"Only a Girl": Christine Frederick, Efficiency, Consumerism, and Women's Sphere.

Janice Williams Rutherford
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College
INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
"ONLY A GIRL": CHRISTINE FREDERICK, EFFICIENCY, CONSUMERISM, AND WOMAN’S SPHERE

VOLUME I

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of History

by

Janice Williams Rutherford
B.A., University of Oregon, 1963
M.A., Portland State University, 1981
August, 1996
To Franklin John Steffes
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My first thanks go to loved ones: to my husband, Frank, without whose support this dissertation would never have been completed; to my daughter, Melissa Rutherford, and my son, Wayne Rutherford, who never doubted that their mom could do this; and to my mother, Margaret M. Williams, who taught me that to be happy, one must love one’s work.

Next I want to thank my committee whose members were enormously helpful in the development of my manuscript. Under their direction, it was transformed into a dissertation. My major professor, Burl L. Noggle, allowed me the freedom to explore possibilities and offered me calm assurance as I felt my way through new territory. Robert A. Becker’s excellent editorial skills saved me from an embarrassing tendency to be verbose, and his flawless logic kept my arguments from going too far afield. Gaines M. Foster alerted me to important interpretive questions and suggested new perspectives from which to view my material. Emily Toth gave the manuscript a biographer’s close reading and offered suggestions that improved my narrative. I thank Charles J. Shindo for agreeing to read the nearly completed dissertation during the last stages of writing. Despite the gentle criticism of these good people, this work may still contain errors, omissions, and indiscretions; these are mine and mine alone. I also wish to thank Anne C. Loveland, chair of the History Department at Louisiana State University, who gave me personal support when I needed it. I am grateful
to the late Sally Hunter Graham for encouraging me to pursue women’s history.

Many informants, some of whom opened their homes and their hearts to me, shared their memories of Christine Frederick and her family. They are all listed in my bibliography, but I must express my special thanks to Jean Joyce, Christine’s only surviving child, without whose impeccable memory and tolerance for probing questions, this work would lack the humanity her stories give it.

I wish to thank the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America for a grant to help me complete my research in their collections. Louise Dougher and the volunteers at the Greenlawn-Centerport Historical Association went to great lengths to help me locate deed records. Professor Natalie A. Naylor of Hofstra University guided me to sources she has uncovered in her work on Long Island women. And I owe special thanks to Kathryn K. Conoly who handles interlibrary borrowing at Atlanta-Fulton Public Library. Through the long months of research, she provided access to many of the primary sources upon which I built my work.

All of these lovely people have contributed to my success in completing what has been at times a lonely pursuit. And all of them have my undying gratitude.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION ................................................................. iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ...................................................... iv
ABSTRACT ................................................................. vii

CHAPTER
1  INTRODUCTION ......................................................... 1
2  PROLOGUE ............................................................... 12
3  "ONLY A GIRL" .......................................................... 36
4  CONCEIVING A CAREER: SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT .... 91
5  APPLECROFT: PRESERVING THE HOME ..................... 150
6  ACCOMMODATING PROGRESSIVISM ......................... 198

VOLUME II
7  BECOMING MRS. CONSUMER .................................... 251
8  SELLING OUT MRS. CONSUMER ................................. 306
9  THE TWILIGHT OF A CAREER: FROM APPLECROFT TO LAGUNA 355
10 EPILOGUE ............................................................... 414

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY ................................................. 432
APPENDIX: CHRONOLOGY OF CHRISTINE FREDERICK'S LIFE 456
VITA ................................................................. 460

vi
ABSTRACT

Christine Frederick was a home efficiency expert who worked out of her home experiment station, Applecroft, in Greenlawn, New York, from 1910 to 1939. She advocated the application of scientific management, technology, and consumer awareness to homemaking. Frederick came of age during a time when feminism was opening a window of opportunity for middle-class, educated, white women. By the time she graduated from Northwestern University, the nineteenth-century doctrine of separate spheres was being challenged. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's critique of the single-family home had been published, the woman suffrage campaign would gain new momentum within the next few years, and women were entering professions heretofore closed to them. Although she took full advantage of these developments, Frederick recognized that most middle-class Americans still held traditional beliefs about gender roles. Fashioning a career upon the premise that woman's place was in the home, she was able to fulfill her need to succeed in the public sphere. She capitalized on trends such as technology, advertising, and consumerism while accommodating the still-prevailing view that the preservation of the home depended upon woman's remaining within it. Thus Frederick's career paradoxically helped to contract feminism's window. During the 1920s, when the first wave of feminism was receding in the face of conservative pressures, Frederick emphasized the importance of the housewife's role in
the marketplace, and advised advertisers and manufacturers on how to sell to "Mrs. Consumer."

This dissertation examines Christine Frederick's life and work in light of two twentieth-century developments. Her career as an expert on the home coincided with the rise and fall of the first wave of feminism. Although she benefited from the advances women enjoyed as a result of that movement, her work counteracted its rise and served its fall. Secondly, Frederick participated in the rise of modern technology and business through her work in the efficiency movement, the development of modern advertising, and the promotion of consumerism. Her gender created a conflict that motivated her to employ modernization to encourage women to remain in their traditional roles.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Christine MacGaffey Frederick lived and worked during a critical period for white middle-class American women, a period during which they considered new possibilities for expanding their sphere. As Christine came of age and began her career in 1912, educated women of her class faced a conflict of values. An examination of the forces that shaped her experiences as the twentieth century began might shed light on the reasons why women face similar dilemmas as the century comes to an end.

Feminist historians have been recovering women’s role in American history for the past three decades. Some have asked why the female majority of America’s middle class has not fully embraced modern feminism which advocates complete equality of men and women in both public and private arenas. Historian June Sochen concluded in 1972 that Americans resist reform if it seriously threatens the “fundamental structure of society”\(^1\). This applies to feminism, for some have feared that the ultimate goal of total equality would threaten the existing order.

Early in the twentieth century, some feminists sought change far more dramatic and controversial than mere equal suffrage; they sought to alter the organization of the home, sacred locus of the nuclear family. But the window of opportunity that they opened by beginning a public

discourse about cooperative ways to arrange domestic life was closed when Americans settled into the conservative climate of the prosperous, postwar 1920s. After a brief period during which a few educated, middle-class, white women tried to expand their world by changing the role assigned to them in the nineteenth century, they retreated in the face of conservative reaction. Although the numbers of women in the work force continued to grow, few feminist voices were heard again for nearly half a century.

This inquiry began with the idea that the home itself should yield clues to society's, indeed women's, resistance to the radical changes proposed by the early twentieth-century advocates of collective housekeeping. Did the single-family house promote inequality? Was it really a mechanism that provided a haven for men but imposed isolation on women? But to uncover the evidence necessary to assess such a hypothesis would require a lifetime of research. An examination of the literature on the American home, however, uncovered an intriguing clue to the inability of early feminists to bring about significant change in the gender roles that had been fashioned in the nineteenth century. Among the women who had enjoyed increased access to education and at least partial entrée into the public sphere, there were some who used their new-found emancipation to reinforce the old ideas about women's and men's places in society. Christine Frederick was one of these: a home efficiency expert,
advertising consultant, and consumer advocate who eagerly embraced the modernization that occurred in the wake of rapid industrialization, yet steadfastly preached the ideology of the home that had been developed in the previous century.

A disciple of the engineers and entrepreneurs who made America hum with efficiency and bustle with commerce, Christine Frederick did not join those women of her class, education, and ability who wanted equality in the public sphere. Instead she devoted her energies to making the home an efficient and well-appointed work place where women would be relieved of drudgery but would nevertheless continue to be primarily housekeepers. By founding a career on advising other women to find happiness in the efficient management of their homes, Christine illustrated the conflict many women faced, for nineteenth-century ideology prevailed even as new opportunities enabled women to become something other than traditional homemakers. Christine entered fully into the public sphere as an advertising consultant to manufacturers and advertisers who sold products to women and thus helped to define a new function for the homemaker. Women gained importance in the economy as America’s primary consumers, but most middle-class married women continued to center their lives on the private home.

The central thesis of this dissertation is that Christine Frederick’s life and work illustrate the dilemma facing educated women of the early
whether to seek professional gratification on the one hand or to adhere to the nineteenth-century ideal on the other. Christine chose to resolve the conflict by fashioning a career for herself that encouraged other women to remain homemakers. She was the product of new forces. Educated and talented, she took great interest in the traditionally male world of industry, commerce, and business. But because she was a woman who had been reared with nineteenth-century views that separated women's and men's spheres, she applied her skills and interests to serving the home. In doing so, she assumed that most women would stay home while she went out in public to spread the gospel of efficiency and consumerism. The inconsistency between what she did and what she said was the result of being caught in the crossfire between persisting old and emerging new visions for women. She tried to serve both.

