*, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 121-123.



was responsible for the inspection and examination of schools, and certification of teachers.<sup>63</sup>

Father Woods was not only Director but, with Mary MacKillop, established the Institute of the Sisters of St Joseph to staff the schools. They envisaged an independent community of women religious committed to living among and educating the poor. The core of the Institute's Rule was central government. The Institute was not subject to the bishop's authority, as were many religious orders, but existed under a single General Superior who answered to the Holy See. In essence, Mary MacKillop was in charge of the recruitment, training and work of the women religious who were to educate the Catholic working class children of the colony. She drew up a detailed set of instructions covering the organisation, curriculum and teaching methodology for use in Catholic schools. She advocated the monitorial system of instruction and excluded the accomplishments from the curriculum, reasoning that working class children should not be educated beyond their station in life. Mary's background was middle class and she had had substantial teaching experience (although no formal training) prior to taking the veil.<sup>64</sup>

Father Woods intended that the Sisters of St Joseph would not only undermine the licensed schools but also replace Catholic lay teachers. In a letter to Mary MacKillop he wrote:

I think that, as we are trying to overcome competition and even Catholicise the country by means of schools, we should do more for the parents than ever they could expect from hired teachers and show them that we are utterly devoted to their interests. We shall soon crush the wretched government system.<sup>65</sup>

The plan was to install the Sisters in schools in the poorest sections of Adelaide, and then extend their schools into country districts. Mary arrived in Adelaide from the town of Penola in July 1867 and, with two other nuns, took charge of the Cathedral Hall school. Enrolments were slow at first but increased dramatically when the Sisters not only provided free education for the poorest children, but also food and clothing. At least one licensed teacher, Ann Cremin, lost her licence when many of her students transferred to the Cathedral Hall school. It was intended to use this school as a Model School pending a more comprehensive system of training. As with the state system, these intentions were not realised until much later.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Fogarty, *Catholic Education in Australia*, pp. 225-227.

<sup>64</sup> Paul Gardiner, *An Extraordinary Australian: Mary MacKillop*, E. J. Dwyer, Sydney, 1993, pp. 156-158; Foale, 'The Sisters of St Joseph', pp. 33-37.

<sup>65</sup> Sister Evelyn Pickering, *Mary and Julian: Their Letters 1862-1868*, Mary of the Cross (MacKillop) Centre, Mount Street North Sydney, 1989, p. 72; Condon, 'A Church in Entropy', pp. 125-126, 128.

<sup>66</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 176; Marie Therese Foale, *The Josephite Story: the Sisters of St Joseph: Their Foundation and Early History 1866-1893*, St Joseph's Generalate, Sydney, 1989, p. 28.

Father Woods moved quickly to establish the Sisters of St Joseph in country schools and, with rapid recruitment into the Institute, the proportion of well-educated sisters fell. Many were sent to teach in the country with little induction into religious life, and even less training as teachers. In 1868, Mary gave up teaching herself and moved among the schools, assisting the nuns with lesson preparation and school organisation. She effectively became a school inspector. By June 1869 the Sisters had taken over or established seventeen schools and were responsible for the education of almost half the Catholic children in the colony.<sup>67</sup>

The Sisters of St Joseph received a mixed reception in country areas. From Moonta Sr Dorothea wrote 'we have not many children, and what there is of them are as wild as little kangaroos. The people, too, are very bad Catholics.' The Sisters owned no property, and supported themselves from begging and the meagre school fees. Parents initially were sceptical about the Sisters' teaching ability and sometimes unable to cater for them in terms of food and living accommodation. Some Sisters reported that they received more financial support from Protestants than their Catholic parishioners. In addition, many Sisters were isolated from the community of women religious by being placed in country convents with only one or two other members of the Institute. Their letters to Mary MacKillop reveal the loneliness of living and working in these adverse conditions. Indeed their faith was sorely tested, and many struggled to uphold both their religious and teaching vocations in the early years.<sup>68</sup>

The Sisters of St Joseph were also openly opposed by a group of Irish priests. They disapproved of the Sisters' practices of living entirely from alms, of refusing to generate income by teaching the accomplishments, especially music, and their refusal to organise into choir and lay sisters in the conventional manner of other women religious. However, the crux of the male clergy's concern was that this group of women religious were independent of their control. The priests had no say in the government of the Institute or the placement of teachers in schools. In an era when female subservience to male authority was expected, Mary and the Sisters of St Joseph were answerable to a higher authority, the Holy See, not the local male clergy.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *Southern Cross*, 20 June 1869, p. 337; Sheedy, 'The Sisters of St Joseph and Catholic Education', p. 87; Foale, 'The Sisters of St Joseph', pp. 91-93; Report Book 1871, F1871 V8, Archives of the Sisters of St Joseph, Sydney.

<sup>68</sup> Sr Dorothea Ryan to Sr Clare, 1 July 1870, Letters of the South Australian Sisters, Archives of the Sisters of St Joseph, Adelaide; Sheedy, 'The Sisters of St Joseph and Catholic Education', pp. 44-45.

<sup>69</sup> Sr John Baptist Fitzgerald to Mary MacKillop, 6 July 1870, Letters of the South Australian Sisters, Archives of the Sisters of St Joseph, Adelaide; Foale, *The Josephite Story*, pp. 56, 108-109; Osmund Thorpe, *Mary MacKillop*, Burns and Oates, London, 1957, p. 85.

At Macclesfield, Sr Gertrude found very little support from either the priest, or the parents, when she and Sr Monica were despatched to set up a school in opposition to the licensed teacher. They managed to find a schoolroom and a gift of calico was used to make blinds. Sr Monica reported that 'the schoolroom looks quite respectable and all we want now is a few desks, a few books and a great lot of pupils.' Of their first seven students, three could not read and the others knew very little. The priest preached the obligatory sermon demanding that the children be sent to the Catholic school but refused to help procure books or slates. Sr Gertrude recorded that 'he might get us two desks and a map.' However, she rejoiced that 'another scholar this morning is doing vulgar fractions ... nice piece of business.' By mid-July they had forty pupils and the school was working according to Mary's instructions.<sup>70</sup>

At the same time as Father Woods was promoting the Sisters of St Joseph, he was systematically marginalising men lay teachers. In October 1867, the Central Council passed a resolution that mixed schools should be conducted by women. At this meeting Woods claimed that men teachers 'seldom took the same interest in schools and pains with the children which females did.'<sup>71</sup> His defence of women as the most suitable teachers of mixed schools defied conventional wisdom which supported men as principal breadwinners and sex-segregated schooling. He sent the Sisters to set up schools in settlements where Catholic men were conducting mixed schools as licensed teachers, and as Catholic lay teachers. Although parents were under strict instructions to support Catholic schools, they were reluctant to send the boys to the nuns. From the parents' perspective, the dilemma was solved by sending the boys to the male teacher's school and the girls to the Sisters, thereby satisfying the demand for sex-segregated schooling. Of course the loss of the girls' fees threatened men's livelihoods as teachers, and generated tensions at the local level between the Sisters and laity.

Within weeks of assuming control of Catholic schooling, Father Woods had also signalled his intentions regarding women lay teachers. He inspected the nineteen Catholic schools which had existed during Bishop Geoghegan's era, attacked the standards of teaching, and dismissed three young women lay teachers for incompetence. Two were allowed to study under the Sisters of St Joseph in the hope that they would join the Institute. He also installed the Sisters in communities where there were women lay teachers.

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<sup>70</sup> Sr Monica Phillips to Mary MacKillop, 9 June 1868, Sr Gertrude Hayman to Mary MacKillop, 11 June 1868, Diary of Sr Gertrude Hayman 5 July 1868, Sr Gertrude Hayman to Mary MacKillop, 13 July 1868, Letters of the South Australian Sisters, Archives of the Sisters of St Joseph, Adelaide.

<sup>71</sup> *Southern Cross and Catholic Herald*, 19 October 1869, *Irish Harp and Farmers Herald*, 25 February 1871.

Catholic lay teachers complained to the press and to their local priests. One of the most scathing critics of the Sisters was 'ex-female teacher' who had been forced to give up her school. She attacked the quality of the Sisters, claiming that illiterate Irish servants had been admitted to the Institute and were now teaching. This accusation was refuted, pointing out that those who had been servants were not given teaching duties. However, there was very little support from the press or the clergy for Catholic lay teachers' struggles to continue their careers.<sup>72</sup>

The complexities of the struggle within the Catholic school system during this period can be seen in Catherine McMahan's teaching career. Catherine was the Catholic lay teacher at Hectorville, not far from Adelaide, when the Central Council was established in 1867. She taught about forty students and was acknowledged as a very efficient teacher. In 1868-9 her school passed the annual examination 'with great credit.'<sup>73</sup> In April 1870, however, Catherine became a licensed teacher with the connivance of the local priests who stated that they 'would rather have the grant than the Sisters.'<sup>74</sup> This was a direct attack on Woods' administration and he responded by sending Sr Mary Joseph and Sr Anthony to establish a school close by. For four months, the two schools competed for pupils until the local clergy capitulated to Fr Woods, and accepted the Sisters.<sup>75</sup> Catherine resigned as a licensed teacher and resumed her association with the Central Council, this time at the Norwood Catholic school. She stayed at Norwood from September 1870 until some time in 1872 when this school was also taken over by the Sisters of St Joseph. In November 1874 she applied to the Board for a licence at Armagh, a country school, where there was a substantial Catholic population. Like many other Catholic lay teachers Catherine lost her place in the Catholic system to the Sisters of St Joseph and turned to the Board for employment. She taught at Armagh until her resignation in mid-1876.<sup>76</sup>

Bishop Sheil was absent from the diocese for most of the period from 1867 to 1871, as tensions between the clergy and the Sisters of St Joseph escalated.<sup>77</sup> When he returned to

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<sup>72</sup> *Irish Harp and Farmers Herald*, 28 October 1871, 18 November 1871; Thorpe, *Mary MacKillop*, pp. 53-55.

<sup>73</sup> *Southern Cross and Catholic Herald*, 20 September 1867, 20 January 1868, 22 January 1869.

<sup>74</sup> Thorpe, *Mary MacKillop*, p. 101; Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no 1101; Thomas, 'The Role of the Laity', p. 140.

<sup>75</sup> Sr Mary Joseph Dwyer to Mary MacKillop, 4 July 1870, 3 September 1870, Letters of the South Australian Sisters, Archives of the Sisters of St Joseph, Adelaide; Foale, 'The Sisters of St Joseph', pp. 147-149.

<sup>76</sup> *Irish Harp and Farmers Herald*, 23 December 1871, 27 January 1872; Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 3554; Incomes of School Teachers 1873-4, SAPP 1977, no. 259, p. 7; Incomes of School Teachers 1875-6, SAPP 1878, no. 42, pp. 4, 10. Catherine married in 1876 but resumed her career as a state school teacher in 1877. See chapter five and the conclusion for further details of her long teaching career as Catherine Francis.

<sup>77</sup> George O'Neil, *Life of Mother Mary of the Cross*, Pellegrini and Co., Sydney, 1931, pp. 50-51; Thorpe, *Mary MacKillop*, p. 76; Foale, *The Josephite Story*, pp. 58-77.

Adelaide in February 1871, he was mentally and physically ill. The priests petitioned him with their grievances about the Sisters of St Joseph, and the conduct of the Catholic school system. A thorough inspection of the schools and the expedient removal of Father Woods from the diocese did not pacify them. At the behest of a group of Irish priests, Bishop Sheil attempted to take control of the Sisters, and abolish the Institute's central government. Mary refused to obey his order and insisted that she was, above all, answerable to God.<sup>78</sup> She was excommunicated on 22 September 1871. More than fifty nuns left the Institute or were expelled during this turmoil but sixty remained in their positions, mainly in country schools. Seventeen of the Sisters' schools were either closed or taken over by lay teachers.<sup>79</sup>

The whole saga of the excommunication was played out in the newspapers in the following months. A core of Catholic laity, especially those who had relatives in the Institute, supported Mary and the *Irish Harp* advocated her cause so successfully that the dissident priests were silenced. The lay teachers' claims were discounted too. Bishop Sheil was persuaded to lift the excommunication in February 1872, a week before he died.<sup>80</sup> An investigation in 1872 exonerated Mary and the following year she travelled to Rome, where the Constitutions of the Institute were ratified and central government confirmed. However, Mary Mackillop's excommunication was only the first of many battles between male clergy and the Sisters of St Joseph over the governance of the Institute and ultimately over the education of Catholic working class children. The male clergy in South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales contested her authority for nearly twenty years.<sup>81</sup>

At the time of the excommunication the Central Council was disbanded and the lay teachers were left to fend for themselves thereafter. In 1871 'ex-female teacher' claimed that 'some of our best teachers, both males and females have been driven out of the colony or into other avocations.' Helen Sheedy has identified at least eleven lay teachers, besides Catherine McMahan, who applied for licences between 1868 and 1874.<sup>82</sup> Some continued as private teachers but this option became increasingly difficult as the Sisters of St Joseph regrouped and the Catholic and state school systems expanded in the 1870s. The third option for Catholic lay women, who wanted to continue their teaching careers, was to take the veil. Life in the Institute of the Sisters of St Joseph was very difficult but offered

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<sup>78</sup> See Mary's letter to the Bishop in Thorpe, *Mary MacKillop*, p. 112.

<sup>79</sup> Foale, *The Josephite Story*, pp. 78-98; O'Neil, *Life of Mother Mary*, pp. 92-95; *Chaplet and Southern Cross*, 27 May 1871; Thomas, 'The Role of the Laity', pp. 134-135; Condon, 'A Church in Entropy', pp. 130-134.

<sup>80</sup> Foale, *The Josephite Story*, pp. 99-105.

<sup>81</sup> Foale, *The Josephite Story*, pp. 101-196, Gardiner, *An Extraordinary Australian*, pp. 119, 270-346.

<sup>82</sup> *Register*, 7 December 1871; Sheedy, 'The Sisters of St Joseph and Catholic Education', pp. 21-22; Thomas, 'The Role of the Laity', pp. 121-132, 142-144.

selected women, like Josephine McMullen opportunities rarely available to those who remained in the secular world.

Josephine was a native of the city of Cork and had emigrated to South Australia with family members in 1855. She was a Catholic lay teacher in the early 1860s but relinquished her school to enter the Mercy Convent in Melbourne. However, she did not stay there long.<sup>83</sup>

In 1867 she was living with her brother and his family, and conducting a private school in Adelaide. At Father Woods' request she rented and furnished a cottage in preparation for Mary MacKillop's arrival in the city. She joined the Institute when Mary arrived and taught with her at the Cathedral Hall school. Josephine's brother was a member of the Central Council and also the architect of the Mother House at Kensington. Her niece also joined the Institute.<sup>84</sup>

At the time of her novitiate Josephine was thirty-five years old, a mature and accomplished lady with experience of religious life. Women like her provided leadership and stability in the tumultuous years that followed. Mary MacKillop had complete confidence in her and their correspondence was open and friendly. By 1868 she was a Little Sister, responsible for managing a convent. Father Woods wrote 'Sr Josephine is well and doing well as Little Sister but it is a great cross to her and she bewails her fate.'<sup>85</sup>

In June 1870 Josephine was Mistress of the Postulants. Mary had gone to Queensland temporarily and Josephine warned her about the escalating tensions in the Adelaide diocese, but from that distance there was little Mary could do to restore equilibrium. Josephine also expressed her concerns to Father Woods and subsequently wrote: 'Now, he hardly speaks to me.' In Mary's absence Josephine took over her role of travelling to the various convent schools in the city and country to assist with organisation. In July she was very ill and her friend Sr Angela noted 'I think it is all from want of nourishment. She has gone morning after morning to Bowden with nothing to eat except a dry piece of bread and tea without milk.' Bowden was located in the poorest part of the working class district of Hindmarsh. Of Bowden it was said 'no poor quarter of any colonial city could vie with it for poverty and its usual accompaniments. The Sisters of St Joseph have a school there in a room literally worse than a stable.'<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Thomas, 'The Role of the Laity', pp. 105, 155; *Southern Cross*, 13 May 1904.

<sup>84</sup> Foale, *The Josephite Story*, pp. 30-31, 203-204; Thorpe, *Mary MacKillop*, pp. 55, 61; Press, *From Our Broken Toil*, p. 163.

<sup>85</sup> Pickering, *Mary and Julian*, p. 77; Sr Josephine McMullen to Mary MacKillop, 5 August 1870, Letters of the South Australian Sisters, Archives of the Sisters of St Joseph, Adelaide.

<sup>86</sup> Sr Josephine McMullen to Mary MacKillop, 25 June 1870, 5 August 1870, Sr Angela to Mary MacKillop, 26 July 1870, 12 August 1870, Letters of the South Australian Sisters, Archives of the

No sooner had Josephine recovered, than she was travelling to country schools in the district where the priests were particularly antagonistic towards the Sisters. At Kapunda she was interrogated for an hour by Father Horan, the leader of the dissident clergy, but she reported that elsewhere 'I sometimes cried with joy to see all so happy and going so well in spite of all the opposition.'<sup>87</sup>

After another bout of serious illness she resumed her travels and on Christmas Day she wrote of her troubles with the Catholic lay teacher at Clare.

I have had two visits from Mr Graham, the schoolmaster since I came up about inducing the girls to come to the Sisters. He said last Friday only I was a religious he would take legal proceedings against me. I told him it was my business to teach the girls and that I would do all I could to get them.<sup>88</sup>

Teaching and administration were Josephine's business for the following thirty-four years. She was the provincial superior of the Queensland Province of the Institute from 1875 to 1880 and in that capacity was at the heart of the Sisters' battles with Bishop Quinn. She was also the provincial superior at Armidale in New South Wales from 1896 to 1899 before being called to Sydney to be the Procuratrix-General (or Bursar) of the Institute and a member of the General Council. She held this position until her death in April 1904.<sup>89</sup>

Notwithstanding the early years of hardship, Josephine McMullen was able to pursue a satisfying religious and professional career. She developed her leadership skills and she had a valued place within a community of autonomous women. Her economic needs were met and she had security in her old age. Her work as a teacher of Catholic children was deemed important for its secular and religious components. In taking up a religious vocation, she had also chosen a viable and esteemed alternative to marriage and motherhood. Indeed Josephine McMullen's membership of the Sisters of St Joseph had enabled her to lead a useful and independent life.<sup>90</sup>

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Sisters of St Joseph, Adelaide; Sabine Willis (ed.), *Women, Faith and Fetes: Essays in the History of Women and the Church in Australia*, Dove Communications, Melbourne, 1977, pp. 87-88.

<sup>87</sup> Sr Bernard Walsh to Mary MacKillop, 18 August 1870, Sr Josephine McMullen to Mary MacKillop, 29 November 1870, Letters of the South Australian Sisters, Archives of the Sisters of St Joseph, Adelaide.

<sup>88</sup> Sr Josephine McMullen to Mary MacKillop, 25 December 1870, Letters of the South Australian Sisters, Archives of the Sisters of St Joseph, Adelaide.

<sup>89</sup> Foale, *The Josephite Story*, pp. 30-31, 132-135; *Southern Cross*, 13 May 1904.

<sup>90</sup> For a general discussion see Marta Danylewycz, *Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920*, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1987, pp. 90-108; Stephanie Burley, 'None More Anonymous? Catholic Teaching Nuns, Their Secondary Schools and Students in South Australia, 1880-1925', M.Ed. thesis, University of Adelaide, 1992, pp. 8-14.

In 1877 Mary MacKillop wrote 'many prejudices are directed against myself, for bishops and priests think me some extraordinary and bold woman.'<sup>91</sup> In an era when women were increasingly being confined to the domestic sphere, her agency in education was extraordinary. She was a leading figure in extending the power of the Catholic church, its governance in the area of education, and the concomitant weakening of lay influence. She undertook administrative tasks which were usually the preserve of a very small group of middle class men. These included laying down the blueprint for Catholic school organisation in South Australia. She was an inspector of schools long before any women were ever appointed in the state school systems. And she was ultimately responsible for the recruitment, training and teaching of a group of women religious whose schools extended into three colonies by the early 1870s. As the Sisters of St Joseph regrouped and expanded under her leadership after the excommunication, those like Josephine McMullen who took the veil were able to pursue teaching as a life-work. On the other hand Catholic lay teachers were increasingly denied the opportunity to earn a livelihood teaching children of their own religion.

### **German women as teachers**

While the Catholic church was building its school system on women's labour as teachers, the only other church which managed to establish a school system in South Australia shunned women teachers in the mid-nineteenth century.

From the time they arrived in South Australia German/Lutheran emigrants attempted to cater for elementary education in each of their settlements. The synod at Klemzig in 1841 laid the ground rules for Lutheran education and it was decided to send to Germany for the appropriate textbooks, hymnbooks and Bibles for use in schools. Children were required to attend school regularly from the ages of six to fourteen and parents were threatened with church discipline, and ultimately excommunication, for failing to school their children, and support the teacher financially. However, irregular attendance was just as much a problem in Lutheran schools as elsewhere. At a later synod the decision was made to hold two school sessions daily, in the hope that this would accommodate the need for children's labour on farms. The older students attended in the mornings and the younger ones in the afternoons.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Thorpe, *Mary MacKillop*, p. 200.

<sup>92</sup> J.E. Zweck, 'Church and State Relations as they affected the Lutheran Church and its schools in South Australia, 1838-1900', M.Ed. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1971, pp. 38, 81.



In the mid-nineteenth century all teachers in the Lutheran school system were men and they were expected to undertake some pastoral as well as teaching duties. The entire financial support of Lutheran schools rested with local communities and individual pastors had jurisdiction over schools in their parish. Teachers' salaries were derived from student fees, plus some cash and payment in kind. Ferdinand Mueller, one of the longest serving Lutheran teachers, began his career at Lobethal with a salary of nine pounds plus free meals with members of the congregation. This was supplemented by wheat sales from a plot of land. Ferdinand had to harvest this plot and employed three girls to help him.<sup>93</sup>

At first Ferdinand conducted classes in one room of a two room tin cottage. When the dividing wall was later removed, the floor was on two levels. The boys sat on the higher part and the girls in the lower level which flooded in winter. (A new school room was built in 1851.) Although seated separately, the boys and girls were taught the same religious and secular lessons. The curriculum and methods of instruction in Lutheran schools were based on those in Prussia. Sewing was not taught and most children left school permanently when they were confirmed at the age of fourteen.<sup>94</sup> Anna Ey attended Ferdinand's school for six years and later recalled 'we memorised and wrote, did arithmetic and sang, the latter with much joy'.<sup>95</sup>

The absence of women as teachers in the Lutheran schools provides a stark contrast to Catholic, licensed and private entrepreneurial schools. Lutheran schools in South Australia modelled their employment practices on those in Prussia where more men were traditionally employed as teachers in state schools, and in young ladies' academies. James Albisetti's review of the feminisation of teaching suggests that Germany had by far the lowest rate of feminisation in western countries.<sup>96</sup> Albisetti uses Anthony La Vopa's research to explain men's dominance in terms of the early professionalisation of teaching in Germany, which encouraged men to view teaching as a career rather than a part time activity. This conclusion is at odds with other research which suggests that men abandoned teaching

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<sup>93</sup> Zweck, 'Church and State Relations', p. 34; Neil Christoph, *Three Brothers From Birnbaum: The Mueller Family History*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1983, pp. 32, 37; Teachers in Germany were employed in the same manner. See Mary Jo Maynes, *Schooling for the People: Comparative Local Studies of Schooling History in France and Germany 1750-1850*, Holmes and Meier, New York, 1985, pp. 36, 42.

<sup>94</sup> A. Brauer, *Under the Southern Cross: History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1956, p. 75; Maynes, *Schooling for the People*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>95</sup> Anna Ey, *Early Lutheran Congregations in South Australia*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1986, pp. 23, 27, 34.

<sup>96</sup> James C. Albisetti, *Schooling German Girls and Women: Secondary and Higher Education in the Nineteenth Century*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1988; James C. Albisetti, 'The Feminisation of Teaching in the Nineteenth Century: A Comparative Perspective', *History of Education*, vol. 22, no. 3, 1993, pp. 255-260. In other German emigrant communities men also dominated as teachers. See Geraldine Joncich Clifford, 'Man/Woman/Teacher: Gender, Family and Career in American History' in Donald Warren (ed.), *American Teachers: History of a Profession at Work*, Macmillan, New York, 1989, p. 295.

when it became a full time occupation.<sup>97</sup> La Vopa's research and that of Mary Jo Maynes and James Van Horn Melton suggest an explanation might be found in the Lutheran tradition whereby the teacher served as the sexton to the local pastor, a position that had to be filled by men. The sexton-schoolmaster persisted well into the nineteenth century when Prussian school reform enlisted the church as its partner.<sup>98</sup> Perhaps it could be that the close connections between schoolmaster and church in South Australia were sufficient to legitimise his position as moral guardian of girls, whereas in licensed schools the role devolved to women teachers.

The Lutheran church eschewed the assistance offered by the state under the 1851 Act. However, German parents wanted their children, especially the boys, to learn English so that they would be able to do business with the English colonists. Where the Lutheran teachers were unable to provide English language instruction, German parents often looked to licensed schools to supply the need. A resolution at the 1856 synod to allow the teaching of English in Lutheran schools did not solve the language issue as many Lutheran teachers were not bilingual. The other area of discontent was in the payment of Lutheran teachers' salaries, as the entire burden rested with the local congregation. Throughout the 1860s teachers and the parents successfully applied to the Board for the government stipend. These deals by parents and/or teachers threatened clerical governance in Lutheran communities and some pastors were unwilling to cede any changes. By 1870 there were thirty-one state schools in German settlements and about the same number of Lutheran schools.<sup>99</sup>

In the late 1840s and early 1850s there was an influx of middle class Germans into South Australia. They settled mainly in Adelaide and at Tanunda in the Barossa Valley, and interacted more widely with the English speaking population than the first groups of German settlers.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Michael W. Apple, *Teachers and Texts: A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, New York, 1986, p. 62; Clifford, 'Man/Woman/Teacher', p. 310.

<sup>98</sup> Anthony La Vopa, *Prussian School Teachers: Profession and Office 1763-1848*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980; James Van Horn Melton, *Absolutism and the Eighteenth Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988; Mary Jo Maynes, *Schooling in Western Europe: A Social History*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1985.

<sup>99</sup> Zweck, 'Church and State Relations', pp. 107-108, 118-127; Brauer, *Under the Southern Cross*, pp. 164-165. For discussions of tensions between teachers, pastors and local communities in Germany, see La Vopa, *Prussian Schoolteachers*, pp. 34, 74; Maynes, *Schooling in Western Europe*, pp. 70, 75-77.

<sup>100</sup> Zweck, 'Church and State Relations', pp. 48, 53, 64-69; Bernhard Basedow, *The Basedow Story: A German South Australian Heritage*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1990.

Among these new immigrants were several women teachers. Although they were excluded from teaching in Lutheran schools some found a niche teaching middle class girls. Their bargaining power derived from their expertise in the accomplishments, namely the German language and music. In England a German governess was a status symbol and in South Australia, too, there were advertisements seeking governesses with expertise in the German language.<sup>101</sup> Ian Harmstorf also claims that in the nineteenth century the English believed that 'music spoke with a German accent' and in Adelaide there were several popular German musicians and music teachers.<sup>102</sup> Sophie Stamm was an accomplished musician who kept a small school prior to her marriage. Miss Wilberth, a German lady, also conducted a German and English school for young ladies in Port Adelaide for some years.<sup>103</sup>

Several of the newly arrived men teachers were university graduates and the Board welcomed them warmly as professional teachers. Mathilde Piper also found a niche as a licensed teacher in the working class suburb of Stepney, which had a substantial German population.

Mathilde arrived in Adelaide in 1851 with her widowed mother, three sisters and two brothers. In Germany she had been educated by a governess and then spent three years at one of the best private girls' schools in northern Germany, taking advantage of the expansion in middle class girls' education which occurred in the early nineteenth century. The early years in South Australia were difficult for the Piper family. Mathilde went governessing again before securing a position as a teacher of German in a ladies' academy. In about 1855 she took over this school and in 1856 her application for a licence was successful.<sup>104</sup>

Mathilde conducted a day and boarding school for between forty and sixty students, two thirds of whom were girls. She taught Arithmetic, German and, if required, French which she knew better than English, and she accommodated parents' demands for English language instruction. In 1860 Inspector Wyatt reported: 'Under a well-qualified German

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<sup>101</sup> *Register*, 4 January 1871; Pamela Horn, 'The Victorian Governess', *History of Education*, vol. 18, no. 4, 1984, p. 340.

<sup>102</sup> Ian Harmstorf, 'Guests or Fellow-Countrymen: A Study in Assimilation, an Aspect of the German Community in South Australia, 1836-1918', Ph.D. thesis, Flinders University, 1987, p. 222. See also Annegrit Laubenthal, 'Music in the German Communities of South Australia' in Andrew McCredie (ed.), *From Colonel Light into the Footlights: The Performing Arts in South Australia from 1836 to the Present*, Pagel Books, Adelaide, 1988, pp. 315-327.

<sup>103</sup> Ey, *Early Lutheran Congregations*, p. 22; *Register*, 3 January 1865, 12 January 1871, 6 July 1872; Annie Duncan's Reminiscences, PRG 532/6, MLSA, p. 30.

<sup>104</sup> For biographical details of Mathilde Piper and her family see 'German Settlers in South Australia, Miscellaneous Papers 1776-1964', Box F, Folder B, Item 29, Special Collections, Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide; Albisetti, *Schooling German Girls and Women*, pp. 9-10, 30-33; Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 3236.

mistress and an able English assistant, this school, consisting chiefly of German children, has been brought into good working condition.' Some notable South Australians, including Sir Hans Heysen began their education in this licensed school.<sup>105</sup>

This school was, in fact, a family business conducted in the Pipers' home at Stepney. Mathilde's mother was in charge of the boarding house and her sister Louise held private classes for young ladies wishing to learn German. Among Louise's students was Emilie Temme. Emilie had received all of her elementary education in English at private girls' schools. Although her mother had taught her some German in the evenings Emilie did not know enough to be confirmed. Therefore she was sent as a boarder to Louise for intensive instruction in the language.<sup>106</sup> After Mathilde's mother died in 1866 Louise took charge of the boarders until her death in 1873. Some of Mathilde's nieces were scholars and assistant teachers in her school. Her widowed sister returned to the family home in 1880 and took charge of the housekeeping for many years.

Church and state, private and public, working class and middle class education all co-existed in Mathilde Piper's school. She obtained a small but secure source of income from the government stipend and, through her close association with the Lutheran church, she secured both working class and middle class students. Her licensed school was underpinned by family labour, and the business generated sufficient capital for her to build a new schoolroom in 1870. Mathilde's license was continued until education became compulsory in 1875.<sup>107</sup>

In sum, the Lutheran school system excluded women as teachers in the mid-nineteenth century. However, middle class German women were able to find niches in other teaching contexts. Some generated income as private teachers and the Board was sufficiently flexible to encompass all manner of schools and teachers under its governance.

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<sup>105</sup> 'German Settlers in South Australia', Box F, Folder B, Item 29; SAGG, 26 April 1860, pp. 370-371.

<sup>106</sup> Margaret Allen, Mary Hutchison and Alison Mackinnon, *Fresh Evidence, New Witnesses: Finding Women's History*, South Australian Government Printer, Netley, 1989, p. 79.

<sup>107</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 1074, 1157, 3369, 2138, 2446, 2822. Correspondence about retiring allowances, 21 December 1875, GRG 50/3/1875/83. See chapter six for further details of Mathilde's school in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

## Conclusion

The mid-nineteenth century education landscape in South Australia was a complex mosaic and the state school system was by no means dominant. Licensed schools co-existed with Catholic and Lutheran schools, as well as all manner of private schools, and the boundaries between the state and other forms of education were blurred. Lutheran and Catholic teachers in the early years colonised the state school system, thereby challenging clerical governance. However, from the late 1860s the Catholic church marginalised men and women lay teachers, and extended its governance by co-opting women religious, namely the Sisters of St Joseph, as teachers.

While men's interests were being institutionalised over women's by the state, at the local level the demand for sex-segregated schooling gave women inside and outside licensed schools many advantages over men. Working class women teachers undermined them by offering a cheap alternative to state schools and by meeting the demand for rapid and efficient instruction in literacy skills. Middle class women, by virtue of their moral guardianship and expertise in the accomplishments, negotiated their careers across a range of contexts. They secured students through their church and social networks and accommodated the demand for teachers who were able to provide tuition in French, music and German. Some provided religious as well as secular instruction. Middle class women also took advantage of the Board's flexibility to secure government assistance for their young ladies' schools or they provided an alternative to mixed schools conducted by men, especially in country areas.

Religion and ethnicity, as well as social class, mediated women's opportunities to generate income as teachers. Although the Lutheran system was out-of-bounds, middle class German women found niches in other contexts. Catholic women's careers were also affected by the reorganisation of that school system.

Notwithstanding these differences, women teachers' agency is revealed in the ways they negotiated their careers across several contexts and in the conduct of their private lives as members of families. Matilda Evans, Ellen Liston and Caroline Carleton, among others, were also subtly claiming space in the public sphere through their writing as well as their teaching. Matilda Evans' fiction in particular proclaimed women's autonomy and that teaching was still their work in the mid-nineteenth century.

However, subtle changes were afoot and being manifested in the Catholic system from the late 1860s. The extension of church governance in this system was effectively delivering

teaching into the hands of single women and excluding married women from pursuing teaching as a life-work. Within two decades teaching had become an occupation for single women in state schools too. The changes which precipitated this phenomenon will be considered in the next chapter.

## Chapter Four

### Reconfiguring women's participation in state schooling

By the 1870s South Australian society was becoming increasingly differentiated by class and by geographic location. The colonial gentry, although small, 'had accumulated great wealth ... usually by way of pastoral, agricultural or mining interests ... and led a distinctively leisured style of living.' Their sons were sent to the Anglican St Peters College in Adelaide and some families sent their children to Britain or Europe for higher education.<sup>1</sup> While members of the gentry maintained their economic power, their political dominance was being challenged by the expanding urban, non-conformist middle class, an 'increasingly ambitious and self-conscious group of manufacturers, professional men, career public servants, business and tradespeople.'<sup>2</sup> This group was predominantly of British heritage but included a number of German families who had emigrated in the early 1850s.

In a series of articles in the *Register*, Catherine Helen Spence commented on the changes brought by the growth of commerce and industry in the colony:

All the avocations which middle class woman used to pursue at home, by which she saved money if she did not earn it, are slipping one by one from her by the encroachments of machinery and the profitable division of labour.<sup>3</sup>

She went on to portray middle class women as idle and losing self-respect because they were not engaged in 'gratified activity.' Arguably her assessment was more a reflection of the British literature from which she quoted liberally, than the actual situation in the colony. With middle class incomes ranging from 100 to 600 pounds per annum only families at the upper end of this scale could forego the labour of the women of the household.<sup>4</sup> Most single and married women were engaged in domestic labour as well as being charged with the responsibility for their families' moral and spiritual lives. Although married middle class women were less likely to be participating in income generating labour, their contributions in terms of unpaid labour and saving expenditure still underpinned many a fragile family economy. And in less wealthy families, for example those of licensed teachers, married women were still generating income. The pace of industrialisation in

<sup>1</sup> Dirk van Dissel, 'The Adelaide Gentry, 1850-1920', in Eric Richards (ed.), *The Flinders History of South Australia: Social History*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986, pp. 337, 362-363.

<sup>2</sup> Pavla Miller, *Long Division: State Schooling in South Australian Society*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Catherine Helen Spence, 'Some Social Aspects of Colonial Life', reprinted in Helen Thomson (ed.), *Catherine Helen Spence*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1987, pp. 535-536.

<sup>4</sup> *Register*, 18 September 1879.

South Australia was also slower than in Britain or the other colonies. From the early 1860s, however, factories and workshops were employing working class women as well as men and the attendant spectre of urban poverty in working class suburbs like Hindmarsh and Bowden was increasingly visible.<sup>5</sup>

Although the political influence of Adelaide's middle class increased, South Australia was economically dependent on the rural economy. Under the Strangways Act, passed in 1869 farmers were allowed to buy larger tracts of land on credit in specially selected localities considered suitable for cultivation and called 'Agricultural Areas.' Struggling farmers from the closely settled areas around Adelaide moved north into the Flinders Ranges, to Yorke Peninsula, to the South East around Mount Gambier and onto Eyre Peninsula. Frequent droughts in these mostly marginal agricultural lands meant that farming families were often unable to make ends meet and the colonial economy fluctuated accordingly. This unparalleled agricultural expansion scattered the rural population and, as the following chapters will show, had enormous repercussions on the provision of schools.<sup>6</sup>

The consolidation and political influence of Adelaide's urban middle class was reflected in the expansion of education for their own children and their agendas for middle class and working class educational reform. By the 1870s there were a number of substantial schools catering for middle class boys and moves were afoot to establish a university in the colony. Young ladies' academies also flourished during this period but the accomplishments' curriculum was under increasing scrutiny from commentators like Catherine Spence who were thoroughly familiar with changes which were taking place in Britain. She was one of the leading advocates for reforming middle class girls education to 'present something better than the pretentious programme of the young ladies' seminary.'<sup>7</sup> Notwithstanding the evidence presented in the previous chapter that young ladies' schools like Caroline Carleton's and Matilda Evans' were providing a rigorous education, Spence's view prevailed and this chapter will show that by the late 1870s a programme of reform had been set in train.<sup>8</sup>

However, in South Australia debates about the reforms of middle class education were overshadowed by those about the state school system. Leading the debates was the influential newspaper, the *Register* which identified a number of problems with the current

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<sup>5</sup> Helen Jones, *In Her Own Name: A History of Women in South Australia from 1836*, second edition, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1994, p. 64.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Williams, 'The Spread of Settlement in South Australia' in Fay Gale and Graham Lawton (eds), *Settlement and Encounter: Geographical Studies Presented to Sir Grenfell Price*, Melbourne, 1969, p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> Spence, 'Some Social Aspects of Colonial Life' in Thomson, *Catherine Helen Spence*, p. 541. See also *Register*, 13 April 1871, 20, 30 January 1877, 8, 12 February 1877.

<sup>8</sup> Alison Mackinnon, *One Foot on the Ladder: Origins and Outcomes of Girls' Secondary Schooling in South Australia*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1984, pp. 60-70.



system, the major one being that it was not reaching all of the working class children for whom it was intended. With the increasing visibility of urban poverty, the *Register* focused on the education of city children and, using Canadian exemplars, advocated a far more comprehensive and interventionist system of state schooling to cater for them.<sup>9</sup>

The second and increasingly vocal platform for change was the Adelaide Philosophical Society. The membership of this group reflected the increasing power of the urban middle class in the colony and included a number of civil servants and professional men as well as members of the clergy. The editor of the *Register* was a member and meetings were widely reported in the press. A few licensed teachers were members, but they had no collective voice in the education debates, the second Preceptors' Association having disbanded in 1862.<sup>10</sup> In July 1867 and October 1868 T S Reed, the new Chairman of the Destitute Board, presented papers to the Philosophical Society on 'Reformatories' and 'Education and the Working-Classes', in which he canvassed all of the contemporary anxieties about ignorance and crime, and advocated free and compulsory schooling to overcome parental neglect. He was joined by James Hosking, a leading private teacher who was a strong critic of Inspector Wyatt, the Board and licensed teachers, and a passionate advocate of the Canadian system. 'Local Boards, local rates, a more thorough inspection, a recognition of pupil teachers etc are ... what we much require.' He advocated payment by results to weed out inferior teachers.<sup>11</sup>

The third platform was in the political arena. In 1868 a Select Committee was formed to investigate the working of the 1851 Act. When one witness suggested that the state should withdraw completely from schooling he was curtly informed that 'we must put the questions to bring out the witnesses' views according to our own way and not according to theirs.' The interrogation focussed on validating secular instruction and concluded by establishing that too many city children were not attending any school and that licensed teachers were of inferior quality. The familiar discourse of teaching as a last resort permeated discussions.<sup>12</sup> Inspector Wyatt agreed that state schooling was not reaching enough children but he and other witnesses queried whether the problem was greater in the

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<sup>9</sup> Malcolm Vick, 'The Central Board of Education in South Australia 1852-1875', M.Ed. thesis, University of Adelaide, 1981, pp. 305-311; Miller, *Long Division*, p. 33. For Canadian events, see Susan Houston and Alison Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars in Nineteenth Century Ontario*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1991 and Bruce Curtis, *Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836-1871*, Althouse Press, London, Ontario, 1988.

<sup>10</sup> List of Members of the Adelaide Philosophical Society, 1864-1875, SRG 10/14, MLSA; Bernard Keith Hyams, 'State School Teachers in South Australia 1847-1950: A Study of Their Training, Employment and Voluntary Organisation', Ph.D. thesis, Flinders University, 1972, p. 147.

<sup>11</sup> These papers were reprinted in the Annual Reports of the Adelaide Philosophical Society, SRG 10/16, MLSA. For biographical details of James Hosking see Vick, 'The Central Board of Education', pp. 278-281; *Register* 30 July, 1888.

<sup>12</sup> Reformers in Canada offered a similar critique of common school teachers in order to agitate for change. See Houston and Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars*, pp. 101-102.

city than the country. He argued that the major impediment was that the Board was unable to fund the construction of large schools in the city, its grant-in-aid being limited to 200 pounds. He cautiously recommended compulsory attendance. He also defended the quality of teachers, as he had done in recent annual reports and rejected payment by results as a method of forcing teacher efficiency.<sup>13</sup> Father Woods proclaimed the success of Catholic schools and launched a scathing attack on licensed schools and their teachers, although freely admitting that he had never stepped inside a government school.<sup>14</sup> The Catholic church's very vocal and pro-active stance during this period fed underlying religious tensions and contributed to the sense of urgency that surrounded the debates about state education. The final report confirmed the Select Committee's agenda, marginalised the dissenting voices, and recommended immediate legislation to effect changes in state education.

Between 1871 and 1875 there were three attempts to legislate for the introduction of compulsory schooling. The attempt in 1871 was easily defeated. In 1873 free, compulsory and secular legislation was passed in the House of Assembly but narrowly defeated by conservative members of the Legislative Council. Late in 1875 legislation for compulsory and secular state schooling was passed by both houses of parliament. Free state schooling, however, was not introduced in South Australia until 1891.<sup>15</sup>

This chapter focuses on state school teachers as the above reform agendas were formulated and progressively implemented. Changes forged under the guise of rational organisation had subtle but far-reaching consequences for teaching families and for women teachers, as individuals, during the final years of the Central Board of Education and the Council of Education, which was established by the 1875 Act. Teachers were employed by the state from 1875 but the precedents for its new regulations and policies had been established some years beforehand. With the individuation of wages, men teachers were institutionalised as sole breadwinners and married women were excluded from pursuing teaching careers in state schools. Henceforth, marital status determined women's tenure in the state system as it did in the Catholic system. This chapter charts the processes whereby the state school system became the province of married men and single women teachers.

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<sup>13</sup> Report of the Select Committee of the House of Assembly into the Working of the Education Act, SAPP 1868-69, no. 56, pp. 1-6, 84; Report of the Education Board, SAPP 1866-67, no. 41, pp. 5-6.

<sup>14</sup> Report of the Select Committee of the House of Assembly into the Working of the Education Act, SAPP 1868-69, no. 56, pp. 8-11.

<sup>15</sup> Vick, 'The Central Board of Education', pp. 321-324; Miller *Long Division*, pp. 30-38.

## Central Board of Education, 1868-1875

In debates about the 'education question' the Board was subjected to increasing scrutiny. Economic depression in the 1860s affected state spending in all areas of public works. The education budget, which had never been generous, was reduced; and with fewer funds at its disposal the Board, under siege was cajoled into responding to the reform agenda rather than setting its terms. In addition to these problems, the rapid dispersal of the rural population into new agricultural lands after 1869 increased the task of providing state schooling in the country districts.

The Board continued its strategy of licensing few and large schools in the city and spreading the licences as widely as possible in the rapidly expanding country districts. It also experimented briefly and unsuccessfully with the provision of bush boarding schools, half-time schools and 'itinerating' teachers.<sup>16</sup> Gradually, however, women teachers were constructed as the solution to the problem of providing state schooling in sparsely settled districts where the schools must be small and mixed. With diminishing financial resources at its disposal, the Board also identified women as a cheap labour force and advocated reducing the stipends for women teachers in schools with fewer than twenty students. However, it was hamstrung by the 1851 Act which had set the minimum stipend at forty pounds. As mentioned in chapter two women teachers' stipends had already been fixed at the minimum rate in 1860. With reduced budgets the maximum stipends for men were also cut in the mid-1860s from 100 to 80 pounds.<sup>17</sup>

At the last Board meeting in 1869 Inspector Wyatt announced new strategies to rationalise the provision of schools. Licences were withdrawn from women teachers 'who were conducting schools of an elementary character connected with schools for which male teachers were licensed, who in several cases were the husbands of licensed teachers.' Then the Board withdrew licences from teachers with less than forty students if the school was within two miles of a larger school. On the original list of fifty-six teachers forty were women. This further entrenched men's privileged positions and left 222 men licensed in the colony in 1870 and 72 women. This was the first and only time that women's marital status was cited as a justification for the removal of their licence. Henceforth no new licences were granted to the wives of licensed teachers, but up to 1875 a few whose husbands were

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<sup>16</sup> See Reports of the Education Board, SAPP 1868-69, no. 19, p. 1, SAPP 1870-71, no. 18, p. 2, SAPP 1873, no. 36, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> See Reports of the Education Board, SAPP 1869-70, no. 19, p. 8, SAPP 1870-71, no. 18, p. 8, SAPP 1871, no. 22, pp. 2, 4; Vick 'The Central Board of Education,' p. 246.

engaged in other occupations were licensed in country schools. Many married women continued teaching in licensed schools as assistants.<sup>18</sup>

By the early 1880s, however, married women teachers had all but disappeared from state schools in South Australia. Only the sewing mistress remained as testimony to their participation in income generating labour in the teaching family. The war of attrition against married women teachers was relatively smooth, swift and without public comment. This was unlike the situation in Victoria where the issues of married women's employment were raised in a royal commission. In Victoria the marriage bar was official from 1889 but it did not actually appear in the education regulations in South Australia until 1915.<sup>19</sup> Given the absence of an overt campaign and specific regulations preventing the employment of married women, it could be argued that their disappearance from South Australian state schools was inevitable, given the changes alluded to at the beginning of this chapter. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century married women's participation in paid employment fell in Australia as it did in England.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, this thesis has shown that teaching in particular was compatible with every permutation of the womanly state. Married women had moved in and out of teaching as an income generating activity according to family need and they were integral to the teaching family labour force in licensed schools. In the following discussion it will be shown that the withdrawal of licences from wives of licensed teachers and the amalgamation of schools were the harbinger of radical changes in the structure of the teaching family.

The decision to withdraw all those licences brought storms of protests from rural parliamentarians and parents but married women were not specifically an issue. The main complaints came from country districts where, it was claimed, many children would be left without schooling. The other arguments related to sex-segregated schooling. Parents at Naracoorte complained about the withdrawal of Catherine Waterhouse's licence using the argument that mixed schools were undesirable. Over the following months several teachers, including Catherine, were re-licensed. Only one, Emma King, was the wife of a licensed teacher and her large infant school in a working class suburb was considered a special case.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Report of the Education Board, SAPP 1871, no. 22, pp. 1, 3; Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 946.

<sup>19</sup> Donna Dwyer, 'Good and Mad Women (Teachers): The Case of Grace Neven', M.Ed. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1993, ch. 1; Marjorie Theobald, 'The Administration of Gender: The Case of Victoria's "Lady Teachers", 1850-1900', Presidential Address, ANZHES Annual Conference, Perth, 1994, pp. 9, 22, 26; Marjorie R. Theobald, 'Women's Teaching Labour, the Family and the State in Nineteenth-Century Victoria', Marjorie R. Theobald and R. J. W. Selleck (eds), *Family, School and State in Australian History*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1990, p. 33.

<sup>20</sup> Pavla Miller and Ian Davey, 'Family Formation, Schooling and the Patriarchal State', in Theobald and Selleck, *Family, School and State*, p. 12; Sonya O. Rose, *Limited Livelihoods: Gender and Class in Nineteenth Century England*, Routledge, London, 1992, p. 46.

<sup>21</sup> *Register*, 4, 6, 11, 20 January 1870; Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 989.

Teaching families complained bitterly about their fate. From Willunga, James Bassett wrote to the *Register* about the loss of Mary's licence after sixteen years of service with the Board. He claimed that this was a great loss to their family's economy.<sup>22</sup> The third licensed teacher at Willunga, Charlotte Smith, also lost her licence. Charlotte, Mary and several other women teachers continued to conduct their girls' schools privately. As they were gradually excluded from both state and Catholic school systems, the young ladies' school became the only teaching context for married women to participate in income generating labour. These women may have lost their stipends but they did not lose their bargaining power. The discourse of moral danger which underpinned sex-segregated schooling was as strong as ever in the late nineteenth century and many women teachers took their girl students and their little boys with them when their licences were withdrawn. This is borne out by the situation at Willunga. In 1868 the three licensed teachers were catering for eighty-one boys and seventy girls. After the licences of both women were withdrawn, James ended up with only sixty-eight boys and forty-two girls.<sup>23</sup>

As a consequence of the Board's rationalisation of licences, the city of Adelaide was left with only eight men and four women licensed teachers, and in 1872 there were only 971 pupils enrolled in their schools. By comparison, in 1857 there had been forty city schools catering for 1979 pupils. As the education debate intensified, Inspector Wyatt freely admitted that the Board was losing ground as a school provider in the city. T S Reed and others claimed that city schools were attended by the children of tradesmen and shopkeepers because the poor were unable to afford the fee of one shilling a week. In 1873 the Board attempted to regain lost ground by granting four new licenses to city schools. That all of these licences were granted to women is testimony to the fact that the Board was losing far more girls than boys to surrounding schools. The imbalance of boys and girls was more dramatic in Adelaide than in the country districts where women teachers had retained their licences. In 1872 less than half of the 971 pupils in city schools were girls. In country districts there was a more even distribution of boys and girls in licensed schools.<sup>24</sup>

Licensed city schools were subjected to intense competition not only from small private schools conducted by women but also from the Catholic system and many Free Schools. As noted in chapter three, the Sisters of St Joseph were also able to provide free education to many children and, using their female staff, they were able to ensure girls' moral safety.

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<sup>22</sup> For details of James and Mary Bassett's teaching careers, see chapter two; *Register*, 8 February 1870; Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 973, 998, 1012.

<sup>23</sup> Reports of the Education Board, SAPP 1868-9, no. 19, p. 14, SAPP 1871, no. 22, p. 20.

<sup>24</sup> Reports of the Education Board, SAPP 1872, no. 73, p. 3, SAPP 1873, no. 36, p. 5, SAPP 1874, no. 24, p. 1; Malcolm Vick, 'Class, Gender and Administration: The 1851 Education Act in South Australia', *History of Education Review*, vol. 17, no. 1, 1988, p. 38.

Members of the Adelaide gentry also began to set up Free Schools in the early 1870s. These schools were attacked by advocates of a more extensive role for the state and they disappeared soon after the advent of compulsory education.<sup>25</sup> However, they catered for a significant number of working class children during this tumultuous struggle for governance. Female philanthropy underpinned much of the organisation and conduct of these schools. The Franklin St Free Day School opened amidst fanfare in March 1870 and the master was assisted by women volunteers.<sup>26</sup> Alice Todd was one of the ladies who took her turn once a week to help the girls sew clothes for sale. In a letter to her husband, Charles, she recorded:

Yesterday I went to Franklin Free School to teach the children to sew for an hour and I read to them for a time. I often wish when I visit poor people I had not such a fussy nose - I always feel so queer and sick when there is any such bad smell.

The very different agendas these people had for their own children's education compared with that of the working class is illustrated by considering the circumstances under which Alice penned her letter. She was sitting with her children at home:

All our darlings are very busy - Charlie writing his Latin exercises, Hedley his Parsing and Lizzie is writing to you looking so sweet at the end of the table and so good tempered as Hedley asks her questions. William is making a Union Jack to be put up on the flag [pole] at the Observatory when your Lordship comes home [emphasis in original].

She also commented on the recent announcement of the establishment of a university in Adelaide. 'I'm so glad as I think it will be so nice for our boys.'<sup>27</sup>

Meanwhile the editor of the *Register* and others kept up the pressure on the Board and the Parliament. And in spite of the efforts of all of the above school providers the *Register* concluded:

that there are numbers of children in the city who are never sent to school, not because they are engaged during the day in any kind of useful employment, for most of them are not old enough to be able to work, but simply that they may spend their hours idling about in the street gaining lessons in the science of larrikinism, and many of them graduating for the profession of crime.<sup>28</sup>

This was the most convincing argument for more legislation to increase the power of the

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<sup>25</sup> Vick, 'The Central Board of Education', pp. 70, 120, 137; Miller, *Long Division*, p. 8.

<sup>26</sup> *Register*, 5 March 1870, 17 April 1873. Women were also involved in this teaching context in Britain. See M. Jeanne Petersen, *Family, Love and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1989.

<sup>27</sup> Alice Todd to Charles Todd, 8 September 1872, PRG 630/2, MLSA.

<sup>28</sup> *Register*, 21 June 1871, 22 July 1872, 24 February 1873, 10 January 1874.

state to intervene more decisively in the education of working class children. Mindful that the parliaments in England and the neighbouring colony of Victoria had recently legislated for compulsory schooling, the debates continued in South Australia.<sup>29</sup>

Amidst these battles the appointment of John Anderson Hartley to the Board in 1871 signalled changes in its composition and administration. A Wesleyan Methodist and professional teacher, he had recently arrived from England to take up the position of headmaster of Prince Alfred's College. He was unconnected with the leading social circles and his appointment was indicative of the growing influence of those from the 'middle ranks' of society in the government. His agency was immediately apparent in the renewed pressure on the government to build the long awaited Model School.<sup>30</sup>

The Grote Street Model Schools opened in the heart of Adelaide in January 1874. In this new model of single campus sex-segregated schooling the boys' department was separated from that of the girls and infants by a high wall. From an initial enrolment of 122 boys, seventy girls and ninety infants, numbers rose rapidly to 850 and the venture was initially hailed as a great success.<sup>31</sup> By January 1875 the Minister of Education reported that 320 children had been refused admission in the previous three months because of insufficient accommodation and that there was a long waiting list for admission. Many of the students were not drawn from the local working class population but were the sons and daughters of the 'well-to-do' This issue was canvassed widely early in 1877 and it was decided that administrators had no power to prevent middle class children from being educated in state schools. Middle class students continued colonising the Grote Street Model Schools into the 1880s.<sup>32</sup>

The teachers in the Model Schools were employed and paid by the Board. This was the first time the state in South Australia became an employer of waged labour and the procedures established at this time were institutionalised in 1875. Lewis Madley, formerly the headmaster of the St James Schools in Sydney, was selected from twenty-nine applicants, most from New South Wales and Victoria. Lavinia Seabrooke, formerly in charge of large girls' schools in England and currently headmistress of the Magill Industrial School became the headmistress. She was a young widow and reputedly a woman of

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<sup>29</sup> Bernard Hyams, Lynne Trewthwey, Brian Condon, Malcolm Vick, Denis Grundy, *Learning and Other Things: Sources for a Social History of Education in South Australia*, Government Printer Adelaide, 1985, p. 92.

<sup>30</sup> Hyams et al, *Learning and Other Things*, p. 93; Vick, 'The Central Board of Education', pp. 293-294; Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 1522, 1758, 1881, 2006, 2023.

<sup>31</sup> *Register*, 26 January 1874; *S A Teachers Journal*, January 1924; Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 2944.

<sup>32</sup> Boucaut Papers on Education, 1876-1877, V99, MLSA; *Register* 29 January 1876, 7 March 1877; Minutes, Council of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 1924. Correspondence between the Council of Education and the Minister of Education, March 1877, GRG 50/3/1877/798.

'magnificent physique and appearance.'<sup>33</sup> The infant mistress, Jane Stanes, had lived in Adelaide from the age of three. At the time of her appointment she was twenty-eight years old and was conducting a private Infant School in North Adelaide. She was chosen from five applicants, all of whom were required to give a demonstration lesson before members of the Board. The assistants and pupil teachers were also employed by the Board and their number increased rapidly to cope with the flood of enrolments.<sup>34</sup>

The salaries of the three Principals were 400 pounds, 200 pounds and 150 pounds respectively. When the state secured the labour of these people there was no suggestion or implication that it was also securing the labour of their families as was the case with licensed teachers. Lewis Madley was paid the wage of a sole breadwinner. His wife Ellen was at home and not contributing her teaching labour. Another assumption was that Lavinia Seabrooke and Jane Stanes had no family responsibilities.<sup>35</sup>

When the state became an employer and individuated the wages of its employees, unrelated individuals were brought together in the workplace. While the behaviour of individual teachers may have been informed by their own family loyalties and commitments, all of the 'contention, bargaining, negotiation, domination and consensus' which had formerly taken place within the teaching family would now be played out among strangers.<sup>36</sup> As Miller and Davey note 'the natural order of things with a male patriarch presiding over the labour of his family and other dependents, seemed to be turning on its head.'<sup>37</sup>

In December 1873, Lewis Madley attended a Board meeting to discuss his duties. He was informed that he 'would have the entire control of the whole school and that he would be looked to secure the successful working of the whole establishment.' With a single stroke of the pen women teachers' rights to conduct their schools independently had been removed and their duties were subordinated to the dictates of men. Or had they? At the next meeting,

<sup>33</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 2408, 2426, 2447, 2448, 2540, 2556, 2571; *SA Teachers Journal*, January 1924. For some biographical details of Lavinia Seabrooke, see Jill Statton (ed.), *Biographical Index of South Australians 1836-1885*, South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society, Adelaide, 1985, pp. 273, 807.

<sup>34</sup> For biographical details of Jane Stanes see Statton, *Biographical Index*, pp. 422, 1532.

<sup>35</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 2521; Marjorie R. Theobald, 'Writing the Lives of Women Teachers: Problems and Possibilities' in Lyn Yates (ed.), *Melbourne Studies in Education 1993*, La Trobe University Press, Glen Waverly, 1993, p. 41. For further discussions of the implications of the male breadwinner wage form, see Rose, *Limited Livelihoods*, pp. 148-150, Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County New York*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1985, p. 231, and Wally Secombe, 'Patriarchy Stabilized: The Construction of the Male Breadwinner Wage Norm in Nineteenth Century Britain', *Social History*, vol. 11, no. 1, 1986.

<sup>36</sup> Louise Tilly and Joan Scott, *Women, Work and Family*, second edition, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1987, p. 9.

<sup>37</sup> Miller and Davey, 'Family Formation, Schooling and the Patriarchal State' in Theobald and Selleck, *Family, School and State*, p. 16.



Mrs Seabrooke respectfully protested against the headmaster being authorised to interfere with her special duties as headmistress; and requested that she may not be called upon to take instructions from a fellow teacher as to the organisation of the girls' schools.

The men of the Board had not reckoned on Lavinia Seabrooke's agency! The matter was deferred to a special meeting of the Board one week later, at which Mr Madley's 'list of duties' was altered.<sup>38</sup> The published rules of the Model Schools set the precedent for 'divided authority' in large schools. Lewis Madley was accountable to the Board. His authority over Lavinia Seabrooke and Jane Stanes was confirmed but some rights were accorded the headmistresses. The third rule stated that the headmaster:

should visit other departments from time to time, to ascertain that the teachers are at their posts and observing the timetable. He must see that all documents required by the Board's regulations are exhibited in their proper places, and that the school records are properly kept. He should not interfere with the discipline or internal management of the other departments; but in the event of its appearing to him that any alteration is desirable he should confer with the teacher concerned, and, in the case of any difference of opinion, refer the question to the Board. The headmaster is empowered to decide questions relating to the general order and routine of the entire school, subject to appeal to the Board.<sup>39</sup>

The headmaster was not totally empowered and the headmistress was not entirely powerless, but she had fewer resources to bargain with, and whatever power she exercised was on terms determined by men.<sup>40</sup>

In 1874 Lavinia was responsible for selecting the women assistants and pupil teachers for the Model Schools. However, when she sent her recommendations directly to the Board, they were referred to the headmaster for his report; and she was curtly informed that 'all further communication must be forwarded through the headmaster as Principal of the Institution.'<sup>41</sup> This instruction was then added to the list of rules for the Model Schools. As this became the practice in all schools, senior women teachers' voices were lost from the written records and the precise nature of their interactions are thus difficult to recover.

There was fierce competition between the boys' and girls' departments as the headmaster and headmistresses attempted to advance their status publicly at the annual examinations. In July 1874 an article in the *Register* commented on the success of the Model Schools and praised 'Mr Madley and his assistants.' Lavinia fired off a letter to the editor taking great exception to the above, saying:

I beg to say that I am not nor was I appointed as an assistant to Mr Madley, but as "Head Mistress" of the girls' school, which school I organised and have since its opening had entire

<sup>38</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 2609, 2626, 2632.

<sup>39</sup> Report of the Education Board, SAPP 1874, no. 24, p. 23.

<sup>40</sup> For a more general discussion see Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGrath and Marian Quartly, *Creating a Nation*, McPhee Gribble, Melbourne, 1994, p. xx.

<sup>41</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 2655, 2753, 2754.

charge of. I therefore think I am fairly entitled to some of the credit for the success of the school.<sup>42</sup>

The editor published this letter without comment or amendment to the original article.

The Board had underestimated the repercussions of the decision to accord women some power for there were ongoing tensions between headmasters and headmistresses as they negotiated their careers. Within a few years, Hartley characterised divided authority as an 'anomaly' in need of rectification in favour of men.<sup>43</sup> However senior women teachers like Lavinia Seabrooke and Jane Stanes had sufficient influence to guarantee the preservation of the headmistress' position until the end of the century. Their ongoing battles will be documented in subsequent discussion.

Just as the Model Schools were opened, there was a coup which overturned the power of Inspector Wyatt and the Board. The Board contacted the government requesting the appointment of another inspector. Without consultation, the government appointed James Hosking. A trenchant critic of the Board, he had been angling for years for an administrative position. The Board refused to accept the appointment. The government dismissed them and installed a new group including Hartley and Campbell from the former Board. Hartley was elected President and the government suggested that the system of inspection be reorganised. The new Board divided the colony into three districts and appointed an inspector for each, with the responsibility of reporting directly to the Board. A detailed set of rules relating to inspections was drawn up. Inspector Wyatt's occupational autonomy and authority as chief inspector were so undermined that after protesting vigorously he resigned. As a mark of respect the licensed teachers presented Inspector Wyatt with an address and a portrait. They had lost their most vocal supporter and did not find a sympathetic advocate in President Hartley.<sup>44</sup>

Between January 1874 and the advent of compulsory education in December 1875, the occupational autonomy of the 217 men and 91 women who were licensed teachers ebbed quickly but not without many individual acts of resistance. New demands were made about the classification of pupils, teaching methodology and timetables. Sewing and Drill were made compulsory components of the curriculum and the examinations were conducted by the inspectors instead of the teachers.<sup>45</sup> Along with Edward Dewhirst and James Hosking, the Board appointed as an inspector another professional teacher, Emile Jung. These men

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<sup>42</sup> *Register*, 18 July, 20 July 1874.

<sup>43</sup> Progress Report of the Commission on the Working of the Education Acts, 1882, SAPP 1882, no. 27, p. 194.

<sup>44</sup> Vick, 'The Central Board of Education', pp. 276-283; T. H. Smeaton, *Education in South Australia from 1836-1927*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1927, pp. 62-64; *S A Teachers Journal*, September 1915.

<sup>45</sup> Report of the Education Board, SAPP 1874, no. 24, p. 3, SAPP 1875, no. 26, pp. 3-13.

were sent to examine the schools thoroughly and report in detail to the Board. Inspector Jung's first report, a scathing attack on teachers, was seized upon by the *Register* as evidence of gross inefficiencies in licensed schools. Many teachers responded to defend their reputations but only one letter was printed.<sup>46</sup> Inspector Jung's appointment proved to be a disaster. His inappropriate behaviour included slapping a boy's face, using intemperate language, and giving conflicting reports about teachers. The Board refused to suspend him, but asked the government to institute a full inquiry when it was reported that he had made indecent remarks about some girl students. In the ensuing impasse which occurred as the 1875 Act was being debated in the parliament, Inspector Jung continued to create havoc in licensed schools. The situation was finally resolved by not appointing him again under the Education Act of 1875. Inspector Jung's behaviour may have been utterly inappropriate but he had reinforced the discourse of teaching as a last resort and articulated the need for 'improvements' in teacher efficiency in state schools.<sup>47</sup>

In its reforming zeal the new Board not only eroded licensed teachers' control of their daily labour in classrooms but also removed their prerogative to employ staff. Henceforth, licensed teachers were required to employ assistants and pupil teachers according to a formula and all appointments had to be sanctioned by the Board. Licensed teachers were also required to give pupil teachers at least one hour of daily instruction outside school hours. In effect, licensed teachers were losing control of the use of family labour in schools.<sup>48</sup>

In 1874 new public examinations were introduced for pupil teachers, assistants and candidates for licences. The first examinations were held in July. Candidates for licences were required to present themselves for two hour examinations in eight compulsory subjects including the principles of teaching, together with two other subjects. Only three out of thirty candidates received their certificates and the unsuccessful candidates were ridiculed by the Board and in the *Register*. However, the longest and last word came from Catherine Spence who defended the candidates' integrity. She pointed out that the promised list of books to study was not published until after the exam. Furthermore, she published the History exam with the comment that many well-educated ladies and gentlemen would not have been able to pass it.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> *Register*, 9 July, 14 July, 10 August 1874.

<sup>47</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 3124, 3171, 3266, 3422, 3553, 3604, 3738, 3745, 3817, 3818, 3872. For discussion of inspectors' role in articulating the need for change, see Bruce Curtis, *True Government by Choice Men?: Inspection, Education and State Formation in Canada West*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1992, pp. 30-31.

<sup>48</sup> Report of the Education Board, SAPP 1875, no. 26, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> *Register*, 28 April, 14 July, 28 July, 1 September 1874.

For the entire period from 1862 to 1875 licensed teachers were without a collective voice, though groups of about forty teachers had met intermittently to discuss education matters as the bills were debated in parliament between 1870 and 1875. At these meetings they supported some of the proposed changes including compulsory attendance, secular instruction and extending the pupil teacher system. German licensed teachers in particular lobbied for the Board to appoint teachers, thereby undermining clerical governance in Lutheran communities. However licensed teachers were determined to maintain control over their families' labour by advocating that head teachers should appoint their own assistants; and they also resisted all suggestions which undermined their internal control of their schools. It was not until October 1875 that the Public Teachers' Association was formed, its objects being 'to bring teachers into union and to extend professional knowledge, to conserve the status and integrity of the profession and to cooperate in the advancement of education.'<sup>50</sup>

It can be seen that the occupational autonomy and integrity of licensed teachers had by 1875 been thoroughly undermined. Furthermore, the new model of professional teacher was already in place and employed by the state by the time the Public Teachers' Association was formed. President Hartley, the inspectors, Lewis Madley, Lavinia Seabrooke and Jane Stanes were part of the new group. None of these people joined the Association although the inspectors sometimes attended its meetings. The Public Teachers' Association was not consulted before the regulations pertaining to the 1875 Act were published and, from its formation, it was marginalised in a defensive position *vis-a-vis* the state.

In sum, the final years of the Central Board of Education set the precedents for far-reaching changes in both the structure of the teaching family and teachers' work. The problems of providing schools in the country intensified as new farming lands were established. Women teachers were constructed as the most suitable teachers for these small mixed schools. As the Board began to amalgamate schools the institutionalisation of men's privileged positions proceeded at the expense of the autonomy of women conducting girls' schools. However, with increasingly invasive systems of inspection and examination the prerogatives of all teachers (men and women) to utilise family labour and determine the nature of their work in classrooms diminished.

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<sup>50</sup> *Register*, 1 October 1870, 2 October 1871, 6 October 1873, 4 October 1875, 20 December 1875.

## The 1875 Act: Regulations and assumptions

By 1875 the reform agendas for both middle class and working class education were well underway. Negotiations for the establishment of a university were all but completed although the British government had refused to ratify the admission of women. The University of Adelaide opened at the beginning of 1876. In the five years between its establishment and the admission of women to study for degrees, many attended lectures as non-matriculated students. Indeed in 1876 women outnumbered men as students. Among them were several women teachers.<sup>51</sup>

Agitation for reforms to middle class girls' education had also increased in the early 1870s and had been discussed by the Board in November 1874. Dr Campbell 'called attention to the absence in this Colony of a high school for girls' and the matter was referred to the Minister of Education. Both Campbell and Hartley were strong supporters of a competitive academic education for middle class girls. Hartley was also a member of the University Council and thus was involved in negotiations to admit women to degrees.<sup>52</sup>

The 1875 Education Act actually provided for advanced as well as elementary state education. Hartley and Campbell's influence was evident in the drafting of this legislation; the first advanced school was opened in 1879. However, the Act's principal focus was elementary schooling. The Act compelled children aged from seven to thirteen years to attend school for a minimum of seventy days per half year if they resided within three miles of a school. School fees were set at sixpence per child, half of the maximum fee charged in the old licensed schools. Increased revenue from land sales had placed the South Australian economy in a better position to support a centralised and comprehensive education system. Although schooling did not become free, the system was established without recourse to local rates. Boards of Advice were appointed in many districts but they were not empowered to determine policy or school funding or teachers' employment. These became the responsibilities of President Hartley and the new Council of Education.<sup>53</sup>

The Council was faced with the problem of providing schools in both the densely populated city and suburbs and in the thinly populated rural areas. Its solution, which had already been adopted in New South Wales, was to create two totally separate categories of

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<sup>51</sup> Mackinnon, *One Foot on the Ladder*, pp. 60-61; Alison Mackinnon, *The New Women: Adelaide's Early Women Graduates*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986, pp. 22-23; University of Adelaide, *Calendar 1877*, p. 10.

<sup>52</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 3541; Mackinnon, *One Foot on the Ladder*, pp. 71-72; Alison Mackinnon, 'Awakening Women: Women, Higher Education and Family Formation in South Australia, 1880-1920', Ph.D. thesis, University of Adelaide, 1989, p. 57.

<sup>53</sup> Vick, 'The Central Board of Education', p. 324; Miller, *Long Division*, p. 37; Hyams et al, *Learning and Other Things*, p. 92.

schools on the basis of student numbers. Schools with fewer than twenty students were categorised as provisional; no training was required of their teachers, who were paid four pounds per student per annum in lieu of a fixed salary. The method of remuneration also neatly solved the problem of minimum stipends which had troubled the previous Board. It was assumed that provisional teachers would be women, the previous Board having constructed them as the most suitable teachers for small, mixed schools. The nomenclature and early discussions in the *Register* also suggested that these schools were temporary, pending the establishment of large efficient schools and a trained teaching corps. However, exponential increases in the number of provisional schools, as the agricultural areas expanded, plagued the Education Department throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>54</sup>

Teachers who had held probationary licences under the 1851 Act comprised the initial cohort of provisional teachers. Such was the case with Elizabeth Ann Bell of Hamley Bridge. In July 1874 she had been granted a probationary license pending an examination and school inspection. She had been a teacher before her marriage and at the time of her licence application had several young children. The Bell family's income was derived from a number of sources besides Elizabeth's teaching. Her husband was a wheat buyer and they also took in boarders. Her sister-in-law kept house while she taught in the local chapel near to their home. In addition to her teaching duties she sewed for the family, was very active in the Anglican church, and attended many social events including charity functions for the local convent school conducted by the Sisters of St Joseph. During school vacations she spent time in Adelaide buying books to add to her extensive library, and attending lectures and exhibitions.<sup>55</sup>

Given her family and teaching responsibilities Elizabeth could have had very little time to prepare for the new, stringent examinations for licences introduced in 1874. When the Council of Education was formed she and several other probationary teachers were allowed six months extra to prepare for the exams. She failed to attend the teachers' exams in January 1877 so 'her services as a Public Teacher were dispensed with.' From July 1877 she was classified as a provisional teacher at Hamley Bridge.<sup>56</sup>

Elizabeth's diary which spans the period 1878-80 reveals both the problems experienced by teachers and the increasing surveillance by the state. Her students attended as irregularly as ever, even though they were under compulsion. Not only inclement weather but also

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<sup>54</sup> Education Regulations, SAPP 1876, no. 21, pp. 5, 7; *Register*, 8 January 1876; Noeline Kyle, *Her Natural Destiny: Education of Women in New South Wales*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1986, p. 28.

<sup>55</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 3106; Kay Whitehead, 'Provisional School Teachers in South Australia, 1875-1915', M.Ed. thesis, Flinders University, 1990, pp. 50-51.

<sup>56</sup> Minutes, Council of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 738, 1683, 2602.

frequent epidemics and local celebrations affected daily attendance. Drought too, affected the numbers. In January 1879 she recorded that many farmers, being 'unable to pay their way,' had moved to other districts and that her 'school prospects seem rather poor too.'

Correspondence with the Council and the local Board of Advice took up several evenings a month. According to the regulations she was required to keep nine different sets of records and documents in the school, as well as completing monthly and quarterly returns.<sup>57</sup> While she recorded this aspect of her workload, she rarely commented on the daily labour in her school. Inspector Hosking's visits, however, gave some cause for anxiety.

25 February 1879: Mr Hosking called this evening.

26 February 1879: Mr Hosking came to visit the school this afternoon, he does not seem as well satisfied with the progress made as I could wish.

27 February 1879: Mr Hosking paid another visit this morning and found a great many of the children late at which he expressed great displeasure.

On 20 June 1879 she gave birth to her sixth child and the next day she 'received notice from Mr Hosking that he intended to inspect the school for results on Thursday 26th.' The examination was postponed and she 'received permission from the Council to keep from the school till 8th July.'

Elizabeth was examined by the same standards as her trained counterparts in large schools. No allowances were made for the fact that she had to prepare students at several levels for the examination nor for her own lack of training and professional development. And on examination day 1879 many of Elizabeth's elder students were absent, having gone to the Stockport show! Notwithstanding these problems, her examination results in 1879 were 58.28 per cent.

The following New Year's Eve Elizabeth reflected briefly on two significant issues, death and the loss of her teaching career.<sup>58</sup> Her parents-in-law had died within two days of each other in August and some friends had also died during the year. However, her faith offered her some comfort as she contemplated the other issue:

A new school is in the course of erection and when finished I suppose my services as teacher in the chapel will not be required. I shall feel giving up the school much, but believe it will all be ordered for the best by Him who is too wise to err.

It seems that teaching was more than an income generating activity for Elizabeth. It could be that teaching contributed to her autonomy.

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<sup>57</sup> Education Regulations, SAPP 1876, no. 21, p. 10.

<sup>58</sup> For similar discourses about death, see Geraldine Joncich Clifford, 'History as Experience: The Uses of Personal History Documents in the History of Education' in *History of Education*, vol. 7, no. 3, 1978, p. 6.

Elizabeth recommenced her school duties in January but became ill. She continued teaching for a few days but was soon bedridden. Elizabeth died on 8 February 1880. Her daughter wrote the final entry in Elizabeth's diary: 'My dear Mamma died today. It seems just like a dream.'<sup>59</sup>

Elizabeth's prediction that her services would be dispensed with once the new school was erected was probably correct. By 1880 the average attendance was more than twenty so the school could be reclassified as a public school and a trained teacher appointed. Although it was assumed that public schools, like the model schools, would be large, single campus, sex-segregated institutions most had less than 100 students. Indeed many were like the new school at Hamley Bridge, that is one or two classrooms with a teacher's residence attached.

Salary differentials which had been implemented under the Board were taken for granted when the state became the teachers' employer and paid individual wages. Male head teachers of public schools were paid a fixed salary ranging from seventy-five to one hundred pounds, an additional payment for successful teaching, tuition fees and a bonus for instructing pupil teachers. Male assistants were also employed in very large schools. The Council intended guaranteeing men a total minimum salary of 150 pounds per annum by appointing them as head teachers to public schools with more than twenty-five students. Their privileged positions as head teachers were protected further by the regulation: 'Should the average attendance be higher than 100, in any mixed school, the principal must be a master.' Some of the smaller schools were assigned one or two pupil teachers but schools had to have at least 100 students before an assistant was appointed. Given that almost all of the old licensed schools had fewer than 100 students, this basically denied women assistants, many of whom were the wives of licensed teachers, paid employment as public teachers in the new state school system.<sup>60</sup>

In essence the state had conferred the status of sole breadwinner on men and institutionalised that wage form in its staffing and salary scales. It was taken for granted that all mature men teachers employed in state schools would be married but there was no place for their wives as paid employees. The state was thus intimately involved in constructing a new teaching family which upheld men's status as household heads, and enhanced their economic status but which denied married women opportunities to generate income as teachers should the family's circumstances warrant it. Desley Deacon notes that in New South Wales 'the State has been central in promoting an emphasis on gender

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<sup>59</sup> Diary of Elizabeth Ann Bell, 1878-1880, D6433(L), MLSA.

<sup>60</sup> Education Regulations, SAPP 1876, no. 21, pp. 2, 4-7; Boucaut Papers on Education, 1876-77, V99, MLSA; *Register*, 14 February 1876.



differentiation which has helped make dependency the "natural" status of [married] women.'<sup>61</sup> The same could be said of South Australia.

Of course the demand for sex-segregated schooling meant that other dependent women with no family responsibilities would be essential to ensure girls' attendance and moral safety in public schools. The headmistresses and assistants in the girls' department of the Model Schools received their original salaries but new arrangements were made for other women teachers. Women could only be employed as head teachers in public schools with less than 100 students and the fixed portion of their salary was forty-five pounds. These schools were located in the country along with the provisional schools. Provision was also made for the employment of women assistants in schools with more than 100 students, and the fixed component of their salary was forty pounds. The absence of graduated salary scales commensurate with those of men, as well as the lower fixed portions, clearly indicated women's status as economic dependents.<sup>62</sup>

When the new Council published its Education Regulations early in January 1876, the editor of the *Register* expressed his general approval but forecast that salaries would be the major source of dissatisfaction. The teachers agreed. In the following weeks the *Register*, Public Teachers' Association, and the Council were inundated with correspondence about both men's and women's salaries. The complainants, mostly men, did not portray themselves as sole breadwinners. Rather they spoke as principal breadwinners of family economies where women's paid teaching labour was necessary to the family's survival. Several teachers claimed that they would lose up to 100 pounds under the new arrangements. Some based their calculations on the aggregated family income. The problem was that so many components of their incomes were variable. Teachers underestimated their worth and President Hartley overestimated it. Publicly he maintained his stance that most teachers would benefit under the new regulations but in private correspondence with the Premier, J P Boucaut, he conceded that men teachers in large schools stood most to lose. Boucaut had little sympathy for the teachers' claims, saying 'Why should all the present lot, many of whom are notoriously incompetent be at once jumped up' [emphases in original]. Most of the likely losers were active in the Public Teachers Association and several of its well attended meetings were reported by the *Register*.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Desley Deacon, *Managing Gender: The State, the New Middle Class and Women Workers, 1830-1930*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1989, p. 1. See also Rose, *Limited Livelihoods*, p. 47.