Christine Frederick's name appears in several histories of technology, the home, and domesticity. These usually cast her as either a promoter of scientific management in the home or an accomplice in the selling of consumerism to the American housewife. Siegfried Giedion, the historian of mechanization, "discovered" Christine in 1948 and considered her the prototype of a group of women who applied scientific management, a system developed by Frederick Taylor to improve industrial efficiency, to the home. Nearly twenty years later, in his study of scientific management as Progressive reform, Samuel Haber referred to Christine as one of the
"feminists" who used Taylor’s ideas. During the 1970s, several writers noted Christine’s role in the efficiency movement. In *Captains of Consciousness*, a critique of advertising and consumerism, Stuart Ewen credited Christine with promoting the “ideology of the industrialized home” in order to reconcile traditional nineteenth-century values with new industrial ones. Architectural historian Gwendolyn Wright identified Christine as the “foremost evangelist of the domestic science ideology” who taught millions of other women how to manage their homes with assembly-line precision. In *The American Home*, social historian David Handlin considered Christine’s contribution to scientific management in the home important because it professionalized homemaking, but he recognized the conflict between her work and life which demonstrated “ambivalence between old and new values.” Although these scholars wrote during the decade of “women’s liberation,” only Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English noticed that the scientific management techniques Christine

---


promoted might not free women at all. Christine preached "the full managerial revolution in the home," they wrote, but since the solitary homemaker had to fill multiple roles—planner, thinker, and worker—the new scheme might actually create more work for her. Ehrenreich and English placed Christine among the Progressive era’s experts who attempted to standardize home life and child-rearing.\(^4\) English professor Martha Banta’s recent history of the disciples of scientific management identified Christine as one of the “forceful theorizers” of her time whose work placed “Taylorism” “front and center” in the discourse about improving—and saving—the home. Banta, like Handlin, recognized Christine’s ambivalence, pointing out that she portrayed herself as a traditional practitioner of domesticity on the one hand and efficient scientific manager on the other.\(^5\)

Among the many historians, sociologists, and feminists who took part in the new debate about women’s place in society during the 1970s and 1980s, several examined women’s relationship to consumerism and uncovered Christine Frederick’s part in creating the female consumer. Most were unflattering. Gwendolyn Wright called Christine a “double agent” because she helped advertisers appeal to women. Architectural historian


Dolores Hayden considered her "anti-feminist" because she was "pro-consumption," noting that her advice to advertisers included tips on appealing to female suggestibility, passivity, and feelings of inferiority. Historian Susan Strasser found Christine to be disingenuous in her support of manufacturers who wished to fix prices of consumer goods during the second and third decades of this century, arguing that her advocacy of business was not in the consumer's interest. In his 1985 history of advertising, Roland Marchand detected Christine's inconsistency; although she posed as the female consumer's advocate, he wrote, she expressed disparaging opinions about the average American woman. Glenna Matthews, historian of domesticity, cited Christine Frederick as an example of how easily corporate America "bought" professional female home experts as spokespersons for its products.6

Recent assessments of Christine's role in the rise of consumerism have not been sympathetic, either. In an essay about the home economists who worked in industry during the 1920s and 1930s, historian Carolyn Goldstein reported that professionally trained women resented Christine

Frederick because she was not trained in a home economics program. Home economists who were themselves helping manufacturers sell their wares to women feared that Christine's lack of specialized training led her to exploit women rather than to help them.\(^7\) Martha Banta writes that although Christine Frederick's homemaker replaced sentiment with efficiency, her housekeeping was done under the influence of the same ideology as that of the Victorian women who preceded her.\(^8\)

This conflict in Christine's work merits closer examination than historians have heretofore given it. Her significance to American history transcends her work as home efficiency expert or her promotion of consumerism, for she embodied the contradiction with which early twentieth-century women lived. She reflected the currents of her time, embracing technology, scientific management, modernization, and consumerism with enthusiasm. Yet she limited the ways members of her own gender could benefit from that modernization because she labored under the nineteenth-century assumption that a woman's work should be located in the home.


\(^8\)Banta, *Taylored Lives*, 239-240.
Christine Frederick has a place alongside Catharine Beecher and Charlotte Perkins Gilman in the history of the American home and woman’s role in managing it. Beecher, from 1841 until the 1870s, did much to promote the idea that women should stay at home, but that they should become trained, competent, professional workers. Gilman, on the other hand, led a campaign to broaden women’s opportunities by releasing them from the solitary caretaking of individual homes from the 1880s to the 1930s. Christine Frederick, whose most important work was done between 1910 and 1930, represented a reaction to the feminists of Gilman’s stripe, and in some ways a return to Beecher’s views. Her career helps explain why most women did not embrace the ideas of early twentieth-century feminists.

This study is confined to the experiences of one who represents a particular group whose lives, of course, did not reflect the lives of all American women. Omitted here are the experiences of early twentieth-century working-class women--many of them immigrants--who had to work to live and so could not remain at home; of African-American women who labored under racial and economic barriers that made full-time housekeeping in their own homes impossible for most; of Native American women, most of whom lived on reservations at the margins of American society; and of the many other minority groups who lived in Christine Frederick’s America. Neither does this work address the experiences of
lesbians who could not comply with the domestic ideal that recognized only heterosexual unions. But Christine Frederick identified herself as a member of the middle class, and she spoke only to white, middle-class women who shared her background, experience, prejudices, and values. She (and her influence upon other such women) are my subjects.

Christine Frederick’s exclusivity was not singular. In the nineteenth century, pioneering educator May Lyon wrote:

To this class in society would I devote, directly, all the remainder of my strength (God permitting)—not to the higher classes, not to the poor classes. This middle class contains the main springs, and main wheels, which are to move the world.⁹

Although historians now properly include in broader surveys groups who did not often appear in the political histories that dominated the field before 1960, it is still fair to say that the white middle class, rightly or wrongly, has defined the common values of American society. Warren Susman wrote in 1984 that the “story of American culture remains largely the story of [the] middle class.”¹⁰ Glenna Matthews observed that the nineteenth-century “ideology of domesticity arose in the middle class and may well

---


have been one of the principal means by which the middle class assumed a self-conscious identity. . . ."11

Christine MacGaffey Frederick sought to perpetuate that identity and dominance by teaching women to embrace modernization while remaining in the home. Her willingness to endorse the middle-class, nineteenth-century belief that women were responsible for the management of the home helped to perpetuate a conflict with which many American women still struggle.

11Matthews, "Just a Housewife," xvi.
CHAPTER 2: PROLOGUE

Every woman should imbibe, from early youth, the impression that she is in training for the discharge of the most important, the most difficult, and the most sacred and interesting duties that can possibly employ the highest intellect. . . . She who is the mother and housekeeper in a large family is the sovereign of an empire, demanding more varied cares, and involving more difficult duties, than are really exacted of her who wears a crown and professedly regulates the interests of the greatest nation on earth.¹

Catharine Beecher, 1869

Woman's true position is in her home. It is here that her highest development is attained; here is her greatest field of usefulness. Her relation to the world is as important as man’s. To her belongs the education of the young. Since so much depends on that early training, woman’s immense advantage in moral opportunity is clearly perceived.²

Christine MacGaffey (Frederick), [1902?]

Christine MacGaffey Frederick, a woman driven by the ambition to influence early twentieth-century American women by professing modernization, adhered to the basic premise of an ideology constructed in the previous century, the century into which she was born. To understand the dichotomy between her thoroughly modern espousal of certain


Progressive ideas and her insistence that women are best suited to mind the home, one must understand the nineteenth century’s view of women. A protagonist of that view was a woman whose own life revealed a similar dichotomy, a woman whose work shaped some of Christine Frederick’s ideas.

Catharine Esther Beecher was born in 1800, the eldest child of the prominent nineteenth-century Calvinist religious leader, Lyman Beecher, “the celebrated orthodox divine,” as one newspaper called him. More than anyone else in her time, though she remained single all of her life, Catharine Beecher defined the American woman’s primary role as wife, mother, and homemaker. Her remarkable career serves as fitting prologue to the equally remarkable career of her twentieth-century successor, Christine Frederick.

The Beechers, though prominent, were often short of funds, and at the age of twenty-three, Catharine opened the Hartford Female Seminary. This step marked the beginning of her lifelong work in educational reform. Nine years later, in 1832, Catharine accompanied her father to Cincinnati where he became president of Lane Theological Seminary. There, within a year of her arrival, she established the Western Female Institute. Its failure in 1837 did not deter Catharine from her mission to establish schools

---

throughout the West and to recruit young women to teach in them. For the next three decades she was indefatigable as traveler and promoter, establishing an organization to facilitate training women teachers, recruiting teachers, and speaking to scores of groups to raise money. She also wrote voluminously; most of her works dealt with education, morality, religion, and woman's role. All of her writings reveal her strong belief in woman's place as moral guardian who wields influence from the home, and it is this aspect of her work that presaged the course that Christine Frederick would take a generation after Beecher had died.

Paradoxically, while promoting the public career of education for women, Catharine Beecher also helped to define woman’s highest and best occupation as that of wife and mother, an already established axiom of nineteenth-century ideology. Catharine was born at the dawn of the century that “knew the differences between the sexes and that these differences were total and innate.” As the century advanced, American social commentators defined “true womanhood,” a state that combined several virtues—piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity—that were believed to be the mark of a “true woman.”


6This term was used by Barbara Welter in her ground breaking 1966 essay on the subject. She identified this ideology in the prescriptive
virtues to the fullest by marrying and presiding over a home. As wife and mother, she was expected to forsake ambitions she might have entertained for a career outside the domestic sphere, to offer emotional support to her husband as he pursued his work in the outside world, to oversee the religious and moral training of her family, and to preside over the work necessary to operate a home. In this role, women would realize their fullest potential. "[T]he true dignity and beauty of the female character seem to consist in a right understanding and faithful and cheerful performance of social and family duties," a contributor to *Mother's Magazine* wrote in 1846.

The rapid progress of the Industrial Revolution throughout Catharine Beecher's life precipitated the separation of spheres by gender. People had begun to fear the loss of virtue in the public arena where industrialization and commerce prevailed. The home, protected from the competition and materialism of the business world, could preserve virtue. Women would eschew the outside world in order to ensure that the values threatened by industrialization would survive.