<sup>62</sup> Education Regulations, SAPP 1876, no. 21, p. 6.

<sup>63</sup> *Register*, 3, 8, 11, 14, 17, 26, 29 January, 1, 11, 12, 14, 15, 18 February 1876; Notes re Education Council and New Regulations, Boucaut Papers, V132, MLSA; Boucaut Papers on Education, 1876-77, V99, MLSA; Council of Education minutes, GRG 50/1, nos 111, 150, 252, 277, 308; John Jones to Council of Education, December 1876, GRG 50/3/1876/2456.

One woman teacher pointed out the enormous salary differences between men and women and asked, 'How can assistant teachers board and clothe themselves for forty pounds per annum?' Women teachers did not want to be an economic burden to their families. They wanted to be useful and independent. Indeed the tenor of this letter suggested that women's autonomy was at risk. The correspondent exclaimed, 'I feel that female teachers in the public schools of the colony are treated with the greatest Injustice!' [emphasis in original]<sup>64</sup>

Men teachers agreed with her. Given that they based their arguments on the family economy, they had a vested interest in increasing the remuneration of women teachers who in many cases were family members. On the question of women teachers' salaries the teachers were supported by the editors of the *Illustrated Adelaide News*, which claimed that 'the labour or talent of women has been accounted as nothing', and by the *Register*, which neatly summarised the assumptions and the realities of women's teaching labour.

We are quite aware there are two considerations which tend to keep down the price of female labour. The one is that women, unlike men, can work for less wages than are sufficient for a livelihood, as the great majority of them board at home or with friends. The other is that they expect to depend on their work for only a short time, while men look forward to it as a permanent means of providing for themselves and their families. These special conditions, however, apply less to schoolwork than almost any other kind of employment in which women engage ... The wives of schoolmasters are able to render material help in the schools, and are entitled to be paid according to the efficiency of their work ... under the new Regulations she must, solely because of her sex receive the smaller salary if she receives any salary at all ... We can see no just reason for calculating the stipends of female teachers on a scale so much lower than that of males.<sup>65</sup>

The regulations were amended in March and June 1876. Maintenance allowances were paid to all head teachers thus increasing their total earnings, considerably in some cases. Statistics recorded at the end of 1876 indicated that the incomes of men and women head teachers in public schools were commensurate with their former remuneration as licensed teachers.<sup>66</sup> Women assistants' salaries were increased slightly and graduated salary scales were introduced.

Without actually saying so, the Council also sanctioned the teaching labour of wives in public schools by a new regulation which stated that:-

In schools with an average attendance of 30 scholars and under 100 a Sewing Mistress may be allowed.<sup>67</sup>

She was to be paid twenty pounds per annum. In smaller schools with male heads, wives

<sup>64</sup> *Register*, 14 January 1876.

<sup>65</sup> *Register*, 26 January 1876. See also *Illustrated Adelaide News*, 15 January 1876.

<sup>66</sup> Report of the Council of Education, SAPP 1877, no. 34, p. 1; *Register*, 8 April 1876, 17 July 1876; Incomes of School Teachers 1875-76, SAPP 1878, no. 42, pp. 1-15.

<sup>67</sup> Education Regulations, SAPP 1876, no. 21, p. 5.

were expected to perform this work without remuneration. The temporary status of the sewing mistress is indicated by her terms of employment. She was engaged by the headmaster who confirmed her appointment with the Council. Her appointment lapsed with his removal from the school. This neatly circumvented the problems which were evident in Victoria, where newly appointed headmasters sought to install their family members as sewing mistresses. In schools with more than 100 students, the headmaster's wife was not required because the tenured women assistants had to teach sewing. Although numbers of sewing mistresses were recorded in the annual statistics, no service records were kept for these women.<sup>68</sup> In effect, the state was further institutionalising men as sole breadwinners by categorising sewing mistresses, who were their wives in many cases, as non-teachers and so blocking their permanent employment.<sup>69</sup>

In 1876 the majority of state school teachers were inherited from the old Central Board of Education. Retiring allowances were paid to several aged and infirm licensed teachers. Some German teachers also relinquished their licenses to return to the Lutheran system which began to reorganise after the 1875 Act. The remaining collection of teaching families, firstly had to be slotted into the Council's new staffing formula and, secondly cajoled into changing their work practices using the systems of inspection and examination, now empowered by payment by results.<sup>70</sup>

The chequered teaching careers of Edward and Augusta Catlow demonstrate ways in which the teaching family was reconstructed in the 1870s. Edward became a licensed teacher at Finnis Vale, south of Adelaide, in 1865. His wife, Augusta was his assistant. Edward was an accomplished Latin, German and French scholar and belonged to the Philosophical Society. He also discovered a method of constructing magic squares and was a regular contributor to the 'Riddler' column in the *Observer*. Augusta was the daughter of the Professor of Oriental Languages at London University.<sup>71</sup> Both had sufficient cultural capital to be considered professional teachers in the mid-nineteenth century. Neither would be accorded this status after 1875.

The Catlows moved to nearby Yankalilla in 1873 and stayed there for nine years. Yankalilla was in Inspector Jung's district and in 1875 Edward clashed with him over the inspection

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<sup>68</sup> Education Regulations, SAPP 1876, no. 21, p. 5; Minutes, Council of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 3938, 3939, 5708. Hartley had visited Victoria in January 1876, thus was aware of its regulations and problems. See minute no. 146. See also Theobald, 'Women's Teaching Labour, the Family and the State' in Theobald and Selleck, *Family, School and State*, pp. 29-32.

<sup>69</sup> The same situation occurred in New South Wales. See Deacon, *Managing Gender*, pp. 141-150.

<sup>70</sup> Teachers' Retiring Allowances, SAPP 1876, no. 94, p. 1; Miller, *Long Division*, pp. 37-38, 53.

<sup>71</sup> Report of the Education Board, SAPP 1866-7, no. 41, p. 10; *Observer*, 4 April 1885; List of Members of the Adelaide Philosophical Society, 1864-1875, SRG 10/14, MLSA; Reg Butler and Allan Phillips (eds), *Register Personal Notices*, vol. 2, Gould Books, Gumeracha, 1990, p. 149.

of the school. Jung gave Edward a satisfactory report but sent entirely contradictory written comments to the Board. After this incident, the Board indicated that it had completely lost confidence in Inspector Jung. It had concerns about Edward's efficiency too.<sup>72</sup>

In 1876 Edward Catlow was co-opted as a waged employee of the state and received an annual salary of 231 pounds. However, there was no place for Augusta as the average attendance at this school was seventy-five, that is, below the entitlement for a tenured assistant. She was classified as a pupil teacher at Yankalilla with resulting loss of salary and status. In October Edward contacted the Council requesting that she be classified as an assistant. She was teaching full-time in the school, taking all of the singing and drawing as well as the sewing lessons. Inspector Stanton remarked that not only did she devote all her time to the school but she was also a better disciplinarian than Edward. He recommended that she be paid as a pupil teacher and sewing mistress to 'bring her up to her former stipend.' In 1876 Augusta's total salary was forty-three pounds!<sup>73</sup>

In mid-1877 Inspector Stanton visited the school and reported that Augusta 'had again given away to habits of intemperance.' She was dismissed at once and banned from entering the school. In the following months she agitated for reinstatement and at the beginning of 1878 she was re-employed as pupil teacher and sewing mistress. She held these positions until her resignation at the end of 1879. By this stage the Catlows' only child, Kate, was old enough to become the monitor at the school. Augusta was able to withdraw from income generating labour, and Kate was inducted into the family's teaching enterprise.<sup>74</sup> Although men like Edward Catlow had lost control of the use of their family's teaching labour in state schools, some were still able to negotiate with President Hartley for the employment of family members. Their success in these negotiations depended on the size and location of the school.

In the early 1880s Edward's state school at Yankalilla was under siege from at least one private school. He had had similar problems in the 1860s and complained to the old Board about a woman who was conducting a private school. This time the private school was located closer to the majority of students and the teacher also charged lower fees than Edward. Through her social network, Augusta had learned about the private teacher's tactics to secure students! Attendance at the state school fell and Edward applied for a

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<sup>72</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 4667.

<sup>73</sup> Edward Catlow to Council of Education, October 1876, GRG 50/3/1876/1893; Incomes of School Teachers 1875-76, SAPP 1878, no. 42, pp. 2, 7.

<sup>74</sup> Minutes, Council of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 1958, 2070, 4516, 4962; Alphabetical Register of Files on the Appointment of Teachers, 1876-87, GRG 18/116. Tilly and Scott also note the persistence of these family strategies under the new economic order. See Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work and Family*, p. 232.

transfer to a larger school where their daughter Kate could also be employed as a pupil teacher.<sup>75</sup>

Edward's status as a professional teacher had been completely undermined, not only by his diminishing numbers but also by the loss of his first class teacher's certificate which had been granted under the former legislation. Hartley and the Council did not respond to his request for an explanation and continued to marginalise him and former licensed teachers as inefficient. In 1878 the Council was abolished and Hartley was reclassified as the permanent head of the Education Department and Inspector- General of schools, much to the chagrin of former licensed teachers. Through the Public Teachers' Association they complained loudly and tensions escalated to such an extent that a government enquiry was initiated in 1881. This was upgraded to a royal commission in 1882 and Edward was one of the many witnesses who stated their grievances. He complained about the competition from private schools and about the loss of professional status at the hands of the new administration. However, Lewis Madley and the headmasters of the model schools defended Inspector-General Hartley. In the final report Hartley was exonerated and the reform agenda confirmed. The Public Teachers' Association disintegrated thereafter.<sup>76</sup>

The Catlows were transferred to Compton Downs in the south-east of the colony in 1882. Augusta was the sewing mistress for a few months until Kate was classified as a pupil teacher. Edward remained at Compton Downs as head teacher until his death from heart disease in March 1885. Augusta died a few months later. Kate completed her pupil teacher apprenticeship and her teaching career will be outlined in the next chapter.<sup>77</sup>

Augusta Catlow's teaching career exemplifies the way in which married women were marginalised as the teaching family was reconstructed. In the 1860s the Catlows had colonised the state school system as an economic and social unit. Augusta had contributed her cultural capital including moral guardianship, her labour, and generated income for the family economy. She had combined her productive activity as a teacher with marriage and motherhood. When teaching became waged labour she was marginalised in theory and in practice. Her employment as combined pupil teacher and sewing mistress was temporary and the Education Department abandoned these arrangements once the former licensed husband and wife teaching teams disappeared from the system through retirement and resignation. The category of sewing mistress was undermined further by reducing their

<sup>75</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 8743, 8744, 8754, 8758; Progress Report of the Commission on the Working of the Education Acts, 1882, SAPP 1882, no. 27, pp. 1-2.

<sup>76</sup> Progress Report of the Select Committee of the House of Assembly on Education, 1881, SAPP 1881, no. 122, p. 72; Progress Report of the Commission on the Working of the Education Acts, 1882, SAPP 1882, no. 27, pp. 1-2; Miller, *Long Division*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>77</sup> *Observer*, 4 April 1885; Alphabetical Register of Files on the Appointment of Teachers, 1876-87, GRG 18/116.

stipend and then replacing it with a nominal payment for each girl who passed the annual sewing examination.<sup>78</sup> Notwithstanding the family strategies used by the Catlows, Augusta had no permanent place as a waged worker because she was a married woman.

By the early 1880s married women had all but disappeared from state schools. Women assistants and provisional teachers were required to notify the Education Department and nominate the date of their resignation when they decided to marry. This requirement did not appear in the regulations. When Inspector-General Hartley was asked 'Must a female resign if she marries?' he replied 'There is no rule on the subject but they nearly always do so.'<sup>79</sup> However, subtle pressure was applied to the few women who resisted this expectation. In a confidential letter he chided Miss Wauchope:

I saw the other day that you were married, though I can't remember what name I ought to address you, and you sign your maiden name in your letter to me. Will you say when you wish to give up the school, because I must arrange for a replacement.<sup>80</sup>

When he heard that Miss Adams had attempted to conceal her marriage, he contacted the headmaster privately and admonished him for complicity in the matter. Miss Adams soon resigned.<sup>81</sup> Finally the process of marginalisation was completed with the practice of refusing to employ married women as state school teachers unless they could prove they were sole breadwinners. Even so, they were not paid the breadwinners' wage.<sup>82</sup>

In sum, the process of transforming the teaching family had begun in 1870 when wives of licensed teachers were deprived of their licences and escalated after 1875 when the state took control of employment. Under the 1875 Act two categories of schools were created. In provisional schools, it was assumed that teachers would be single women and that their labour could be purchased cheaply. In public schools, married men were institutionalised as head teachers and it was taken for granted that the assistants would be single women without family responsibilities. The staffing formulas and scales of remuneration reflected these assumptions. In fact the state was creating the sexual division of labour it took as normative by basing teachers' salaries on the breadwinner wage and subtly excluding

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<sup>78</sup> Education Regulations, 1885, SAPP 1885, no. 34, p. 11; Eighth Progress Report of the Public Service Commission, 1891, SAPP 1891, no. 30, p. 129.

<sup>79</sup> Eighth Progress Report of the Public Service Commission, 1891, SAPP 1891, no. 30, p. 126.

<sup>80</sup> John A. Hartley to Miss Wauchope, 16 April 1888 in Brian Condon (ed.), 'The Confidential Letterbook of the Inspector-General of Schools, 1880-1914', Murray Park Sources in the History of South Australian Education, Murray Park College of Advanced Education, Adelaide, 1976.

<sup>81</sup> John A. Hartley to W. Torr, 20 April, 27 April 1883 in Condon, 'The Confidential Letterbook'; Jones, *In Her Own Name*, pp. 76-77. In Victoria subtle strategies also operated to ease married women out of state schools. See Donna Dwyer, 'Managing Gender: The Victorian Education Department and Women Teachers, 1870-1890', Paper presented to ANZHES Annual Conference, Sydney, 1995, pp. 91-98.

<sup>82</sup> For example, see Mrs M. E. Bishop to Inspector-General, 28 January 1884, GRG 18/3/1884/630; Mary McCarthy to Inspector-General, 20 February 1895, GRG 18/3/1895/423.

married women as teachers. In the space of about a decade the tenure of women state school teachers had become dependent on their marital status.

### **The new cohort of state school teachers**

Although the majority of teachers were inherited from the Board, the new administration was equally determined to recruit a new labour force. In consultation with the government President Hartley decided that the most urgent tasks facing the Council were building the schools and establishing a cohort of trained teachers. The compulsory attendance regulations were held in abeyance pending the implementation of an extensive building programme to add to those erected under the 1851 Act. Teachers were provided through the reorganised pupil teacher system, and the Training College which was opened in mid-1876. Trained headmasters and headmistresses were also recruited from the other colonies until there was a sufficient supply of locally trained and experienced personnel.<sup>83</sup>

In the substantial suburb of Norwood the new Model School opened in September 1877 amidst great fanfare. There were 923 enrolments on the first day and at least 2000 eligible students in the district. The school attracted a solid core of middle class students and it was soon known as a 'good' school, along with the Grote Street Model Schools. In 1881 the headmaster commented that the 'moral tone of the school was good', and indicated the social mix of the school by stating that there were 'a few larrikins in every class. They come from Stepney and the brickfields. The lower streets are supposed to be as bad as any part of the colony for larrikins.'<sup>84</sup>

The surrounding licensed schools were closed. Some licensed teachers were granted retiring allowances or were transferred to other localities and some were employed in the new school. Louise Moss closed her licensed school to become infant mistress. One of her scholars later related 'how timidly he and other small children, used to the small home-like building and the gentle rule of Mrs Moss, viewed their entry into the big formidable-looking scene of their labours.' John Smyth was recruited from Victoria as headmaster and Lavinia Hyndman (formerly Seabrooke) came from Grote Street Model Schools as headmistress. One of her girl students recalled that on the first day Lavinia 'divided us into two companies - those who had done compound sums and those who had not. Later on we gradually got a third class.' Competition between the boys' and girls' departments was

<sup>83</sup> Notes re Education Council and New Regulations, Boucaut Papers, V132, MLSA.

<sup>84</sup> Progress Report of the Select Committee of the House of Assembly on Education 1881, SAPP 1881, no. 122, p. 142; Progress Report of the Commission into the Working of the Education Acts 1882, SAPP 1882, no. 27, p. 27; Hyams et al, *Learning and Other Things*, p. 155; East Torrens Board of Advice Report, SAPP 1886, no. 44, p. 28.

intense and in September 1878 the inspector delivered a 'special and good report' about the girls' department to the Council of Education. Lavinia had achieved 95.2 per cent in the annual examination. The boys' department managed 86.53 per cent.<sup>85</sup>

Very little is known of Lavinia's family life while she was headmistress at Norwood. She had remarried in March 1877, a few months prior to her appointment. In 1878 she gave birth to a daughter who only lived a few months. Her second husband also died in August 1878. That year was certainly one of professional success and personal tragedy. Lavinia resigned as headmistress in July 1880, two days prior to her marriage to George Church, a widower with two young children.<sup>86</sup>

Notwithstanding all of the previous discussion about the marginalisation of married women as teachers, the unofficial marriage bar was not applied to senior women teachers in state schools. Lavinia was one of several women in prestigious positions who continued their careers after marriage. Ruth Gill was recruited as headmistress and her husband as headmaster at North Adelaide. Lavinia, Ruth and single women like Jane Stanes were soon joined by the most successful graduates from the Training College and this elite cohort of women teachers in Adelaide was well placed to cooperate with Inspector-General Hartley. Moreover there is substantial evidence to suggest that he consulted them in the same way that he consulted the senior men in state schools. Of course when men's and women's interests differed, men's ultimately prevailed as they had done under the Board. However, these women had significant clout in matters concerning women teachers and curriculum issues such as sewing. In 1875 Lavinia had been co-opted as the needlework examiner for all female candidates for licences. In 1878, she, Ruth Gill and Jane Stanes delivered a scathing report on the standard of needlework among pupil teachers, and 'forwarded a scheme arranged for the different years, with directions for working.' This curriculum was adopted by the Council and the sewing curriculum for all girls in state schools was drawn up by a committee of senior women teachers. This curriculum was made increasingly complex in the 1880s. Although the headmistresses were subordinate to the senior men, they had power over other women teachers and over working class girls. The following chapter will show that senior women were at least partly responsible for the increasing burdens borne by women assistants in late nineteenth century state schools.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Daniel Manning, *Norwood School 1877-1977*, E. S. Wigg & Son, Adelaide, 1977, pp. 4-7; Council of Education minutes, GRG 50/1, nos 2875, 2887, 5944; Inspector-General Hartley's Report, SAPP 1979, no. 35, p. 45.

<sup>86</sup> There is no record of her having taken leave for the birth of her daughter. Lavinia gave birth to another daughter in 1881 and was widowed for the third time in 1885. See Statton, *Biographical Index*, pp. 273, 807. See also Alphabetical Register of Files on the Appointment of Teachers, 1876-87, GRG 18/116.

<sup>87</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 3879; Minutes, Council of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 4084, 4136, 5590; Helen Jones, *Nothing Seemed Impossible: Women's Education and*



As the reform agenda was progressively implemented, tensions increased not only between headmasters and headmistresses at the Model Schools but also between head masters and women assistants in public schools. At the royal commission, male witnesses spoke of escalating tensions between men and women as strangers were brought together in these new workplaces. However women assistants had no public voice as none were called to give evidence.<sup>88</sup> Inspector-General Hartley agreed that the number of disputes had increased and explained his method of dealing with them.

When these complaints are made I do not get them put into writing if I can help it. When I can heal up disputes I do so, and if every complaint made by teachers were put in writing I should have a very extensive record.<sup>89</sup>

Given his predilection for the personal approach, the empirical evidence of these tensions is difficult to find. However, at Mount Gambier they erupted in spectacular fashion as Mary Mackay, a licensed teacher, pursued her career under the new administration.

Mary had been licensed in Mount Gambier in the south east of the colony from 1867 and was assisted by her sister Catherine and their niece Isabella. Their widowed mother took care of the house. The school at 'Elm Cottage' had many hallmarks of a young ladies' school; Mary and Catherine were both well educated and Catherine was fluent in several languages. They offered extras in German, Music, leather work and modelling wax flowers. The records indicate that some young boys attended her school but Mary was subject to the regulation forbidding her to teach boys above the age of seven. However, in the 1870s there were also substantial numbers of destitute scholars enrolled at Elm Cottage. Like the Sheridan and Piper families, the Mackay teaching family was catering for both middle class and working class students.<sup>90</sup>

With the inauguration of the new system Mary was classified as head teacher, and Catherine and Isabella were classified as pupil teachers as the school was too small for an assistant to be appointed. In 1876 Mary clashed with President Hartley when she wrote to the Council stating that unless she received 'a satisfactory reason for her pupil teachers not

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*Social Change in South Australia, 1875-1915*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1985, pp. 28-30.

<sup>88</sup> Progress Report of the Select Committee of the House of Assembly on Education, 1881, SAPP 1881, no. 122, pp. 140, 149; Progress Report of the Commission on the Working of the Education Acts, 1882, SAPP 1882, no. 27, pp. 122-126, 133. Catherine Helen Spence, a school visitor (truant officer) and the headmistress of the Advanced School for Girls were the only women witnesses at the royal commission. None of them mentioned women assistants.

<sup>89</sup> Progress Report of the Commission on the Working of the Education Acts, 1882, SAPP 1882, no. 27, p. 154.

<sup>90</sup> *Border Watch*, 15 September 1866; Margaret Allen, 'Catherine Martin: An Australian Girl?' in Debra Adelaide (ed.), *A Bright and Fiery Troop: Australian Women Writers of the Nineteenth Century*, Melbourne, Penguin, 1988, pp. 151-55; Council of Education Report, SAPP 1877, no. 34, p. 31. See chapters two and three for details about Frances Sheridan and Mathilde Piper's schools.

being required to attend the recent examinations she would apply to the Council through the Public Teachers' Association.' Some spirited communication ensued and the president demanded that she withdraw the threat unreservedly. Mary finally acceded to his demand. Afterwards Catherine resigned as pupil teacher and moved to Adelaide. Mary continued as head teacher at 'Elm Cottage' in Mount Gambier until late in 1877 when she spent three months at the Training College in Adelaide.<sup>91</sup>

The new Mount Gambier public school, built to accommodate several hundred scholars, opened in January 1878 with Alexander McArthur as headmaster and Mrs O'Shannassy as headmistress. Both principals had been recruited from other colonies. From being head teacher of her own school Mary Mackay was relegated to the position of first assistant in the girls' department and Isabella was appointed as a pupil teacher.<sup>92</sup> Whatever the internal dynamics of the Mackay family life, the group had worked towards a common goal at 'Elm Cottage' licensed school. Now Mary had not only lost the occupational autonomy experienced by licensed teachers but was also a subordinate, and a waged worker, among strangers in a very different workplace from that of the family school. Indeed there were dramatic changes in the nature and location of her work, but not for long.

The school furniture including inkwells did not arrive until March; there were no school record books or instructions about tuition fees to be paid by the hundreds of newly enrolled students. And the assistant for the boys' department arrived late and was found to be unsuitable. Amidst this turmoil, Alexander McArthur reported that he had suspended the first assistant, Mary Mackay, for abrasive language to himself and the headmistress. In turn Mary explained that Mrs O'Shannassy had treated her improperly. Inspector Stanton was despatched at once to investigate. His report recommended Mary's dismissal for insulting language. She resigned on 4 March 1878, a mere three months after the school had opened. Clearly, Mary was anxious to regain a measure of occupational autonomy, and immediately re-applied for employment as 'Head teacher of a small school' but her application was unsuccessful.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Minutes, Central Board of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 3825; Minutes, Council of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 1275, 1308, 1368, 2993, 2996. Apparently Catherine met Hartley at the opening of the University of Adelaide and he subsequently employed her as a secretary in the Education Department from 1877 to 1886 while she established herself as a writer. She published her first novel in 1877 and ultimately became an eminent Australian author with publications spanning fifty-five years. See Margaret Allen, 'Catherine Martin, Writer: Her Life and Ideas', *Australian Literary Studies*, vol. 13, no. 1, May 1987, pp. 184-196.

<sup>92</sup> *Register*, 9 May 1877, 15 January 1878; Alphabetical Register of Files on the Appointment of Teachers, 1876-87, GRG 18/116.

<sup>93</sup> Minutes, Council of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 4905, 4906, 4988, 4997, 5001; Alexander McArthur to Council of Education, 30 September 1878, GRG 50/3/1878/4669.

By 1881 attendance at the state school had been halved and there were 'fourteen other schools in existence, eleven of which might be said to be competing in the matter of instruction and fees with the Public School.' Among these was Crouch Street Ladies School conducted by Mary Mackay. Just as Mary Bassett had done after the loss of her licence in 1870, Mary Mackay took some of her students with her when she left the state school system and continued generating income as a teacher. Young ladies' academies continued as viable teaching contexts for middle class women throughout the nineteenth century. There the old teaching family economy flourished, its internal dynamics untrammelled by the state.<sup>94</sup>

After Mary's dismissal, problems at Mount Gambier public school continued. In June, Mrs O'Shannassy clashed with the headmaster and President Hartley. She 'resigned hastily, urged by the President's manner' and demanded three months' salary as compensation for the expenses incurred in bringing her family from Sydney. Alexander resigned in September stating all of the above difficulties as reasons for his resignation. Inspector Stanton also stated that there were other 'private reasons' the details of which were not explained.<sup>95</sup> When the new appointments were made the headmaster was granted authority over both the boys' and the girls' departments and no headmistress was appointed.

By 1882 several headmistress and infant mistress positions had lapsed as the original appointees left the Education Department. This was not only a considerable financial saving for the state but also enhanced headmasters' status at the expense of senior women teachers. This matter was raised at the royal commission by Catherine Helen Spence in April 1882. She had originally declined an invitation to give evidence but changed her mind and 'came to the Commission to advocate the retention of head mistresses in schools.' Catherine had been lobbied by the headmistresses and infant mistresses of the Model Schools who had met to discuss the reduction of the number of senior positions for women. In her evidence Catherine stated, 'I object to such a check on the ambition of the female teachers and the abolition of what was drawing gentlewomen into the service.' She was sure that the moral tone of schools was better where there was a headmistress and discussed the situation in Victoria where headmasters had sole control, remarking that 'there have been some moral revelations there that are not at all pleasant.'<sup>96</sup> Inspector-

<sup>94</sup> Inspector Stanton to Inspector-General Hartley, 21 October 1881, GRG 18/3/1881/4427; Progress Report of Select Committee 1881, SAPP 1881, no. 122, p. 19; *Border Watch*, 17 January 1880, p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> *Register*, 25 June 1878; Alexander McArthur to Council of Education, 30 September 1878, GRG 50/3/1878/4669.

<sup>96</sup> Progress Report of the Commission on the Working of the Education Acts, 1882, SAPP 1882, no. 27, pp. 139-143, 238. Catherine was probably referring to evidence presented at the Victorian commission in March 1882. See Carole Hooper, 'Eliza Mary Johnson, Schoolteacher - and Wicked Woman?' in Lyn Yates (ed.), *Melbourne Studies in Education*, vol. 29, no. 1, La Trobe University Press, Melbourne, 1995, pp. 30-32.

General Hartley responded with the information that there were currently only five infant mistresses and eight headmistresses appointed in the fifteen largest schools in the colony. He considered that the situation of 'divided authority' in the largest schools was 'an anomaly in our system. It grew up when we were feeling our way in the Council of Education; indeed, it originated with the establishment of the Central Model School under the old board.' Lavinia Seabrooke's agency had caught the Board unawares in 1874 and although her career as a state school teacher was relatively short (1874-1880), her legacy was the relatively powerful headmistress's position. At the commission Hartley admitted that he was 'gradually leaning more and more towards the Victorian system' but, while there was indecision, senior women were able to influence him and resist the whittling away of their privileges. The headmistress' position was not abolished until after his death in 1896.<sup>97</sup>

The final reform of the decade was the establishment of the Advanced School for Girls in 1879. As mentioned earlier, the 1875 Education Act had provided for the establishment of advanced schools and agitation for this kind of state school for girls escalated in 1877. It was argued that there were efficient private schools for middle class boys but there was no comparable and affordable girls' school. Proponents stated that it would not displace the best of young ladies' schools but fill a niche in the education market place by providing girls of modest means with an academic secondary education and prepare them for university entrance. Inspector-General Hartley's support was instrumental in the establishment and continued success of this state secondary school.<sup>98</sup>

The school opened in October 1879 with an initial enrolment of twenty-nine girls who had completed the compulsory certificate in state elementary schools or passed an entrance examination. Enrolments quickly increased to 100 and students ranged in age from eleven to twenty. The Advanced School offered instruction in English, French, German and drawing as well as Latin, Algebra and Euclid in the upper classes. No music was taught at the school although most students took lessons privately. Needlework and cookery were not included in the curriculum either.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Progress Report of the Commission on the Working of the Education Acts, 1882, SAPP 1882, no. 27, p. 194. Note that the Grote Street Model Schools were sometimes being referred to as the Central Model School by the early 1880s. In this thesis the original nomenclature will be retained in the following chapters.

<sup>98</sup> *Register*, 20 January 1877, 18 September 1879; Minutes, Council of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 2479, 6108, 6201; Council of Education Report, SAPP 1878, no. 40, p. 5, SAPP 1879, no. 35, pp. 7, 19; Mackinnon, 'Awakening Women', pp. 57, 66; Mackinnon, *One Foot on the Ladder*, pp. 56-74.

<sup>99</sup> Mackinnon, *One Foot on the Ladder*, pp. 79, 84-89; *Observer*, 29 December 1883; Progress Report on the Commission into the Working of the Education Acts 1882, SAPP 1882, no. 27, pp. 131-132.

Jane Stanes was recruited from Grote Street Model Schools as the first Headmistress. Her own education, teaching qualifications, and her teaching experience indicate her suitability for this prestigious position. She was among the first group of women to study as non-matriculated students at the University of Adelaide in 1876. She was the first teacher in the colony to be awarded the first class teachers' certificate under the new regulations. And in 1877 she had succeeded Lavinia Hyndman as Headmistress of the girls' department at Grote Street. Edith Cook, the Infant Mistress at Grote Street was recruited as the assistant teacher.<sup>100</sup>

Unfortunately Jane's health failed after two months and she was granted leave. There is some evidence that stressful family circumstances were a factor in her illness. Edith became acting headmistress and when the new appointee could not take up the position Edith's appointment was made permanent.<sup>101</sup>

Jane did not return to the state school system. She resigned in 1880, married Henry Doudy in 1881, and moved to the country. However, she maintained life-long friendships with her colleagues, including Inspector-General Hartley and continued as an activist on behalf of women teachers. She was also a member of her local Board of Advice in the 1890s. Like Matilda Evans, Jane expressed her feminist views publicly in two novels and she also published a pamphlet on women's higher education. When she died in 1932 her obituary stated that this 'well known educationist of the early days ... had always maintained her interest in educational matters.'<sup>102</sup>

## Conclusion

The decade beginning in 1870 was one of rapid and far-reaching change for state schooling in South Australia. The problems of providing schools in expanding rural areas were joined by those of providing schooling for city children. As the Central Board of Education responded to powerful advocates for change in the nature of state schooling, licensed teachers' status and conditions of work changed markedly. They were marginalised as inefficient in public forums such as the Philosophical Society, the government enquiry, the

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<sup>100</sup> Advanced School Notes, A706, MLSA; Inspector-General's Annual Report, SAPP 1879, no. 35, p. 53; University of Adelaide, *Calendar*, 1877, p. 10.

<sup>101</sup> John A. Hartley to Mrs Doudy, 9 October 1889 in Condon, 'The Confidential Letterbook'; Mackinnon, *One Foot on the Ladder*, pp. 78-81; Jones, *Nothing Seemed Impossible*, pp. 38-55. Edith married in 1884 and continued teaching until just before the birth of her first child in 1885. She was replaced by Madeleine Rees George.

<sup>102</sup> Inspector-General's Annual Report, SAPP 1894, no. 44, p. 18; *Advertiser*, 30 August 1932; Jones, *Nothing Seemed Impossible*, pp. 45-46, 201; Statton, *Biographical Index*, p. 422. See following chapter for Jane's correspondence with Inspector-General Hartley about women teachers.

*Register* and then as the inspectorial system was reorganised under the new Board. Their occupational autonomy was also undermined as their prerogative to organise their families' labour dissipated in the face of increasing state intervention. On the other hand, men's status as household heads and principal contributors to the family economy were entrenched by school amalgamations in 1870 and from this period married women were marginalised in the state school system.

The 1875 Education Act refocussed the efforts of the state on the elementary education of working class students with the introduction of compulsory (but not free) schooling and it provided for the establishment of secondary schools as well. Under the Act, the state as employer individuated teachers' wages. Men were constructed as sole breadwinners and married women were constructed as non-teachers and denied opportunities to generate income and continue their traditional work in state schools. In so doing, the state fostered the sexual division of labour in teaching families and helped make economic dependency the 'natural' status of married women in the late nineteenth century. On the other hand, single women were co-opted as waged workers to accommodate the continuing demand for sex-segregated schooling and to staff provisional schools in the expanding agricultural areas. Yet there were exceptions to the unofficial marriage bar. The state sponsored a cohort of married and single women teachers at the senior levels of the education hierarchy. These women exercised far more influence in matters of policy and practice than their subordinate positions would suggest.

In essence, state intervention transformed the structure of the teaching family by constructing teaching as waged work for married men and single women. Tensions in the workplace increased as unrelated individuals pursued their teaching careers. Although men's status as household heads and sole breadwinners was institutionalised in the regulations and in practice, they had to work with women who were neither sexually subordinate nor economically dependent on them. As the following chapters will show, the unintended consequences of the individuation of wages were that single women teachers gained a public presence and economic independence which had the potential to threaten the gender order.

## Chapter Five

### Professional and other teachers in state schools

In January 1876 Matilda Evans' novel, 'Two Sides to Every Question: From a South Australian Standpoint' was published in the *Illustrated Adelaide News*. In the first chapter Nettie Alton contemplated ways in which she might contribute to the family economy after her father's death. The Alton family lived in the country and Nettie discussed the idea of earning her living as a teacher. However a friend responded: 'There are so few children about here and the Government school takes up what there is, I'm most afeard there's not much chance of your getting a school.' Nettie agreed and added that if she kept a school she would not be able to care for her invalid mother. The Alton family moved to Adelaide, rented a little cottage in the 'back streets' and Nettie generated income with her new sewing machine.<sup>1</sup>

Matilda Evans' prediction that the state school system would eventually attract most of the students under compulsion was correct. However, her implication that women would lose opportunities to generate income was not so accurate, for many continued their traditional work in the new state school system. They applied to be pupil teachers, provisional teachers in country schools, and to enter the Training College directly. Although women were not a new phenomenon in state schools, the new employment practices exposed their work to public scrutiny. Under the old Board only the names of licensed teachers, seventy per cent of whom were men, were included in annual reports, and in the minutes which were published in the newspapers. After 1875 these same documents contained the names of most individuals employed by the state, and the continuing presence of women as state school teachers was not only exposed but also became an issue. In 1879 one correspondent in the *Register* claimed that there were four or five female applicants for every male, bemoaned the absence of men, and predicted that 'in no distant period the education of our youth will be almost entirely in the hands of unmarried women.'<sup>2</sup> By 1900 almost seventy per cent of state school teachers were women and, certainly, only a handful were married. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century women had definitely captured teaching and made it their work.

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<sup>1</sup> *Illustrated Adelaide News*, 15 January 1876. See also Maude Jeanne Franc, *Two Sides to Every Question: From a South Australian Standpoint*, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, London, 1876, pp. 5-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Register*, 19 June 1879.

Pavla Miller and others have termed this phenomenon the 'feminisation of teaching', while Noeline Kyle has argued that the state resisted women as teachers and that teaching was 'masculinised' in the late nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> However, this thesis has shown that teaching had been women's work from the beginning of white settlement. Neither of these arguments encapsulate the changes in the nature and location of women's work as the state fostered the sexual division of labour among teaching families, and neither expose the threat to the gender order posed by women as they pursued their work as teachers, and their lives as independent women.

The state school system as it developed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century was a markedly different teaching context from its mid-nineteenth century counterpart. The last chapter showed that the teaching family enterprise was replaced by individual employees, namely married men and single women. Women who taught in state schools were no longer co-opted as part of a team but received separate earnings, albeit far less than their male counterparts. Women teachers' wages were based on the assumption that they had no economic dependents whereas men's wages were calculated to enable them to support an economically dependent wife and family. Teachers' conditions of employment also assumed that they were socially independent, that is that they were free to transfer from school to school at the state's behest, and to live and work apart from their families. Women teachers no longer worked in an extension of the family home but, literally in many cases, continued their traditional work in purpose-built public institutions, and negotiated their careers among strangers. In effect, changes in the nature and location of women's work as teachers in state schools had the potential to produce a generation of socially and economically independent women, who challenged the equation of the public sphere as a masculine preserve.

This chapter focuses on the first generation of women teachers as waged workers in state schools and outlines ways in which they participated in the reconstruction of the late nineteenth century teaching profession. With the establishment of the Training College in

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<sup>3</sup> Pavla Miller, *Long Division: State Schooling in South Australian Society*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986, pp. 52-53, 372; Barry H. Bergan, 'Only a Schoolmaster: Gender, Class and the Effort to Professionalise Elementary Teaching in England 1870-1910' in *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 1, 1982; James C. Albisetti, 'The Feminisation of Teaching in the Nineteenth Century: A Comparative Perspective' in *History of Education*, vol. 22, no. 3, 1993; Michael W. Apple, *Teachers and Texts: A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, New York, 1986, pp. 58-76; Noeline Kyle, 'Women's "Natural Mission" but Man's Real Domain: The Masculinisation of the State Elementary Teaching Service in New South Wales' in Sandra Taylor and Miriam Henry (eds), *Battlers and Bluestockings: Women's Place in Australian Education*, Australian College of Education, Canberra, 1988. See also Alison Mackinnon, 'A New Point of Departure' in *History of Education Review*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1984, p. 12; Alison Prentice and Marjorie R. Theobald, 'The Historiography of Women Teachers: A Retrospect' in Alison Prentice and Marjorie R. Theobald (eds), *Women Who Taught: Perspectives on the History of Women and Teaching*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1991, p. 7.



1876, the professionalisation of teaching focussed on recruiting, training and promoting approximately equal numbers of men and women through ascending levels of responsibility and prestige in the Education Department. As tensions between men and women escalated, however, the state expanded and protected men's positions of authority, and restricted women's career paths. In order to meet the demand for schools in country areas, the state also employed uncertificated provisional teachers, mostly women, who dominated the school system numerically but who were excluded from the profession by their trained counterparts. I will show how that state attempted to resolve the tensions created by the employment of increasing numbers of women as teachers.