---


9Many historians of the nineteenth century have discussed the reasons for the emergence of an ideology of the home or doctrine of two spheres.
Catharine Beecher’s work reflected the prevailing view that the public sphere was so besmirched by competition, greed, and hostility that women should not enter it, but rather provide a countervailing force to it. In 1837 she wrote that politics, for example, was so riddled with “falsehood, anger, pride, malice, revenge and every evil word and work,” that persons wishing to “maintain the peaceful, loving, and gentle spirit of Christianity” would be utterly “grieved and dismayed at the bitter and unhallowed passions” engendered by the work of politicians. Women, who were the “appointed ministers of all the gentler charities of life,” should “relinquish the attitude of a partisan” and mediate as “an advocate of peace” among men.\textsuperscript{10}

Affirming the view that men were less moral than women, Beecher wrote in 1869 that “the ballot will never be accorded [women] till benevolent and conscientious men are the majority--a millennial point far beyond our present ken.”\textsuperscript{11} Her biographer suggests that Beecher understood that women had struck a bargain. If they would “limit their participation in the society as a whole, so the pact has been described, then they could ascend


\textsuperscript{11}Beecher and Stowe, \textit{American Woman’s Home}, 468.
to total hegemony over the domestic sphere."\textsuperscript{12} Beecher articulated this understanding in 1851 when she wrote that when women are properly trained to be educators in the home, "every woman will be so profitably and so honorably employed in the appropriate duties of her peculiar profession, that the folly of enticing her into masculine employments will be deemed . . . ridiculous."\textsuperscript{13}

Thus the society in which Catharine Beecher matured placed woman firmly in the home. As a young woman, she accepted without question that it fell to her, the woman of the house, to tend to her brothers' domestic needs. Edward Beecher wrote to her from Yale, "I wish you would be very particular and very certain to have my shirts, vests, cravats and stockings washed and sent down on Monday," and "I wish the striped pantaloons I send to be lengthened as the other pair was."\textsuperscript{14} Catharine wrote in her 1841 *Treatise on Domestic Economy* and repeated in the later household manual she coauthored with her sister Harriet, *The American Woman’s Home*: "Few things are in worse taste, than for a man needlessly to busy himself in women’s work. . . ."\textsuperscript{15} She believed that fathers

\textsuperscript{12}Sklar, *Catharine Beecher*, 113.


\textsuperscript{14}Edward Beecher to Catharine Beecher, 21 June, 1822, file folder 21, Beecher-Stowe Collection.

occupied an appropriate role as parents, but they should reinforce gender roles, instructing their sons in "mechanical skill," while mothers should encourage their daughters to play with toy wash tubs and teach them to make dolls and dolls' clothes.16

As she developed her definition of woman's proper role, Catharine Beecher rejected the natural rights argument that women and men were equal. She argued instead that women were morally superior and that their influence should be different from men's. Unlike her contemporaries, Angelina and Sarah Grimké, she believed in a hierarchical relationship between the sexes. "Heaven has appointed to one sex the superior and to the other the subordinate station, and this without any reference to the character or conduct of either," she wrote in the 1830s when she was debating the Grimkés on women's participation in the abolition movement.17 Woman should exert her moral authority within her sphere. 

*Woman's Home*, 229.


17Beecher, *Essay on Slavery*, 99. The Grimké sisters, prominent abolitionists, were members of a significant minority of nineteenth-century women who fueled the woman movement by arguing that women and men were equal. In Angelina's published letters to Catharine Beecher, she refuted Beecher's argument that woman's place was properly dependent. "I cannot refrain from pronouncing this sentiment as beneath the dignity of any woman who names the name of Christ," she wrote. She argued that depending upon chivalry and gallantry were "silly insipidities" insulting to the "true glory" of "womanhood." Grimké attacked the prevailing ideology that Beecher espoused: "By this doctrine, man has been converted into the warrior and clothed with sternness, and those other kindred qualities, . . . whilst woman has been taught to lean upon an arm of flesh, to sit as a doll,
“Instead of rushing into the political arena to join in the scramble for office, or attempting to wedge into the over-crowded learned professions of man,” she lectured, “let woman raise and dignify her own profession, and endow posts of honor and emolument in it, that are suited to the character and duties of her sex. . . .”

For Beecher the home was the primary arena within which woman “dignified her own profession.” Within “the domestic and social circle” she could do her moral duty and instill Christian values without the risk of facing the conflict within which men worked “in the boundaries of his sphere.” If woman remained in the home (or in the schoolroom), she could wield gentle influence over men. If she emerged from this domestic sphere, woman would not only lose influence, but also “the sacred protection of religion.” If she were to become combative or competitive like men, she would be thrown “out of her appropriate sphere.” Beecher explained this view in 1841:

In this country, it is established, both by opinion and by practice, that women have an equal interest in all social and civil concerns; that no domestic, civil, or political, institution, is right, that sacrifices her interest to promote that of the other sex. But in order to secure her . . . to be admired for her personal charms. . . .” See A[ngelina] E. Grimké, Letters to Catharine E. Beecher in Reply to An Essay on Slavery and Abolition (1838; reprint, Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 107, 116.


19Beecher, Essay on Slavery, 100-102.
the more firmly in all these privileges, it is decided, that, in the
domestic relation, she take a subordinate station, and that, in civil and
political concerns, her interest be intrusted to the other sex, without
her taking any part in voting, or in making and administering laws.\textsuperscript{20}

Woman, then, had "a superior influence" in matters of education,
religion, and morals. Within the home, she was responsible for the mood
of the household. In the ideal family, everyone in the household
"experienced a peaceful and invigorating influence, as soon as they entered
the sphere illumined by her smile and sustained by her cheering kindness
and sympathy.\textsuperscript{21} It was the duty of the mother to obey the father (indeed,
she was to set an example of obedience for the children), and the
performance of this duty would ennoble and elevate her.\textsuperscript{22}

Woman was responsible not only for moral rectitude and cheer, but
also for the physical maintenance of the home. In this capacity, the wife
and mother should "meet [her] daily crosses with . . . a cheerful
temper. . . ." Housekeeping skills were very important, and Beecher
believed that all young girls must be trained well in them. "If parents wish
their daughters to grow up with good domestic habits, they should have, as
one means of securing this result, a neat and cheerful kitchen.\textsuperscript{23} Not only

\textsuperscript{20}Beecher, \textit{Treatise}, 4.

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., 9, 134.

\textsuperscript{22}Beecher and Stowe, \textit{American Woman's Home}, 203-204.

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid., 214, 371.
were housekeeping duties important, but they were so well fitted to
woman's nature that the proper performance of them benefited her health:

God made woman so that her health and comfort are best promoted
by doing the work she is appointed to perform. The tending of
children, the house-work of a family, duly combined with its sedentary
pursuits, all tend to strengthen and develop those central muscles of
the body that hold its most important organs in their place.\(^\text{24}\)

Even after Beecher began to emphasize what she saw as her life's
work, the recruiting and training of women to teach school, she never lost
sight of the basic assumption that women's ordained profession was
domestic. As a single woman, she promoted the field of education as an
appropriate extension of the domestic sphere for women who did not marry
and rear children. But even single women should form families, she
suggested. In a plan she outlined for women's universities, for example,
she wrote that the principal and associate principal of the elementary
section could "establish a family, consisting of the two, who would take
the place of parents to several adopted orphans and to several pay-pupils
whose parents . . . would relinquish the care of their children." The college
professors could likewise form families under the leadership of those who
would conduct the "domestic training in the college."\(^\text{25}\) Beecher suggested

\(^{24}\text{[Catharine Beecher], "Woman's Profession Dishonored," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, November, 1864, 768.}\)

in many of her writings that single women could make homes by adopting orphans.26

Yet marriage was sacred and remained for Beecher the preferred state for American women. At the age of seventy, she wrote an urgent letter to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, trying to dissuade Stanton from speaking out in favor of divorce in the wake of the scandalous McFarland-Richardson case. The “family state,” she told Stanton, was being undermined and laws that “sustain” it should be upheld at all costs. Beecher believed that proven adultery was the only valid ground for divorce. Although drunkenness and abuse, she admitted, were reasons enough to permit a woman to separate from her husband, neither party should be allowed to remarry should this occur. She begged Stanton to be “very cautious and guarded” regarding this matter in an upcoming lecture.27 Not only was marriage sacred to

26See, for example, Beecher and Stowe, American Woman’s Home, 204, 451-452.

27Beecher, of course, was aware that Stanton was in favor of divorce reform. Stanton had spoken out on other divorce cases in the 1860s and she always defended a woman’s right to leave a bad marriage. In the McFarland-Richardson case, Abby Sage McFarland had divorced her dissolute husband and had begun to see another man, Albert Richardson. Daniel McFarland shot Richardson, who then married Abby on his deathbed. Ironically, Catharine’s brother, Henry Ward Beecher, performed the nuptials. McFarland was acquitted on an insanity plea, and Abby was roundly criticized. Stanton wrote afterwards, “I rejoice over every slave that escapes from a discordant marriage.” Elizabeth Griffith, In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 159. Beecher’s letter to Stanton, 16 May 1870, is in the Harper Collection, HM 10546, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California (hereafter cited as the Huntington Library).
Catharine Beecher, but like most nineteenth-century writers, she portrayed domestic life as serene and blissful. While staying at her sister Harriet's home in 1837, she wrote a description of the happy scene to friends:

*I wish you could just step across our garden into [Harriet's] little box & go up stairs into a little upper verandah & there you will see a little swing cradle suspended and at one end sits little Harriet playing, who looks up with bright blue eyes & an ever ready smile--a fat, easy, plump, quiet little puss. At the other end lies little Elisa--smaller, more delicate, & quietly sucking her thumb. . . . Harriet sits by darning stockings & looking rather thin & worn. Mr. Stowe is in his little study busy with his books. Anne--the mainstay is in the kitchen alternate nurse, cook & chambermaid. They live very snugly & have but little work to do compared with most families, & have as great a share of domestic enjoyment as ordinarily falls to the lot of married people who are entirely satisfied with each other.*

The ideal notwithstanding, Beecher had to create a role within a role for the single woman. "Generally speaking there seems to be no very extensive sphere of usefulness for a single woman but that which can be found in the limits of a school-room," she wrote to her father after her own plans to marry were dashed by the death of her fiancé. Her argument that it was woman's peculiar moral duty to educate the young allowed her to include the school in the domestic sphere. This concept led her to enlarge her goals and to claim that women would redeem the nation

---


through moral instruction to the young. Eventually, she would write that woman’s profession was threefold: teacher, health keeper, and homemaker.