Although women's career paths were restricted, and most were locked into subordinate positions, employment in the state school system provided middle class single women with opportunities to achieve economic independence and some public influence. Some also explored new options to lead independent private lives. Indeed, as they actively pursued their careers and their lives as women, they became more conspicuous in the public sphere and were identified as members of the group of 'new women'. In essence this chapter will demonstrate that women state school teachers were challenging the gender order both publicly and privately in the late nineteenth century.

### **Recruiting and training the professional teachers**

When the state took control of teachers' employment in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the characteristics of the professional teacher were re-articulated and more rigidly defined. There was no space in the new state school system for mid-nineteenth century teachers like Frances Sheridan and Hannah Turner who had been accorded professional status even though their schools were inefficient. There was no space either for well-educated teachers like Mary Ann and William Cawthorne who had accessed the profession by virtue of their cultural capital in the early days of the Board. Indeed the aforementioned women, being married, would not have been employed at all unless they could prove that they were sole breadwinners. Recruitment of the well-educated professional teacher virtually ceased with the abandonment of the examination for the Teaching Certificate. The avenue was left open with a regulation which stipulated that applicants with university degrees would be accepted as state school teachers. Only a handful of teachers were recruited directly from the University of Adelaide. These included some women teachers at the Advanced School for Girls.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Alison Mackinnon, *One Foot on the Ladder: Origins and Outcomes of Girls' Secondary Education in South Australia*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1984, p. 127.

Late nineteenth century professional teachers were distinguished first and foremost by their credentials acquired through the pupil teacher apprenticeship and the Training College. Status as a member of the profession was virtually restricted to those men and women who entered the state school system as pupil teachers. All other state school teachers, that is uncertificated provisional teachers and partially trained acting assistants, were marginalised. Credentialism as a form of exclusionary social closure thus conferred privileges on a relatively small cohort of state school teachers and this chapter will demonstrate that there were further divisions within the group.<sup>5</sup>

The first Principal of the Training College, Lewis Madley, indicated that cultural capital was an essential attribute for access to the late nineteenth century profession. In 1876 he defined the ideal pupil teacher thus:

The candidates most desirable are young persons of good moral character, sound health, active habits and fair attainments; enthusiastic in their adopted profession, anxious to learn, willing to submit to be taught, and possessing an aptitude to teach.<sup>6</sup>

The 1885 regulations also incorporated this assessment:

Pupil teachers must not be less than fourteen years of age, of good character, and must produce a medical certificate that they are in good health and physically fitted for the work of teaching and the certificate must be on the authorised form. They must also pass an entrance examination, to which candidates of not less than 13½ years of age will be admitted.<sup>7</sup>

The entrance examination excluded many working class students but, as the following chapter will show, many unsuccessful candidates set up their own private schools.

Prospective teachers spent three or four years as pupil teachers. Head teachers were required to give them one hour's instruction daily, and most pupil teachers undertook a full-time teaching load in the junior classes of the school. They were examined annually and those who failed were dismissed. They could also lose their positions when school numbers fell below forty, the minimum school size required for their employment. Given that small schools were mostly located in rural areas, pupil teachers in country towns were less likely to complete their apprenticeship and be eligible for the final year of instruction at the Training College.<sup>8</sup>

The Training College opened in Adelaide in June 1876. The course was initially six months, but from 1878 prospective teachers spent one year at the college. The entrance examination was waived if the candidates had already been pupil teachers or assistants

<sup>5</sup> For further discussion, see Frank Parkin, *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1979, pp. 54-58.

<sup>6</sup> Council of Education Report, SAPP 1877, no. 34, p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> Education Regulations, 1885, SAPP 1885, no. 34, p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Education Regulations, 1885, SAPP 1885, no. 34, pp. 3, 8; Mackinnon, *One Foot on the Ladder*, pp. 129-132.

under the previous Board. Students were paid a weekly allowance and were expected to spend three years teaching in public schools after graduation. Private fee-paying students were also admitted to the college.<sup>9</sup>

The course was intensive and women and men were segregated for sewing, drill and some aspects of Mathematics. Otherwise they were offered the same subjects. After the initial period of six months' instruction, students could elect to study for the basic Third Class certificate, or for the Second Class certificate which required some study at the University. All students completed their practical training in city model schools.<sup>10</sup>

Besides Lewis Madley, the headmasters and headmistresses from the Model Schools gave lectures and assisted in the supervision of practical sessions. Inspector-General Hartley was also involved in training the students. One teacher later reminisced about Hartley and Madley's complementary talents:

The one was a superb educationist but knew nothing about primary schools, their methods and their needs. The other was par excellence a primary school master, thoroughly up-to-date, highly skilled, with a wonderful magnetism and an abounding energy.<sup>11</sup>

Hartley gave weekly lectures in several subjects, tutored men and women students privately, and kept a watchful eye on all aspects of their public and private conduct.<sup>12</sup>

In this hothouse atmosphere, discourses of professionalism were reinforced daily to both the men and women students, and personal and professional networks established. Tropp notes that in England 'it was in the colleges that the young teachers obtained their feeling that they were a professional group, and friendships were made which were afterwards to facilitate the formation of national associations.'<sup>13</sup> The same could be said of South Australia. By the time the students graduated, their characters, talents and foibles were already well known. Hartley consulted Madley about graduates' appointments and it is likely that many careers were pre-determined at those meetings, for the most promising graduates were given the best appointments.

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<sup>9</sup> Council of Education Report, SAPP 1877, no. 34, pp. 5, 24; Council of Education Minutes, GRG 50/1, no. 1860; Bernard Keith Hyams, 'The Training College, Adelaide 1876-1900; A Brief Description', Paper presented to ANZHES Annual Conference, Adelaide, 1976, pp. 3-4.

<sup>10</sup> Bernard Hyams, Lynne Trethewey, Brian Condon, Malcolm Vick, Denis Grundy, *Learning and Other Things: Sources for a Social History of Education in South Australia*, Government Printer, Adelaide, 1985, pp. 126-128; Mr Madley's Report, SAPP 1879, no. 35, pp. 40-41.

<sup>11</sup> *SA Teachers Journal*, December 1915, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> He admonished Edith Cook who later became the headmistress of the Advanced School for Girls for dancing 'till 2 or 3 in the morning during term time'. See John A. Hartley to Mrs Doudy, 9 October 1889, Brian Condon (ed.), 'The Confidential Letterbook of the Inspector-General of Schools, 1880-1914', Murray Park Sources in the History of South Australian Education, Murray Park College of Advanced Education, Adelaide, 1976; *Observer*, 19 September 1896.

<sup>13</sup> Asher Tropp, *The School Teacher: The Growth of the Teaching Profession in England and Wales from 1800 to the Present Day*, William Heinemann Ltd. London, 1957, p. 25.

About thirty candidates were admitted to the Training College each year and the unstated aim was that there should be approximately equal numbers of male and female students, with the balance in favour of the males. In the early years candidates for training were drawn from other sources besides pupil teachers, and there were distinct differences in both the source and the quality of the female and male applicants.

When the Training College opened, it was the only facility in South Australia offering higher education and credentials to women. The University of Adelaide did not admit women to study for degrees until 1881, and even then most who attended university classes did so as non-matriculated students.<sup>14</sup> By comparison the Training College was inundated with women wanting to study for the teaching certificate, and Inspector-General Hartley could afford to be very selective in his choice of women applicants. Between fifteen and eighteen women were successful annually and almost all of them had had previous teaching experience, either in licensed schools or young ladies' academies. Like the pupil teachers, applicants had to produce evidence of good character, and the anecdotal and inferential evidence suggests that the women students were recruited from middle class families.<sup>15</sup>

At the Training College these women had the cultural capital required for success, they were anxious to learn, and they voiced their concerns about the discriminatory practices they encountered. In 1877 their complaints resulted in the cancellation of their gymnastics classes. Some had problems with Arithmetic. Madley advocated that they be examined at a lower standard than the male students but Hartley refused this request on the grounds that women had the same intellectual capacities as men. However, the main problems centred around the subjects required for the Second Class certificate. Students had to study Mathematics or a language other than English, Physiology, Physics and Chemistry, the last two of which were university subjects. Women educated in the accomplishments were advantaged by the language requirements but disadvantaged by the sciences. Madley reiterated their complaints of overwork. Under pressure Hartley adjusted the requirements and students were allowed to substitute English Literature for one of the sciences.<sup>16</sup>

By 1882, 206 teachers had graduated, and 180 of these were employed in public schools. In the early years, the rate of attrition among trained teachers does not seem to have been as

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<sup>14</sup> Alison Mackinnon, 'Awakening Women: Women, Higher Education and Family Formation in South Australia, 1880-1920', Ph.D. thesis, University of Adelaide, 1989, pp. 68, 73.

<sup>15</sup> Catherine Helen Spence, 'Some Social Aspects of Colonial Life' in Helen Thomson (ed.), *Catherine Helen Spence*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1987, p. 542.

<sup>16</sup> *Register*, 8 February 1877; Council of Education minutes, GRG 50/1, nos 3904, 3922; Council of Education Report, SAPP 1877, no. 34, p. 24; Mr Madley's Report, SAPP 1880, no. 44, p. 23; Mr Madley's Report, SAPP 1882, no. 44, p. 21.

high as it was in other countries. A Canadian study indicates that many men saw teacher training as 'an opportunity for temporary employment until enough capital was accumulated for them to pursue other career goals.'<sup>17</sup> In South Australia men and women who worked their way through the pupil teacher apprenticeship and the Training College mostly stayed in the state school system. Indeed Inspector-General Hartley made it clear that he was primarily interested in those who were prepared to commit to teaching as a life-work.<sup>18</sup> However, some of the early women graduates who entered via the entrance examination were transient in the state school system, not because marriage truncated their careers but because they soon moved into private schools as teachers. The following chapter will demonstrate that they were utilising the Training College to acquire the credentials that would give them greater bargaining power in the education marketplace.

At the same time as the Training College was turning away women, it was struggling to fill its unspoken quota of male trainees. Women far outnumbered men at the entrance examination and the few men who entered the college via this pathway had been engaged in other occupations. The shortfall in the numbers of male students was made up by pupil teachers, assistants from the former licensed schools and provisional teachers. These students were admitted without examination and in fact some had failed the pupil teachers' examination but were still given a place. Try as they did, however, Hartley and Madley were unable to recruit enough men and there were always more female than male students at the college.<sup>19</sup>

Men and men's professional interests dominated public discussion of this 'problem'. Complaints about the lack of male students were registered in the press and reiterated by the inspectors, and in Madley's annual reports. Both Hartley and Madley admitted that the social position of the men was below that of the women. Madley invoked the discourse of teaching as a last resort to describe provisional teachers, and men from other occupations. The problem as stated by Madley and the inspectors was that there were insufficient male pupil teachers in public schools. Headmasters were accused of exacerbating the shortage by using female pupil teachers in the boys' departments of large schools.<sup>20</sup> Complaints escalated to such an extent that Inspector-General Hartley took the unprecedented step of

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<sup>17</sup> Mr Madley's Report, SAPP 1882, no. 44, p. 20; R. D. Gidney and W.P.J. Millar, *Professional Gentlemen: The Professions in Nineteenth Century Ontario*, Ontario Historical Studies Series, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1994, p. 241.

<sup>18</sup> See John A. Hartley to W. C. Grasby, 3 November 1890, Condon, 'The Confidential Letterbook'.

<sup>19</sup> Council of Education Report, SAPP 1877, no. 34, p. 24; Council of Education Report, SAPP 1878, no. 40, pp. 32-33.

<sup>20</sup> *Register*, 4 May 1877, 20 September 1877, 19 June 1879; Boucaut Papers on Education 1876-1877, V99, MLSA; Council of Education Report, SAPP 1878, no. 40, p. 8; Mr Madley's Report, SAPP 1884, no. 44, pp. 4, 24; Mr Madley's Report, SAPP 1884-5, no. 44, pp. 25-26; Inspector Dewhirst's and Mr Madley's Reports, SAPP 1886, no. 44, pp. 1, 18; Evidence and Appendices Relating to Eighth Progress Report of the Public Service Commission, SAPP 1891, no. 30A, p. 126.

devoting part of his 1885 annual report to the problem. In an appendix entitled 'Female Teachers' he marginalised dissenting voices and articulated an alternative discourse:

Public attention has been drawn of late to the comparatively small number of male pupil teachers. The Senior Inspector and the Principal of the Training College have referred to the matter in their recent reports, and some appear to imagine that this is a weak spot in our educational system.

The question of the comparative merits of men and women as teachers is one on which differences of opinion are sure to arise, and my own views do not coincide with those of the gentlemen mentioned above. I venture to state that, on the average, a girl makes a better teacher than a boy. This is not a question of intellect, though every one knows that even on this head public opinion has undergone a great change within the last two or three decades; but even if we admit that the powers of woman's mind are, on the whole, inferior to those of the man's, there are still other qualifications to consider. Sympathy with the child nature, liveliness, fertility of resource, and gentleness of manner are not less necessary attributes of the good teacher, and few will deny that these are essentially feminine characteristics, while in discipline and organisation the man probably has the advantage. Even the objection often urged, that women marry and give up the work, is minimised by the consideration that this leaves room for younger persons as teachers;<sup>21</sup>

He concluded the statement with statistics comparing South Australia with England and the other colonies. These figures showed that women constituted about forty per cent of certificated teachers in the colonies but 63.5% in England, and from sixty-six to seventy-seven per cent of pupil teachers. Indeed they support Noeline Kyle's predication that New South Wales had the highest percentage of men teachers and that the 'masculinisation of teaching' was an Australia-wide phenomenon. Yet Hartley omitted all provisional teachers from the statistics, thereby understating the actual extent to which women were employed in late nineteenth century state school systems.<sup>22</sup>

This strategy to quell opposition worked. The lack of male pupil teachers was not raised again in annual reports, although the issue was occasionally canvassed by critics of the Education Department.<sup>23</sup> Women continued to predominate as pupil teachers in South Australia but many were not admitted to the Training College at the end of their apprenticeship. Instead they joined the growing numbers of partially trained acting-assistants in public schools.<sup>24</sup> By 1890 there were reductions in the overall numbers at the Training College but men were still the preferred candidates. Hartley's public advocacy of women as teachers in 1885 was not matched by changes in policy or practice.

<sup>21</sup> Inspector-General's Report, SAPP 1886, no. 44, p. xx.

<sup>22</sup> Inspector-General's Report, SAPP 1886, no. 44, p. xx; Kyle, 'Women's "Natural Mission"' in Taylor and Henry (eds), *Battlers and Bluestockings*, p. 29. My reading of this statement has been influenced by Sonya Rose's discussion of these kinds of reports. See Sonya O. Rose, *Limited Livelihoods: Gender and Class in Nineteenth Century England*, Routledge, London, 1992, p. 8.

<sup>23</sup> *Register*, 30 May 1888, 15 July 1889.

<sup>24</sup> A similar situation existed in New South Wales. See Noeline Williamson, 'The Employment of Female Teachers in the Small Bush Schools of New South Wales, 1880-1890: A Case of Stay Bushed or Stay Home' in *Labour History*, no. 43, November 1982, p. 2.

Hartley's statement is also significant for its characterisation of women teachers as nurturers, and teaching as a precursor to marriage and motherhood. This was the first time that the discourse was articulated by a high profile administrator, and by 1885 Hartley was undisputed head of the Education Department. This perception of women teachers was also advanced by school administrators in New South Wales, America and Canada when their widespread employment became an issue, and has been incorporated into the subsequent arguments about the 'feminisation of teaching'.<sup>25</sup>

However, by connecting teaching with domesticity Hartley obscured the dramatic changes which had taken place with the individuation of teachers' employment a decade earlier. Women teachers were no longer part of family work teams nor were they economically or socially dependent on the men teachers with whom they worked. At a time when the sexual division of labour was being constructed as the norm in the state school system, and in the middle class, women's presence in paid employment was an anomaly. As the concept of work also narrowed to mean 'waged labour', Leonore Davidoff claims that there was a 'continued effort to keep the category "woman" attached to society via the family and thus part of the moral domain, untainted by the market.'<sup>26</sup> Constructing teaching as a preparation for motherhood preserved the gender order. Hartley's 1885 statement worked for another reason. By invoking 'commonsense' understandings about women, he had generated tolerance for the existing situation, that is single women's public presence and numerical dominance in the state school system.

The view of women teachers as expressed by Hartley does not accord with women's perspective on their teaching careers in South Australia. Catherine Hart and Hannah Turner, for example taught because they needed the money, and because work gave them dignity and independence. In her fiction Matilda Evans also pursued the same theme. American researchers have also noted the absence of the nurturing discourse in women teachers' writing. They conclude that women taught for similar reasons to men.<sup>27</sup> In the following discussion it will be shown that late nineteenth century women teachers pursued their careers with the same vigour as their male counterparts. However, given the

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<sup>25</sup> Kyle, 'Women's "Natural Mission"', pp. 30-31; Prentice and Theobald, 'The Historiography of Women Teachers' in Prentice and Theobald, *Women Who Taught*, p. 6; Apple, *Teachers and Texts*, pp. 63-65; Jo Anne Preston, 'Female Aspiration and Male Ideology: School Teaching in Nineteenth Century New England' in Arina Angerman (ed.), *Current Issues in Women's History*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1989, pp. 172-180; Marta Danylewycz, Beth Light, Alison Prentice, 'The Evolution of the Sexual Division of Labor in Teaching: Nineteenth Century Ontario and Quebec Case Study' in Jane Gaskell and Arlene McLaren (eds), *Women and Education*, second edition, Detselig Enterprises Ltd, Alberta, 1991, pp. 33-36.

<sup>26</sup> Leonore Davidoff, *Worlds Between: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1995, p. 246.

<sup>27</sup> See Preston, 'Female Aspiration and Male Ideology' in Angerman (ed.), *Current Issues in Women's History*, pp. 172-180; Sari Knopp Biklen, *Schoolwork: Gender and the Cultural Construction of Teaching*, Teachers College Press, New York, 1995, ch. 4.

continuing institutionalisation of men's positions of authority by the state, the outcomes for women were quite different.

### **Career paths**

In the late nineteenth century, the horizontal career model as exemplified by licensed teachers such as James and Mary Bassett was no longer sufficient for members of the profession. James and Mary had spent their lives in the one place and gradually built their reputations through their school examination successes and participation in community life. Now, teaching was still a life-work but it acquired a vertical dimension. Career was reinterpreted as 'a pre-established total pattern of organised professional activity with upward movement through recognised preparatory stages and advancement based on merit and bearing honour.'<sup>28</sup>

In South Australia the most successful Training College graduates began their careers as assistant teachers either in substantial country towns, such as Mount Gambier or in the Model Schools and other large schools in Adelaide. Men teachers then expected to become head teachers in country schools and gradually advance to more prestigious appointments in Adelaide. As had been the case under the 1851 Act, city schools were the bastion of professional teachers and those who stayed in country schools continued to be marginalised as less successful teachers. Grote St and Norwood Model Schools were two of the most eagerly sought situations in the colony. Their status was enhanced by the core of middle class students who attended and won scholarships entitling them to secondary education. The final career move for a select few headmasters was to the rank of inspector. Every one of the nineteenth century headmasters of Norwood Model School became an inspector. Inspector-General Hartley presided over the Education Department until his death in 1896.<sup>29</sup>

The career paths of South Australian teachers were tightly controlled by the central administration. Although teachers could request transfers, the final decision rested with Inspector-General Hartley. He stated that promotion was by seniority and merit but his assessment of merit was a continual source of frustration among men teachers. They claimed that 'certificates, length of service and good service' were not universally

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<sup>28</sup> Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America*, Norton and Co., New York, 1976, p. 172.

<sup>29</sup> Daniel Manning, *Norwood School 1877-1977*, E. S. Wigg & Son, Adelaide, 1977, p. 30. For a typical male career path see Inspector Warren's obituary, *SA Teachers Journal*, March 1928, p. 35.



recognised.<sup>30</sup> However, these factors were only part of the requirements for a successful teaching career. Indeed an assessment of the style and quality of a teacher's personal life was an integral part of the decision-making process. While the inspectors reported on teachers in country districts, Hartley visited the schools in and near Adelaide frequently, advising, cajoling and berating teachers about their professional and personal conduct. A former teacher noted that his 'propensity for walking and consequently turning up at odd times has more than once proved inconvenient to teachers who do not work for the love of it.'<sup>31</sup> However, this personal contact provided him with the opportunity to assess teachers' character as well as their work. Ultimately teachers 'of suitable character' were promoted to the most prestigious positions in the state teaching service.<sup>32</sup>

The ideal male professional teacher was still a married man but, with the restructuring of the teaching family, husbands and wives no longer worked alongside each other. Once men moved up from the small schools, their wives' temporary employment as sewing mistress lapsed. However, there was the continuing expectation that the teachers' style of family life would reflect the values they sought to instil in working class children. Inspector Whitham commented on one teacher of dubious quality that 'were he married I would have some hope of him.' Joseph Ladyman and Goethe Homann, both of whom were unsatisfactory teachers, were finally dismissed when their wives' alleged sexual misconduct was brought to Hartley's notice.<sup>33</sup> Married women's cultural capital, including moral guardianship within the family, had become the hidden investment in men's careers. In the schools, however, single women carried the mantle of moral guardianship.

Middle class women graduates had the appropriate cultural capital required for success in the teaching profession if the promotion ladder had been open to all. Although they were located at every level of the state school system, except the rank of inspector, the previous chapters have shown that men's positions in state schools were protected from the outset by regulations and in practice. As the restructuring of the school system gathered momentum, each new set of regulations was more complex and more clearly defined men's and women's career paths. The result was that a few women became head teachers of

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<sup>30</sup> Inspector-General's Annual Report, SAPP 1889, no. 44, pp. xv-xvi. Evidence and Appendices Relating to the Eighth Progress Report of the Public Service Commission, SAPP 1891, no. 30A, pp. 126, 153.

<sup>31</sup> *The Educator*, vol. 1, no. 12, 1893, p. 159; Progress Report of the Commission on the Working of the Education Acts, 1882, SAPP 1882, no. 27, p. 154; Hyams et al, *Learning and Other Things*, p. 123.

<sup>32</sup> For further comments to this effect, see A. G. Austin (ed.), *The Webbs' Australian Diary, 1898*, Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, Melbourne, 1965, p. 94.

<sup>33</sup> N. C. Harry to Council of Education, May 1877, GRG 50/3/1877/1668; Joseph Ladyman to Council of Education, July 1876, GRG 50/3/1876/1620; Kay Whitehead, 'Provisional School Teachers in South Australia, 1875-1915', M.Ed. thesis, Flinders University, 1990, pp. 191-192.

country schools, and a handful became headmistresses of girls' departments in large city schools, but most trained women spent their entire careers as assistants.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the reorganisation of the school system also intensified teachers' daily work. Efficient teachers were expected to adhere to a strict daily routine, use whole class rather than individualised instruction, and secure order and obedience in the classroom. More detailed lesson preparation and record keeping also increased the amount of time spent outside school hours. Successive sets of regulations required students to master more content in some curriculum areas, and also introduced new subjects. In 1888 for example, Drawing became a compulsory subject whereas it had previously been optional. In the 1890s Mental Arithmetic, elementary Science and Manual work were also added to the curriculum. As a consequence new skills were constantly demanded of all teachers.<sup>34</sup>

However, women's work as teachers was more intense and more time consuming than men's, because they were required to teach sewing. In fact, this subject was an endless source of anxiety for all women teachers regardless of rank. Instructions became more detailed but girls were not allowed to make dolls' clothes to demonstrate their skills, or to use sewing machines as they became available. Girls also resisted attempts to make them do plain rather than ornamental needlework and women teachers literally spent hours correcting exercise books and fixing sewing. In 1889 Jane Doudy (nee Stanes) publicly outlined the problems in a long letter to the *Advertiser*. She complained that women carried a far heavier workload than men for a pitiful salary and that they were disadvantaged in the annual examinations:

In girls' schools the pupils are expected to be proficient in needlework and knitting. This means that at least six hours are taken from the ordinary routine, and yet with so much less time to study in the girls' curriculum is the same as that of the boys, and they have to pass precisely the same standard. Each girl belonging to the upper classes has to present for examination a garment cut out and completed by herself, and also some knitted article. As it would be impossible in large classes to get this done in school time the mistresses and assistants are compelled to look over, fix and put in order after school hours, otherwise their classes must fail, and of course very unpleasant results follow.<sup>35</sup>

This was the crux of the matter. Women teachers were ambitious. They wanted success at the examinations and identified sewing as the barrier to them competing equally with men for results. Jane Doudy upheld the importance of plain needlework for working class girls,

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<sup>34</sup> Inspector Whitham's report, SAPP 1889, no. 44, p. 13; Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors, SAPP 1897, no. 44, p. 12; Miller, *Long Division*, pp. 45-56; Hyams et al, *Learning and Other Things*, pp. 129-150; see also Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice, 'Teachers' Work: Changing Patterns and Perceptions in the Emerging School Systems of Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Canada' in Prentice and Theobald (eds), *Women Who Taught*, pp. 140-154.

<sup>35</sup> *Advertiser*, 3 October 1889. Jane was formerly the headmistress at Grote Street and the first headmistress of the Advanced School for Girls. Her teaching career was discussed in chapter four.

but argued that the standards for girls should be lowered in Arithmetic in order to make the competition fairer. Women teachers agreed with her. Their arguments were not about girls' intellectual capacities *vis a vis* boys. In fact, they supported the competitive academic curricula at the Advanced School for Girls as proof of girls' intellectual equality. Inspector-General Hartley never succumbed to their entreaties. Instead he sidestepped the issue of male privilege and argued that the intellectual capacities of boys and girls were equal and therefore they should be judged by the same standards.<sup>36</sup>

Inspector-General Hartley was so perturbed by Jane's letter, however, that he responded at length privately to her criticisms. He respected Jane's opinion and in his first letter stated: 'if you will prove your point, I will do my best to see that an alteration is made in our present arrangements.'<sup>37</sup> Jane had actually resigned from the state school system about a decade before this communication but she was able to challenge the Inspector-General, thereby continuing to influence matters regarding women and girls in state schools. For the most part though, it was women teachers inside the state school system whose agency in negotiating their careers contributed to the reconstruction of the teaching profession. The career paths of four women teachers, Catherine Beaton, Catherine Francis, Kate Catlow and Caroline Jacob illustrate the opportunities and restrictions for women in late nineteenth century public schools.

Catherine Beaton had been an assistant in the licensed school at Claraville, near Mount Gambier for two years prior to entering the Training College in 1877. She graduated with the basic Third Class teaching certificate and ordinary results, and was appointed to Mount Gambier as an assistant in the girls' department.<sup>38</sup>

After two years, she transferred to Naracoorte, a much smaller country school, where the headmaster was Charles Wainwright. At this school the new social relations between unrelated men and women were tested over some years. In August 1882 Charles wrote to Inspector-General Hartley complaining about Catherine 'for introducing private matters into the school business in spite of his instruction that this is not to be done.' Hartley wrote a confidential letter to Catherine:

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<sup>36</sup> *Education Gazette*, October 1888, p. 30; Helen Jones, *Nothing Seemed Impossible: Women's Education and Social Change in South Australia 1875-1915*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, pp. 29-31.

<sup>37</sup> John A. Hartley to Mrs Doudy, 3 October 1889, 9 October 1889, 26 October 1889 in Condon, 'The Confidential Letterbook'.

<sup>38</sup> For Catherine's teaching record see Teachers' Classification Board and Teachers' History Sheets, 1882-1960, GRG 18/167; Catherine was at Mount Gambier during Mary Mackay's clashes with the headmaster and headmistress. See chapter four.

If you would like to say anything about the matter you are at perfect liberty to do so, and any communication would be treated as confidential if so desired by you: if you prefer to say nothing kindly write me a line to that effect.  
Please mark your reply "Private" outside the envelope.<sup>39</sup>

Apparently Catherine was reluctant to divulge the exact nature of their differences and Hartley allowed her to remain at the school.

In 1884 Inspector Stanton reported on the ongoing battles between the staff. After the annual examination he had spent more than six hours 'hearing complaints' from Charles about Catherine's discipline problems. Charles had recorded incidents in his diary since the initial troubles in 1882, and Catherine was 'entirely taken by surprise' by many of the allegations. Inspector Stanton wrote:

Miss Beaton never was a good disciplinarian and she never will be, but I cannot find that she is wilfully careless in the matter; on the contrary, I believe she does her best.

However he found that Catherine had broken the punishment regulations. As a result, she was severely censured and Charles was reprimanded, firstly for allowing the regulations to be violated, and secondly, for his unprofessional conduct.

have further to state that in my opinion his conduct in taking notes as to his assistant's behaviour without calling her attention to any grounds of complaint is quite unbecoming his position as Head teacher; and that the result of the inspector's investigation is to leave a doubt in my mind whether he ought to retain a position in which he has to deal with grown-up persons. I hope he will profit by the warning and not make it necessary to recommend his removal to a smaller school.<sup>40</sup>

Neither Charles nor Catherine were promoted to prestigious positions in city schools. Catherine transferred to Nangula Springs as head teacher in 1888 and then to Lucindale in 1902. By this stage opportunities for women teachers to become head teachers had been further eroded, and their workloads increased. The maximum school size for women head teachers had been reduced from 100 students to seventy-five and they were no longer allowed to employ sewing mistresses. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the percentage of women head teachers in the Education Department fell from thirty to ten.<sup>41</sup>

However, as head teacher of her own school, Catherine Beaton was freed from the workplace conflict which had plagued her at Naracoorte. She had won the same degree of occupational autonomy that was granted to men head teachers. She earned a modest salary of 124 pounds per annum and she was a member of the Teachers Superannuation Fund. Furthermore, living accommodation was provided for her at Nangula Springs and at

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<sup>39</sup> John A. Hartley to Miss Beaton, 31 August 1882 and 8 September 1882, Condon, 'The Confidential Letterbook'.

<sup>40</sup> Inspector Stanton to Inspector-General Hartley, 22 December 1884, GRG 18/3/1884/8116.

<sup>41</sup> Education Regulations, 1885, SAPP 1885, no. 34, p. 3; Education Regulations 1892, SAPP 1892, no. 51, p. 12; Miller, *Long Division*, p. 372.

Lucindale. As a tenured servant of the state Catherine had achieved economic independence and some security for her retirement. She resigned in 1905 having spent thirty-one years as a state school teacher.<sup>42</sup>

Kate Catlow had commenced teaching as a monitor in her parents' licensed school. Kate's mother, Augusta had taught with her husband as part of a family enterprise, combining marriage and motherhood with her work as a teacher. By comparison, Kate was an employee of the state and it was assumed that she had no dependents. She completed her pupil teacher apprenticeship and graduated from the Training College in 1886 with a Second Class certificate, and 'good' results. Her teaching career was spent working with unrelated individuals in large, urban, age-graded institutions, the last of which was Norwood Model school. Kate resigned to marry in 1898.<sup>43</sup>

As an assistant teacher, Kate spent her teaching career in relative obscurity. She was not only subordinate to the headmaster at Norwood but also to the headmistress, whose responsibility it was to oversee most of her daily work. The examination results for the girls' department were aggregated so Kate did not receive public acknowledgment for her individual contribution to the school's reputation. However, her teaching record indicates that she was a successful teacher.<sup>44</sup>

Although women teachers in city schools were confined to subordinate positions and had less occupational autonomy than country teachers, they were more fortunate in that they were able to access opportunities for professional development. There were Saturday classes on school management and method, as well as Singing and Drawing classes when these revised curricula were introduced. Inspector-General Hartley held Literature classes which proved popular too. In 1887 the University amended its regulations so that teachers and other workers could study for a degree at evening classes. However, women teachers' workloads prevented most of them from taking up part-time study and prior to 1900 they could reach the maximum salary levels without a degree anyway. Instead of taking university classes, they chose the kinds of professional development which had relevance to their daily work and prospects of promotion.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Education Gazette*, January 1891, p. 10; Inspector-General's Report, SAPP 1886, no. 44, p. 67.

<sup>43</sup> See chapter four for details of Augusta and Edward's teaching careers. For Kate's teaching record see Teachers' Classification Board and Teachers' History Sheets 1882-1960, GRG 18/167.

<sup>44</sup> See comments in the introduction about the difficulties of researching the careers of assistant teachers in state schools.

<sup>45</sup> Minutes, Council of Education, GRG 50/1, no. 6261; Council of Education Report, SAPP 1877, no. 34, p. 10; *Education Gazette*, January 1887, p. 7, March 1887, p. 11, January 1890, p. 8. More than fifty women assistants who had not taken university courses were later disadvantaged when the regulations changed in the early twentieth century, and they were unable to access the top salaries. They protested through the Women Teachers' Association, and their letters cite their extensive professional development, and their career histories. See Women Teachers' Association to Director, 16 May 1911, GRG 18/2/1911/1186.

Adelaide teachers had more personal access to Inspector-General Hartley and thus were more likely to be assessed as teachers of suitable character, thereby securing their professional reputations. Kate Catlow was a long-time committee member of the Old Students Association which was formed in 1883. In this association the graduates of the Training College mingled with Hartley, the headmasters, headmistresses and the inspectors who were honorary members. Associational activity sustained the networks established at the Training College and in the workplace. It also reinforced the discourses of professionalism. At the monthly meetings, members gave papers on a range of topics. In 1885 Hartley spoke about 'Self-Culture' and other papers included 'The Public Teacher', 'Political Economy' and 'Poet Gordon'.<sup>46</sup>

Catherine Francis (nee MacMahon) was one of the few teachers from the old system who reached high status positions after the 1875 Act. She had originally begun teaching in the Catholic school system but lost her place to the women religious, and most of her long career was spent in state schools. However, she remained a devout Catholic and the Catholic Women's League formed a guard of honour at her funeral in 1917.<sup>47</sup>

Catherine was a licensed teacher for about two years prior to her marriage to Thomas Francis in June 1876. She rejoined the state system and was appointed as an assistant to Norwood Model School in 1877, when Lavinia Hyndman (formerly Seabrooke) was headmistress. Catherine gradually worked her way up through the assistant teacher ranks to become assistant-in-charge of the girls' department in 1885 and headmistress in 1887. During her sixteen year tenure as headmistress, almost half of the bursaries to the Advanced School were won by girls from Norwood. Neither Catherine nor her female staff, including Kate Catlow, have been credited for the role they played in these girls' education.<sup>48</sup>

By 1890 Catherine was one of only six headmistresses of girl's departments. Norwood still maintained the position of infant mistress, but in many large schools the most senior woman teacher was the 'assistant in charge'. They earned about half of the headmistress' salary and were subordinate to the headmaster in all matters, but carried almost as much responsibility as a headmistress. In spite of Catherine Spence's arguments at the royal commission in 1882, opportunities for women to reach senior positions were whittled

<sup>46</sup> *Education Gazette*, May 1885, p. 16; June 1886, p. 39, May 1889, p. 40, September 1896, p. 103.

<sup>47</sup> For details of Catherine's career with the Catholic system and as a licensed teacher, see chapter three. For her teaching record see Teachers Classification Board and Teachers History Sheets, 1882-1960, GRG 18/167; *Register*, 6 September 1917; *Southern Cross*, 6 September 1918.

<sup>48</sup> For details of bursary winners see Mackinnon, *One Foot on the Ladder*, p. 193; Catherine's husband was at some time an Inspector of Telegraphs. At the time of her death she was a widow but I have been unable to trace further details of her private life. See *Advertiser*, 6 September 1917.

away in the following years but not without protests from Catherine Francis and her colleagues. As each new set of regulations was drafted, the headmistress' position was threatened, and senior women met to discuss the problem and lobby Inspector-General Hartley. Such was the case in 1891 when free state education was introduced and payment by results was abolished. The women also expressed their concerns about the new fixed salary scales for women teachers.<sup>49</sup>

In 1885 the South Australian Teachers Association was formed in Adelaide. Catherine Francis was a member of the executive for many years and she was the first woman to present a paper to the association. The topic was the 'Results Examination', and she outlined all of the aforementioned arguments about women teachers' disadvantaged position because of sewing. Excerpts of her paper were published in the *Observer*. In 1891 she was also elected to represent women teachers at the Public Service Commission of Enquiry. In that forum she again addressed the vexatious problem of sewing and the results examination. Although sewing was a heavy burden for women teachers, it was the one field in which women teachers' authority was acknowledged in the Education Department, and publicly. Men teachers had absolutely no claim to expertise in needlework! In her evidence Catherine also requested more adequate salaries for sewing mistresses and pupil teachers.<sup>50</sup>

Catherine sought public recognition for her work through the Public Schools' Floral and Industrial Society which was established by Inspector-General Hartley in 1879 to promote the work in state schools to the community. Leading citizens donated prizes and judged the children's work at the annual exhibition in Adelaide. Thousands of children came by train from the country to attend the exhibition. As a committee member, Catherine reinforced her personal contacts with Inspector-General Hartley who was President of the society, the inspectors, other headmasters and headmistresses, and the judges who included Mrs Hartley and Mrs Madley.<sup>51</sup>

In 1890, Inspector Whitham reported that the girls at Norwood were spending far too much time preparing their needlework exhibits. However, the reputations of Catherine and her female staff were at stake. In the 1890s Norwood was one of the major prize winners so

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<sup>49</sup> *Education Gazette*, May 1887, pp. 32, 35. See meetings of women teachers on 6 March 1891, 15 September 1891, South Australian Teachers Association Minute Book, 1890-1897, SRG 74, MLSA.

<sup>50</sup> *Register*, 6 July 1885; *Education Gazette*, October 1888, p. 80; *Observer*, 8 September 1888; Evidence and Appendices Relating to the Eighth Progress Report of the Public Service Commission, SAPP 1891, no. 30A, pp. 152-153, 208-211.

<sup>51</sup> *Education Gazette*, June 1885, p. 22, May 1899, p. 44, December 1887, p. 71; Jones, *Nothing Seemed Impossible*, p. 56. See also G.E. Saunders, 'J.A. Hartley and the foundation of the Public School System in South Australia' in C. Turney (ed.), *Pioneers of Australian Education*, vol. 2, Sydney University Press, Sydney 1972, p. 169.

Catherine's status as a teacher and headmistress was bolstered by her school's performance. Some of her women staff members were publicly recognised too. In 1891 Kate Catlow's 'class of little boys and girls delighted the large audience by their excellent performance of a minuet. The grave faces of the tiny ladies and gentlemen were not the least amusing part of the entertainment.'<sup>52</sup>

However, it is important not to romanticise the relationships between headmistresses, their staff, and girl students. Some headmistresses exploited their women assistants and pupil teachers mercilessly. In 1888 the headmistresses were instructed to take sole charge of a class as well as their other duties. Inspector-General Hartley defended his edict with the comment:

The Head Mistresses (with exceptions) calmly relieved themselves of class teaching and divided up their work among the assistants and pupil teachers. It was they who showed want of consideration. They bound burdens grievous to be borne (for their pupil teachers) and only occasionally touched them with one of their little fingers [emphasis in original].<sup>53</sup>

Although it is not known whether Catherine Francis was one of the offenders, there is evidence of her harsh treatment of girl students. As a teacher she was reputed to be 'good, but hard'. In 1889 Inspector-General Hartley wrote to her confidentially after a student's father complained about her excessive discipline. He concluded: 'Now don't go and talk to the child or the class when you read this. Think the matter over calmly and, when your mind is made up, come and see me.'<sup>54</sup> Other teachers were fined for breeches of the punishment regulations. In 1902 there is also a note in her teaching record that she was 'cautioned about ill treatment of a child.'<sup>55</sup>

In 1902 Catherine took one month's leave, submitted her resignation but then withdrew it. As a consequence of this vacillation she lost her position at Norwood. By this time the headmistress' position had been abolished so Catherine spent the remaining thirteen years of her career in relative obscurity as a country head teacher, not only losing status but also earning less than half of her headmistress' salary. At least she had superannuation to support her in her retirement.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Inspector Whitham to Inspector-General Hartley, 10 October 1891, GRG 18/3/1891/1711; *Education Gazette*, December 1891, p. 125.

<sup>53</sup> John A. Hartley to Mrs Doudy, 26 October 1889, John A. Hartley to Miss C. Smith, 21 October 1881, John A. Hartley to Miss Holman, 3 March 1886, Condon, 'The Confidential Letterbook'.

<sup>54</sup> John A. Hartley to Mrs Francis, 26 November 1889, Condon, 'The Confidential Letterbook'.

<sup>55</sup> See Teachers Classification Board and Teachers' History Sheets, 1882-1960, GRG 18/167.

<sup>56</sup> See Catherine's record in Teachers Classification Board and Teachers' History Sheets, 1882-1960, GRG 18/167; *Education Gazette*, January 1891, p. 10, December 1902, p. 149.



Caroline Jacob achieved the ultimate plum, in terms of women's career paths and status in the Education Department. She was one of a select group of women state school teachers drafted into the Advanced School for Girls.

Caroline's cultural capital stood her in good stead for success. Mary Jacob had raised her daughters to be useful and independent. She had also passed on her expertise in the accomplishments, especially French, which would assist Caroline to acquire the second class teachers' certificate at the Training College. Ultimately, Caroline's ambition was to conduct her own school.<sup>57</sup>

Having graduated from the Training College as the 'best woman student' in 1880, she began her teaching career in her home town of Mount Gambier. John Peate was the headmaster and in evidence to the royal commission in 1882 he delivered a scathing indictment of his assistant teacher. He claimed that Caroline was 'totally unfit for teaching in a public school. Her manner was harsh and she was so nagging with the children that they simply refused to do what she told them ... I lost many children through Miss Jacob and my labour was thrown away.' He blamed her for the school's poor aggregate result in the annual examination and his subsequent loss of salary. Although Inspector Stanton said that John's complaints were not entirely justified, he empathised that headmasters were 'expected to bring their schools up to a certain standard with the aid of assistants in whose selection they had no voice.'<sup>58</sup>

John Peate had lost control of the employment of his staff. He now had to work with unrelated single women who had similar ambitions as himself. Worse still, he was under siege from surrounding private schools, most of which were conducted by women.<sup>59</sup>

Inspector-General Hartley defended Caroline and chastised John Peate for his unprofessional conduct in naming her in his evidence. He transferred all staff at Mount Gambier to new schools, thus solving this particular crisis. Caroline spent the remainder of the year as an assistant at Gawler and was then transferred to the girls' department at Port Adelaide where she rapidly ascended the assistant teacher ranks. In 1885 she became an assistant teacher at the Advanced School for Girls.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> For details of Caroline's family and her education see chapter one. For Caroline's teaching record, see Teachers Classification Board and Teachers History Sheets, 1882-1960, GRG 18/167.

<sup>58</sup> Progress Report of the Commission on the Working of the Education Acts, 1882, SAPP 1882, no. 27, pp. 122, 126, 148; Inspector Stanton's Report, SAPP 1881, no. 44, p. 14.

<sup>59</sup> No wonder John Peate took to the bottle! See John A. Hartley to J. V. Peate, 3 March 1886, Condon, 'The Confidential Letterbook'. See chapter four for details of the competition between private and state schools in Mount Gambier.

<sup>60</sup> Progress Report of the Commission into the Working of the Education Acts, 1882, SAPP 1882, no. 27, p. 126.

Just as there were clear differences in the status and working conditions between city and country teachers, so too, there were differences between women teachers in the city public schools and those in the Advanced School. Staff at the Advanced School not only provided secondary education but their students, in the early years at least, were solidly middle class, unlike the majority of those in the public schools. The classes were smaller and no sewing was taught either. Relieved of this burden, the workload of women teachers at the Advanced School was lighter too. There were no men teachers at the school, so this group of women teachers were released from the problems of gender relations which beset many other assistants and headmistresses. Lastly, Advanced School examination successes were widely reported, thus enhancing the status of its women teachers. Caroline Jacob's work was specifically mentioned in the headmistress' annual reports and at prize-giving ceremonies.<sup>61</sup>

The women teachers at the Advanced School had different personal and professional networks too. Several attended University classes as non-matriculated students. In 1886, for example, Caroline attended the Geology class along with some colleagues, her sister Annie and other teachers from select ladies' academies. The same group of women were active in the Collegiate Schools' Association.<sup>62</sup>

Caroline resigned from the Education Department in December 1897 and, with her sisters, opened Tormore House, thereby realising her ambition to conduct her own girls' school. Age and teaching experience had not mellowed her. She was still a harsh disciplinarian and 'ruled the school with a rod of iron.' In the early twentieth century, this school, referred to as the 'Cheltenham of South Australia', was a conspicuous success at the University examinations and its headmistress was a well-known public figure.<sup>63</sup>

As state school teachers these four women were subject to an increasing raft of regulations which dictated their everyday teaching in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. With the introduction of new and more complex curricula, teachers' workloads were intensified, and their prerogative to choose content and methods of instruction diminished. Women teachers carried the extra burdens of sewing and of being locked into subordinate positions by more

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<sup>61</sup> Jones, *Nothing Seemed Impossible*, pp. 54, 60; Mackinnon, *One Foot on the Ladder*, p. 84; John A. Hartley to Mrs Doudy, 9 October 1889, Condon, 'The Confidential Letterbook'; *Observer*, 26 December 1891.

<sup>62</sup> University of Adelaide Fees Accounts, 1876-1894, Series 29/61, University of Adelaide Archives; Jones, *Nothing Seemed Impossible*, p. 76; Minute Book of the Teachers' Guild and Collegiate Schools Association 1891-1893 and then the Collegiate Schools Association, 1893-1905, V1224, MLSA.

<sup>63</sup> Jones, *Nothing Seemed Impossible*, pp. 76-84; Mackinnon, *One Foot on the Ladder*, pp. 66-67; Alison Mackinnon, *The New Women: Adelaide's Early Women Graduates*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986, pp. 38, 82-83.

rules and conventions which specifically protected men's positions, and marginalised most of those who married. However, women teachers were not entirely powerless and certainly not passive. In classrooms they were powerful figures and, in some cases, harsh disciplinarians rather than nurturers. They expressed their ambition openly in competition for results, in undertaking professional development, in promoting their work publicly, and in resisting the institutionalisation of male privilege.

Women's presence as waged workers in state schools was justified by connecting teaching to domesticity. However, this discourse obscured the fact that women teachers' agency challenged male dominance of the public sphere on an almost daily basis. Although the state protected men's career paths, headmasters had only limited powers in the workplace to deal with independent women. They had lost control of the use of family labour in schools and had no say in the selection of staff. Examination results were aggregated and the poor performance of individual teachers affected payment by results to the entire group. Furthermore, headmasters' interpersonal skills were carefully assessed when they were being considered for promotion and they were expected to 'make full allowance for the differences between the sexes' when dealing with women teachers.<sup>64</sup> Arguably men, as sole breadwinners, were now under more pressure to earn sufficient income to support economically dependent wives and children but had less control over the labour required to generate that income. The friction between married men and single women in state schools did not erupt into major confrontations which could be reported publicly, that is until the appointment of a woman inspector in 1897. Nevertheless, the evidence of women's challenges to the gender order is found in the ways the state subtly undermined their career paths by ever more complex regulations which protected men's positions in the public sphere.<sup>65</sup>

The career paths of these four women teachers also illustrate the continuing fragmentation of the state teaching profession in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Men and women teachers in country schools were isolated from the networks which were essential to advancing one's status as a professional teacher. Most women teachers were rendered invisible by their subordinate positions in the workplace and they were further overshadowed by those in the Advanced School for Girls. Professionalisation not only differentiated between teachers on the basis of gender but also confirmed the rural/urban dichotomy and began the divisions between elementary and secondary teachers. The last

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<sup>64</sup> John A. Hartley to Mr V.J. Pavia, 9 March 1885, Condon, 'The Confidential Letterbook'.

<sup>65</sup> The crisis surrounding the appointment of a woman inspector will be detailed in the conclusion of the thesis. For more general discussion of changes in masculinity, see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, Hutchinson, London, 1987, pp. 230, 451; Michael S. Kimmel, 'The Contemporary "Crisis" of Masculinity in Historical Perspective' in Harry Brod (ed.), *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies*, Allen and Unwin, Boston, 1987.

division was institutionalised in the twentieth century when a university degree became the basic qualification for secondary teachers.<sup>66</sup> These differences between public school teachers were mostly subtle in the late nineteenth century. The great divide as far as the state was concerned was between trained and untrained teachers.

### **Provisional teachers**

Although efforts were made to recruit, train and promote teachers in public schools in South Australia, the expansion of the state school system was underpinned by an ever increasing cohort of uncertificated women provisional teachers, who were located in one-teacher schools throughout the agricultural areas, and extending to the margins of white settlement. In more closely settled areas, the local public school with its trained staff in the township was surrounded by a host of provisional schools, while in the remote regions provisional schools were often the only ones in the district. From 1885 provisional schools constituted about sixty per cent of all state schools, and provisional teachers were the largest group of women employees in the Education Department.<sup>67</sup>

Applicants for provisional schools were examined individually by inspectors for their literary attainment. The inspectors' reports also included comments about their aptitude for teaching and their character. Many women applicants had previous teaching experience in private schools or as monitors and pupil teachers in public schools. The apprenticeships of the latter group were often truncated by fluctuating student numbers in country schools. Successful male applicants were employed straight away but women usually joined a waiting list for appointments. In some years there were as many as thirty women awaiting appointments but those in difficult financial circumstances did receive special consideration.<sup>68</sup>

When Inspector-General Hartley referred to women teachers in provisional schools, he consistently invoked the connections between teaching and domesticity, characterising these women as young girls who lived with their families and taught in their local school. He defended their low salaries by claiming that 'they earn a comfortable living for a few years and then they get married.' He also ensured that provisional teachers' employment

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<sup>66</sup> For further discussion see Penny Summerfield, 'Women and the Professional Labour Market 1900-1950: The Case of the Secondary Schoolmistresses', *Women, Education and the Professions*, History of Education Society Occasional Bulletin, no. 8, 1987, p. 42; Bergan, 'Only a Schoolmaster', p. 14.

<sup>67</sup> Whitehead, 'Provisional School Teachers', ch. 1.

<sup>68</sup> Whitehead, 'Provisional School Teachers', pp. 48, 55, 58-59; Margaret Watson to Inspector-General, 22 July 1879, GRG 18/3/1879/2013; Residents, Rivoli Bay to Council of Education, February 1877, GRG 50/3/1877/542; Ellen O'Mahony to Inspector-General, 9 September 1881, GRG 18/3/1881/3744.

did not threaten the professional status of public teachers by downplaying the numbers employed; by denying them opportunities to enter the Training College; and by consistently discounting their teaching as inefficient.<sup>69</sup> They were required to teach the same subjects and were examined by the same standards as public teachers. In annual reports comparisons were made and, not surprisingly, the status of the trained public teachers was bolstered by their superior performance as a group. However, there was considerable overlap in terms of examination results between the two groups and by the early 1880s it was acknowledged that some provisional teachers were achieving excellent results, even though they were not trained.

In 1885 the Education Department acknowledged the efficiency of individual provisional teachers by providing an avenue for promotion into public schools. Fourth Class teaching certificates were awarded to provisional teachers who had been employed at least five years and who demonstrated exceptional ability. The introduction of this regulation prompted many letters from ambitious provisional teachers, and the Inspector-General responded tersely:

Fourth Class Certificates are only granted to such persons that show exceptional skill in teaching. Some appear to be under the impression that if they have taught for the required period and have gained fair results they are entitled to the certificate, which is not the case [emphasis in original].<sup>70</sup>

Only thirteen provisional teachers (five men and eight women) were awarded this certificate. From 1892 additional qualifications in Elementary Drawing or Music were required for promotion into public schools. Of course all provisional teachers were prevented by distance from attending these courses in Adelaide but correspondence courses were offered by the Education Department.

Very few provisional teachers were ever promoted into public schools via these certificates and some public teachers actively opposed the extension of opportunities to provisional teachers. Although both groups cooperated in the various country Teachers' Associations, the more influential public teachers in Adelaide distanced themselves as far as possible from their uncertificated colleagues. In 1895 and again in 1899 provisional teachers in several associations agitated for more opportunities to qualify as public teachers. Their claims were summarily dismissed by the South Australian Teachers' Association. Furthermore, women teachers in the city were as parochial as their male counterparts. When Catherine Francis

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<sup>69</sup> Kay Whitehead, 'Career Paths for Provisional Teachers in South Australia, 1875-1915', *History of Education Review*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1994, p. 54; Whitehead, 'Provisional School Teachers', pp. 85-88.

<sup>70</sup> *Education Gazette*, June 1886, p. 43; Whitehead, 'Provisional School Teachers', p. 79.

and the senior women discussed salaries, promotions and working conditions, there was no mention of women in provisional schools.<sup>71</sup>

However ambition to be a successful teacher was not the sole prerogative of trained teachers. The careers of Annie Sharpley, Kate McEwen, Elsie Birks and Pauline Schach illustrate the constraints and opportunities for the largest and most marginalised group of women teachers in the Education Department.

At first glance Annie Sharpley's profile fits Inspector-General Hartley's image of provisional teachers. She began her teaching career in 1877, aged eighteen, at 'Near Naracoorte' school. The school had been built by her father, a local farmer. At first, she rode her horse to school from the township of Naracoorte but later a house was attached to the schoolroom.<sup>72</sup>

From the beginning of her career, however, Annie was an excellent teacher, and her reputation was acknowledged by the central administration in Adelaide. In 1878 she achieved 93.38 per cent in the annual examination, a result surpassed by only two headmasters and Lavinia Hyndman (formerly Seabrooke) at Norwood. Inspector Stanton, reputedly the toughest inspector of all, was so impressed with Annie's performance that she was offered a teaching position at a Model School in Adelaide. However, she declined this offer of promotion on account of her aging parents whom she did not wish to leave. For several years Annie's outstanding examination results earned her special commendation in the Inspector-General's annual report. Not surprisingly, she was the first provisional teacher to be awarded the Fourth Class certificate in 1885 and her school was sufficiently large to be classified as a public school.<sup>73</sup>

In 1887 when the average attendance at Near Naracoorte fell below twenty, the school was reclassified as provisional and Annie again declined a transfer. Consequently, she was reclassified as a provisional teacher and remained at that school for her entire career (1877-1929). Her teaching record indicates sustained exceptional ability and both Inspector-General Hartley and Inspector Stanton made special visits to her school over the years. There was admiration for her teaching ability but some frustration is also evident. When Annie challenged the inspector after a particularly vexatious school examination, he apparently retorted that she 'was wasted in this school.' Annie had opportunities to be

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<sup>71</sup> *Register*, 17 April 1882; *Education Gazette*, March 1886, p. 16, April 1886, p. 23, May 1887, pp. 31-32; Whitehead 'Career Paths', pp. 55, 58. See meetings 6 March 1891, 4 June 1891, 15 September 1891, South Australian Teachers Association Minute Book, 1890-1897, SRG 74, MLSA.

<sup>72</sup> For Annie's teaching record see Teachers Classification Board and Teachers History Sheets, 1882-1960, GRG 18/167; Whitehead, 'Career Paths', p. 57.

<sup>73</sup> Inspector Stanton's Report, SAPP 1879, no. 44, p. 25.

sponsored into a prestigious position in the city but she chose a horizontal career path which enabled her to meet family commitments. Her choice was vindicated locally and her reputation was such that a number of children bypassed Naracoorte public school to attend her provisional school.<sup>74</sup>

Prior to the introduction of free education, Annie's income was commensurate with that of women head teachers because her school was well attended, and she received the maximum payment for results. After 1892, her income was fixed at ninety-six pounds, well below that of women head teachers and not really 'a comfortable living'. She was marginalised by the late nineteenth century state, and by city teachers, because she lacked the requisite credentials and because her school was small and located in the country. On the other hand, she was granted the same degree of occupational autonomy as country head teachers like Catherine Beaton. Head teachers and provisional teachers could communicate directly with Inspector-General Hartley, a privilege denied all other women teachers, and as principal teachers they also received the accolades when they promoted their work publicly, for example through the Public Schools' Floral and Industrial Society.

The first exhibition in the south east of the colony was held at Mount Gambier in October 1895. Inspector-General Hartley and a host of dignitaries attended the two day exhibition. One thousand Mount Gambier state school students competed along with six hundred from outlying schools. Annie Sharpley from Near Naracoorte and Catherine Beaton from Nangula Springs each brought a small contingent by train and stayed overnight in the town. Annie's students were among the prize winners in sewing and basketwork, and won first prize in the 'Recitation' competition. The whole event was pronounced a resounding success and 'the display in the Exhibition building gave ample evidence of the character of much of the education in our state schools.'<sup>75</sup>

Annie Sharpley spent her long career immersed in the supportive networks of family friends and community. Few provisional teachers were so fortunate. The rural population was highly mobile and provisional schools opened and closed frequently, as droughts and fluctuating economic fortunes forced farmers to relocate.

Kate McEwen had spent some years teaching in private school in the country before she applied to become a provisional teacher in 1882. As a Catholic woman, she could not pursue a teaching career in the Catholic school system unless she took the veil. The first

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<sup>74</sup> *Naracoorte Herald*, 21 May 1929; Interview with Mr Harry Clark, Adelaide, 22 June 1993. Mr Clark commenced his teaching career at Near Naracoorte in 1935. Annie was still living in the schoolhouse and told him some anecdotes about her career.

<sup>75</sup> *Border Watch*, 26, 30 October 1895; *Education Gazette*, November 1895, p. 125.

part of her career with the state was spent at provisional schools in the marginal agricultural lands in the north of the colony where the living and working conditions were isolated and lonely. In 1887 she transferred to Cleve on Eyre Peninsula, an equally isolated district.<sup>76</sup>

Teachers in these outlying areas had little access to the personal and professional networks which sustained public teachers in Adelaide. The Education Department provided no professional development for country teachers until the introduction of the *Education Gazette* in 1885. This monthly publication informed teachers of current issues in education and provisional teachers' questions were answered in the Notes and Queries column.

When the inspector visited Kate at Cleve in 1893, he informed her that she was 'earnest and had ability' but was 'not keeping up with the times.' After he left, she wrote to Inspector-General Hartley requesting an alteration to her school holidays so that she could spend a week's observation in Adelaide schools.

I have the honour to inform you that I would be very glad of an opportunity of seeing trained teachers at their work. I am earnest in my endeavours to do well in my school, but feel that from want of seeing newer ideas, I am lacking in system; hence my inability to get really good percentages though I devote all my time to my work. As I am desirous of remaining in the service, I would very much like to be a successful teacher in every sense of the word.<sup>77</sup>

Permission was granted. Kate's annual salary was only seventy-eight pounds so the costs incurred in travelling to Adelaide would have entailed considerable sacrifice on her part.

Kate was far removed from Adelaide but the transfer to Cleve had placed her in close proximity to her family. Although the needs of the Education Department took precedence, Inspector-General Hartley did endeavour to place teachers according to their preferences. Kate's parents were farmers at the nearby settlement of Carpa and her three sisters were also provisional teachers in the district. She resigned to marry in 1897, having spent fifteen years as a provisional teacher.<sup>78</sup>

By comparison, Elsie Birks' career as a provisional teacher lasted less than two years and she resigned to marry Erskine Gilmour. She was one of many provisional teachers whose short tenure contributed to the impression of transience and lack of ambition among this most marginalised group of women teachers. However, like Kate McEwen, she was eager to be a successful teacher. Elsie had received a wide-ranging education in private schools and in the Advanced School for Girls, and she had also been trained as a teacher at Miss

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<sup>76</sup> For Kate's teaching record see Teachers Classification Board and Teachers' History Sheets, 1882-1960, GRG 18/167; Kate McEwen to Inspector-General, 8 July 1879, GRG 18/3/1879/1859.

<sup>77</sup> Kate McEwen to Inspector-General, 28 February 1893, GRG 18/3/1893/574.

<sup>78</sup> Janie McEwen to Inspector-General, March 1893, GRG 18/3/1893/789; Mary McCarthy to Inspector-General, 20 February 1895, GRG 18/3/1895/423.



Vivian's young ladies' school in North Adelaide. Of course, this training did not provide the credentials required by the Education Department.<sup>79</sup>

Elsie's father sold his pharmacy in Adelaide in 1895, and took the family to Murtho, on the banks of the River Murray, near the town of Renmark to participate in a 'venture in Christian Communism.' The Murtho village settlement was planned as a joint farming enterprise where all members contributed their labour and income to a common fund which supported the group. However, five years of drought in marginal agricultural lands as well as disagreements between the settlers rendered the experiment a failure.<sup>80</sup>

At Murtho, Elsie contributed her labour, as a teacher and her salary to the enterprise. She recorded her hopes and fears, her trials and successes in letters to her former colleague and friend in Adelaide, Blanche Vivian. In August 1895 she contemplated her forthcoming career as a state school teacher.

By today's steamer I received the fourth communication addressed THE HEAD TEACHER. My appointment will come next - this looks like seriously undertaking it - does it not? I often quake and wonder if all will go well, or if I shall find it difficult to keep up to all the Government requirements. I do not mean to lose heart; but so often a very little disturbance sends my spirits down to zero; and it will be so very different to being under your wing, or one of many in a large school, this having the whole responsibility; yet there is a certain safe feeling of being well hedged in with rules, regulations and prescribed subjects to be taught [emphasis in original].<sup>81</sup>

The total population of Murtho was fifty-three and some of Elsie's brothers, sisters and cousins were among her sixteen scholars. The schoolroom was made of galvanised iron and it also served as the local meeting place and church. She left the names of late-comers on the blackboard every evening and they were subsequently admonished by their parents. The school furniture consisted of four long desks provided by the Education Department; the Juniors sat in the front row, First and Second class occupied the next, followed by the Third class. The Fourth and Fifth classes, that is two girl students, sat in the back row.<sup>82</sup>

Inspector Stanton visited the school about two months after it opened and Elsie recorded her anxiety as she awaited this event. She had heard from other teachers that he was in the district. However, she was:

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<sup>79</sup> Letters and Reminiscences of Elsie Birks, D2861(L), MLSA; Blanche Vivian was a well known lady teacher in the city; Elsie attended the Advanced School in 1881. See Advanced School for Girls - Exam Register, 1881-1894, V1422, MLSA.

<sup>80</sup> Richard Vynne Woods, *The Birks Murtho Letters, 1894-1900: Hardship and Happiness for Two Families on the River Murray*, Richard V. Woods, Kangarilla, 1994, pp. 1, 38-43.

<sup>81</sup> Elsie Birks to Miss Vivian, 24 August 1895, Letters and Reminiscences of Elsie Birks, D2861(L), MLSA.

<sup>82</sup> Woods, *The Birks Murtho Letters*, pp. 3, 29.

greatly relieved at the verdict he leaves - "I found sixteen children (all the Roll) present, and am satisfied with the beginning that has been made." There were a great many points on which I wanted his advice - but can you picture little me facing him alone (nobody's wing to hide under, no teacher to go between) and explaining my methods of teaching certain subjects [emphasis in original].

During another visit she was admonished for teaching both the boys and the girls to sew and darn, and was instructed to give the boys lessons in manual work while the girls did sewing.<sup>83</sup>

Inspectors' visits aside, Elsie mostly enjoyed teaching and she was well supported by her family and the community. She improvised the lack of materials by asking her brother to collect reeds for basketmaking. Some Geography lessons were also held on the river bank. She organised concerts to show off the work of the school. Her students made decorations in Art lessons and formed the choir for the first wedding at the settlement. However, there were also the daily trials of correcting endless spelling errors and students falling asleep in class because of the demands made on them to labour before and after school. And there was nothing romantic about the iron schoolroom in the heat of summer in the middle of the drought:

Today was very disagreeable. I and the chicks were nearly choked, although we closed both door and window and the books and slates were most dusty and unpleasant to handle, as to the needlework - alas! for the colour, between hot little hands and the dust storm, which raged all morning [emphasis in original].<sup>84</sup>

Elsie Birks' letters are a very positive assessment of teaching. She demonstrated the relative freedom and autonomy that could be derived from working with small numbers of students and little Departmental surveillance beyond the inspectors' visits. But she also realised the special circumstances of her position. Unlike many other provisional teachers, she was able to live with her family and their support counteracted the isolation of her daily work in a one teacher school. In her letters she frequently recalled the companionship of working with other women in a large school and showed that their social and professional activities intermingled. However, many provisional teachers boarded with strangers and worked alone every day. Furthermore, their salaries were barely sufficient to provide for their subsistence and few could afford to travel home frequently.

Pauline Schach was employed by the state for thirteen years, during which time she taught in nine schools. Her experiences as a provisional teacher contrast sharply with those of Elsie Birks.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Elsie Birks to Miss Vivian, 18 October 1895, and reminiscences p. 83, Letters and Reminiscences of Elsie Birks, D2861(L), MLSA.

<sup>84</sup> Elsie Birks to Miss Vivian, 25 November 1895. See also letters dated 14 October 1895, 27 December 1895, and reminiscences pp. 78, 83, Letters and Reminiscences of Elsie Birks, D2861(L), MLSA.

<sup>85</sup> For Pauline's teaching record see Registers of Provisional Teachers, 1880-1910, GRG 18/91.

Pauline's family was German but there was no place for women as teachers in the Lutheran school system. Pauline started teaching as a monitor in her home town of Hahndorf and then became a pupil teacher. She was accepted into the Training College in 1885 (along with Kate Catlow) but she left after three months. For the following two years she was employed as a temporary assistant in three schools, including the girls' department at Moonta. There, the headmistress was one of those who abrogated her teaching responsibilities and exploited her female staff.<sup>86</sup>

Without a teaching certificate, Pauline could not become a public teacher. In March 1887 she was sent to the provisional school at Wiltunga. Her living and working conditions were isolated and lonely compared with those at her previous schools in substantial country towns.<sup>87</sup> Within a year she had applied for a transfer. William Malcolm also wrote to Inspector-General Hartley demanding her immediate removal. He stated that he found no fault with her teaching but:

she is much too familiar with my eldest son, an inexperienced lad just in his nineteenth year. She has him completely under her control, getting him to go out riding and driving all over the place at the most unseemly hours, not infrequently is my son absent till eleven or twelve o'clock at night, you will admit this is anything but satisfactory.<sup>88</sup>

This hint of sexual independence was enough for Pauline to be relocated straightaway. She spent eighteen months at Springfield provisional school, and transferred to Teal Flat in 1890. While teaching at Teal Flat she 'fell for' Franz Gerlach. She resigned in July 1892 and married him.<sup>89</sup>

Pauline's examination results indicate that she was a successful teacher. She was also well-educated, 'devoted to literature', and loved music and needlework but she was never in one place long enough to build up a reputation through the use of her many skills. Like many provisional teachers, she was cut off from the kinds of personal and professional networks which enhanced status and sustained careers. She was also isolated from her family in Hahndorf. Indeed, her living and working conditions provided a stark contrast to Inspector-General Hartley's characterisation of provisional teachers.

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<sup>86</sup> Reg Butler, *Lean Times and Lively Days - Hahndorf Primary School, 1879-1979*, Investigator Press Adelaide, 1979, p. 32. The headmistress at Moonta was Mary Holman. See the note in her teaching record. Teachers Classification Board and Teachers History Sheets, 1882-1960, GRG 18/167. See also John A. Hartley to Miss Holman, 3 March 1886, Condon, 'The Confidential Letterbook'.

<sup>87</sup> For further discussion about the problems of isolation, see Williamson, 'The Employment of Female Teachers in the Small Bush Schools', pp. 7-11; J. Donald Wilson, "'I am ready to be of assistance when I can": Lottie Bowron and Rural Women Teachers in British Columbia' in Prentice and Theobald, *Women Who Taught*, pp. 206, 211-216.

<sup>88</sup> William Malcolm to Inspector-General, 28 March 1888, GRG 18/3/1888/806. According to his letter, William had no children at the school but was most interested in the state school system.

<sup>89</sup> For further details of Pauline and her family, see Reg Butler, *A College in the Wattles: Hahndorf and its Academy*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1989, pp. 428-430.

In sum, there was considerable diversity in the teaching experiences of provisional teachers. Those like Annie Sharpley, who were located in the same school for many years, were able to establish personal and professional networks, and achieve public status and recognition locally; there were many similarities between them and head teachers of public schools. Teachers who were fortunate enough to live in their home communities could also establish rewarding teaching careers with family and local support. On the other hand, many provisional teachers lived and worked in adverse circumstances. They were isolated from supportive networks, subjected to constant occupational mobility, and those on the minimum salary of sixty-six pounds must have struggled to make ends meet.

By the turn of the century, 86 per cent of provisional teachers and 62 per cent of public teachers were women. There was never a concerted attempt to train enough teachers to staff all state schools in the colony, and 'provisional' teachers were a permanent feature of the system. In 1896, 40 per cent of full-time adult teachers were provisional, and most of these were women.<sup>90</sup> Like their counterparts in public schools, they wanted to be successful teachers and utilised the transfer system to access the environments which satisfied personal and professional needs and ambitions. However, the state and public teachers ensured that women teachers in provisional schools would not threaten the status of those with credentials acquired through training.

### **State school teachers as 'new women'**

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, it became increasingly obvious that women had captured the occupation of teaching. The negative publicity about their presence diminished after Inspector-General Hartley's statement in 1885 but they continued to dominate the expanding state school system numerically. All new appointments and transfers were published in the newspapers and readers could not fail to notice the presence, and the mobility, of women teachers in the occupation.

Many women teachers not only worked in purpose-built public institutions but also lived apart from their families. The introduction of vertical career paths, as well as the individuation of employment, made state school teachers more mobile and more conspicuous in the public sphere. Schools in rural areas opened and closed frequently as the population shifted in search of better farming land, and this also contributed to teachers' mobility. As a consequence, many women had to find their own living

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<sup>90</sup> Miller, *Long Division*, pp. 51-53, 372.

accommodation. Some boarded but some also established independent households or households with other women. In effect, women teachers dominated the workplace and their social visibility also increased in the late nineteenth century.<sup>91</sup>

Although removed from their families, these teachers were at liberty to establish friendships with peers. Women teachers in large schools, especially in Adelaide, spent their working days in the company of women and their associational activity was both professional and social. Kate Catlow's membership of the Old Students' Association provided her with the opportunities to attend social events as well as meetings on professional matters. Caroline Jacob's relationships with her colleagues at the Advanced School were personal and professional. In her letters to Blanche Vivian, Elsie Birks frequently referred to the benefits of working in the company of other women and to their shared social activities. She also wrote of the support and advice she received from teachers at nearby schools.<sup>92</sup> To the friendships formed through church and family networks, this generation of women teachers added those with peers. These friendships with like-minded women sustained many over-worked teachers. They also provided new options for women to assert their independence from family ties and choose alternative living arrangements.<sup>93</sup>

Teachers were encouraged to enhance the status of the profession by publicising the work of the state school system and by taking part in the public life of their local communities. Indeed their chances of promotion were improved by the conscientious performance of public duties. As previously mentioned, women teachers were active in the Public Schools' Floral and Industrial Society. Country teachers also involved parents and other state school supporters in local events such as concerts, Arbor Day and Visiting Day. These became regular features of community life in the late nineteenth century and increased teachers' public profile.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> This was also the case in America. See Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1977, p. 57; Polly Welts Kaufman, *Women Teachers on the Frontier*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1984, pp. 33-34.

<sup>92</sup> Woods, *The Birks Murtho Letters*, pp. 17-18; Jones, *Nothing Seemed Impossible*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>93</sup> Alison Mackinnon, "'Nowhere to Plant the Sole of the Foot?': Women, University Education and Subjectivity in the Early Twentieth Century' in Lyn Yates (ed.), *Melbourne Studies in Education*, La Trobe University Press, Glen Waverley, 1993, p. 26; Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920*, Virago Press, London, 1985, p. 6; Sari Knopp Biklen, 'Confiding Women: A Nineteenth Century Teacher's Diary', *History of Education Review*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1990, pp. 24-35; Geraldine Joncich Clifford, "'Lady Teachers" and Politics in the United States, 1850-1950' in Martin Lawn and Gerald Grace (eds), *Teachers: The Culture and Politics of Work*, Falmer Press, London, 1987, p. 15.

<sup>94</sup> Inspector Whillas' Report, SAPP 1901, no. 44, p. 23; Kay Whitehead, "'A Small Share of the Pioneering Work": The Relationship Between Rural Communities and Provisional School Teachers in South Australia, 1875-1915' in R. C. Petersen and G. W. Rodwell (eds), *Essays in the History of Rural Education in Australia and New Zealand*, William Michael Press, Darwin, 1993, pp. 161-163. See also Christina Florin, 'Social Closure as a Professional Strategy: Male and Female Teachers from Cooperation to Conflict in Sweden, 1860-1906' in *History of Education*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1991, p. 23.

Annie Sharpley, for example, built her reputation not only on her work as a teacher but also by her participation in the wider community. She was a leading amateur in the Naracoorte Dramatic Club, along with other women teachers (provisional and public), in the district.

Though they had their time fully occupied in teaching in schools in the district, mostly at some distance from the town they gave their services freely in assisting at dramatic entertainments for the benefit of institutions, particularly the Institute and the Hospital.<sup>95</sup>

Annie was also a member of the Presbyterian church and an exhibitor and 'good supporter' of the local Horticultural and Floricultural Society flower shows. Her obituary stated that she had recognised that 'it was a civic duty to furnish the town with institutions and societies for social and intellectual purposes.'<sup>96</sup>

When Annie retired, the parents and old scholars asked if they could organise a social in her honour. To her dismay, the event escalated to such an extent that a larger venue was required. Annie was 'troubled' as she composed a speech to be read on her behalf by the Chairman of the organising committee. Having spent fifty-two years as a state school teacher she had a lot to think about! Her speech can be read as a carefully constructed evaluation of the rewards of her 'life's work as a teacher'.

After thanking the organisers, she spoke of the occupational autonomy she had experienced:

I felt all through the long years I conducted the school that I had the respect and support of the parents, and the goodwill of the children and I can sincerely assure you that was more than sufficient encouragement to me.

Parents had never interfered with her work as a teacher. They had granted her the freedom to carry out her work in the school. Annie claimed that 'discipline' (rather than nurturing) was 'the basis of successful work'. She discussed the 'spirit of cooperation that existed between scholars and teacher', especially when their work was under scrutiny by the inspectors. She then related the ways in which the education bureaucracy had expressed its confidence in her teaching ability by 'offering her chances of promotion in other spheres', and awarding her the Fourth Class certificate: 'I valued this certificate as it was obtained for the practical work in teaching.' Annie concluded by outlining how her work as a teacher had benefited society in general:

I am proud that so far as I know nearly all of my old scholars have become useful citizens in varied walks of life, and a number have held and hold important positions in the business and commercial activities of the state, and in the public service of the country.<sup>97</sup>

As far as Annie Sharpley was concerned, she had successfully inculcated the habits of

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<sup>95</sup> *Naracoorte Herald*, 21 May 1929.

<sup>96</sup> *Naracoorte Herald*, 24 January 1941.

<sup>97</sup> The report of Annie's farewell, including the whole text of her speech, covered almost a page in the local newspaper. See *Naracoorte Herald*, 21 May 1929.

order and obedience, and made 'future generations of South Australian children more productive workers and politically responsible adults.'<sup>98</sup>

Annie encapsulated the rewards of teaching in terms of occupational autonomy and increased public status, as well as doing one's duty in the world. These discourses of professionalism resonated in her speech although she had never experienced them at the Training College or through associational activity. Arguably, they enabled other women to derive rewards from teaching that could be balanced against the intensification of their labour and their subordinate positions in state schools.<sup>99</sup>

Waged work as a teacher had given Annie Sharpley a valued place in the public sphere, and enabled her to lead a useful and independent life. She never married but she had a long-term friendship with the editor of the *Naracoorte Herald*. They spent weekends together and the exact nature of this relationship was the subject of a great deal of community speculation. But such was her reputation, the relationship did not diminish her standing in the local community. The Naracoorte Town Hall was the only building large enough to accommodate the numbers attending her retirement social.<sup>100</sup>

Nevertheless, Annie's unorthodox life as a single woman set her apart from the majority of women in the late nineteenth century. Most women married and withdrew from income generating labour. In fact, in the occupation of teaching, the state was intimately involved in institutionalising men as sole breadwinners and fostering the sexual division of labour. With the introduction of the male breadwinner's wage in commerce and industry, as well as the state school system, married women's opportunities to generate income diminished and they devoted more time to household management and motherhood. With the increasing emphasis on household cleanliness and the accumulation of material possessions that marked out family status, married women's labour was focussed on the home. Women also assumed more responsibility for parenting as home and workplace separated, and child-rearing became a discrete task. Closer supervision and physical care of young children was expected of 'good' mothers:

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<sup>98</sup> Ian Davey, 'Growing Up in South Australia' in Eric Richards, (ed.), *The Flinders History of South Australia: Social History*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986, p. 391.

<sup>99</sup> Mackinnon, 'Awakening Women', pp. 165-166, 203. For another discussion of the rewards of teaching see Biklen, *Schoolwork*, pp. 52-61.

<sup>100</sup> Apparently when Annie died speculation increased. Had she married secretly? Would she be buried as Mrs Caldwell or Miss Sharpley? She went to her grave as Miss Sharpley. Interview with Mr Harry Clark, Adelaide, 22 June 1993. Her lengthy obituary reveals no intimate details but is a poignant testimony to her status in the community and her friendship with the editor. *Naracoorte Herald*, 24 January 1941.

In the spate of child-rearing advice manuals published in the period, doctors urged women to breastfeed their infants and give particular care to matters of diet, hygiene, clothing and exercise.<sup>101</sup>

There is also evidence to suggest that women's role as moral guardians intensified and that there was a positive re-evaluation of both the physical and moral aspects of mothers' parenting role.<sup>102</sup>

Carol Bacchi claims that 'the new responsibility attached to mothering had an impact on marital relations as well. Women gained higher status and authority in the family. As a result many reformers advocated new, more companionate marriage.'<sup>103</sup> In fact, the reforms of middle class girls' education were ultimately justified in terms of making them companionate wives and better mothers. Discourses about companionate marriage were a feature of Matilda Evans' fiction which was affordable and widely promoted during this period. Catherine Helen Spence and Ellen Liston also espoused the value of companionate marriage in their novels. However, it was generally assumed that, sooner or later, women would marry.<sup>104</sup>

Annie Sharpley's life-course stands out against the norm for women in late nineteenth century colonial society. She was one of a small but significant group of women teachers who never married but chose instead to make teaching their life-work. Among those who have featured in this chapter, Catherine Beaton, a country head teacher, and Caroline Jacob from the Advanced School, did not marry. In fact, most of the teachers at the Advanced School, and in senior positions in public schools, remained single. (However there were exceptions such as Catherine Francis who was able to continue teaching after marriage.) Education Department records also indicate that there was a core of women teachers who taught for more than twenty years and that there were many whose careers exceeded ten years. Kate Catlow resigned to marry after a twelve year career; Kate McEwen taught in provisional schools for fifteen years before marrying. The evidence suggests that women teachers were not as transient as Inspector-General Hartley's rhetoric implied and it could

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<sup>101</sup> Davey, 'Growing Up in South Australia' in Richards, *Flinders History*, p. 385. For a general discussion of changes in married women's work, see Louise Tilly and Joan Scott, *Women, Work and Family*, second edition, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Methuen, New York, 1987, pp. 176-185; Harriet Bradley, *Men's Work, Women's Work: A Sociological History of the Sexual Division of Labour in Employment*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 224, 228-229.