In Catharine Beecher’s early educational programs at the Hartford Female Seminary, housekeeping was incorporated into school life. The girls were expected to keep their own rooms tidy and to mend their clothes. By the time that she wrote her first complete housekeeping manual, Beecher had decided that domestic training should be taught in girls’ schools as part of the curriculum, too. She shared the widespread assumption that all women are naturally destined to become homemakers, while men might choose from a variety of occupations. “[A] housekeeper’s business is not, like that of the other sex, limited to a particular department, for which previous preparation is made.”

---

30 Sklar, *Catharine Beecher*, 95-97. This idea flows from what Linda Kerber identified as “Republican Motherhood,” that is, endowing women, after the American Revolution, with the important task of educating virtuous young citizens to build the new republic. The difference between Kerber’s republican women and Beecher’s female educators was that the earlier women subscribed to the belief in equality based on the natural rights theory and Beecher saw women as morally superior to men. See Linda Kerber, “The Republican Mother” in, *Women’s America: Refocusing the Past*, ed. Linda K. Kerber and Jane Sherron De Hart, 3rd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 87-95.


32 Catalogue of the Officers, Teachers, and Pupils of the Hartford Female Seminary, Summer 1828, 7-11, 14, file folder 320, Beecher-Stowe Collection.

should be trained for their job, she argued that intellectual activity should be secondary to domestic employment until a girl reached the age of 14. Daughters, not servants, should do the dusting, sweeping, “clear starching,” and “nice cooking” at home. “[M]any young ladies, who can tell how to make oxygen and hydrogen, and discuss questions of Philosophy or Political Economy, do not know how to properly make a bed and sweep a room. . . .,” she wrote disapprovingly.\(^3\)

Most mid-nineteenth-century mothers, Beecher believed, were not prepared to teach their daughters all the complexities of housekeeping. Girls would respect domestic economy as an important field of learning if it were taught properly in the schools, she argued.\(^3\) She feared that woman’s sacred duty was being dishonored because so many young women did not know how to manage a home, and the servants available after the onset of the Industrial Revolution were primarily immigrants who did not know how to keep house by American standards.\(^3\) “It is generally assumed . . .,” she wrote, “that a housekeeper’s business and cares are contracted and trivial; and that the proper discharge of her duties demands far less expansion of mind and vigor of intellect than the pursuits of the

\(^3\)Beecher, *Treatise*, 46.

\(^3\)Ibid., 41-47.

other sex." Beecher wanted to correct this assumption by elevating homemaking. If women’s work were “elevated to an honorable and remunerative science and profession, by the same methods that men have taken to elevate their various professions,” she believed, American women would be much happier. “[A] woman who has charge of a large household should regard her duties as dignified, important and difficult,” she wrote. American education, then, should “raise the science and practice of domestic economy to its appropriate place, as a regular study in female seminaries.” Housekeeping was as worthy of professors, lectureships, and “scientific treatment” as any occupation held by men.

The elevation of homemaking was a dominant theme in Beecher’s arguments for domestic education. Since society did not value homemaking, she said, women were drawn away from it. Men were leaving their “comfortless,” uncared-for homes to go to men’s clubs. Thus deserted, she cautioned, women would seek clubs, too. Furthermore,


38 Beecher, “Address on Female Suffrage,” 205.


competent servants were not available because girls preferred factory work to domestic service which they perceived as less respectable.\textsuperscript{42}

Catharine Beecher’s biographer notes that she exerted a strong influence on American society through her housekeeping manuals, \textit{A Treatise on Domestic Economy} and \textit{The American Woman’s Home}. After publishing \textit{Treatise} in 1841, she became a recognized authority on the home. Wherever she went, she was hailed “as the heroine who had simplified and made understandable the mysterious arts of household maintenance, child rearing, gardening, cooking, cleaning, doctoring, and the dozen other responsibilities middle class women assumed to keep their children and husbands alive and well.”\textsuperscript{43} Before Beecher collected and attempted to standardize the information contained in her books on homemaking, there had been no attempt to systemize “that body of knowledge needed to run and care for a household.”\textsuperscript{44} These books contained advice on a wide variety of subjects in which she felt the American housewife should be competent. They offered advice on every aspect of the domestic sphere from concerns as decidedly homely as laundry, cleaning, and nutrition to social intercourse and etiquette to spiritual obligations such as promoting religion and giving to charity. In the


\textsuperscript{43}Sklar, \textit{Catharine Beecher}, 151-152, 263-264.

\textsuperscript{44}David P. Handlin, \textit{American Home}, 55.
later volume, Beecher emphasized the responsibility a woman had for creating a Christian home and a Christian family, but in both books, much of the information had to do with the proper care of a household.

Beecher was one of the first to advise American women to develop the "habit of system and order" in caring for their homes, or to practice efficiency as a later era would label it. The housekeeper should "devise a general plan" apportioning time to each duty, she wrote. A woman should not be "the mere sport of circumstances." She suggested a weekly schedule: Monday should be set aside for planning, Tuesday for laundry, Wednesday for ironing, and so on. Not only did Beecher advise the homemaker to manage her time, she also suggested ways to organize space. She advised that a special closet be designated for laundry supplies, a compartmentalized trunk for sewing and mending, particular nooks in the kitchen for each implement. The family itself should be organized and each member given specific duties. Beecher made it clear that ensuring system, order and regularity of habit in others was the responsibility of the housewife. "[I]f by late breakfasts, irregular hours for meals, and other hindrances of this kind, [the woman] interferes with, or refrains from promoting regular industry in, others, she is accountable to God for all the waste of time consequent on her negligence."45 The

45Beecher, Treatise, 144-153, 175.
discussion of economy in time and space was followed by suggestions for economizing on expenditure.

Beecher assumed that the wife purchased the household goods. Many women suffered from “want of judgement and good taste” in their selection of furniture and clothing, she wrote. Too many women splurged on one luxurious article and thus put the rest of their possessions to shame. On the other hand, one should never buy cheap goods. Beecher told her readers that “articles at medium prices do the best service.” She suggested a budget system, advising women to divide their expenditures into three categories: food, clothing, housing, and conveniences; education and books; and benevolence and religion. She offered as an example of managing these expenditures the story of a woman who kept track of her expenditures for one year, then showed the accounts “to her husband, and obtained his consent that the same sum should be under her control, the coming year. . . .” She advised that young girls should be taught how to purchase necessities economically, since “so many young ladies take charge of a husband’s establishment, without having had either instruction or experience in the leading duty of their station.”

Beecher provided detailed instructions for all manner of household work. She carefully described the process of washing dishes properly, for

46Beecher, Treatise, 178-181; Beecher and Stowe, American Woman’s Home, 239.
example, listing the necessary tools (swab, cloths, towels, tin tubs, draining waiter, soapdish and soap) and then enumerating each step (scraping, mixing soap, washing dishes in a particular order, rinsing, draining, wiping, and putting away). She detailed in similar fashion the minutiae of setting the table, doing the laundry, starching, ironing, and cleaning the house. Her books gave clear instruction on laying wall-to-wall carpet, varnishing furniture, and carving meat. Beecher set high standards: she admonished the housewife to see that tablecloths and napkins were always “well-starched,” that the cayenne pepper was stirred daily, and that the beds were always neatly made. “A nice housekeeper always notices the manner in which a bed is made;” she wrote, “and in some parts of the Country, it is rare to see this work properly performed.”

Of course, much of the domestic work described by Catharine Beecher in the nineteenth century was performed by servants in the middle-class household. But in recognition of the fact that it was becoming more and more difficult for such households to hire servants, Beecher provided plans for small houses in which the housewife could do all her own work. She advocated simplicity, commenting that she “hoped, that, as the science of domestic economy improves in this Country, much less money will be laid out in parlors, verandas, porticos, and entries; and the money thus saved,


48 Ibid., 352, 363.
be employed in increasing the conveniences of the kitchen, and the
healthfulness and comfort of those parts of the house most used by the
family."\textsuperscript{49} In the later volume, she featured a plan of her own design.\textsuperscript{50}
She also offered interior decorating advice, suggesting types and colors of
floor coverings, wallpapers, and upholstery and commenting on fashions in
furnishings.\textsuperscript{51}

Catharine Beecher's advice to women revealed a profound respect for
usefulness and a stern bias against wasting time. When she turned her
attention to leisure time and how it should be spent, she wrote, "As the
only legitimate object of amusement is to prepare mind and body for the
proper discharge of duty, the protracting of such as interfere with regular
employments, or induce excessive fatigue, or weary the mind, or invade the
proper hours for repose, must be sinful."\textsuperscript{52} She frowned on attending the
theater, dancing, or novel-reading for the young because these activities
were too exciting and might promote ill health. Instead, young girls should
pursue gardening, music, collecting shells and rocks, and doll-making.\textsuperscript{53}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{49}Ibid., 268-283, 338.
  \item \textsuperscript{50}Beecher and Stowe, \textit{American Woman's Home}, 25-37.
  \item \textsuperscript{51}Beecher, \textit{Treatise}, 366, 338-339, 342-343.
  \item \textsuperscript{52}Beecher and Stowe, \textit{American Woman's Home}, 287.
  \item \textsuperscript{53}Beecher, \textit{Treatise}, 252-262.
\end{itemize}
Despite her subscription to and promotion of the ideology that circumscribed a woman's field of activity, the doctrine of two spheres presented a conflict for Catharine Beecher. She had discovered early in life that she enjoyed learning, but she had to fit her love of scholarship into the prescribed mode of thinking.\footnote{Sklar, \textit{Catharine Beecher}, 51, 52.} She wrote in 1837 that "the more intelligent a woman becomes, the more she can appreciate the wisdom of that ordinance that appointed her subordinate station. . . ."\footnote{Beecher, \textit{Essay on Slavery}, 107-108.} She needed to shape her arguments for female education so that they seemed to support the separation of spheres. She wrote that women should not attend male colleges nor should they be taught by men. In Beecher's prescriptions for women's academic curricula, domestic skills always figured prominently.\footnote{Beecher, "Address on Female Suffrage," 206-209.}

Since Catharine Beecher believed that the moral responsibility for training the young fell to the female, it followed that this training should properly occur in the home. Yet there were many women--educated single women like herself and educated younger women who needed employment while anticipating marriage--who might properly step outside the home and teach in America's schools. Her crusade to recruit young women as teachers was a way to preserve the notion that women should remain in a prescribed sphere while giving them an arena from which they could exert
influence and power. For Beecher, it was a way to circumvent the conflict that the prevailing ideology presented to women of talent and ambition; she could disregard the rules that bade woman to stay home—traveling, speaking, raising funds—because she was doing so to promote women’s “true profession.”\(^5^7\) Her own life stood in sharp contrast to the ideology she espoused. “By 1847,” her biographer has written, “her life was a bundle of contradictions. She was an expert on domestic economy, but had no home of her own; she was a writer on the moral education of children, but had no children herself; she was a competent religious writer, but had never experienced conversion; and she urged young women to become teachers, but was herself not willing to teach.”\(^5^8\) Catharine Beecher’s gender was the cause of her conflict. She espoused the doctrine of separate spheres, yet she sought the power and influence available only to men under the terms of that doctrine.

Beecher’s life and work represent a dilemma for middle-class women that began in the nineteenth century and dominated much of women’s experience during the early decades of the twentieth. Vestiges of that dilemma affect us still. It was during Beecher’s mature years that a

\(^5^7\) Beecher often referred to homemaking as woman’s “true profession.” See, for example, the introduction to *American Woman’s Home*; she and Harriet write that the purpose of the book is to “elevate . . . each department of woman’s true profession. . . .” Beecher and Stowe, *American Woman’s Home*, 13.

\(^5^8\) Sklar, *Catharine Beecher*, 186.
movement for women's rights was conceived and it was during those same years that she herself helped to crystallize woman's role as guardian of the home. Beecher preached that women should remain cloistered from the world of politics, commerce and business, yet she was a fund raiser nonpareil, daring to write aggressive letters to prominent men of influence in pursuit of her educational aims. She "traveled like a candidate for political office, moving quickly from one city to another, thereby promoting a large amount of newspaper coverage of her arrivals and departures." And she exhibited vigorous entrepreneurial energy in promoting her own works. She was caught in the contradiction that was inherent in her belief in an ideology that perceived women as subordinate to men while she herself was ambitious, talented, and driven to exert power and influence. Arguing that women were best suited for training the young, Beecher was actually allowing the public world into the home. As her biographer has pointed out, if women were to educate future citizens, they were participating in the public sphere by implementing social policy.

---

59 See Beecher's letters to Nathaniel Wright, prominent Cincinnati leader during the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s, for example. Catharine Beecher to Nathaniel Wright, 29 June, 1835, box 19; 14 June, 1839, box 23; April, 1844, box 25; and 20 December, 1859, box 34, Wright Family Papers, Library of Congress.

60 Sklar, Catharine Beecher, 177.

61 See Beecher's "An Appeal to American Women" in American Woman's Home, 469, for evidence of her skill at selling.

But Catharine Beecher's legacy to her twentieth century sisters was the belief that woman's primary sphere of influence was in the home. If the nineteenth century presented a "Woman Question" by juxtaposing women's rights arguments to the ideology of domesticity, most supported the preservation of the home as a solution. Catharine Beecher argued that women, whose rightful place was in their "higher sphere," became dissatisfied because of the woman's rights conventions of the nineteenth century. She admitted that women had a valid grievance; the common perception of their duties as degrading was "absurd" and "unreasonable." But the women's movement threatened to render female education "anti-domestic," and that was going too far. Sewing shouldn't be sacrificed to mathematics, Beecher argued. The care of the home was more important than any other activity women might consider. This belief still shaped the lives of most middle-class American women five years after Catharine Beecher's death when Christine Isobel Campbell was born.

---

63 Ehrenreich and English, *For Her Own Good*, 3, 131.

CHAPTER 3: “ONLY A GIRL”

It was a bleak, chill morning on that Tuesday, February 6th, in Boston. Nevertheless, some light cast its weak illumination around the old Roxbury house in that early dawn. A man . . . held his old turnip-shaped watch in his hand to check the hour his first son and legal heir for whom he had waited so long would be born.

He was slumped down in a padded rocker in a small hideous bedroom containing a double bed. . . . On one side of the bed lay an emaciated feminine figure . . . whose name was Christine [sic]. But no attention was paid to her although she had agonized and almost died in this trying ordeal of childbirth. No matter, weren’t women supposed to suffer when they bore children? Yes, the Bible declares they should.

The hour approached 4:00 A. M. The man again rechecked his watch. How proud he would be to be the first to see his own son, his longed-for son. Would the nurse never bring in the baby? Just at that moment a sharp cry was heard, a resolute and resonant cry which clearly indicated, “I am here.”

In a few moments the nurse brought in the baby and the man eagerly stretched out his arms for the bundle. The nurse paused a moment, then folded back the blanket. “Horrors!” he cried out in disgust. “Why, it’s only a girl!”

So begins the unfinished autobiography that Christine Isobel MacGaffey Frederick\(^2\) began to write in the last year of her eighty-seven-year-long life. The knowledge of her natural father’s disappointment that February morning in 1883 when he learned that his firstborn child was a girl, coupled with the memory of her mother’s subsequent trials as an untrained Victorian gentlewoman who needed to support herself, had a

\(^1\)[Christine Frederick], “Only a Girl,” unpublished autobiographical notes, [1969], 1, file folder 9, Frederick Papers, Schlesinger Library.

\(^2\)Existing records show Christine’s middle name spelled variously as Isabel, Isabell, Isobell and Isobel. She used Isobel in her autobiography.

36
profound impact on Christine’s life. As a female child of the nineteenth century, Christine was reared to understand, as Catharine Beecher had taught, that woman’s place in life was confined to a domestic sphere. As a young adult during the first years of the twentieth century, she was to witness the enlarging and eventual breaching of that sphere. Her Victorian roots, her mother’s terrifying experience, and her modern youth were to shape her life around the conflict posed by these different perspectives.

The aging Christine recounted an exotic family history. Her grandfather, Robert Scott, had emigrated from Scotland to Missouri sometime before the Civil War. His bride-to-be, Christine Brands, had joined him in the early 1860s. Scott, a handsome young man of whom the Brands family did not approve, had captured Christine’s heart years before in Scotland. Christine and her three sisters, Isobel, Mimie, and Elizabeth, grew up in the Lowlands of Scotland. In their youth they spent time with “Robbie” Scott and his brothers, handsome blond Highlanders. According to her admiring granddaughter, recalling the tales her mother had told her, Christine Brands was a dark-eyed beauty, the object of all the Scott brothers’ affections. But she cared only for Robbie, the brother with wanderlust. When she was twenty-eight years old, after waiting many years and refusing the offers of his brother, Christine followed Robbie to America where he had established himself in St. Louis as the partner in a flourishing livery business. She packed her belongings and sailed for New
Orleans where she was detained for a time by a cholera scare. At last, she took passage on a steamboat and traveled upriver to St. Louis. Robbie met her at the wharf and they were married then and there by the boat's captain.³

The Scotts succeeded in the new world. Robbie's business provided comfort enough that Christine could be driven about St. Louis in a victoria by Sam, their black butler, and shop for delicacies in the French market. Her granddaughter remembered accompanying her on these excursions and delighting in the wares--especially the "great, luscious watermelons"--that Sam brought from the market stalls to the carriage for their inspection.⁴ By 1880, when their daughter, Mimie, was a young woman, the Scotts were able to clothe her in the best satins, velvets, and laces. By the standards of the day, they were quite well-to-do. A circuit court judge would write of them in 1888 that their "standing in the community here is of the very best."⁵

In order to demonstrate Robbie's success to the family that had discouraged their marriage, Christine took nineteen-year-old Mimie, decked

³[C. Frederick], "Only a Girl," [6-9]; Jean Joyce, interviews by the author, tape recording, Washington, DC, 14-16 September, 1994.

⁴[C. Frederick], "Only a Girl," [9]; Christine Frederick, Selling Mrs. Consumer (New York: Business Bourse, 1929), 318; Joyce, interview, 15 September, 1994.

⁵In the Matter of Christine Isabell Campbell, No. 78051, "Decree remanding child to the custody of the mother," 10 (Circuit Court, City of St. Louis, 27 December, 1888, photocopy).
in finery, to visit Scotland. On the ship, Mimie Scott met a young minister from Boston, William R. Campbell. Handsomely dressed, she presented an enticing picture to the struggling young preacher whose own family was poor. The twenty-five year old Campbell was seeking his first appointment; he had recently graduated from Andover Theological Seminary. His father, also a man of the cloth, had eked out a meager living on a rocky Vermont homestead and had provided but poorly for his family. William’s sister, Mary, remembered years later that poverty combined with fervent religious beliefs had made their childhood bleak. They were not allowed to go to the circus, she recalled, but might be given a penny to see the animals on display outside, since this would instruct them in the wonders of God’s creation.