<sup>102</sup> Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood*, pp. 36, 43, 46.

<sup>103</sup> Carol Bacchi, 'The "Woman Question"' in Richards, *Flinders History*, p. 414.

<sup>104</sup> Kay Whitehead, 'Catherine Spence, Matilda Evans and Ellen Liston: Teachers/Novelists and Nineteenth Century Education', Paper presented to ANZHES Annual Conference, Sydney 1995, pp. 523, 526, 529-530; Margaret Allen, 'Three South Australian Women Writers 1854-1923; Matilda Evans, Catherine Spence and Catherine Martin, Ph.D. thesis, Flinders University, 1991, pp. 138, 220.



be that sizeable numbers were delaying or rejecting marriage as women's ultimate destiny.<sup>105</sup>

In fact, the contradictory practices of the state are evident in the careers and private lives of women teachers in state schools. The state marginalised married women as teachers and portrayed teaching as a preparation for motherhood to justify single women's employment as waged workers. In so doing, it participated in the social construction of married women's dependency in late nineteenth century society. Yet it also fostered the conditions for single women to be socially and economically independent. In order to pursue their careers, teachers had to move from school to school. Women teachers very often lived apart from their families by choice or by circumstance. Selected women were also given opportunities for higher education and promoted to prestigious positions in the profession. There was also the potential to achieve positions of influence in the local community and participation in public life. Finally, employment by the state conferred on women teachers sufficient economic independence to make marriage a choice rather than an economic necessity. Catherine Helen Spence commented on the benefits of waged employment for single women:

As a general rule when the middle class woman of the future consents to marry she must choose not between destitution and marriage but between the modest competence she can earn and the modest competence her lover offers. If love is cast in the balance the joint home will have wonderful attractions; if love is absent the independent life will be felt to be best.<sup>106</sup>

It would seem that some women teachers in state schools were utilising their economic independence to explore new options in their private lives.

The appearance of the first generation of middle class women who had been educated and employed as waged workers in the 1870s, and who rose to prominence in the 1880s, was the subject of public debate by the 1890s. The so-called 'woman question' reflected the tensions surrounding women's visibility in the workplace, as well as the private decisions they were making about their lives as women. The statistics indicated a significant increase in the numbers of single women in the paid workforce. Some found their niches in the professions and there was a growing band of women employed in manufacturing and commerce. Equally unsettling were the statistics that revealed increasing age at marriage, a

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<sup>105</sup> Classification of School Teachers of Over Twenty Years Service, SAPP 1895, no. 105, p. 1; Leaves of Absence in the Education Department, SAPP 1900, no. 118, pp. 1-8. See also Mackinnon, 'Awakening Women', pp. 78, 164-167; Whitehead, 'Career Paths', p. 62; Mackinnon, *One Foot on the Ladder*, pp. 134-136.

<sup>106</sup> Catherine Helen Spence, 'Some Social Aspects of South Australian Life' in Helen Thomson (ed.), *Catherine Helen Spence*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1987, p. 544.

declining birthrate, and an increasing proportion of women never marrying. It seemed that a significant number of women were rejecting women's 'natural' destiny.<sup>107</sup>

As the debate about the 'woman question' gathered momentum, middle class single women were identified as a discrete group of so-called 'New Women'. New women were likely to have taken advantage of the new opportunities for women to participate in higher education at the University and the Training College. Twenty-four women had graduated from the University by 1900, and many of these became teachers but far more had opted for the Training College certificate which gave them more bargaining power in the education marketplace. Women teachers, the largest group of women in professional employment, were identified as the vanguard of new women in the late nineteenth century. Although few individuals had a high public profile, the numbers employed by the state made them conspicuous and, at least until the mid-1880s, prompted adverse publicity. Their agency in negotiating their careers was resisted within the Education Department by increasingly complex regulations which protected men's career paths, but they continued to challenge male dominance in their day-to-day work. Finally, some of the first generation never married but opted to spend their lives in the company of other women or family members, while others spent long periods as waged workers before marrying. In effect, these women teachers in state schools were mounting a challenge to the gender order in their work and in their private lives as women, in the late nineteenth century.<sup>108</sup>

## Conclusion

In late nineteenth century state schools, the concept of the professional teacher was redefined and engineered by credentialism and social closure. Men and women with the appropriate cultural capital were recruited from the ranks of pupil teachers and inducted into the profession at the Training College. Teachers' occupational mobility increased as their career paths encompassed ascending levels of responsibility and prestige. However, men's privileged positions were protected at all levels of the state school system and opportunities for women to reach prestigious positions diminished during this period. The most successful teachers achieved professional status in Adelaide Model Schools, and selected women were drafted into the more prestigious Advanced School for Girls. However, expansion of state schooling in country districts was achieved by the recruitment of

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<sup>107</sup> Bacchi, 'The "Woman Question"' in Richards, *Flinders History*, pp. 405-408; Mackinnon, 'Awakening Women', pp. 78, 127, 136.

<sup>108</sup> For further discussion, see Mackinnon, *The New Women*, pp 15-27. See also Carol Smith-Rosenburg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1985, pp. 175-177, 253-255.

enormous numbers of uncertificated provisional teachers, mostly women, who were marginalised by the state and by trained teachers.

Yet, teaching had its rewards for women who joined the state school system, not the least of which was a reasonably secure source of income. Country teachers experienced a degree of occupational autonomy and opportunities to achieve a respected public position in a small community. Some were able to meet their traditional commitments to family, as well as pursue successful teaching careers. On the other hand, women teachers in city schools were able to establish and maintain professional and social networks, thereby advancing their status as members of the profession. Most city teachers spent their working days in the company of other women; peer relationships sustained many over-worked women teachers. Wherever they taught, these middle class women also derived satisfaction from playing their part in confirming the social order by producing good citizens.

Finally, women teachers in late nineteenth century state schools contested male dominance in the public sphere and in the private decisions they made about their lives as women. In the workplace, their presence was justified by constructing them as nurturers and their agency was resisted by institutionalising male privilege with increasingly prescriptive regulations and discriminatory practices. However, the expansion of state schooling in the late nineteenth century had conferred on increasing numbers of single middle class women opportunities to perform useful work in public institutions; a modest economic independence; and choices about the way they would construct their private lives. By 1900, a significant group of women were opting to delay or reject marriage and actively pursue their careers as teachers, thereby mounting a double challenge to the gender order.

## Chapter Six

### Women teachers in church and private schools in the late nineteenth century

In 1873 Mademoiselle Cecile Nagelle emigrated to Australia (with only her canary, Dickie for company) under the Female Middle-Class Emigration Society scheme. Not liking her original destination of Melbourne, she moved to Adelaide and was employed to teach piano and German at Miss Senner's Ladies' School in 1875. However, Miss Senner closed her school and returned to England, leaving Cecile to find another niche in what was a very competitive education market place at the beginning of 1876. The compulsory education legislation had just been passed, the University of Adelaide was about to open and many people were endeavouring to generate income by teaching middle class girls. Cecile commented that 'in Adelaide Masters no matter how bad a teacher he may be are much preferred to a lady, just because he is a man.'<sup>1</sup>

In January 1876 she sought further employment:

Mademoiselle Nagelle, Professor of Music, seeks engagement for two days a week in a school. Highest references and testimonials. Address: Box 119 Adelaide.<sup>2</sup>

Her advertisement did not elicit the desired response and in February she moved to Gawler, a large country town near Adelaide. In Gawler there were two sizeable state schools, a Catholic school conducted by the Sisters of St Joseph and numerous private schools. The competition for students was fierce but Cecile thought that she had the cultural capital to secure a niche as a teacher. She formed a partnership with 'a young lady' whom she considered could 'give far superior English Education than any other Teacher in Gawler.'<sup>3</sup> However Cecile was ambivalent about her chances of success.

It is greatly to my disadvantage that there are others that teach Music here, although I am the only professional in the place and well known too, as I have several times played in public in Gawler ... The Colony begins to be overrun with teachers of all kinds.<sup>3</sup>

By June 1876 she had moved to Angaston, where she claimed that she was 'the only Teacher in the place to instruct in the accomplishments required.'<sup>4</sup> Cecile joined 'an old lady who keeps a School - the pupils of which I instruct in Music, Singing and Languages' and she also gave private lessons in music. She commented that this school was 'not a

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<sup>1</sup> Patricia Clarke, *The Governesses: Letters from the Colonies 1862-1882*, Hutchinson, Hawthorn, 1985, pp. 41, 126, 135-136.

<sup>2</sup> *Register*, 11 January 1876.

<sup>3</sup> Clarke, *The Governesses*, p. 136; Gawler Board of Advice Report, SAPP 1881, no. 44, p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> Matilda Evans had filled this niche until she moved to Adelaide in 1869. See chapter three.

Ladies' School as they are trades peoples children with the exception of a few of the higher class.<sup>5</sup>

At Angaston, Cecile's venture proved successful and she also formed sufficient friendships to provide some compensation for the loss of her support networks on the other side of the world. Still, her religious faith sustained her life as an autonomous woman.

I often feel sad at heart when I think of those dear friends at home and whether I shall ever see them again. But I must not be cast down, for God has raised friends for me over here, and wherever I go, I meet with kindness and hospitality.<sup>6</sup>

She lived in Angaston for several years until her marriage to an Anglican minister.<sup>7</sup>

Cecile Nagelle had negotiated a place in a rapidly changing education landscape in South Australia. Her expertise in the accomplishments gave her bargaining power. Even so, she explored several options before finding her niche as a teacher.

This chapter focuses on women who generated income as teachers in a variety of private schools and in the church systems in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It explores changes in the education landscape as each of the systems competed for elementary students; as the reform agenda in middle class girls' education gathered momentum; and when free state schooling was introduced in 1891. Working class women teachers were marginalised as the state established its predominance in elementary schooling and Catholic lay teachers disappeared from that system. However, women began to colonise the Lutheran system. Middle class women teachers in young ladies' schools utilised state sponsored reforms to increase their bargaining power, but in so doing their work was steadily brought under men's governance. However, these women teachers, like their colleagues in state schools, challenged the gender order as they pursued their work and their lives as independent women. I argue that by the turn of the century their public presence and agency evoked equally public responses from men to contain their threat to the gender order.

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<sup>5</sup> Eric Richards, 'Immigrant Lives, 1836-1986' in Eric Richards (ed.), *The Flinders History of South Australia: Social History*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986, p. 162.

<sup>6</sup> Richards, 'Immigrant Lives' in Richards, *Flinders History*, p. 162.

<sup>7</sup> Clarke, *The Governesses*, pp. 126, 135-138.

## Private, church and state schooling in country districts

When Cecile Nagelle arrived in Angaston in 1876 the education landscape was as diverse as it had been during Matilda Evans' tenure as a teacher in the town. Richard Thomas had been a licensed teacher at Angaston for twenty years and the state school was conducted in his house. Richard died in 1876 and when his wife Maria notified the Council of Education she requested that she might 'keep the school open'. The answer was 'Yes until she hears from the Council'.<sup>8</sup> Although the surrounding district was heavily populated with German immigrants and Lutheran schools, there was no Lutheran school actually in the township. However, there were other private schools, one of which was conducted by Alice Latham, a long-time resident of the town.

Alice was born at Angaston in 1852. She never knew her father for he had gone to the Victorian goldfields prior to her birth and disappeared without trace. Alice and her mother lived with her maternal grandparents and were well-supported financially by other family members, including Mrs Latham's brothers, who lived in the same district. Alice was a student at Matilda Evans' school in the 1860s and Matilda's step-daughter Polly was one of her many friends. Alice's letters and diaries provide insights into ways in which private teachers negotiated changes in the education landscape.<sup>9</sup>

For at least part of 1867 Alice, aged fifteen, conducted an Infant School in her home for between eight and twelve scholars. In her diary she commented infrequently about her school and then mainly about the effects of inclement weather on attendance. Besides keeping school, she was a member of the local Baptist church and led a very active social life among family and female friends. Indeed those social and religious networks sustained her through the difficult years that followed.<sup>10</sup>

In the early 1870s the family's support for Alice and her mother diminished when droughts and disastrous financial ventures prompted her uncles to sell their properties around Angaston and move to new farming lands further north in the colony. From about 1872 Alice and her mother lived in rented premises and by 1876 she had resumed the occupation of 'schoolmistress'. Her school was a private day school conducted in one room of their

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<sup>8</sup> Council of Education Minutes, GRG 50/1, no. 1435; School Centenary Committee, *Angaston Primary School: 1878-1978*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1978, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Letters of Robert Latham to Eliza Radford, 1850-55, PRG 281/30, MLSA; Diary of Alice Latham, 1867-68, PRG 281/31, MLSA; Drafts of Letters by Alice Latham, 1878-9, PRG 281/32, MLSA. See chapter three for a discussion of Matilda Evans' school.

<sup>10</sup> Diary of Alice Latham, 1867-68, PRG 281/31, MLSA. For further discussion of women's networks, see Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County New York, 1790-1865*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1985, pp. 195-196.

home. At best forty scholars were enrolled but attendance was affected by the common problems of ophthalmia and whooping cough.<sup>11</sup>

In April 1878 Alice wrote to her aunt, a teacher in England:

The Council of Education have selected a piece of ground just in front of our house on which to erect a model school [sic] and then I expect we shall have to seek pastures new because their charge is so low that they are sure to get most of the children. I troubled about it at first but it is not yet commenced so I am determined not to meet trouble half way. (There are five schools here already that ought to be enough for such a small place)  
P.S. Since I have finished your letter the workmen have commenced to build the Model School. They have been digging up a large gum tree and have nearly carried it all away. I can hear their saws and hammers as I am writing this.<sup>12</sup>

Alice's anxiety increased as the building progressed, and in the following months she contemplated her future. 'I have a weak wrist, my right unfortunately so that I am unable to do any thing but teach. I am very fond of it too. I should be quite miserable if I had nothing to do.' The Lathams needed the income generated by Alice's teaching labour, but it was also a matter of being useful and independent. 'I believe with you dear that work is good and necessary for us. I would not wish to live without work even if it were possible.' Teaching was a productive activity which generated income and contributed to Alice's identity. She did not invoke the nurturing discourse which was used to justify women's work as teachers. In fact, Alice rarely mentioned children other than to cite the fluctuations in enrolments which, of course, affected her income.

Her aunt in England commiserated with her about the potential loss of livelihood, told her of her own experience of school inspections, and suggested that opening a little shop might be a suitable way to generate income.<sup>13</sup> However Alice intended teaching for as long as she could and learned new skills in order to attract more students. She began taking music lessons from Cecile Nagelle, whom she regarded as a friend and a 'good music teacher'. Alice admitted that she was 'not very musical' but she knew the market value of this accomplishment. 'I wish I had been able to teach music ... it pays so much better.'<sup>14</sup>

The Angaston Public School opened in January 1879. Maria Thomas was sent to nearby Tarrawatta as a provisional teacher and Theodore Niehuus came from Adelaide as headmaster. Theodore had been a licensed teacher since 1859 and in the 1860s had conducted a very successful German and English licensed school. However in the upheaval which accompanied the 1875 Act he clashed with the new administrators, and was reputed

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<sup>11</sup> In the *South Australian Directory* Alice's occupation is listed as schoolmistress from 1876-1882; Drafts of Letters by Alice Latham, 1878-9, PRG 281/32, MLSA.

<sup>12</sup> Drafts of Letters by Alice Latham, 1878-9, PRG 281/32, MLSA.

<sup>13</sup> Drafts of Letters by Alice Latham, 1878-9, PRG 281/32, MLSA; Letters Received by Alice Latham, 1871-79, PRG 281/33, MLSA.

<sup>14</sup> Drafts of Letters by Alice Latham, 1878-9, PRG 281/32, MLSA.

to have 'grossly mismanaged his school' in Adelaide. He was demoted to Angaston and given a chance to redeem his reputation as an efficient teacher.<sup>15</sup>

In March 1879 Alice recorded 'My school is much better than I had expected though small. I have had two already from the Model School and this is their first quarter. The teacher is a German and is not much liked so that is all the better for us. I do hope we shall be able to get on here for it is a pity to break up our home. We must trust in the Heavenly Father for he is ever good.' By November, however, she was very depressed as her numbers had plummeted to sixteen, and she was working harder than ever, till dark each day. Besides teaching school and taking music lessons, she was giving private lessons in fancy needlework to augment her diminishing income.<sup>16</sup>

Theodore Niehuus did not redeem himself at Angaston. Although he attracted some students with the offer of low fees, his examination results were a disgraceful thirty-seven per cent. He requested another examination and the results were even worse. He was transferred to Eudunda in 1880 and after one year resigned and became a publican. His replacement was Alfred Holloway. Hannah Holloway was appointed as sewing mistress and pupil teacher, and this husband and wife teaching team were recognised as able teachers. Hannah Holloway's presence also ensured the girls' attendance at the state school.<sup>17</sup>

Alice Latham taught at Angaston until the beginning of 1882 when she and her mother relocated to Adelaide. In 1881 Alice had exhibited many items of her own needlework in Adelaide in order to increase her public profile as a teacher of that craft. Her cousin wrote 'I am quite proud that you again won some distinction with your work at the AYM's Art Exhibition. It might bring you an increase of pupils as well as orders.' After the Lathams arrived in the city, Alice had pamphlets printed and advertised in the *Register* that she would give private tuition in needlework, as well as taking sewing orders. The Lathams also took in lodgers to generate income. Alice's account book indicates that for the following two years until her marriage, her new venture was successful.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Progress Report of the Select Committee of the House of Assembly on Education 1881, SAPP 1881, no. 122, p. 80; Progress Report of the Commission on the Working of the Education Acts, 1882, SAPP 1882, no. 27, p. 133; Reg Butler, *A College in the Wattles: Hahndorf and its Academy*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1989, p. 37; Excerpts from Adolph Leschen's Diary, 1859-61, D6113(L), MLSA, pp. 1-3.

<sup>16</sup> Drafts of Letters by Alice Latham, 1878-9, PRG 281/32, MLSA.

<sup>17</sup> Progress Report of the Commission on the Working of the Education Acts 1882, SAPP 1882, no. 27, pp. 133-136; Morooroo Board of Advice Report, SAPP 1880, no. 44, p. 40.

<sup>18</sup> Letters Received by Alice Latham, 1871-1901, PRG 281/33, MLSA; *Register*, 16 January 1882, 3 October 1882; A. Latham, D5199(Misc), MLSA; Alice Latham's Account Book 1880-86, PRG 281/34, MLSA. In 1883 Alice married Earnshaw Roberts, a farmer from Greenock (near Angaston). She continued to generate income after her marriage, not with her needlework or teaching, but, typically with the sale of eggs, chickens and butter. Earnshaw died in 1898 leaving Alice with four



Enrolments at Angaston state school gradually increased in the 1880s. The Moroороо Board of Advice had responsibility for enforcing the compulsory attendance clauses in Angaston and the surrounding district but the students' attendance was as irregular as ever. Parents of children who had not attended the statutory number of days were required to give a written explanation or attend a Board meeting. The Board was then empowered to institute legal proceedings against persistent offenders.<sup>19</sup> According to the Moroороо Board of Advice, many avoided prosecution by claiming that they were enrolled in Lutheran schools. There were twelve state and eight Lutheran schools, and an unknown number of other private schools in the district. The Board continually complained that it had no jurisdiction over private schools and thus was unable to enforce the law. By 1884 three-quarters of the eligible students in the Angaston district were enrolled in state schools. Although Lutheran schools catered for most of the remaining students, some attended private schools.<sup>20</sup>

With the advent of compulsory education, tensions between the Lutheran and state systems escalated as both competed for students. German parents continued to demand English language instruction for their children and many Lutheran teachers were unable to provide this. Hence state schools had significant bargaining power even in predominantly German communities. The Education Department maximised its advantage by recruiting men of German descent and appointing them as headmasters in these communities. At Hahndorf, for example, all of the state school headmasters between 1875 and 1915 had German surnames. The competition between the Lutheran and state schools in this town was bitter and long standing.<sup>21</sup>

By the early 1880s there were between forty and fifty Lutheran schools in the colony. With the exception of Flinders Street Lutheran Day School in Adelaide, all were located in country districts. Most were small one-teacher schools and most were conducted by men.<sup>22</sup> Although regular school attendance was encouraged, there is no evidence that Lutheran teachers cooperated with Boards of Advice in enforcing the compulsory attendance clauses.

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young children. Alice died in 1950, aged ninety-eight. For biographical details see Jill Statton (ed.), *Biographical Index of South Australians 1836-1885*, South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society, Adelaide, 1986, p. 1383.

<sup>19</sup> Education Regulations, 1885, SAPP 1885, no. 34, pp. 1-2.

<sup>20</sup> Moroороо Board of Advice Reports, SAPP 1881, no. 44, p. 36, SAPP 1882, no. 44, p. 34, SAPP 1884-5, no. 44, p. 71, SAPP 1887, no. 44, p. 45.

<sup>21</sup> Reg Butler, *Lean Times and Lively Days - Hahndorf Primary School, 1879-1979*, Investigator Press, Adelaide, 1979, pp. 239, 243; A. Brauer, *Under the Southern Cross: History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1956, pp. 223-228.

<sup>22</sup> Final Report of the Commission on the Working of the Education Acts 1883, SAPP 1883-4, no. 27A, p. 71.

Lutheran teachers continued to be paid in the traditional manner of cash plus some payment-in-kind. Salaries ranged from forty to eighty pounds per annum and other allowances included free residence, some wheat and firewood. Teachers struggled economically and most relied on the income of other family members to make ends meet. One disgruntled Lutheran teacher claimed that the salary was little more than half of the income of a state school teacher. The minimum salary for men in state schools was 150 pounds and many men of German descent joined the state system. Consequently Lutheran communities had difficulty recruiting male teachers.<sup>23</sup>

In the early 1880s this teaching context opened just a fraction to women teachers, although almost all of these women were related to the previous teacher. At Mannum, Anna Lindner conducted the Lutheran school for six years after her husband's death. Martha Bruhl took over her father's school at Steinthal and was the head teacher there for twelve years. And Mathilde Hoffmann began her teaching career as an assistant to her brother at Palmer. However, the Lutheran system continued to be dominated by men. German women who wanted to pursue teaching careers mostly did so in state schools or in young ladies' schools.<sup>24</sup>

In the expanding agricultural areas much further north than Angaston, the Catholic and the state school systems competed to establish the first schools. In some places this competition assumed ridiculous proportions as both began schools in settlements barely able to support a school of any description. Saltia, for example, was populated mainly by the owners of bullock teams which carted goods from Port Augusta to the hinterland beyond Saltia. The state school was 'an abandoned dwelling house, very much in want of repair ... the paling of the roof and verandah are fast giving way to the influence of wind and weather.' In May 1877 the Sisters of St Joseph opened a school and took most of the students from the state school. For two years both systems competed for students but the Sisters abandoned their school in 1879. In 1880 there were only twenty students enrolled in the state school. In 1884 the residents petitioned the Education Department to erect a school but their application was refused on account of insufficient students.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Final Report of the Commission on the Working of the Education Acts 1883, SAPP 1883-4, no. 27A, pp. 71-75; Brauer, *Under the Southern Cross*, p. 230. According to A. Schulz's unpublished research, at least 286 men and women of German descent became state school teachers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. See 'German Settlers in South Australia', Box F, Folder B, Item 36.

<sup>24</sup> Butler, *College in the Wattles*, p. 370; *Lutheran Herald*, September 1941, p. 224, June 1952, p. 171; 'German Settlers in South Australia', Box F, Folder B, Item 36. Schulz's research identified 95 women who became state school teachers, but this list is incomplete. Pauline Schach, for example, is not on the list. See chapter five for details of her teaching career.

<sup>25</sup> Inspector Jung to Council of Education, 10 December 1875, GRG 50/3/1875/60; H.W. Masterman to Council of Education, May 1877, GRG 50/3/1877/1633; A. Mitchell to Inspector-General Hartley, 9 September 1880, GRG 18/3/1880/3337; Residents, Saltia to Inspector-General Hartley, June 1884, GRG 18/3/1884/3803. Occasionally all three systems battled to establish schools in small places.

For women who pursued their teaching and religious vocations with the Sisters of St Joseph life was anything but easy in the late 1870s when the competition with state schools in the expanding agricultural areas was so intense. Marie Foale notes that 'there was constant movement among the Sisters because the membership of the Institute and the number and location of schools were in a constant state of flux ... the sisters were being extended to the full in order to meet the increasing demand for convents and schools.'<sup>26</sup> The Institute tried to place young nuns with more senior members so that they could learn by example but some found the isolation almost unbearable. Sr Peter Gough wrote from Willochra in the far north of the colony 'Sometimes I feel as if my heart would break with loneliness' and went on to complain that Winifred, her companion was 'too holy'. She concluded 'You have no idea what it is like in a lonely place with a holy sister.'<sup>27</sup>

In effect, the working conditions of the Sisters of St Joseph were as isolated, and had the potential to be as lonely as those experienced by women teachers in provisional schools in the state school system. Both groups of women were far removed from their families and were transferred frequently from school to school. Although sustained by their faith to some extent, the Sisters were unable to establish the friendship networks which also supported women in larger schools. The Sisters of St Joseph abandoned the school at Willochra after two years.

On the other hand, in more closely settled districts where the convents were larger and the population a little more stable, women religious like Sr Eustelle Woods were more content. Eustelle received the Holy Habit in July 1880. Her sister had been one of the earliest members of the Sisters of St Joseph and the Woods family had been particularly supportive of Mary MacKillop during the crisis of her excommunication.<sup>28</sup> In the mid-1880s Eustelle was located at Clare with three other sisters. The convent had been established since 1869 and the troubles with lay teachers in the district had long subsided. The Catholic school

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Such was the case at Lancelot. See Inspector Whitham to Inspector-General Hartley, 19 January 1880, GRG 18/3/1880/667; Vincent Thomas, 'The Role of the Laity in Catholic Education in South Australia from 1836 to 1986', Ph.D. thesis, Flinders University, 1989, p. 468; Ellen Tunbridge to Council of Education, June 1877, GRG 50/3/1877/1952; John Connell to Inspector-General Hartley, 15 April 1892, GRG 18/3/1892/509.

<sup>26</sup> Marie Therese Foale, *The Josephite Story: The Sisters of St Joseph: Their Foundation and Early History 1866-1893*, St Joseph's Generalate, Sydney, 1989, p. 142.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Marie Therese Foale, 'The Sisters of St Joseph: Their Foundation and Early History, 1866-1893', Ph.D. thesis, University of Adelaide, 1987, pp. 379, 424.

<sup>28</sup> 'Sisters of St Joseph, Chapters etc 1877-1883', Box 378, Catholic Archives, Adelaide; Sisters of St Joseph (ed), *Resource Material from the Archives of the Sisters of St Joseph*, Sisters of St Joseph, North Sydney, 1980-1983, Issue no. 7, p. 2. For details of the Woods family, see Margaret M. Press, *From Our Broken Toil: South Australian Catholics 1836-1906*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1986, pp. 168, 186.

competed with the state school, and there were also two private schools conducted by women teachers in the township.<sup>29</sup>

The local priest at Clare was supportive although Eustelle was slightly bemused by his constant attention. In a letter to Mary MacKillop she wrote:

Nearly every time he comes into the school he gives one of us a lesson on teaching, and as I am closest to the door he comes in at, I get the most of them. The other day he told me that when I was teaching I talked too much (an old complaint) and did not make the children speak out.

Eustelle enjoyed life in the company of other women. She reported that she was the least serious of the nuns at Clare and constantly played tricks on the others, including the postulants. In fact she had to give up the position as Mistress of the Postulants as her charges did not take her seriously. She concluded:

I must try and be sensible as you will think I am as wild as ever ... However whether I am wild or not I am very happy and can not help being jocative as an old woman in Gawler used to say [emphasis in original].<sup>30</sup>

Yet the ongoing battles between the Sisters of St Joseph and the Bishop over the government of the Institute caused great tension. The Bishop consistently challenged Mary MacKillop's authority in the Adelaide diocese. Although most of the sisters supported Mary, a small group conducted a smear campaign against her. This dissent plus the problems caused by the Institute's precarious finances climaxed in 1883, and the Bishop set up an official inquiry. In November 'Bishop Reynolds expelled Mary from his diocese as a drunkard and an embezzler of money for the poor.' Mary went to Sydney and was followed by more than twenty sisters. A new Mother House was established there and central government of the Institute was finally ratified by the Pope in 1888.<sup>31</sup>

For Eustelle Woods at Clare, these goings-on were a constant source of anxiety. She was worried that her father might intervene again in support of Mary and thereby exacerbate the tensions in the diocese. She was also torn between her religious and teaching vocation. Mary MacKillop stated that the sisters were 'Religious first - Teachers second' [emphases in original]. However, the South Australian sisters realised that, without Mary they would be under even more pressure to accept diocesan government. The sisters who remained in the colony petitioned the Pope for the retention of central government. Eustelle wrote:

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<sup>29</sup> Clare Board of Advice Report, SAPP 1882, no. 44, p. 25. See chapter three for a discussion of the early tensions between lay teachers and women religious at Clare.

<sup>30</sup> Sisters of St Joseph, *Resource Material*, Issue no. 7, p. 80.

<sup>31</sup> Foale, 'The Sisters of St Joseph: Their Foundation and Early History', pp. 370-379; Paul Gardiner, *An Extraordinary Australian: Mary MacKillop*, E. J. Dwyer, Sydney, 1993, pp. 270, 283, 342-346.

We are not willing to accept Diocesan Government and ask [that] our names be enjoined to the petition for Central Government. It would come very hard on us to leave the dear little children to the mercy of Public Schools, but when we do our best conscientiously maintaining our Constitutions, it will not be our fault if they are without schools.<sup>32</sup>

She resolved to stay in South Australia and continue to uphold both of her vocations.

With the loss of so many Sisters to New South Wales, there were significant changes in the Catholic school system from the mid-1880s. The Sisters of St Joseph withdrew from the marginal agricultural lands in the far north of the colony, leaving the state system as the only education provider, and the Catholic system was consolidated in Adelaide and larger country towns. The number of Catholic schools in South Australia fell from forty-six in 1882 to twenty-six by 1895. However, most of the remaining schools were substantial in size.<sup>33</sup>

The Sisters of St Joseph were eager to ensure that their students obeyed the compulsory attendance clauses, and they cooperated with the Boards of Advice in enforcing the regulations. Attendance at the Catholic schools was as irregular as in state schools but the superintendent of school visitors had difficulty prosecuting offenders:

The books of the Sisters were kept in such an irregular manner that it was not safe to bring up any cases, especially if there was a chance of further proceedings.<sup>34</sup>

After a complaint about truants from Catholic schools in 1884, administrators met with officials from the state system and as a result the Sisters were issued with Education Department roll books. Diocesan intervention was apparent when Archdeacon Russell ordered them to 'forward returns as per instruction in the Roll Book.' The Sisters also took the initiative in reporting irregular attenders to school visitors or the Education Department. From 1884 the superintendent of school visitors published statistics from the Catholic as well as the state school system.<sup>35</sup>

In sum, after the initial rush to establish schools one or other of the systems gained the ascendancy in most rural communities. In the thinly populated areas, it was the state system which captured most, if not all, of the students under compulsion. As the previous chapter indicated, state schools in these districts were mostly provisional schools conducted by

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<sup>32</sup> Sisters of St Joseph, *Resource Material*, Issue no. 9, pp. 81, 84; Gardiner, *An Extraordinary Australian*, p. 451.

<sup>33</sup> Foale, 'The Sisters of St Joseph: Their Foundation and Early History', pp. 405-410.

<sup>34</sup> Mr. Vockins to Inspector-General Hartley, 7 May 1883, GRG 18/3/1883/2768; Superintendent of School Visitors' Report, SAPP 1883-4, no. 44, p. 67. In Adelaide and large country towns School Visitors (truant officers) were employed to assist the Boards of Advice.

<sup>35</sup> Superintendent of School Visitors' Report, SAPP 1883-4, no. 44, pp. 29, 67; Inspector-General Hartley, 3 July 1884, GRG 18/3/1884/4548; Sisters of St Joseph, Macclesfield to Inspector-General Hartley, 7 February 1890, GRG 18/3/1890/316.

women teachers, so girls' attendance was assured. Many of these women had begun their careers as private teachers and then applied to the state for employment. Inspectors' reports indicate that girls outnumbered boys in state schools in the remote agricultural districts. Everywhere else there were more boys than girls enrolled in state schools.<sup>36</sup>

In closely settled districts, enrolments in state schools increased more slowly and in some country towns the two church systems also maintained their schools. The Lutheran school system had opened slightly to women but by the early-1880s the Catholic system was almost entirely in the hands of women religious. In places like Clare and Angaston, private schools conducted by women teachers continued throughout the 1880s. The 1890 census records indicate that there were more than sixty women teachers conducting private schools in small country towns where the state school head teachers were likely to be men. Besides the Sisters of St Joseph and the state school with its male head teacher, there were at least five women generating income as private teachers in Clare.<sup>37</sup> However it is likely that these figures underestimate the numbers of women who taught in the country. Governesses and women who taught as part of the family economy are not always captured in the statistics.

### **The education landscape in Adelaide**

In the fifteen years following the 1875 Act, state school enrolments in Adelaide and the suburbs did not exceed 60 per cent of the eligible students and boys outnumbered girls in state schools.<sup>38</sup> Given that working class students in urban areas had been the focus of the legislators, education administrators and school visitors alike were dismayed by this state of affairs. However, women teachers in private schools retained their bargaining power as had been the case in the mid-nineteenth century.

In working class suburbs like Hindmarsh, the education landscape was diverse, and there were all sorts of women teachers conducting schools of various sizes. Eliza Davies, formerly a Board of Education teacher in New South Wales, had opened a 'poor school' in 1870. Her tuition fees were fourpence to sixpence a week and in 1880 thirty students were enrolled in her school. Mrs Murphy catered for just six students while Miss Hammence had seventy at her school.<sup>39</sup> According to the 1890 census there were eight private schools

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<sup>36</sup> Pavla Miller, *Long Division: State Schooling in South Australian Society*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986, p. 69; Inspector Dewhirst's Report, SAPP 1878, no. 40, p. 11; Inspector-General Hartley's Report, SAPP 1880, no. 44, p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> Colonial Secretary's correspondence, 22 October 1891, GRG 24/6/1891/1439.

<sup>38</sup> Kerry Wimshurst, 'Child Labour and School Attendance in South Australia 1890-1915', *Historical Studies*, vol. 19, no. 76, 1981, p. 397.

<sup>39</sup> *Register*, 28 June 1870; Mr Vockins, Hindmarsh to Inspector-General Hartley, March 1880, GRG 18/3/1880/957.

conducted by women in the Hindmarsh district and all except one were catering for more than thirty students. There were 220 students enrolled in the Sisters of St Joseph's school at Bowden. However, Miss Gapp and Miss Fulton's school for young ladies, 'Carrondown', is not recorded and it is likely that many dame schools also eluded the census collectors.<sup>40</sup>

In the Hindmarsh district, school visitors and state school administrators claimed that there were many schools kept by 'young girls who could not pass a pupil teachers examination.' In fact working class girls who wanted to teach had great difficulty accessing the state school system as pupil teachers. The South Australian evidence suggests that, unlike the situation in England, pupil teacher apprenticeships were not an avenue of upward mobility for working class girls.<sup>41</sup> Ian Davey's study of Hindmarsh students shows that very few girls reached the compulsory standard before they turned thirteen and very few extended their schooling beyond the years of compulsion either.<sup>42</sup> Thus most were precluded from taking the pupil teacher entrance examination. Those working class girls who did apply, competed with middle class girls from other state and private schools. Headmasters were advised to undertake 'a most careful investigation into the character and antecedents of all persons who are candidates for employment', and they were not restricted to recruiting from their own schools.<sup>43</sup> Given the abundance of female applicants, headmasters could afford to be very selective in their choice of female pupil teachers and working class girls were unlikely to be employed in the state school system. As the previous chapter showed, the result was that the social position of women teachers in state schools was higher than their male colleagues.<sup>44</sup>

However failure to secure a niche in state schools did not deter working class girls who wanted to teach. Inspector Hosking noted that the 'daughters of working men ... rather than go into service or do anything of that kind, they have opened schools of their own.' School visitors confirmed the same phenomenon in other working class districts like Port

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<sup>40</sup> Colonial Secretary's correspondence, 22 October 1891, GRG 24/6/1891/1439; Interview with Mrs Evelyn Wilson, OH 25/34, Hindmarsh Oral History Project, MLSA; Ian Davey, 'Growing Up in a Working-Class Community: School and Work in Hindmarsh' in Patricia Grimshaw, Chris McConville, Ellen McEwen (eds), *Families in Colonial Australia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1985, pp. 163-167.

<sup>41</sup> Frances Widdowson's research in England shows that in the early years working class girls were able to access pupil teacher apprenticeships but they were gradually replaced by girls from *petit bourgeois* families. See Frances Widdowson, *Going Up into the Next Class: Women and Elementary Teacher Training 1840-1914*, Hutchinson and Co., London, 1983.

<sup>42</sup> Davey, 'Growing Up in a Working-Class Community' in Grimshaw et al, *Families in Colonial Australia*, p. 168.

<sup>43</sup> Inspector-General's Report, SAPP 1883, no. 44, p. 22; Education Regulations 1885, SAPP 1885, no. 34, p. 8.

<sup>44</sup> Alison Mackinnon's study shows that pupil teachers mostly came from lower middle class families. See Alison Mackinnon, *One Foot on the Ladder: Origins and Outcomes of Girls' Secondary Schooling in South Australia*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1984, pp. 169-170.