Aboard ship, William Campbell asked Mimie to marry him. She accepted, and he followed her home to St. Louis where he formally asked for, and was granted, her hand from Robbie Scott. Soon Mimie began to have second thoughts about marrying the cool minister from New England and, during his second trip to Missouri, told him as much. Robbie Scott,

---


7Christine Frederick, “What the New Housekeeping Means to the Farm Home,” speech before the Farmers’ Institute, Decatur, Illinois, [22 February 1916], 84, file folder 10, Frederick Papers; Joyce, interview, 15 September, 1994.
whom his great-granddaughter called a “tyrannical old Scot,” told Mimie that she had given her word to a “man of the kirk” and could not take it back. By the time of their marriage, William had secured a position as pastor of the Highland Congregational Church in Boston. Thus Mimie married unwillingly and with heavy heart accompanied her new husband to Boston, where she conceived and bore him the unwanted daughter eleven months later.

The painful birth, during which Mimie was denied any medication that might have eased her agony, and her growing aversion to the man who showed such disdain for their little daughter, steeled the young mother’s determination to leave Boston as soon as she was able. “Nothing but nothing,” her daughter wrote nearly ninety years later, “would make her return to her green-eyed husband whom she had never liked and bear Henry or Paul, or any other children which her husband envisioned.”

Christine Frederick’s description of this episode, written a lifetime after she had first heard it told, conveys the resentment she still felt for her mother’s ordeal and her own rejection. The room in which she was born, she writes,

---

8 Joyce, interview, 14 September, 1994; In the Matter of Christine Isobel Campbell, “Answer of Petitioner,” 2.


10 Joyce, interview, 14 September, 1994; [C. Frederick], “Only a Girl,” 2.
was “hideous.” The floor was a “dirty yellow.” Her mother, “emaciated,” had “agonized and almost died.” Most telling is her description of her father as a man with “green snaky eyes,” a phrase she must have repeated many times to her children. Her daughter described William Campbell, whom she met many years later, as a lustful man whose “green eyes” awakened deep distrust. The memory of this story galvanized Christine Frederick’s determination to learn how to make a living and to ensure that her daughters did, as well.

Mimie and Christine spent much of the next two years, from 1883 through 1885, in St. Louis. On one occasion, they took a trip to Michigan. During the protracted visits with her parents, Mimie learned to do accounting work while helping her father. She spent enough time in St. Louis to meet her second husband, the man she would marry ten years later. Mother and child left Boston for the last time in January, 1885, when Christine was just twenty-three months old. Mimie appealed to her parents to help her extricate herself from her unhappy marriage, but Robbie Scott was not yet willing to help his daughter leave her husband permanently. Although Mimie’s mother was more sympathetic, she, too, was

11[C. Frederick], “Only a Girl,” 1, 3; Joyce, interview, 14 September, 1994.

12[C. Frederick], “Only a Girl,” 1, 3; Joyce, interview, 14 September, 1994; In the Matter of Christine Isabell Campbell, “Decree remanding child to custody of her mother,” 7.
against a divorce. Nevertheless, she arranged for Mimie to leave the country and work as a governess in Russia, and in August, 1885, Mimie took Christine to Moscow.  

While Christine Brands Scott had traveled west to shape a new life in the New World, her sisters had traveled east from their home in Scotland to become governesses in Czarist Russia. It was to these aunts that young Mimie Scott Campbell fled, seeking refuge from her unhappy marriage. Her mother had prevailed upon her sisters to find Mimie a position, and with only her two-year-old daughter as company, she made the long journey to Moscow by ship and train.

Aunts Elizabeth and Isobel had arranged for Mimie to serve as governess to the five-year-old daughter of a wealthy Russian family, the Gilinskys, whose country estate lay outside Moscow. Little Christine, however, was sent to live with Aunt Elizabeth who served as a governess

---

13[C. Frederick], “Only a Girl,” 1, 3; Joyce, interview, 14 September, 1994; C. Frederick, Selling Mrs. Consumer, 354.

14During the latter half of the nineteenth century, and until the Bolshevik revolution, many upper-class Russian families engaged English-speaking governesses. In the 1830s, a clearing-house for English governesses was established in Moscow, so great was the demand. A Scots woman served as governess to the Grand Duke Nicholas, son of Czar Nicholas I, in 1818, so the precedent for Scots governesses was well established by the time the Brands sisters went to Russia in the 1870s. Harvey Pitcher, When Miss Emmie Was in Russia: English Governesses before, during, and after the October Revolution (London: John Murray (Publishers) Ltd., 1977), 7-8, 33.

15[C. Frederick], “Only a Girl,” 4; Joyce, interview, 14 September, 1995; “Decree remanding child to custody of the mother,” 2.
in a beautiful apartment on the fashionable Нéвsky Прóспéкт in St. Petersburg. The grey rock apartment building stood in a "row of palaces and new apartments." Eighty years later, Christine could describe the double-paned windows under which she played with small toys, the high ceilings, the cream walls, and the elegant glazed tile stove. She did not attend school; a tutor who had been engaged for Aunt Elizabeth's employer's children instructed them all at home in reading, writing, French, and dance. Christine became "an avid reader" while still very young and eagerly awaited the arrival of Aunt Elizabeth's English magazines every month. She particularly enjoyed the Sherlock Holmes stories that appeared in them.¹⁶

During Christine's sojourn in St. Petersburg, she was exposed to Russian society as her Aunt Elizabeth's companion. They would go shopping in the family's carriage or "drosky" along the market streets where the stalls and shops yielded up delights like wrapped chocolates and small toys. They made frequent visits to a family named Bibekoff whose daughters became Christine's friends and whose maid liked to brush the child's long black hair. One memorable Christmas, Christine attended a party at the Bibekoffs' home where a dwarf dressed in gold dazzled her as he distributed gifts from beneath a candle-lighted golden tree. Once she played at the home of a banker whose daughter had a troupe of dancing

¹⁶[C. Frederick], "Only a Girl," 5, [34-35, 38].

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
white mice. She recalled trips to Moscow, too. Sometimes she and her mother and aunts would go into the woods outside the city for picnics, and they would pick mushrooms at Sparrow Hill.17

Easter was the most exciting time in Russia during Christine’s early childhood there. Feasts, carnivals and celebrations marked the holy days in St. Petersburg. Christine colored boiled eggs, made paper flowers, and enjoyed frolicking on the frozen Neva River during the Easter holidays. The little girl especially liked the rich puddings and cakes.18 Sometimes she would receive gifts hidden in the mysterious interiors of the beautiful china eggs set about the apartment: perfumes, dolls, and delicate work baskets.19

---

17 The British governesses who worked for the Russian upper classes were treated far better in Moscow and St. Petersburg than governesses were treated in England. They were accorded the same privileges as family members. Thus Christine’s memories of a glittering social life in St. Petersburg are plausible. Pitcher, When Miss Emmie Was in Russia, 35.

18 Pitcher refers to “tall Easter cakes” and a “special sweet cheese pyramid” in describing the special Easter foods served in Russia. Pitcher, When Miss Emmie Was in Russia, 81.

19 The details about Christine Frederick’s childhood in Russia appear in her unpublished autobiographical notes which were written the year before her death after she had suffered several strokes. While the material must be viewed critically, many of the stories were repeated by her daughter who had heard Christine recall these events years earlier, and acquaintances from her later life remember her telling of them, too. Other than court records validating the trip and the dates, however, no corroborating written evidence remains. [C. Frederick], “Only a Girl,” [32-38]; Joyce, interview, 14 September, 1994; Louise Arnold, telephone conversation with author, 13 May, 1994.
Family lore holds that Mimie's leaving William Campbell was a great scandal in Boston and that his family regarded her as a scarlet woman for many years thereafter. Court records of a bitter custody battle in the Circuit Court of the City of St. Louis during the fall and winter of 1888 reveal the animosity in the Campbell marriage. Mimie was forced to bring Christine back to the United States in order to play out a distressing drama three years after she had fled to Russia.\textsuperscript{20} The late nineteenth-century confusion surrounding the awarding of child custody had undoubtedly served as a powerful incentive for Mimie to leave the country. Although the courts had begun to reject the ancient notion that children belonged to their father and were awarding custody to the mother more and more often, it was by no means a certainty that a woman who had left a marriage would keep her children. The issue was decided by a judge in almost all states, and their decisions varied.\textsuperscript{21}

On November 15, 1888, William Campbell filed suit for divorce and for custody of his daughter in the Superior Court, Suffolk County, Massachusetts. Thirteen days later, he was granted temporary custody

\textsuperscript{20}In the Matter of Christine Isabell Campbell, No. 70851 (Circuit Court of the City of St. Louis, 7 - 27 December, 1888, photocopies).

\textsuperscript{21}By the time Mimie Scott Campbell left her husband, one out of every fourteen to sixteen marriages in the United States ended in divorce. Between 1887 and 1906, there were a total of 798,672 divorces granted in the United States. Glenda Riley, \textit{Divorce: An American Tradition} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 5, 52, 77-86, 124.
"during the pendency of" the case. Mimie was served with papers in St. Petersburg and, accompanied by one of her aunts, brought Christine to New York. Leaving the child there, Mimie and her father, who had traveled from St. Louis to be with her, went on to Boston and appeared in court. William had the matter postponed until Mimie could be forced to produce Christine. Upon advice from counsel, Mimie and Robert Scott left Boston, fearing that the court might force them to hand over the child. Back in the Scott home in St. Louis, Mimie received a copy of the order granting temporary custody of Christine to her husband. When she ignored it, William filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus in the Circuit Court of the City of St. Louis on December 7, and a trial ensued. William had not seen his daughter for three years.