Adelaide and the mining towns of Wallaroo and Moonta. When the compulsory attendance clauses were enforced by school visitors in these districts, pupils enrolled in the 'inefficient private schools' rather than the state schools, much to the consternation of state school administrators. In 1881 the headmaster at Hindmarsh reported that the state school was nowhere near full and that there were 400 to 500 scholars attending private schools.<sup>45</sup>

In essence, working class women retained their bargaining power as private teachers throughout the 1880s by providing a cheap and flexible alternative to state schools. They charged threepence or fourpence a week and accommodated students' need to generate income for the family economy. They also accepted very young children with their school-age siblings, thereby providing child-minding as well as literacy instruction. These women, literally in many cases, offered a safe and homely alternative to state schools.<sup>46</sup>

While Boards of Advice and state school administrators marginalised working class schools and teachers as inefficient, they were far more reluctant to apply the same criticism to women of their own social class who conducted private schools. Indeed, there are distinct differences between the discourses articulated by Boards of Advice in working class districts and those in middle class suburbs like Norwood, where private schools also flourished rather than disappeared. In 1883 the superintendent of school visitors stated that there were more private schools in the Norwood district than any part of the colony and he recommended that all private schools should be examined for their efficiency. Catherine Helen Spence, a member of the Board of Advice, commented that some small private schools had closed after the 1875 Act, but she was reluctant to comment further on the remaining private schools. The East Torrens Board of Advice reported that there were at least fifty private schools competing with eight state schools, including Norwood Model School and that the state schools were gaining the ascendancy. However, its own statistics indicate that state schools made very little headway in the 1880s, attracting between fifty-five and fifty-eight per cent of the local students under compulsion.<sup>47</sup>

Neither the Board of Advice nor the superintendent of school visitors identified the specific nature of the private schools around Norwood. Among them were three working class Catholic schools conducted by the Sisters of St Joseph. Mrs Eagle also kept a little 'Dame's

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<sup>45</sup> Progress Report of the Select Committee of the House of Assembly on Education 1881, SAPP 1881, no. 122, p. 57; Superintendent of school visitors to Inspector-General Hartley, 24 April 1879, GRG 18/3/1879/1090; Inspector Dewhirst and Mr Vockin's reports, SAPP 1881, no. 44, pp. 5, 59.

<sup>46</sup> Progress Report of the Select Committee of the House of Assembly on Education 1881, SAPP 1881, no. 122, pp. 2, 53, 98.

<sup>47</sup> Superintendent of School Visitors' Report, SAPP 1884, no. 44, p. 67; East Torrens Board of Advice Reports, SAPP 1884-5, no. 44, pp. 36-37, SAPP 1886, no. 44, p. 28, SAPP 1890, no. 44, p. 31; Progress Report of the Commission on the Working of the Education Acts 1882, SAPP 1882, no. 27, p. 143.



School' for about a dozen children. However the anecdotal evidence suggests that a variety of young ladies' schools proliferated in this district. Miss Schroeder's 'Osmund House School' commenced in 1874 and was still operating at the turn of the century. She catered mostly for young ladies from German families, while Annie Montgomerie Martin's prestigious school for young ladies 'combined short hours and University work.' In the 1890 census twenty of the twenty-three private schools recorded for this district were conducted by women.<sup>48</sup>

Mathilde Piper had been a licensed teacher in the Norwood district since 1856. Her school catered for working class students and for middle class girls, mainly of German origin. Her license was withdrawn when Norwood Model School opened in 1877 and she was granted a retiring allowance. However, Mathilde continued her school privately for a further twenty years. At least three of her former students conducted their own schools for young ladies in the district in the late nineteenth century.<sup>49</sup>

In the late 1880s Mathilde was joined by her niece Alma Loessel. Alma had been educated at this school but completed her pupil teacher apprenticeship in state schools, including the Advanced School for Girls. She entered the Training College in 1885 but withdrew because of illness. Prior to joining her aunt, she taught at Mrs Thornber's school for young ladies. Alma put her experience of the new state school system to good use in her aunt's school. 'With Miss Piper's approval and at her request Miss Loessel completely remodelled the school and carried it on according to latest methods.' The school was advertised as 'St Peters Private School - Henry Street' and Alma also gave private lessons in German. In the 1890 census Alma reported that she was teaching thirty-eight students. The school closed in 1898 when Mathilde retired and went to live with her sister in Mount Gambier.<sup>50</sup>

Alma continued her teaching career in other schools for young ladies, including Tsong Giaou at McLaren Vale. In 1910 she joined the Education Department and taught in state high schools for a further twenty-one years.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> 'German Settlers in South Australia, Miscellaneous Papers, 1776-1964', Box F, Folder B, Item 29, Special Collections, Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide; Stella Mary Macdonald (ed), *In Paths Directed: Reminiscences and Autobiography of Emily E. Churchward*, Investigator Press, Adelaide, 1984, p. 98; *Register*, 2 January 1892.

<sup>49</sup> See chapter three for details of Mathilde's career as a licensed teacher; Council of Education minutes, GRG 50/1, no. 2446.

<sup>50</sup> 'German Settlers in South Australia', Box F, Folder B, Item 29; Colonial Secretary's correspondence, 22 October 1891, GRG 24/6/1891/1439. See advertisements for this school in the *Register*, 19 January 1892, 16 January 1893, 20 January 1897.

<sup>51</sup> Ira Nesdale, *The Third Bridge Tsong Gyiaou - McLaren Vale*, Investigator Press, Adelaide, 1980, pp. 51, 57. For Alma's teaching record in state schools, see Teachers Classification Board and Teachers History Sheets, 1882-1960, GRG 18/167.

While working class girls had great difficulty accessing the state school system as teachers, many middle class women like Alma Loessel colonised state schools temporarily and then continued their careers in other teaching contexts. One pupil teacher openly admitted that she did not intend to take the examination but was 'going to learn all she can and open a private school.' When this was reported to the central administration she was dismissed. In 1888 a Board of Advice reported that in its district 'all private schools appear to be well conducted, many of the teachers being educated and trained as teachers in the state schools.' This unorthodox use of the new state school system not only enabled some middle class private teachers to compete successfully with state schools but also led to more widespread use of 'efficient' teaching methodologies and state school curricula.<sup>52</sup>

Middle class women teachers also utilised state sponsored reforms in secondary and higher education to increase their bargaining power in the education marketplace. In the late nineteenth century, several of the most prestigious ladies' schools were conducted by ex-state school teachers who had begun their careers in the Model Schools or the Advanced School for Girls. Such was the case with Margaret and Kate Brown.

The Brown family had arrived in South Australia in 1862 and James Brown set up a hardware business in Adelaide. The elder daughters, Margaret and Kate were educated at young ladies' schools, and Margaret was in the first group of non-matriculated students to attend lectures at the university in 1876. From January to July 1877 she attended the Training College as a private student to complete her studies for the second class teachers' certificate. She was appointed as an assistant in the girls' department at North Adelaide Model School in July 1877. The headmistress, Ruth Gill, wrote that Margaret was 'an able teacher, especially of older girls to whom she is able to impart a sound English education.' Meanwhile, Kate spent two years as a pupil teacher at the Grote Street Model Schools under the tuition of Jane Stanes and Lavinia Seabrooke. Kate entered the Training College in 1878 but soon withdrew. She completed the course in 1879 and was appointed as an assistant in the Advanced School for Girls in 1880. In March 1882 she resigned, having suffered a nervous breakdown.<sup>53</sup>

Margaret resigned from the Education Department in March 1883, partly because of family problems, and partly because she was 'disappointed at not getting promotion fast enough.'

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<sup>52</sup> Dixon Bertram to Council of Education, 29 November 1876, GRG 50/3/1876/2394; Kate McInerney to Inspector-General Hartley, 23 February 1892, GRG 18/3/1892/623; Wallaroo Board of Advice Report, SAPP 1889, no. 44, p. 51.

<sup>53</sup> Minutes, Council of Education, GRG 50/1, nos 1860, 2666; University of Adelaide, *Calendar, 1877*, p. 10. For details of Margaret and Kate's employment in the state system, see testimonials by Inspector-General Hartley, Lewis Madley, Ruth Gill and Edith Hubbe (nee Cook), Misses Brown, Wilderness, PRG 156, MLSA; Elisabeth George, *The Wilderness Book*, Hassel Press, Adelaide, 1946, p. 8.

She continued her career as a private teacher, beginning in the time-honoured way of taking in a handful of students to educate with her youngest sister in the family home.<sup>54</sup>

In 1884 Margaret advertised her 'morning classes in English' and in 1885 the family moved to larger premises and were able to accept more students. Kate, who was 'especially well-fitted for Infant teaching', contributed her teaching labour until her death (by suicide) in 1891. According to the 1890 census there were forty-nine students enrolled in the school.<sup>55</sup>

By 1893, the enterprise had prospered sufficiently for Margaret to acquire land on which she built a two-storey house with room for at least fifty boarders. Mrs Brown was in charge of the boarders and religious instruction and, as the three younger girls completed their schooling they were also inducted into the family business. Margaret placed substantial advertisements in the newspapers. In the 1890s the 'Medindie School and Kindergarten' offered education to girls of all ages and also prepared them for the University entrance examinations. Margaret stated that the school was conducted by certificated teachers and publicly cited Inspector-General Hartley and Lewis Madley, Principal of the Training College, among her referees. In effect, Margaret utilised her qualifications, teaching experience and professional networks acquired through her association with the state school system as cultural capital, thereby giving her greater bargaining power in the education marketplace. She also mentioned her students' successes in the various examinations in her advertisements. The school's annual prize-giving ceremonies were reported in the press, along with those of the Advanced School and other prestigious young ladies' schools.<sup>56</sup>

In the 1880s and 1890s, young ladies' schools became increasingly visible in the public sphere through their advertisements and the publicity surrounding their examination successes. Many of the leading lady teachers also belonged to the Collegiate Schools Association. By 1893 they outnumbered men as members, and they were far more active within the association than their male counterparts. Caroline Jacob joined the association while she was teaching at the Advanced School and continued to participate actively after she established 'Tormore House'. Blanche Vivian and Mary Overbury were well known private teachers and participants in the association. These teachers in prestigious private schools, as well as the Advanced School, endeavoured to influence the nature and content

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<sup>54</sup> John A. Hartley to Mrs Douy, 9 October 1889, Brian Condon (ed.), 'The Confidential Letterbook of the Inspector-General of Schools, 1880-1914', Murray Park College of Advanced Education, Adelaide, 1976; Marjorie Scales, *The Wilderness: One Hundred Years of History and Legend, 1884-1984*, Griffen Press, Adelaide, 1984, p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> *Register*, 23 January 1884; Misses Brown, Wilderness, PRG 156, MLSA; George, *The Wilderness Book*, pp. 9-10; Colonial Secretary's correspondence, 22 October 1891, GRG 24/6/1891/1439.

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, *Observer*, 2 January 1896; Scales, *The Wilderness*, pp. 18-20.

of the University examinations through the association. Madeleine Rees George, headmistress of the Advanced School, led the negotiations with the university about the courses of study and the examinations, albeit not always successfully.<sup>57</sup>

As the middle class consolidated in South Australia, the demand for their daughters to be educated as ladies, and to be prepared intellectually for companionate marriage, was accommodated by women teachers in young ladies' schools. Middle class women maintained their niche in the education marketplace by providing a genteel alternative to state schools, as well as instruction in religion and/or the accomplishments, neither of which were provided in the Advanced School or the Model Schools.<sup>58</sup> They also adapted their secondary curriculum to conform to the University examinations. Their advertisements for students and their annual prize-giving ceremonies reflected the influence of state sponsored changes in secondary education as well as those in elementary education.<sup>59</sup> Yet in conforming with the rigorous requirements of the University examinations these women had ceded control of the curriculum and, to some extent, their daily work to the male-dominated University Council.

In sum, women teachers in private schools across the social spectrum in Adelaide retained their bargaining power in the 1880s. Although working class women were marginalised by state school administrators, they competed successfully with the state school system for working class students. The teaching family still featured in young ladies' schools and middle class women with expertise in the accomplishments maintained their advantage in the marketplace. They were also well placed to acquire the credentials and teaching experience in state schools which could then be utilised in other teaching contexts. Yet in accommodating state sponsored reforms, in particular the University examinations, their work was steadily brought under men's governance.

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<sup>57</sup> See Minute Book of the Teachers' Guild of South Australia and the Collegiate Schools Association, V1224, MLSA; *The Educator*, vol. 1, no. 10, 1893, p. 137. See chapter five for further details of Caroline Jacob's career. Elsie Birks, the provisional teacher at Murtho, had actually been trained as a teacher in Blanche Vivian's school. Her letters to Blanche are quoted at length in chapter five.

<sup>58</sup> Inspector-General Hartley acknowledged women teachers' bargaining power in 1890. See Report on the Competition between Government and Private Schools, SAPP 1890, no. 152, p. 1.

<sup>59</sup> Helen Jones, *Nothing Seemed Impossible: Women's Education and Social Change in South Australia, 1875-1915*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1985, pp. 68-86; Mackinnon, *One Foot on the Ladder*, pp. 139-140; Helen Reid, 'Hardwicke - A Blue Stocking School?', Paper presented to ANZHES Annual Conference, Perth, 1994, pp. 367-370. See also Marjorie R. Theobald, 'Women and Schools in Colonial Victoria, 1840-1910', Ph.D. thesis, Monash University, 1985, pp. 249-250, 262-263, 331.

## Women teachers and free state schooling

In the 1880s the number of state schools in South Australia increased from 370 to 551. However, these increases were mainly in the small provisional schools in the expanding agricultural districts. The number of private schools officially hovered around 300. According to the 1890 census there were 313 private schools in the colony, 239 of which were conducted by women. The Catholic school system was also in the hands of women religious. In the late nineteenth century, the most significant challenge to women teachers' livelihoods in the private and Catholic schools was the introduction of free state schooling in 1891.<sup>60</sup>

Popular agitation for free schooling came initially from mining communities in 1878 when a downturn in the industry caused considerable unemployment. Parents complained about the loss of dignity entailed in applying for free education in state schools. Widespread economic decline in the 1880s intensified calls for free state schooling and the proportion of students receiving free tuition doubled between 1883 and 1887. In 1890 legislation was introduced and passed in the House of Assembly but defeated in the Legislative Council. When improvements in the rural economy produced a budget surplus in 1891, legislation for free education was re-introduced and again passed in the House of Assembly. By the time it reached the Legislative Council, however, some of the churches and women teachers in private schools were campaigning publicly against the Bill.<sup>61</sup>

The Lutheran and Catholic systems launched separate campaigns against free education. Clergy from both Lutheran synods temporarily set aside deep antagonisms and combined to present petitions. Forty Lutheran teachers, all men, were also among the individual petitioners but the groundswell of opposition was registered by women teachers in private schools. In August and September 1891, a total of 162 petitions signed by 301 teachers were tabled in the Legislative Council and at least one hundred of these were sent in by women teachers conducting private schools.<sup>62</sup> Each petition arrived on a printed proforma which had a space for teachers to give their own reasons for opposing free education. Of course the most oft-stated reason was the potential loss of livelihood:

... Those who are well fitted to teach will lose their means of making a living. (Jessie Little)  
... my only source of living for myself and family ... Miss Selby and myself have no  
business or Profession whatsoever to depend on, but to keep a school. (Charlotte Selby)

<sup>60</sup> Miller, *Long Division*, p. 371; *Register*, 21 October 1890; Final Report of the Commission on the Working of the Education Acts 1883, SAPP 1883-4, no. 27A, p. 4; Colonial Secretary's correspondence, 22 October 1891, GRG 24/6/1891/1439.

<sup>61</sup> Denis Grundy, 'Free Schooling and the State in South Australia 1875-1898' in Imelda Palmer (ed.), *Melbourne Studies in Education*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1983, p. 183.

<sup>62</sup> M.J. Whitfield, *The Free Education Bill*, Hussey and Gillingham, Adelaide, 1891, pp. 3-6; Petition to Reject Free Education Bill, SAPP 1891, no. 102, p. 1.

... it will be the means of throwing dozens of young persons who are now earning their living by private teaching out of employment. (Lucy Millar)  
... A great many private teachers have spent the best years of our lives in training the young; and cannot turn easily to other means of subsistence, and would by the bringing in of the Free Education be liable to be thrown upon charity, or upon the government for support. (Misses Tilney)<sup>63</sup>

Women religious were also prominent among petitioners against free education. The sisters at St Raphael's Catholic school made a similar claim to those of women teachers in private schools: 'We shall be injured in our rights to a fair livelihood, to which we have just claims by our teaching and profession', while the two Sisters at Sevenhills objected to the legislation on the grounds that 'Roman Catholics would be taxed to support schools that they cannot in conscience make use of.'<sup>64</sup>

Most women provided more than one objection. Many stated that free education was already available in state schools and that the legislation freed parents from the responsibility of providing one of the basic necessities of life, that is education, for their children. Others considered it 'an effort on the part of the State to suppress Religious and Denominational teaching', an important bargaining chip held by women teachers in private schools as well as the Lutheran and Catholic schools.<sup>65</sup> And it was this issue rather than the loss of women teachers' livelihoods which dominated the discussion in the newspapers and in the parliament.<sup>66</sup>

This political agitation by women teachers in private schools outstripped all other public attempts by women teachers to secure their niche in the education marketplace in the nineteenth century. Women's individual agency has been highlighted throughout this thesis and the collective action of the senior women in the Education Department and in the Collegiate Schools Association has also been featured. However, this 'mass' movement by women teachers in private schools to defend their right to earn a living is perplexing. It has been impossible to ascertain the source and method of distribution of the printed proforma or to identify the possible leaders, except Mary Whitfield.

In June 1891, Mary wrote a letter to the editor of the *Register* opposing free education. She also published a pamphlet on the same subject in October. Mary's sister, Annie Montgomerie Martin, conducted a well-known young ladies' school in Norwood at the time. However, that seems to have been Mary's only connection with women teachers and

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<sup>63</sup> See individual petitions from each of these women. The petitions are kept in the Legislative Council vaults. They were not printed in the Parliamentary Papers.

<sup>64</sup> Whitfield, *The Free Education Bill*, pp. 28, 31.

<sup>65</sup> See petition from Lucy H. E. Pizey, Norton's Summit at the Legislative Council. See also Whitfield, *The Free Education Bill*, pp. 25-36.

<sup>66</sup> See *Observer*, 4 July 1891; *Register*, 13 June, 1, 9, 28 July, 22, 25 August, 14, 15 September 1891.

she is not known to have been a political activist in any other forum either. In the pamphlet, Mary wrote that 'The friends and supporters of these schools have found it difficult to obtain the census returns necessary for a full exposition of their case.' She summarised the debates in the Legislative Council and published excerpts from many petitions. However, the pamphlet gives no further details of the campaign and does not identify any other activists.<sup>67</sup>

Aside from Eliza Kelsey and Annie Montgomerie Martin, no women teachers from the most prestigious ladies' schools petitioned the parliament. The Collegiate Schools Association did not take up the issue either.<sup>68</sup> The protesters were women who taught girls of all ages (and young boys) but who concentrated their attention on elementary education. Many of the petitioners came from the Norwood district, where Mary lived and from schools in the city but there were also many petitions from country schools where women teachers had been struggling to maintain their livelihoods for many years. Such was the case with Eliza Parke of Echunga.

Eliza had established her school sometime in the 1860s in a building erected by the Catholic community. The Sisters of St Joseph never attempted to start a school at Echunga and Eliza continued teaching there for more than thirty years, although she was not counted as part of the Catholic school system.<sup>69</sup> A school photograph, dating from the 1880s indicates that she was teaching at least fifteen students, some of whom were very young. According to the 1890 census she was teaching fifteen students.<sup>70</sup>

Eliza reported that twenty students were enrolled in her school when she petitioned the Legislative Council and candidly stated her opinion:

It is the duty of parents and guardians to provide for their children and to educate them; the law of God commands them to do so. I think the public money could be put to better use. Where poverty is, let the children be free, at Private or Public School. A man must pay the dog tax, the rates etc. I think he is a mean fellow who will ask the public to pay for the education of his children.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *Register*, 23 June 1891; Whitfield, *The Free Education Bill*, p. 10. My thanks to Margaret Allen who provided the contextual information about Mary Whitfield.

<sup>68</sup> Whitfield, *The Free Education Bill*, pp. 27, 35.

<sup>69</sup> Eliza was not included in the list of Catholic schools that were issued with roll books in 1884 and she did not receive any assistance from the diocese.

<sup>70</sup> Thomas, 'The Role of Laity in Catholic Education', p. 133; Jack Whimpress, *Echunga 1839-1939*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1975, p. 123; Colonial Secretary's correspondence, 22 October 1891, GRG 24/6/1891/1439.

<sup>71</sup> See Eliza's petition at the Legislative Council.

However the protests from the churches and women teachers were to no avail. The legislation to introduce free state schooling for seven to thirteen year olds was passed late in 1891 and state school enrolments increased from 44,804 to 59,603 by 1895.<sup>72</sup>

In December 1896 the Vicar-General of the Catholic church visited Echunga and commented:

There is a property at Echunga on which there is a log hut. A poor old person named Miss Parks [sic] teaches school in it. She has eleven on [sic] but seldom has more than five. Miss Parks [sic] has not received any assistance from the District and cannot be counted as having a Catholic school. I believe it would be charity to give her a few pounds, she, I believe, should be in the destitute.<sup>73</sup>

Eliza Parke had been marginalised by both the state and the Catholic school systems. By the turn of the century Catholic elementary schooling was, with the exception of four lay teachers, entirely in the hands of women religious. Although the system faced increased pressure with the advent of free education, it did retain most Catholic students and catered for about ten per cent of students under compulsion. However, secular instruction was readjusted in order to compete with state schools. State school curricula and text books were being used in many Catholic schools when Mary MacKillop inspected them in 1895.<sup>74</sup>

The Lutheran system did not fare as well as the Catholic and by 1900 the Lutheran schools 'were netting less than one third of their possible catch.'<sup>75</sup> This system also responded by aligning the secular aspects of its curricula with the state schools. Carl Krichauff, formerly a state school teacher, drew up a timetable and course of instruction based on that used in the state system. Twenty-four out of forty lessons a week were to be given in English. Lutheran teachers were also encouraged to subscribe to Education Department publications including the *Education Gazette*.<sup>76</sup>

The Lutheran system also attempted to improve the quality of instruction by establishing Immanuel College, a school and training institution for teachers, under the direction of Carl

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<sup>72</sup> Grundy, 'Free State Schooling', pp. 184-192; Miller, *Long Division*, pp. 68-69; Davey, 'Growing up in South Australia' in Eric Richards (ed.), *The Flinders History of South Australia: Social History*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986, p. 392.

<sup>73</sup> Quoted in Thomas, 'The Role of Laity in Catholic Education', p. 133.

<sup>74</sup> 'Reports of Schools Examined 1897 - South Australia', F1897 V5, Sisters of St Joseph Archives, North Sydney; K.J. Wimshurst, 'Street Children and School Attendance in South Australia, 1886-1915', M.Ed. thesis, Flinders University, 1979, p. 150.

<sup>75</sup> Ian Harmstorf, 'Guests or Fellow-Countrymen: A Study in Assimilation, an Aspect of the German Community in South Australia, 1836-1918', Ph.D. thesis, Flinders University, 1987, p. 107.

<sup>76</sup> J.E. Zweck, 'Church and State Relations as They Affected the Lutheran Church and its Schools in South Australia, 1838-1900', M.Ed. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1971, pp. 310-320; J.W. Hayes, 'Education in the German Lutheran Community of South Australia circa 1838-1914', M.Ed.(Hons), University of Sydney, 1971, pp. 126-127.



Krichauff and Pastor Leidig. The college was built in the country at Point Pass and opened in 1895 with nine students. Among them was a woman, Emma Geyer.<sup>77</sup>

Emma was the youngest daughter of August Geyer, the Lutheran teacher at Langmeil. She had left her father's school after her confirmation at the age of fourteen and spent some years working 'in domestic positions among the well-to-do. The Geyer family struggled to make ends meet on August's meagre salary and Emma's income 'assisted her family very materially.'<sup>78</sup>

Emma was twenty-five when she graduated from Immanuel College and she spent more than twenty years teaching in Lutheran schools. Her first teaching appointment was to Baldina. In 1900 she moved back to Langmeil to assist her aging father. When August died, Emma took over as head teacher and student numbers increased under her leadership. In 1911 she was replaced by a headmaster and she spent the remaining six years of her teaching career as an assistant teacher at the school.<sup>79</sup>

By the turn of the century 80 per cent of students under compulsion were enrolled in state schools. Catholic schools netted about ten per cent and the remaining students were found in the Lutheran schools, nine of which were conducted by women, and in private schools.<sup>80</sup>

Once free state education was introduced, working class women whose bargaining power had been principally their low fees probably lost most of their students over the age of seven. The focus of Board of Advice and school visitors' reports shifted from 'inefficient private schools' to the struggle to enforce more regular attendance of state school students under compulsion. However, working class schools did not disappear entirely. It is likely that some dame schools continued providing the first lessons in literacy and child minding for younger children. Ian Davey's study of Hindmarsh students showed that, on average, girls entered the state school system a year later than boys and that some had been previously enrolled in private schools conducted by women.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> D.E. and I.V. Hansen, *With Wings: A Centenary History of Immanuel College, 1895-1995*, Openbook Publishers, Adelaide, 1995, pp. 31-33; Paul Sabel, 'Immanuel College at Point Pass: The Foundation Years 1895-1922', Advanced Diploma of Teaching, Murray Park College of Advanced Education, 1973, p. 58; Zweck, 'Church and State Relations', p. 326.

<sup>78</sup> *Lutheran Herald*, January 1940, p. 15, November 1943, p. 375.

<sup>79</sup> In 1920 Emma migrated with family members to America. She lived in New York for fifteen years during which time she was the matron of a children's home and a home for the aged. *Lutheran Herald*, January 1940, p. 15; Judy Milde, *Wilhelm and Elisabeth Milde and Descendants 1837-1985*, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1985, pp. 56-58.

<sup>80</sup> 'German Settlers in South Australia, Miscellaneous Papers, 1776-1964', Box F, Folder B, Item 22.

<sup>81</sup> Davey, 'Growing Up in South Australia' in Richards, *Flinders History*, pp. 392-395; Davey, 'Growing Up in a Working-Class Community' in Grimshaw et al, *Families in Colonial Australia*, p. 167.

Young ladies' schools also proved resilient to the onslaught of free state schooling and at the end of the century there were still more girls than boys enrolled in private schools. Some middle class parents preferred the moral guardianship and genteel atmosphere, as well as the accomplishments, offered by young ladies' schools. Middle class women with expertise in the accomplishments retained their competitive edge, and those who were able to provide secondary as well as elementary education consolidated their niche in the education market place in the 1890s.<sup>82</sup>

Although private schools did not disappear from the education landscape with the advent of free state schooling, competition between the various providers intensified and many individual private schools did not survive. However, some women teachers with the appropriate cultural capital were able to find employment in state schools. In 1892 Inspector-General Hartley reported that twelve private teachers had joined the state system. Harriet Moore, who had been trained in England and Hannah Binns, who had a teachers' certificate from Victoria were employed in public schools in Adelaide. However, those who were uncertificated had more difficulty securing employment. The successful applicants joined the waiting list for appointments as provisional teachers in country schools. Sabina Sanders had been teaching for nearly five years in a small school at West Hindmarsh and Jessie Dodson had spent six years as a private teacher at New Glenelg. Both of these women were sent to isolated country schools as provisional teachers. In the following years there was a trickle of applications from private teachers to join the state system as provisional teachers.<sup>83</sup>

In the final analysis, the legislation for free schooling established the predominance of the state school system in the city as well as the country, by the end of the nineteenth century. The church systems consolidated their places by co-opting aspects of state school curricula and organisation. Women teachers slowly colonised Lutheran schools but the Catholic system closed to all but those who were prepared to take up both a religious and teaching vocation. It became increasingly difficult for working class women to generate income by teaching as the education landscape changed. However, middle class women teachers continued to enter the expanding state school system and they also maintained their niches as private teachers.

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<sup>82</sup> Miller, *Long Division*, p. 69. See advertisements for young ladies' schools in Adelaide and in the country, *Register*, 15 January 1892, 22 January 1895, 4 January 1900.

<sup>83</sup> Cost etc of the Education Department, SAPP 1893, no. 168, p. 1; Hannah Binns to Inspector-General Hartley, 28 September 1891, GRG 18/3/1891/1651; Harriet Moore to Inspector-General Hartley, 19 February 1892, GRG 18/3/1892/553; Sabina Sanders to Inspector-General Hartley, March 1892, GRG 18/3/1892/778; Jessie Dodson to Inspector-General Hartley, December 1892, GRG 18/3/1892/2624.

## 'New Women' in private schools

In the 1890s significant changes were also evident in secondary and higher education in the colony. The Advanced School for Girls had secured its reputation for academic excellence in secondary education with successes in the University examinations. There was also a cohort of prestigious young ladies' schools successfully preparing girls for university entrance. Yet very few middle class families completely eschewed the accomplishments for their daughters, so most young ladies' schools catered for all ages and offered an extensive curriculum to maintain their economic viability.

The traditional accomplishments of music and art had also become subject to credentialism in the late nineteenth century and this was reflected in the young ladies' schools. The Adelaide College of Music led the way in re-orienting music teaching towards external examinations and, when the Elder Conservatorium of Music was established at the University in 1898, it absorbed the staff and students of the Adelaide College.<sup>84</sup> The School of Design, conducted by H P Gill was affiliated with the English institution in South Kensington, as was its main competitor, James Ashton's Academy of Arts. As many as 200 pupils a week attended Ashton's studio and he 'made much of his pupils' successes at examinations for certificates of South Kensington, at the Royal Society of Arts in London, and the Royal Drawing Society'.<sup>85</sup> In turn those certificates were used by women to increase their bargaining power as teachers.

The careers of Mary Giles and her daughter Eleanor illustrate ways in which teaching families in young ladies' schools accommodated the increasing credentialism in the accomplishments in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, as well as the other state sponsored changes in education. Eleanor's reminiscences also provide insights into their private lives as independent women.

Mary Giles was a gifted musician and had received a thorough education in the accomplishments 'in order to be independent and earn her own living.' Her brother paid for her education as her father had died when she was young. Prior to her marriage in 1876, Mary had been a daily governess in several young ladies' academies. She also taught English and music to the children of several families, 'among them those of Archdeacon Farr, of St Peters College.'<sup>86</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Annegrit Laubenthal, 'Music in the German Communities of South Australia' in Andrew McCredie (ed.), *From Colonel Light into the Footlights: The Performing Arts in South Australia from 1836 to the Present*, Pagel Books Pty Ltd, Adelaide, 1988, p. 324.

<sup>85</sup> Neville Edward Weston, 'The Professional Training of Artists in Australia, 1861-1963, with Special Reference to the South Australian Model', Ph.D. thesis, University of Adelaide, 1991, pp. 146, 168-170, 185-186.

<sup>86</sup> Eleanor S. Giles Reminiscences, D5879(L), MLSA, pp. 1-2.

Apparently Mary was 'a born teacher and loved the work until the end of her days.' Within a year of her marriage to Christopher Giles, a clerk at the General Post Office, she had returned to teaching and opened a school at their home in Walkerville. The children of several prominent Anglican families attended 'Olive House' in the late 1870s and early 1880s. Mary's students included two of the younger Misses Brown whose school for young ladies was mentioned earlier in this chapter. Between 1877 and 1885 Mary also gave birth to five daughters, one of whom was severely disabled. She was assisted in the house by a cook, housemaid and nursery-maid.<sup>87</sup>

The Giles family moved house twice in the late 1880s and finally rented a house in Norwood. Mary educated all of her daughters at home with the assistance of a nursery governess and supplemented by private tutors for music. She also accepted a handful of students to educate with her daughters.

Mrs Chris Giles will receive two more pupils under twelve for morning lessons in English and French; also pupils for piano and singing.<sup>88</sup>

Mary's tiny school was just two blocks from Norwood Model School with its enrolment of 1000 students and not far from Alma Loessel's private school.

By the late 1890s the girls were growing up and Mary decided to generate income with a more substantial teaching enterprise, and induct her daughters into the profession. Her daughter, Eleanor, recalled:

she knew father would never be able to provide for our future - by that I mean further education in the Arts. There were still three of us to consider, we might not marry, and at this stage many girls and women were going into offices, doing clerical work such as typing and bookkeeping, and nursing.

The first attempt was unsuccessful as the school was located too close to Rose Park state school, which by now was providing free elementary education, and too far from public transport. Then Mary 'found the very place for the new school, on Kensington Road, Norwood - "Mount View"' a house with fourteen rooms and pleasant surroundings. She advertised in the *Register* and attracted boarders from the country as well as day scholars. Mary taught the older students and Eleanor the younger children. They also gave private lessons in music.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Eleanor S. Giles Reminiscences, D5879(L), MLSA, pp. 3-5; Scales, *The Wilderness*, pp. 7, 11.

<sup>88</sup> *Register*, 9 January 1892; Eleanor S. Giles Reminiscences, D5879(L), MLSA, pp. 3-9.

<sup>89</sup> Eleanor S. Giles Reminiscences, D5879 (L), MLSA, pp. 9-12; *Register*, 19 January, 1897, 19 January 1898.

The women of the Giles family continually upgraded their teaching skills and knowledge in order to increase their bargaining power. Eleanor took lessons from Miss Lindsay in the latest developments in physical culture and then led the whole school in exercises twice a week. She also attended the Adelaide College of Music while her sisters took art lessons at James Ashton's studio. In turn they used their knowledge and credentials to specialise in the accomplishments, and to attract more students. Eleanor and Mary also attended evening lectures in music as non-matriculated students at the University. Mary also belonged to the University Shakespeare Society.<sup>90</sup>

Eleanor recorded in her reminiscences that by the end of the nineteenth century 'we were aware that the era of University examinations was with us for good.' Their advertisement in 1899 was a far cry from earlier ones.

Mrs Chris Giles - Mountview 77 & 79 Kensington Road Norwood. Pupils prepared for the University, Music and Art examinations. Classes for boys under ten. The Marryatville and Burnside Trams pass the School. There are four terms in the School Year. The Next Term will begin February 1.<sup>91</sup>

In 1900 Kindergarten classes were added to the Giles family enterprise. These advertisements reflected ways in which young ladies' schools were diversifying in order to attract students above and below the age of compulsion. By 1900 the state and church school systems had captured most of the seven to thirteen year olds.

When the lease on 'Mountview' expired, the school was closed, and the Giles family relocated to a district where Eleanor 'knew it would be impossible to get pupils.' Christopher Giles was approaching retirement age and Eleanor was intent on earning her own living. But how? 'We girls had a choice of congenial work in teaching or nursing or office work.' At the age of twenty-five she started training as a nurse but was relieved when the Matron told her she was not suited to the job. She then chose to improve her teaching skills by taking a course in 'Advanced Grade Piano Playing'.

She had other worries too. Archie, a distant cousin visited the family:

he singled me out from my sisters and made passionate love to me - And this amidst all our searchings, indecision and anxiety over our future welfare!

Archie persisted with offers of marriage until 'I told him to forget all about me. He said one word, "Why?" When I told him why, he left me in silence.'<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Eleanor S. Giles Reminiscences, D5879(L), MLSA, pp. 12-18.

<sup>91</sup> *Register*, 4 January 1899. See also *Register*, 15 January 1900.

<sup>92</sup> Eleanor S. Giles Reminiscences, D5879(L), MLSA, pp. 23-25.

Eleanor's problems were resolved when her father was 'offered the Post and Telegraph Job at Normanville', a small town south of Adelaide. The family moved to Normanville and, within a few weeks, Eleanor and Mary were giving private lessons in music and gradually attracting day scholars. After five years Christopher became the Postmaster at Aldinga and Mary set up her school at the Post Office. Eleanor branched out for a time and conducted her own school at nearby Yankalilla. As new demands were made, she upgraded her skills in order to prepare students for the various examinations. Both Mary and Eleanor continued teaching well into the twentieth century as there was sufficient demand for a genteel alternative to the local state and church schools.<sup>93</sup>

Mary and Eleanor Giles spent their professional lives as teachers in relative obscurity, especially after they moved to the country and their schools did not rank among the most prestigious in the colony. However, their agency was revealed in the ways they took advantage of opportunities for professional development; in promoting their work publicly through advertising; and in accommodating the increasing credentialism in the accomplishments of music and art. Their professional and personal networks were entwined and woman-centred. Although they were not members of the Collegiate Schools Association, they moved in the same social circles as some of the lady teachers and counted one of the activists, Mary Overbury, as a close friend. Indeed women teachers in private schools, like those in the larger state schools, spent much of their work and leisure time in the company of other women.

Although Mary and Eleanor's professional lives as members of the same family enterprise were similar, their private lives as independent women took contrasting paths, neither of which reflected the socially constructed norms for middle class women at the turn of the century.

Mary Giles had combined marriage and motherhood and teaching as an income generating activity in an era when they were being constructed as oppositional. If she had been teaching in the mid-nineteenth century, there would have been nothing untoward about her presence in the education marketplace. As the earlier chapters of this thesis showed, married women were productive members of families. They contributed their cultural capital, labour and earnings as teachers to a common fund that supported the family. Jane Hillier, for example, had established her young ladies' school soon after she arrived in the colony with her husband and four young children. And Mary Bassett, Hannah Turner and Mary Ann Cawthorne had conducted their own licensed schools in the 1850s and 1860s when marriage was no barrier to women's employment in the state school system. In the

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<sup>93</sup> Eleanor S. Giles *Reminiscences*, D5879(L), MLSA, pp. 25-50.

late nineteenth century, however, the numbers of married women in paid employment fell markedly as home and workplace separated with changes in the economic and political infrastructure of the colony. In the occupation of teaching, the state had been instrumental in fostering the sexual division of labour in teaching families as the norm, and married women had all but disappeared from state schools. By 1900 most married women's work was unpaid and focused on the home and family. Marriage and motherhood had been constructed as a full-time vocation. Mary Giles' decision to continue her teaching career after marriage thus stands out against the socially constructed norm of married women's dependency.

Mary retained her autonomy as a married woman but her career path as a teacher had to be negotiated with other family members and she did not always win these discussions. Indeed, it was Christopher Giles' decision to relocate to the district where there were so few pupils which meant that Mary and Eleanor were unable to teach for a time. In 1913 Mary actually left the family home at Aldinga and returned to Adelaide to take over the Misses Stenhouse's school. Eleanor opposed this venture as she thought the school would be unprofitable. (She was correct and the school closed in 1915.) However, it seems that Christopher understood Mary's desire to be useful and independent as a teacher. In her reminiscences, Eleanor wrote that 'Father never went against Mother in any of her wishes and ambitions, knowing that teaching was her life-work.'<sup>94</sup>

Eleanor Giles also made teaching her life-work but it was her decision not to marry which set her apart from the majority of women at the turn of the century. The last chapter showed that the late nineteenth century was a period of heightened expectations about companionate marriage and, with the expansion of waged labour, middle class single women were achieving sufficient economic independence to make marriage a choice rather than an economic necessity. Two of Eleanor's sisters did marry and the family also supported Eleanor's alternate life-course. She was one of many women teachers in private schools who opted to marry later in life or not at all. Indeed the significant feature of this generation of women teachers in private schools, which differentiated them from their predecessors, was their tendency to remain single. Among the women who have featured in this chapter, none of the Misses Brown married, nor did Alma Loessel. They joined those from the state school system, and other professions who opted to negotiate their private lives as single women, and they were also identified as members of the group of 'new women'.

As the debate about the 'Woman Question' intensified, the new women attracted a mixture of endorsement and critique. Academic successes at the Advanced School were applauded,

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<sup>94</sup> Eleanor S. Giles Reminiscences, D5879(L), MLSA, pp. 12, 27-50.

as were the first women graduates of the University. Edith Dornwell, the first graduate, had been educated at the Grote Street Model Schools during Jane Stanes' and Lavinia Seabrooke's tenure and won a bursary to the Advanced School. When she graduated in 1885 there was public acclaim for her success. She then returned to the Advanced School as a teacher.<sup>95</sup> Similarly, the first medical graduate, Laura Fowler, was feted in an editorial in the *Register*:

We have no doubt that Miss Fowler will be the first of a long line of women graduates in the Medical School here, many of whom will make the practice of their profession their life-work.<sup>96</sup>

On the other hand, opposition to the new women was evident in the *Observer*. In 1888, for example, an article addressed the issue of 'woman's ambition'. The 'young lady in town whose highest ambition is to make a brilliant marriage' was applauded and teaching was also seen as the most respectable occupation for 'the girl who for want of means is bound to earn her own livelihood.' But those who chose teaching to satisfy personal ambition were an entirely different matter:

Those whose minds soar in different directions to matrimony fix their hopes upon becoming proficient in music, painting and sculpture and not a few are deeply fascinated by the positions of high-school mistresses. Here again is a proof that independence is the cry of hundreds of women. The position of mistress in a school gives them the liberty they so ardently crave for.<sup>97</sup>

The writer concluded that women should not work outside the home unless their economic circumstances demanded it.

The *Observer* campaigned actively against the new women in the late nineteenth century and women teachers were identified time and again as the most numerous, and the most visible, members of this group. Women in young ladies' schools, as well as those in the state school system, were challenging the gender order in their work and in their private lives as independent women. Teachers in the Advanced School, and those who conducted prestigious young ladies' schools were more visible in the public sphere than the majority of state school teachers who occupied subordinate positions in the Education Department. Their public profiles and professional status were enhanced by their advertisements for students, reports of their examination successes, and annual prize giving ceremonies. This critical mass of autonomous women challenged male dominance of the public sphere and their tendency to delay or reject marriage was equally unsettling. In effect, the appearance

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<sup>95</sup> Alison Mackinnon, *The New Women: Adelaide's Early Women Graduates*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986, pp. 31-36.

<sup>96</sup> *Register*, 6 February 1892; Mackinnon, *The New Women*, pp. 44-60.

<sup>97</sup> *Observer*, 1 September 1888.



of these new women evoked public responses to both validate their achievements and contain their threat to the gender order.<sup>98</sup>

## Conclusion

By 1900 the state school system was the dominant provider of elementary education in South Australia. However, the expansion of this system had been a slow and uneven process. The state gained the ascendancy in newly settled agricultural districts long before it did so in Adelaide and the larger towns where there was a significant working class population. From the mid-1880s the Catholic system rationalised its provision of schools and concentrated them in Adelaide and substantial country towns, while the Lutheran system endeavoured to provide small schools in as many country locations as possible. The advent of free state schooling prompted an influx of enrolments and by 1900 eighty per cent of children under compulsion were enrolled in state schools.

These changes in the education landscape impacted significantly on women teachers. There was a diminution of opportunities for working class women to generate income by teaching. These women were excluded from employment in the expanding state school system and, with the advent of free state schooling, lost some of their bargaining power as private teachers. A handful of German women became teachers in Lutheran schools, and the Catholic system closed to all but single women who were prepared to take up both religious and teaching vocations.

Middle class women retained their advantaged positions as the education landscape changed. Some colonised the state school system to gain qualifications and teaching experience which they subsequently transferred into private schools. Women teachers in young ladies' schools accommodated the changes in state elementary and secondary schooling without compromising the bargaining power generated by their moral guardianship of girls and their skills in the accomplishments. However, their work was subtly being brought under men's governance.

As they consolidated their positions in private schools, middle class women teachers' public profile increased in the education marketplace. They also joined the growing numbers of women who were opting to delay marriage or to remain single. By the late 1880s, women teachers had been identified as the most visible members of the group of 'new women' whose public and private lives as independent women challenged the gender

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<sup>98</sup> See, for example, *Observer*, 4 July 1891, 9 February 1895; Carol Bacchi, 'The "Woman Question" in South Australia' in Richards, *Flinders History*, pp. 416-418.

order. The emergence of this group of economically and socially autonomous women set in motion the machinery of containment in the public sphere in the late nineteenth century.

## Conclusion

When Jane Hillier staked her claim in the education marketplace in the 1830s, teaching (paid and unpaid) was one among many of the ways in which married and single women across the social spectrum contributed to the family economy. They imparted the first lessons in literacy, as well as the manners and morals which contributed to the family's cultural capital; they generated income as governesses and tutors, in dame and day schools, and in young ladies' schools. Middle class women with skills in the accomplishments were advantaged in the education marketplace. Women's work as teachers also enabled them to be 'useful and independent', that is, it contributed to their autonomy.

In the mid-nineteenth century women also colonised the Catholic and state school systems as they were established, but they were excluded from Lutheran schools. In the state system, the teaching family was co-opted as a social and economic unit to accommodate the demand for sex-segregated schooling and women's moral guardianship was central, rather than marginal, to the development of the system. Marriage and motherhood did not preclude their participation, and middle class women were able to secure niches as licensed teachers and as assistants in mid-nineteenth century state schools. The boundaries between licensed and other schools were blurred, furthermore, and women's teaching careers ranged over a variety of contexts.

From the outset, however, the status of men as household heads and principal breadwinners was upheld and protected by the state. Teaching was constructed as a life-work, a profession, in order to attract middle class men and women teachers into state schools. Both well-educated and trained teachers were accepted as members of the profession in the mid-nineteenth century but city teachers advanced their status at the expense of those in country schools.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century men's and women's places within families and in colonial society were gradually renegotiated. From the early 1870s the state fostered the sexual division of labour in teaching families, thereby marginalising married women as teachers in state schools. Teaching was thus constructed as an occupation for married men and single women and, once the state took control of training and employment in 1875, the profession became increasingly fragmented. Uncertificated teachers, most of whom were women, were denied professional status, the rural/urban dichotomy was confirmed and tensions between men and women escalated.

As had been the case in the mid-nineteenth century, the regulations and practices that constituted the late-nineteenth century state were created out of ongoing gender conflict. Women's agency in pursuing their waged work as teachers in the state school system was opposed by measures that locked them into subordinate positions and protected men's career paths. Yet the continuing demand for sex-segregated schooling had ensured niches for women as teachers of girls at all levels. Catherine Francis, headmistress of the girls' department at Norwood, secured a respected place in the state school system. She had been marginalised from the Catholic system by the Sisters of St Joseph in the 1870s but by the 1890s she was the unofficial leader of women teachers in public schools. In negotiating a vertical career path she had participated in the construction of the teaching profession. Catherine had also assumed the mantle of activism established by Jane Stanes and Lavinia Seabrooke in earlier years.

State school headmistresses were overshadowed by the women teachers in the state's only secondary school, the Advanced School for Girls. Some women utilised the state school system to acquire credentials and teaching experience which increased their bargaining power in other teaching contexts. By the turn of the century there were several ex-state school teachers competing with the Advanced School for middle class students. Both groups' professional reputations and public profiles were enhanced by their students' conspicuous success in the University examinations. These women's personal and professional networks marked them off from the state teachers in elementary schools. Furthermore, among this cohort of women teachers were graduates of the University of Adelaide. As a degree became the accepted qualification for secondary school teachers in the twentieth century, divisions widened between secondary and elementary, and private and state teachers.

The majority of women teachers in state elementary schools worked in relative obscurity. Many women spent their teaching careers in subordinate positions as assistants. Their agency was revealed in the ways they took advantage of opportunities for professional development, in promoting their work publicly through the Public Schools' Floral and Industrial Society, and in their membership of associations, societies and clubs. As their workloads intensified, friendships formed in the workplace and, through associational activity, sustained many women teachers in city schools. When economic depression descended in the 1890s, teacher recruitment slowed and class sizes in Adelaide schools increased markedly. Much of this burden fell on assistant teachers.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A.G. Austin (ed.), *The Webbs' Australian Diary, 1898*, Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, Melbourne, 1965, pp. 94-95. For discussion of the onset of the depression, see Pavla Miller, *Long Division: State Schooling in South Australian Society*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986, p. 77.

Country teachers in state schools were marginalised geographically and professionally by city teachers but they were significant members of their local communities. Head teachers and provisional teachers were also freed from gender conflict in the workplace and experienced more occupational autonomy than their colleagues in larger state schools. However, provisional teachers were the largest and most marginalised category of state school teachers. Trained teachers in city schools considered provisional teachers to be 'second-rate', and continually resisted suggestions which would enable them to qualify as members of the profession.<sup>2</sup>

Notwithstanding the blurred boundaries between the Advanced School and other prestigious private girls' schools, the education landscape had become increasingly differentiated by class and religion in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. With the advent of free state schooling in 1891, the state system absorbed eighty per cent of students under compulsion and women teachers in private schools faced increased competition for fewer students. Working class women were marginalised by the state but continued to cater for younger students, and middle class women provided a genteel alternative to large state schools and, in many cases, religious as well as secular instruction. Women teachers in young ladies' schools consolidated their bargaining power by accommodating changes in middle class girls' education, especially the increasing credentialism in the accomplishments of music and art.

The Lutheran and Catholic systems established entirely separate systems of schooling. Women religious secured their place as the principal educators of Catholic working class children in South Australia, thereby excluding lay teachers, and the Lutheran school system had begun to admit women as teachers in the late nineteenth century. Both of the church systems gradually aligned aspects of their secular instruction with that provided in state schools. These adjustments were also evident in some private schools conducted by women.

In essence, single women dominated all teaching contexts numerically by the end of the nineteenth century, the one exception being the Lutheran system. Their presence in the public sphere had been exposed by the individuation of wages and by the separation of home and workplace which accompanied the expansion of both church and state school systems. By the 1890s state school administrators had become more assertive about excluding married women as teachers. From 1895 all women teachers in provisional schools were required to resign when they married. Yet married women were still accepted at the senior levels of the Education Department: Marie Barclay, headmistress of the girls'

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<sup>2</sup> *Herald*, 16 October 1896; Kay Whitehead, 'Career Paths for Provisional Teachers in South Australia, 1875-1915', *History of Education Review*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1994, pp. 55, 58.

department at North Adelaide, married in 1896 and continued her career until her death in 1911.<sup>3</sup>

Education administrators justified single women's employment as waged workers by portraying them as nurturers, and teaching as a preparation for motherhood. Yet this discourse obscured ways in which women were challenging the gender order in the public sphere and in the choices they made about their lives as women. Although the majority of women did marry and resign their paid work as teachers, some were making a positive choice to remain single. By the 1890s the emergence of this group of economically- and socially-autonomous women was generating considerable debate about women's position in society. Indeed women teachers were identified as the vanguard of 'new women' in the late nineteenth century. While some critics bemoaned women's agency outside the domestic sphere, Catherine Helen Spence commented:

The sisterhoods and the various charitable pursuits of one class of female workers, the earnest studies of another, the various new avocations into which women are passing are all evidence of their desire to serve the community in which they live.<sup>4</sup>

Women teachers' social visibility had increased as they bolstered the status of the profession publicly, and as they participated in the associational and recreational activities of their local communities. The heyday of female philanthropy also came in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and was concomitant with married women's gradual marginalisation from income-generating labour. As economic depression descended in the 1890s middle class women had plenty of opportunities to do useful work in ministering to the poor.<sup>5</sup> However, philanthropic work posed dilemmas for women teachers. Many were involved in the fundraising activities which took place outside school hours but their daily employment precluded their participation in the ongoing activities which constituted much of middle class women's philanthropic work.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Education Gazette*, May 1895, p. 60, April 1896, p. 53. See also Helen Jones, *In Her Own Name: A History of Women in South Australia from 1836*, second edition, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1994, pp. 76-77.

<sup>4</sup> Catherine Helen Spence, 'Some Social Aspects of Colonial Life', reprinted in Helen Thomson (ed.), *Catherine Helen Spence*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1987, p. 536.

<sup>5</sup> For a general discussion of women's charity work in Adelaide, see Jones, *In Her Own Name*, pp. 81-106, 194; Margaret Allen, Mary Hutchison and Alison Mackinnon, *Fresh Evidence, New Witnesses: Finding Women's History*, South Australian Government Printer, Netley, 1989, pp. 176-179. For a British perspective, see Leonore Davidoff, *Worlds Between: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1995, p. 240; M. Jeanne Peterson, *Family, Love and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1989, pp. 137-138.

<sup>6</sup> Matilda Evans made this point several times in her fiction. See chapter three. Visitors to the Female Refuge always attended during weekdays. See Matron's Diary, South Australian Female Refuge, 1881-4, D6398(L), MLSA; See also Elizabeth Scholefield, 'The Ladies Kindly Visited: Women and Philanthropy in Kensington and Norwood, South Australia in the Nineteenth Century', *Hons History*, University of Adelaide, 1981, pp. 31, 43.

Women's involvement in social and philanthropic activity was countenanced so long as it did not encroach on men's privileges. Leonore Davidoff notes that in Britain 'when women attempted to enforce a set of moral values upon men of their own status group, as in late nineteenth century reform or social purity campaigns, these men became uncomfortable and restive.'<sup>7</sup> In South Australia there had been a long tradition of temperance reform. Indeed Matilda Evans canvassed the temperance cause in many novels and they found a ready market as Sunday School prizes. However, the movement escalated with the formation of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in 1886. Within three years there were twenty-three branches scattered throughout the colony and a total membership of more than 1000 women. Mary George, formerly a private teacher, was the paid secretary of the union and Mary Mackay was a stalwart of the Mount Gambier branch. It is likely that women teachers were well represented in many other branches.<sup>8</sup> The Woman's Christian Temperance Union played a prominent role not only in moral reform but also in late nineteenth century colonial politics.

### **Teachers and political activity**

At the turn of the century middle class women still had access to colonial politicians and administrators through their family, social and church networks as had been the case in earlier years. They were also more openly involved in politics. The last chapter showed that women teachers in private schools and women religious had petitioned the Parliament in 1891 when their livelihoods were threatened by the introduction of free state schooling. However, their concerns were marginalised and it was argument about religious instruction that dominated public debates. Furthermore, it does not seem that the women teachers' cause was discussed by women who were politically active in other spheres at the time, especially in the campaign for women's suffrage.

Between 1886 and 1894 there were seven attempts to pass suffrage legislation in the South Australian Parliament and a concerted effort by women and some men to garner support in the community. The campaign began officially with the formation of the Women's Suffrage League in 1888. Most of the women activists lived in Adelaide and were drawn from nonconformist churches. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Working Women's Trade Union were also very active participants. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union played a vital role in extending the campaign beyond the city although

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<sup>7</sup> Davidoff, *Worlds Between*, p. 254.

<sup>8</sup> Jones, *In Her Own Name*, pp. 199-200; *Observer*, 21 February 1920; Women teachers were strongly represented in the WCTU in America. See Jonathon Zimmerman, 'The Dilemma of Miss Jolly: Scientific Temperance and Teacher Professionalism, 1882-1904', *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 4, 1994, pp. 420-421.

League leaders, especially Mary Lee, also travelled widely and addressed meetings in many country towns. Between 1888 and 1894 several petitions in favour of women's suffrage were also presented to the Parliament. The largest of these was signed by 11,600 people between April and August 1894. The Suffrage Bill was passed through both Houses of Parliament in late December 1894.<sup>9</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain the degree of women teachers' support and involvement in the suffrage campaign. Among private teachers, Annie Montgomerie Martin was an activist and a foundation councillor of the Women's Suffrage League. She also joined a delegation to the Premier in 1891. Mary George, the secretary of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, was also a member of the Women's Suffrage League and it is likely that women teachers supported the campaign through their membership of the WCTU.<sup>10</sup> However, women state school teachers' views on this issue must remain a matter of speculation, for their conditions of employment precluded their active participation in politics. The regulations stated:

Teachers are enjoined not to take part in political affairs, otherwise than by the exercise of the franchise, and are requested to refrain from any interference with local questions which might bring them into collision with the residents in the neighbourhood.<sup>11</sup>

Teachers were not even allowed to act as newspaper correspondents, lest they become embroiled in local disputes.

Several women teachers were signatories on the largest suffrage petition presented to the Parliament. They included Mary Mackay and Elsie Birks, who have featured earlier in this thesis.<sup>12</sup> Although Jane Doudy (nee Stanes) was not among the signatories, in 1889 she had publicly stated her support for the cause in a letter to the *Advertiser*. She had complained that women teachers in state schools were being treated unfairly and were breaking down from overwork. She added:

There is one thing they can do and I hope will do, strengthen in every way possible the hands of Dr Stirling and those associated with him, in trying to have the suffrage extended to women. When women have a voice in determining who will represent them in Parliament many a wrong will be righted which is now a scandal to the community.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Jones, *In Her Own Name*, pp. 80-82, 137-167.

<sup>10</sup> Jones, *In Her Own Name*, pp. 116-117.

<sup>11</sup> Education Regulations, 1885, SAPP 1885, no. 34, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Other women teachers included Annie Jacob (but not her more well known sister Caroline), Jessie Goldney, Emmeline McDougall, Eliza Kelsey, Harriet Tupper, Emma Leslie, Louise and Mary Anne Tilly, Mabel Monk and Eliza Hammence.

<sup>13</sup> *Advertiser*, 3 October 1889. See chapter five for other details of this letter and Inspector-General Hartley's private responses to it. The same arguments in favour of women's suffrage were advanced by the Victorian Lady Teachers' Association. See Marjorie Theobald's very recently published, *Knowing Women: Origins of Women's Education in Nineteenth-Century Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1996, pp. 164-165.



Although women teachers in state schools could not openly take part in colonial politics, their activism within the South Australian Teachers' Association had wider ramifications. Catherine Francis registered her concerns about women's workloads in 1888 and 1896 when she presented papers about sewing and the results examinations to well attended meetings.

Allusion was made to the anxiety of the teacher, and the time, patience and energy needed to secure good results at the annual examination ... The sewing was an endless source of anxiety, both to teacher and pupil; in fact this heavy task was not thoroughly understood, especially by male teachers.<sup>14</sup>

Reports of both papers were published in the Adelaide press. In 1888 this prompted agitation for the appointment of a woman inspector. One correspondent contended that 'women ought to have the same plums as men ... women need the suffrage in order that they may obtain fair consideration in the schools and other public institutions.'<sup>15</sup> As a state school teacher Catherine could not openly work for this cause but this exposing of women teachers' working conditions was timely, following as it did the inauguration of the Women's Suffrage League three months earlier.

In fact, women were appointed at senior levels in a number of government and semi-government institutions in the years following the suffrage legislation. Thus the first generation of new women achieved a higher public profile and increased opportunities to influence political processes.<sup>16</sup> Yet there was an equally vehement backlash against the new women in some sections of the press and in the Education Department. Indeed, the appointment of the first woman inspector in 1897 exposed the longstanding tensions between men and women teachers in state schools, and the conflict was played out publicly in the newly-formed South Australian Public Teachers Union.

The successful formation of the teachers' union in Victoria had prompted South Australian teachers to establish a similar representative body. Members of the Old Scholars' Association of the Training College organised the inaugural conference of the South Australian Public School Teachers Union in September 1896. (Kate Catlow was a member of the organising committee.) More than two hundred teachers attended the three-day conference and social gatherings, including a garden party at Government House. The

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<sup>14</sup> *Education Gazette*, October 1888, p. 80; *Observer*, 8 September 1888; 9 May 1896, 20 June 1896, South Australian Teachers Association Minute Book, 1890-1897, SRG 74, MLSA.

<sup>15</sup> *Register*, 11 September 1888.

<sup>16</sup> Jones, *In Her Own Name*, pp. 203-208.

whole event was overshadowed, however, by the accidental death of Inspector-General Hartley two weeks earlier.<sup>17</sup>

A board of three inspectors was appointed in January 1897 to replace Hartley. This created vacancies for two new inspectors and, at the same time as he appointed the board, the Minister of Education, J H Cockburn, announced that one of the inspectors' positions would be allocated to a woman. Cockburn had been one of the most vocal campaigners in favour of women's suffrage among Parliamentarians.<sup>18</sup>

Men teachers responded immediately with a deputation to the Minister expressing their opposition to the proposal. Some days later their objections were made public at a special meeting of the Adelaide Teachers' Association.<sup>19</sup> The meeting began with an altercation about the presence of reporters in the audience. Catherine Francis, headmistress of Norwood, argued successfully that they be admitted. Then she proposed the motion: 'That the appointment of a lady inspector is viewed with favour by teachers in the city and suburbs.' In support of her stance she pointed out that the majority of state school teachers were women and that they undertook the same training and work as men. She also stated that 'Ladies had come to the front so rapidly that they were proved to be quite competent to take part in making their own laws, educational or otherwise.'<sup>20</sup> William West, headmaster of Norwood, led the opposition. He stated that there would not be enough suitable work, that is inspecting sewing and kindergarten classes, to occupy a lady. He noted as well that headmistresses had all but disappeared from state schools and he thought it would be inappropriate to promote an assistant to the rank of inspector. However, when he revealed the crux of the matter by saying that headmasters 'did not like "petticoat government"', and did not want to see the new women come along', Catherine Francis interjected, amidst laughter, 'That's just at the bottom of it.'<sup>21</sup> Although other women addressed the meeting, few of their comments were reported in the newspapers. Much of the reported discussion revolved around the points that this appointment was the inevitable, if not favourable, consequence of women's suffrage and that the Minister was determined to have his way. When the vote was taken the motion was convincingly defeated. Men's anxieties about this

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<sup>17</sup> *Education Gazette*, September 1896, p. 103, October 1896, pp. 113-120; *Register*, 13 April, 8 September, 26 September, 29 September 1896; Colin Thiele, *Grains of Mustard Seed*, Government Printer, Adelaide, 1975, pp. ix-xiv.

<sup>18</sup> SAGG, 7 January 1897, p. 3; *Education Gazette*, January 1897, p. 19; Jones, *In Her Own Name*, pp. 115-116.

<sup>19</sup> This association had formerly been known as the South Australian Teachers' Association.

<sup>20</sup> Meeting, 20 January 1897, South Australian Teachers Association Minute Book, 1890-1897, SRG 74, MLSA; *Register*, 21 January 1897.

<sup>21</sup> *Register*, 21 January 1897; *Advertiser*, 21 January 1897.

assault on their privileged positions were reflected one week later in a satirical cartoon in the *Quiz and Lantern*.<sup>22</sup>

In 1897 there were only five headmistresses and two infant mistresses remaining in state schools. The most senior woman in the Education Department was Kate Cooney, who had been promoted from assistant-in-charge to infant mistress at Flinders Street in 1880. Margaret Woodman and Marie Downing's appointments as headmistresses at Sturt Street and Flinders Street dated from 1883 and Catherine Francis had been appointed to the position at Norwood in 1887. Catherine was acknowledged as the leader among women teachers in state schools and her application for the position of inspector was sent before the aforementioned teachers' meeting. Other possible candidates included Marie Lucas (nee Barclay) and Eva Sellar from North Adelaide, and Blanche McNamara.<sup>23</sup>

The headmistress of the girls' department at Port Adelaide, Blanche McNamara, was appointed as the first woman inspector of schools in March 1897. Blanche and her sisters had been educated by the Dominican nuns in Adelaide. Two of them had joined religious teaching orders but Blanche chose a secular teaching career and became a pupil teacher in the state school system in 1875. She graduated from the Training College with a second class certificate in 1878 and worked her way up through the ranks in the girls' departments of city schools. She was appointed headmistress at Port Adelaide in 1890.<sup>24</sup>

Blanche McNamara's appointment as an inspector is difficult to explain, as the principles of promotion by seniority and merit seem to have been overturned in this case. Although her qualifications and teaching experience rendered her a suitable candidate for the position, Blanche was the most junior headmistress in the Education Department. Furthermore, men's chances of promotion to the rank of inspector were enhanced by their leadership roles in professional associations and the wider community, yet there is no evidence to suggest that Blanche had taken any previous leadership role among women teachers. Blanche was the only senior woman who had not been an activist in the Old Scholars' Association, South Australian Teachers' Association or Public Schools' Floral and Industrial Society. Unlike Catherine Francis, Blanche was not one of the high profile 'new women' activists. Could it be that Blanche McNamara was the least threatening of the

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<sup>22</sup> *Register*, 21 January 1897; *Advertiser*, 21 January 1897; *Observer*, 23 January 1897; Meeting, 20 January 1897, South Australian Teachers Association Minute Book, 1890-1897, SRG 74, MLSA; *Quiz and Lantern*, 28 January 1897.

<sup>23</sup> Catherine's application is dated 19 January. The only other application recorded in the index to correspondence came from Florence Jenkins of Sydney. There is no record of an application from the successful candidate, Blanche McNamara! See Index of Letters Received, 1892-1901, GRG 18/8/1. For the senior women's teaching records see Teachers' Classification Board and Teachers' History Sheets 1882-1960, GRG 18/167.

<sup>24</sup> Helen Northey, 'Saint Mary's Convent Schools' in Brian Dickey (ed.), *William Shakespeare's Adelaide 1860-1930*, Association of Professional Historians, Adelaide, 1992, p. 46.

possible candidates for the position of woman inspector? Her appointment merited very little attention in the press and was not mentioned at the Teachers' Union's annual conference.<sup>25</sup> In 1897 the Board of Inspectors' annual report noted:

Early in the year a new departure was made by the appointment of Miss McNamara to be inspector of schools. This lady has been many years in the service, and her good reputation has been enhanced by the skill and industry displayed since her promotion. She seems to have succeeded thoroughly both from the view of the department and of the teachers.<sup>26</sup>

Blanche McNamara's appointment has been hailed as a direct result of the suffrage and as the beginning of a new era of opportunities for women teachers in state schools.<sup>27</sup> However, the appointment of a woman to this most sought-after position in the Education Department turned out to be short-lived. Blanche died of consumption after a protracted illness in 1900 and her replacement, who was not a state school teacher, was employed for less than two years. The woman inspector's position was abandoned in September 1902.<sup>28</sup>

In sum, at the end of the nineteenth century South Australian women were openly challenging male dominance of the public sphere by engaging in politics as well as social and philanthropic activity. Although women teachers in state schools could not openly agitate for women's suffrage, they were buoyed up by this reform movement. Yet Carol Bacchi notes that the suffrage campaign was most actively opposed in situations where more women were employed in waged labour.<sup>29</sup> The preceding discussion suggests that the Education Department was a case in point. The longstanding tensions between men and women in state schools manifested themselves in the controversy surrounding the woman inspector's appointment. Although this position soon lapsed, women teachers in state schools had asserted their agency publicly as political activists and they would continue to be sustained by these achievements in an increasingly hostile climate at the beginning of the twentieth century.

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<sup>25</sup> *Observer*, 20 March 1897; *Register*, 16 March 1897. Her appointment was welcomed by the WCTU. See *Register*, 20 March 1897. The Teachers' Union did make a point of congratulating the new male inspector. See *Education Gazette*, October 1897, p. 132.

<sup>26</sup> Board of Inspectors' Report, SAPP 1897, no. 44, p. 12.

<sup>27</sup> Jones, *In Her Own Name*, pp. 78, 208.

<sup>28</sup> Helen Jones, *Nothing Seemed Impossible: Women's Education and Social Change in South Australia 1875-1915*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1985, pp. 18-21.

<sup>29</sup> Carol Bacchi, 'The "Woman Question"' in Eric Richards (ed.), *The Flinders History of South Australia: Social History*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986, p. 415.

## Teaching as women's 'life-work'

The appointment of a woman inspector actually obscured the war of attrition which had been waged against women teachers in state schools from 1875, and which intensified at the turn of the century. In 1898 the loss of several senior men teachers to the newly-established Education Department in Western Australia rejuvenated the 'problem' of attracting men of suitable character into the profession.

The loss of male teachers naturally suggests the propensity of considering how the demand for such is to be met in the future. We have but a small number of pupil teachers to supply the deficiency, and unless we offer special inducements, there will undoubtedly be a lack of the right kind of men to fill up the positions that only male teachers should occupy.<sup>30</sup>

Concomitant with this discourse was the renewal of the public complaints about the numbers of women employed as teachers in state schools.<sup>31</sup> This time, however, there was no male administrator who was prepared to publicly endorse teaching as women's work as Inspector-General Hartley had done in 1885. After his death, the carefully-nurtured professional and personal networks with senior women soon dissipated. The long-defended headmistress's position was abolished in 1900. Women's opportunities to become head teachers in country schools were also eroded in 1903 by confining their appointments to schools with less than sixty students. Both of these changes consolidated men's status at the expense of senior women teachers. Women assistants' work had been steadily intensified by more complex curricula and increasing class sizes. Women provisional teachers were completely marginalised by their lack of credentials and their geographic isolation. When one had the temerity to ask that she might teach after her marriage a note was appended to her letter: 'State that it is distinctly understood that she will continue to teach till Christmas only. Her resignation to be forwarded so as to reach this office by Dec 1, '97.' Of course men continued to receive 'special inducements' from the moment they applied for employment with the state.<sup>32</sup>

The loss of these career paths did not stem the flow of applications from women seeking employment in the state school system. Although other occupations were gradually being accessed by middle class women, teaching was still the preferred choice for many and there were long waiting lists for employment. As Catherine Francis' generation resigned or lost their positions, the mantle of activism passed to a new cohort of assistant teachers. Many of these had been taught by the first group of new women in state and private schools. The second generation of women teachers remained as intransigent as ever, pursuing their

<sup>30</sup> Board of Inspectors' Report, SAPP 1899, no. 44, p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> *Register*, 3 April 1905, 18 July 1905; *Education Gazette*, August 1904, p. 132.

<sup>32</sup> Education Regulations, SAPP 1901, no. 37, p. 13; Education Regulations, SAPP 1903, no. 92, p. 3; Mary Blizzard to Board of Inspectors, 5 July 1897, GRG 18/3/1897/1278.

teaching careers and lives as independent women, participating in public life, and in political activity through the Teachers' Union. Indeed women teachers in the early twentieth century were challenging the gender order as much as their predecessors.

In 1903 drastic reductions in all teachers' salaries and opportunities for promotion caused widespread discontent across the state school system. Men's grievances were discussed at length at the Union's annual conference but nothing was mentioned about women teachers. In fact their economic and professional situations had deteriorated even more markedly than those of men.<sup>33</sup>

The new era for women teachers' struggles dawned in August 1903, when women teachers in Adelaide schools met to form their own association with the intention of acting collectively in their specific interests. The aims of the Women Assistants' Association were:

- 1) To combine for mutual benefit and improvement.
- 2) To discuss professional subjects with the aim of helping each other.
- 3) To protect the interests of all women teachers.<sup>34</sup>

However, the fragmentation of the teaching profession was evident in the nomenclature and its practice: about half of the adult women teachers in state schools, that is those in provisional schools, were not initially included in the new organisation.

This thesis concludes at the point where the second generation of women teachers in state schools collectively and publicly set the agenda for their twentieth-century struggles as teachers and as independent women. By 1906 'lady teachers felt the time had come for righting an injustice of long standing' and at the Union's annual conference they tabled a motion demanding equal pay and promotion opportunities commensurate with those that men enjoyed. This was the first time that women teachers spoke with a collective voice at the annual conference. So unusual was the occasion that the Premier and Minister of Education, Tom Price, 'came unnoticed into the hall and listened intently throughout the address from his place on the back seat of the hall.'<sup>35</sup>

The President of the Women Assistants' Association, Lizzie Hales, proposed the motion: 'That greater inducements be offered to lady teachers to remain in the service.' Lizzie was

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<sup>33</sup> *Register*, 3 July 1903, *Education Gazette*, July 1903, p. 110. For general discussion of men teachers' dissatisfaction with the Board of Inspectors, see Thiele, *Grains of Mustard Seed*, pp. 60-76.

<sup>34</sup> *Education Gazette*, September 1903, p. 130, May 1904, p. 72. Deteriorating working conditions also prompted women's collective organisation in other states and countries. See Noeline Kyle, *Her Natural Destiny: Education of Women in New South Wales*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1986, p. 216; Harry Smaller, 'A Room of One's Own': The Early Years of the Toronto Women Teachers' Association' in Ruby Heap and Alison Prentice (eds), *Gender and Education in Ontario*, Canadian Scholars Press, Toronto, 1991, pp. 105-117; Pat Staton and Beth Light, *Speak with Their Own Voices*, Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario, Toronto, 1987, pp. 34-60.

<sup>35</sup> *SA Teachers Journal*, June 1935, p. 3; *Education Gazette*, July 1906, p. 172.

twenty-seven years old and had been educated in state schools before undertaking her pupil-teacher apprenticeship. She graduated as a trained teacher in 1901, spent a year in a country school and then transferred to Hindmarsh, where a number of the Association's activists were located. At the time of her speech, she had just transferred to Norwood.<sup>36</sup>

Lizzie began her address by marginalising complaints about women teachers' numerical dominance in the state schools and citing the American system, 'where elementary education was practically under the control of women' as a successful model of education. She did not ask for the restoration of the headmistress or inspector's positions but for more 'first assistants' in city schools and women head teachers in the country. She recalled that 'women teachers had hoped much when one of their number, Miss McNamara, was appointed an inspector, and Miss McNamara had discharged her duties with tact, judgment and common sense.' The motion was seconded by Miss Carter who argued that 'the profession of teaching' was women's work. She mixed humour with serious intent and continued:

The woman who sought work in the higher branches of the profession meant to make teaching her life-work, unless, of course, she met a man with one thousand pounds a year and a motor car. (Laughter and cheers) Teaching would be her life-work as it would be a married man's life-work, and she would pursue her calling for two reasons - because she was progressive, and because the state of her finances compelled her to do so ... Women, therefore, asked for the same remuneration as men, and demanded that they should be judged by their capability and not by their sex."<sup>37</sup>

The motion was passed at the Union conference, but the all-male executive contained this particular threat to the gender order by simply 'resolving to take no action.'<sup>38</sup>

However, the second generation of new women in state schools had found a collective voice, and were publicly staking their claim to full membership of the public sphere on the same terms as male breadwinners. Indeed, they were invoking the discourses of professionalism by claiming teaching as a life-work, and demanding vertical career paths and equivalent opportunities to those of their male colleagues. In so doing they were drawing on the legacies of many individual women besides Blanche McNamara, whose agency in pursuing their teaching careers and lives as independent women had not only contributed to the construction of the teaching profession but also challenged the gender order. This generation of new women, however, would be subject to increasingly virulent attacks from men teachers, and society generally, in the early twentieth century.

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<sup>36</sup> For Lizzie's teaching record see Teachers' Classification Board and Teachers' History Sheets 1882-1960, GRG 18/167.

<sup>37</sup> *Education Gazette*, July 1906, p. 172. Women activists later recalled this occasion and these addresses as the defining moment in the history of their struggles in the first half of the twentieth century. See Adelaide Miethke's comments in the *Register*, 7 May 1915 and Phebe Watson's comments in the *S A Teachers Journal*, June 1935, p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> *Education Gazette*, January 1907, p. 31. This became the standard way of resisting women's agency in the Teachers' Union. See Adelaide Miethke's comments in the *Register*, 7 May 1915.

This thesis has juxtaposed a narrative of structural change with biographical sketches of individual women and revealed women's agency in negotiating their teaching careers and their lives as autonomous women. In so doing I have shown that teaching, paid and unpaid, in a variety of contexts, enabled women to be both 'useful and independent.' Such was the case with Lizzie Hales. Her biography exemplifies the continuities and changes in women's work as teachers over the time frame of the thesis.

Lizzie was an assistant at Norwood from 1906 to 1911. The inspectors' comments in her teaching record indicate the ongoing tensions between men and women in this particular workplace. Lizzie was variously described as 'masterful', 'enthusiastic', and 'rather hard'. It was stated that she 'lacks tact' and 'evokes opposition'. Aside from her daily work as a teacher, she continued her studies, part-time at the University of Adelaide and in 1908 was one of the first state school teachers to complete her Bachelor of Arts degree. Her teaching experience and her impressive credentials gave her sufficient bargaining power to secure a promotion to Norwood District High School when it opened in 1911.<sup>39</sup>

The Women Assistants' Association extended its membership to all women teachers in state schools and was renamed the Women Teachers' Association in 1907. As President, Lizzie 'championed their cause and worked tremendously to better the conditions of work, remuneration and to get in touch with the girl outback.' Another woman activist recalled: 'Small, gentle, dignified, [Lizzie] proved a brilliant speaker with her quiet, convincing logic'. This perspective stands in stark contrast to the aforementioned assessments of her qualities by men. Lizzie's political activism was not confined to the Union. She was an active participant in the Women's Non-Party Political Association. Indeed, this generation of new women was challenging male dominance of the public sphere more openly, and collectively, than the previous generation.<sup>40</sup>

Lizzie resigned from the Education Department in December 1911 to marry Rudolph Greenwood, a Congregational minister. By this stage an increasingly rigid sexual division of labour had become the norm in middle class families and, with the Harvester 'family wage' judgment of 1907, was being institutionalised more widely by the state.<sup>41</sup> The Greenwoods moved to Sydney where their son, Gordon, was born. As a mother, Lizzie contributed her unpaid teaching labour and passed on her cultural capital in much the same

<sup>39</sup> For the comments in Lizzie's teaching record see Teachers' Classification Board and Teachers' History Sheets 1882-1960, GRG 18/167; For discussion about early state high schools, including Norwood, see Miller, *Long Division*, p. 137.

<sup>40</sup> *SA Teachers Journal*, June 1935, p. 3; *Education Gazette*, January 1907, p. 31; *Register*, 7 May 1915; *Advertiser*, 2 April 1935.

<sup>41</sup> Miller, *Long Division*, p. 154. For an account of the twentieth century division of labour see Kerreen Reiger, *Family Economy*, McPhee Gribble, Melbourne, 1991.



way as earlier generations of women. Gordon 'obtained his Arts degree and, under his mother's guidance, entered for Honours History. News of his distinction in the Honours degree was published the day after his mother's death.'<sup>42</sup>

However, Lizzie Greenwood also chose to continue teaching as paid work, and secured her niche in the only remaining context open to married women: the private girls' school. When Jane Hillier had chosen this life-course in the early years of white settlement, it had been common practice for married and single women to contribute their teaching labour and income to the family economy. With the individuation of wages and the restructuring of the teaching family, teaching had become single women's work. Therefore Lizzie's choice of life-course in the early twentieth century stands out against the socially-constructed norm of married women's domestic dependency. She was employed at 'Abbotsleigh', one of the most prestigious, academic girls' schools in New South Wales. With its high fees and select clientele, this corporate girls' school was a far cry from her earlier days in working class Hindmarsh. At Abbotsleigh Lizzie taught history until her death in 1935. The school's historian later recalled:

"Greenie" or "Lizzie Ann" as Mrs Greenwood was called, had been well-loved for many years, and Old Girls still cherish the memory of her small serene figure and her ready smile for everyone. She was a brilliant history teacher, approaching the subject with life, humour and imagination, but quite free of romanticism. Every year the proportion of honours results amongst her students was high. It was her practice to start each lesson with a "short test", firing the first question at the class before she reached her seat. She did her best to appear relentless when dealing with those who had neglected their homework, but the effort was rarely successful. She also taught Latin, and if any girl failed to gain the firmest grasp of its basic rules, the fault did not lie with "Greenie".<sup>43</sup>

Teaching was, after all, her life-work.

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<sup>42</sup> Lizzie died in Sydney. Her obituaries noted in particular her earlier activism on behalf of women teachers in South Australia. *SA Teachers Journal*, June 1935, p. 3; *Advertiser*, 2 April 1935; Gordon Greenwood had a distinguished academic career as a historian at Sydney University and the University of Queensland.

<sup>43</sup> Denys Burrows, *History of Abbotsleigh*, Council of Abbotsleigh, Sydney, 1968, pp. 66-67. For further discussion of Abbotsleigh, see Kyle, *Her Natural Destiny*, pp. 104, 108-109, 124.

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