Mimie responded to his petition by accusing him of an "ungovernable temper" and "crued [sic] and barbarous treatment" to both her and their daughter. She said that he had struck her, that she feared for her life, and that on one occasion, he had bound Christine, ill with a rash, to the slats of her crib, bruising and injuring her. William denied these charges, explaining that, on the advice of a physician, he had restrained the child’s arms during

---

22William R. Campbell vs. Mimie Scott Campbell, No. 75 (Superior Court, Suffolk County, Massachusetts, 28 November, 1888, photocopy in Archives, Circuit Court, Missouri).

23In the Matter of Christine Isabel! Campbell, “Decree remanding child to the custody of the mother,” 2-3.
an eczema attack. Each parent claimed that the other was an unfit
 guardian. Mimie objected to surrendering Christine’s care to William’s
 mother, who was now his housekeeper, claiming that the old woman was
 physically and mentally infirm. William countered that Mimie’s charges
 were untrue. She had deserted him, he said, and had denied him access to
 his child, even refusing his offers of monetary assistance.24

 The trial, held on December 18, 1888, was well-attended even if no
 one but the twenty-six subpoenaed witnesses appeared in the courtroom.
 Among those called was a Miss Brand [sic] whose address was the same
 as that of Mr. and Mrs. Robert R. Scott, also subpoenaed as witnesses.
 This was the aunt, probably either Elizabeth or Isobel, who had
 accompanied Mimie and Christine on the trip from Russia.25 The Honorable
 George W. Lubke held that both Mimie and William were fit parents, but
 that since the child was young and female, it would need its mother for

 24In the Matter of Christine Isobel Campbell, “Petition for the Writ of
 Habeas Corpus,” 7 December, 1888; “Return of Mimie Scott Campbell,” 10
 December, 1888; “Answer of petitioner”, 18 December, 1888. The matter
 of money raised the issue of William’s reputation for parsimony. Mimie
 claimed in her return that he had told her before Christine’s birth that if she
 could not provide clothes for the infant, they would have to depend on
 charity. Christine’s daughter remembers that years later, William Campbell
 was so frugal that he kept accounts of the cost of every carrot in his
 kitchen, and that he sliced roast beef so thin that the slices were

 25In the Matter of Christine Isobell Campbell, Subpoenaes, 14-17
 December, 1888. Her great-aunt Isobel was particularly fond of Christine
 and, according to her daughter, she left her “all she had” when she died.
 Joyce, interview, 16 September, 1994.
some time to come. Invoking the “tender years” doctrine, he awarded custody to Mimie, granting generous visitation privileges to William, visitation that would prove impracticable since William lived twelve hundred miles away.\(^{26}\)

The judge’s decision suggests a close relationship between Mimie and her six-year-old daughter and reveals something of Mimie’s character. Judge Lubke noted that she was “a refined Christian woman; that she is passionately fond of the child; that she has cared for it with a watchful eye. . . .” But he dismissed her charges that William was cruel, unfeeling, or ungenerous, giving credibility to William’s testimony, too.\(^{27}\)

Christine Frederick remembered her father’s visits to the Scott home at the time of this trial. When Campbell came to claim her, Grandfather Robbie rode shotgun at the top of the stairs, presumably to prevent Campbell from forcibly taking her away, while her father plied her with gifts. There were also tales of attempted kidnappings through bribes to servants.\(^{28}\)

Exactly eighteen months after the Missouri trial ended, the divorce that was finally granted to William Campbell by the Superior Court in

\(^{26}\)In the Matter of Christine Isabell Campbell, “Decree remanding the child to the custody of the mother,” 10-11.

\(^{27}\)Ibid., 8-10.

\(^{28}\)[C. Frederick], “Only a Girl,” 36-37; Joyce, interview, 14 September, 1994.
Suffolk County, Massachusetts became absolute. After attempting to serve Mimie with notice to appear throughout the spring and summer of 1889, the court finally granted Campbell a divorce on grounds of desertion and gave him custody of Christine in December. The decree provided that Mimie could have the child for three months out of every year, provided she keep her in the state of Massachusetts.\textsuperscript{29} In fact, Mimie Scott Campbell never complied with it.

3.2

When Christine Campbell was born, changes that would define her adult years were already well under way. Technology, industrialization, urbanization, and the rise of big business, all hallmarks of the early twentieth century, had already begun to change America. There was gas lighting, for example, as early as 1816. Thomas Edison established the first commercial electric power plant, the Edison Electric Illuminating Company’s Pearl Street power station in New York City, in 1882. Public waterworks had been a feature of the American city since the Civil War.\textsuperscript{30}

Industrial production grew tremendously during the second half of the nineteenth century. Technology had provided new machines, sources of

\textsuperscript{29}William R. Campbell vs. Mimie S. Campbell, transcript summary, 133, (Suffolk County Superior Court Department for Civil Business, Record Book, Divorces, 1890, photocopy).

power, and communication systems. Railroads that traversed the continent by the 1880s had provided the transportation for moving goods. And finance capitalism had provided the capital to fund the growth of large industrial corporations.31

When Christine was born, a cultural gap between city and country was already evident. Manufacturing aimed at non-local markets had fueled urbanization after the Civil War. And growing cities were assuming control over areas of life once governed by local custom and authority. In 1820, there had been fifty-six towns with populations between 2,500 and 25,000 and only five with populations between 27,000 and 152,000 in the United States. A mere seven percent of Americans had lived in these population centers. But by 1870, twenty-five percent of the nation’s people lived in urban areas. By 1920, more than half of the American people would live in towns and cities.32 Thus Christine Frederick had entered a world rapidly changing through technology, industry, and urbanization.

These three phenomena served as handmaidens to the rise of big business at the turn of the century. Politics served as a fourth. The


32Wiebe, Search for Order, 14-19; Handlin, American Home, 89.
election of Republican presidential candidate William McKinley in 1896 marked the beginning of a long period of government-assisted business growth in the United States. Anti-trust legislation, passed to protect people from the abuses of big business, was not scrupulously enforced. Twelve years after Christine Frederick’s birth, government stepped in to assist George Pullman in putting down a strike. Large chain stores like Woolworth’s, Grand Union, and Kroger’s emerged in the 1880s and 1890s. In 1900 the American Economic Association stated that it favored combinations.

Institutions other than government rose to serve the cause of business, too. The Harvard School of Business opened in 1908, and in 1911, established its Bureau of Business Research. Emily Fogg Mead, business educator and author of *The Place of Advertising in Modern Business*, was urging “business men to penetrate the home, break down the resistance of ordinary housewives, and ‘forget the past’ in their pursuit of profits” as early as 1901. Even museums promoted business, offering

---


special exhibits of artifacts to manufacturers who might glean design ideas from historic textiles or American Indian artifacts.\textsuperscript{36}

3.3

When Mimie’s husband voiced his disappointment at siring a girl in that dismal Boston bedroom in the winter of 1883, he was expressing hopes and desires based upon Victorian moral and social values. The infant Christine had entered a world in which most influential people still believed, as Catharine Beecher had argued, that the sexes’ spheres should be separate. Women stayed at home and men went out into the world. William Campbell had wanted a child who would carry on his work and his name. A girl, he believed, could do neither.

In fact, the spheres of Victorian men and women were not as separate as Campbell believed them to be.\textsuperscript{37} Large numbers of women joined the industrial work force at the onset of America’s industrial revolution in the early nineteenth century, even as Beecher was advising women to remain in the home.\textsuperscript{38} Still, the doctrine of two spheres was the ideal to which most middle-class white women and men subscribed when

\textsuperscript{36}Ibid., 165-170.


Christine was born. During the decade of her birth, for example, the editor of the *Popular Science Monthly* wrote that "women may make transient diversions from the sphere of activity for which they are constituted, but they are nevertheless formed and designed for maternity, the care of children, and the affairs of domestic life."³⁹

Catharine Beecher was only the most prominent among several purveyors of middle-class values who defined the domestic sphere in the nineteenth century. Others contributed to the prescriptive literature that reinforced her advice. Horace Bushnell, an evangelical religious leader of the period, thought that the home should be the "church of childhood." The editor of *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, Sarah Josepha Hale, though an outspoken advocate for women’s property rights and access to professional education, believed that women were nevertheless responsible for the sanctity of the home.⁴⁰

Nineteenth-century medical theories, based on Darwinism, provided the rationale for keeping women at home. In 1870 one physician wrote, "It was as if the Almighty in creating the female sex, had taken the uterus and built us a woman around it."⁴¹ Three years later, Dr. Edward Clarke of

---


⁴¹Quoted in Matthews, "Just a Housewife", 125.
Boston University argued in *Sex Education: or a Fair Chance for the Girls* that too much education and mental exercise would damage girls’ reproductive systems. Countering these assertions in 1875, Antoinette Brown Blackwell wrote *The Sexes Throughout Nature* in which she argued that both males and females contributed to the progress of the human being and should therefore be educated equally. Nonetheless, Clarke’s theories prevailed among the general public and promoted the notion that a woman’s worth lay in her reproductive organs.42

Yet Christine would grow to adulthood during a time when she would be forced to straddle the dividing line between full acceptance of the “woman’s sphere” and the view that women could enjoy a public professional life. By the time of her childhood, there was a mature, consolidated movement for female suffrage.43

There were other signs that white middle-class women were beginning to expand the boundaries of their world when Christine Frederick was born. For one thing, growing numbers of them were seeking and attaining higher education. In 1865, Vassar College had opened to offer a


full liberal arts curriculum to women.\footnote{Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, 	extit{Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women's Colleges from Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s} (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 28.} Ellen Swallow (later Richards) became the first woman admitted to a scientific school when she enrolled as a special student in chemistry at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1870, and fifteen years later, women were admitted to MIT as regular students.\footnote{Women in Science in Nineteenth-Century America. Catalog to exhibit. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 3. Ellen Swallow Richards had studied chemistry at Vassar and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She had wanted to teach, but there were no chemistry positions open to women in 1873, so she helped to develop a new science which eventually became known as home economics. See Ehrenreich and English, 	extit{For Her Own Good}, 136-140.} In 1893, seven years after Bryn Mawr was established, its bold new president, M. Carey Thomas, insisted on giving women the same rigorous scholarship the best colleges of the nation offered to men.\footnote{Horowitz, 	extit{Alma Mater}, 117-118.}

There were also signs of sexual polarization at the end of the nineteenth century. Temperance reformers and suffragists often held that male behavior was bad while female behavior was good. In 1890, Basil March, the fictional magazine editor in William Dean Howells's novel, \textit{A Hazard of New Fortunes}, explained the behavior of the magazine's manager to his virtuous wife as follows:

Fulkerson's standards are low; they're merely business standards; and the good that's in him is incidental and something quite apart
from his morals and methods. He's naturally a generous and right-minded creature, but life has taught him to truckle and trick, like the rest of us.\footnote{William Dean Howells, \textit{A Hazard of New Fortunes} (1890; reprint, New York: New American Library, Signet Classics, 1965), 310.}

On the other side, male writers sometimes exhibited misogynist tendencies. As historian of domesticity Glenna Matthews has pointed out, books like the Peck's Bad Boy series of the 1870s and 1880s often portrayed women as foolish and lacking in authority.\footnote{Matthews, "Just a Housewife", 82-85.}

This polarization was associated with a deep division in the underlying arguments used to further women's position within the ranks of women activists themselves. Some women turned Catharine Beecher's argument to keep women out of politics on its head, reasoning that because they were different from men, because they were the moral guardians of civilization, because they were superior in religious fervor, they should be allowed to participate in public decisions. Others, basing their arguments on natural rights thinking as Angelina Grimké had done decades earlier, asserted women's rights on the basis of equality, arguing that there were no differences between the sexes that were not culturally induced.\footnote{Matthews, "Just a Housewife", 90-91; Nancy Cott, \textit{The Grounding of Modern Feminism} (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 19-21; Aileen S. Kraditor, \textit{The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920} (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1981), 44-53.}
Nevertheless, when Christine was born, the home had acquired a special place in American society. As women took on the responsibility for maintaining moral rectitude in the nineteenth century, the home itself acquired moral value. To antebellum Americans, the private ownership of that moral, domestic haven assumed great importance; home ownership became the social ideal and the goal of millions. Walt Whitman wrote, "A man is not a whole and complete man unless he owns a house and the ground it stands on." Most mid-nineteenth-century, middle-class Americans disapproved of other living arrangements. Communitarian experiments like Brook Farm were seen as threatening to the institution of the family. Catharine Beecher had argued that even unmarried women should form single family units. Young men were advised that their primary role was to earn income enough to provide a good house for their families. Still, by Christine’s seventh birthday, most Americans could not realize the ideal. Workers could not afford a home that typically cost between $2,400 and $3,100. In 1890, fewer than half of American families owned their own homes.

\[50\text{Walt Whitman, “Decent Homes for Working-men,” quoted in Handlin, American Home, 69.}\]
\[51\text{Handlin, American Home, 71-76.}\]
\[52\text{Ibid., 54, 265.}\]
\[53\text{Keller, Affairs of State, 373.}\]
Nevertheless, the ideology of the home that Catharine Beecher had helped develop gathered strength. Late in the century, Mark Twain wrote that his house in Hartford "had a heart, and a soul, and eyes to see us with; and approvals, and solicitudes and deep sympathies; it was of us, and we were in its confidence, and lived in its grace and in the peace of its benediction. . . ." The ideology now encompassed physical properties. For example, architects might adopt the Gothic style to symbolize the religious function of the home. The formal separation of rooms designed for distinct purposes in late Victorian homes suggested civility and progress. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, as Christine Frederick grew to adolescence, the ideology of the home began to shift from an emphasis on moral rectitude to "more emphasis on comfort and consumption." This was a response to the growing importance of industry and business and merchants' need to market their products.

During Christine's childhood, most homemakers still did a good bit more hard work than the ideology implied. It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that pre-cooked or prepared foods were available to the American housewife. Until then, urban and farm wives alike had to pluck poultry, sift impurities out of flour, soak hams, and roast and grind

---


56Clark, *American Family Home*, 104.
their own coffee beans.\footnote{Strasser, \textit{Never Done}, 29.} For the affluent middle class, there was still hired domestic help, and Christine's grandparents employed six servants.\footnote{C. Frederick, \textit{Selling Mrs. Consumer}, 119-120.} But servants were not available to all; in 1880, there were 188 servants per 1000 families in New York City. By 1900, that number had been reduced to 141 servants per 1000 families.\footnote{Elizabeth Collins Cromley, \textit{Alone Together: A History of New York's Early Apartments}. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 200.}

The dominance of the ideal of a domestic sphere characterized by the ideology of the private home notwithstanding, resistance to the isolated woman's sphere appeared even as Beecher and Stowe were publishing \textit{The American Woman's Home}. In 1869 Melusina Peirce proposed a cooperative housekeeping experiment in Boston. Peirce was an educated, middle-class housewife who thought that cooperative cooking, laundry, and sewing would free women to pursue professional lives if they wished.\footnote{For a discussion of Peirce's career, see Dolores Hayden, \textit{The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities}, First MIT Press paperback ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), 67-89.} Several cooperative housekeeping experiments were attempted throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century, indicating that at least a few Americans sought an alternative to the doctrine of two spheres. The Boston Cooking School delivered meals to working class homes in the...
1880s, the Twentieth Century Food Company distributed cooked meals in New Haven in 1900, and several groups tried to centralize cooking, dining and laundry. Americans were reading Edward Bellamy’s bestseller *Looking Backward* in 1888 and many were eager to try his ideas for a cooperative, utopian system he called “Nationalism.”

Of course, since not every American family could afford a private home in the 1880s and 1890s, most city dwellers lived in apartments. In 1889, the average cost of a single dwelling in New York City was $16,700, far beyond the reach of middle-class families. New York was undoubtedly an anomaly at the turn of the century; by 1910, Manhattan’s average dwelling contained 30.9 persons while the average dwelling in the rest of the country housed only 5.2. But even in New York, apartments were roundly criticized by the purveyors of the single family home. Attacks targeted women because women were expected to be the keepers of the home. In 1903, a contributor to the *Architectural Record* complained that apartments would not have been so popular “without the acquiescence of large numbers of women; and it is devoutly to be hoped that many more women will not be foolish enough to follow this example, thereby

---


sacrificing the dignity of their own lives and their effective influence over their husbands and children.”

Of course, many Americans did not, and could not, find succor in their homes. Stephen Crane wrote of a home that was “chaotic, unloving,” “gruesome,” “seething,” and “grease-enveloped” in 1893. The mother who presided over this home was crude, cruel, and uncaring. Social reformer and photographer, Jacob August Riis, revealed to Americans how bleak life in the homes of countless urban immigrants could be in his photographic essay, *How the Other Half Lives*, first published in 1890. The idealized home, the seat of the calm, loving, and morally upright domestic sphere, was simply not available to all classes of Americans. It remained an ideal.

3.4

After the custody trial, Mimie and Christine lived in St. Louis with the child’s grandparents. Life with the Scotts was pleasant, at least for

---


66 The St. Louis city directories list a “Minnie S. Campbell, bkpr, H. Watson” for the years 1891 through 1893. The residence listed is the Scotts’ address: 1116 St. Ange Avenue. *Gould’s St. Louis Directory*, (St.
Christine. Not only was the little girl treated to shopping excursions with her grandmother, but Grandpa Robbie took her on buying trips, too. The merchants with whom he traded would give her treats, and she could listen to the music box in the jewelry store.\(^6\)\(^7\) Sometimes Grandpa Robbie would take Christine to his big iron safe, open it, and take out a wooden box full of gold pieces. These, he told her, would pay for her college education.\(^6\)\(^8\)

Mimie kept accounts for her father and also did much of the fancy cooking for her parents’ guests.\(^6\)\(^9\)

Mimie had already met the sweet, gentle Wyatt MacGaffey before she took Christine to Russia. MacGaffey, who lived in Chicago, had been in St. Louis working for Robbie Scott when Mimie came home with her baby from Boston. He had fallen in love with her, and they had exchanged affectionate letters during the years she was abroad with Christine.\(^7\)\(^0\)

Mimie Scott Campbell married Wyatt MacGaffey in St. Louis on August 7, 1891.

---

\(^6\)\(^7\)[C. Frederick], “Only a Girl,” [9].

\(^6\)\(^8\)[Ibid., [10].

\(^6\)\(^9\)Joyce, interview, 14 September 1994; C. Frederick, Selling, 119-120.

\(^7\)\(^0\)Joyce, interview, 14 September, 1994. Christine’s daughter, Jean Joyce, has the letters Mimie wrote MacGaffey from Russia, but they were not available at the time of the interviews.
1894, when Christine was eleven years and seven months of age.\textsuperscript{71} The new family of three repaired to Chicago and made their home on Humboldt Avenue.\textsuperscript{72} Christine came to love her kind, amusing step-father. Musically talented, MacGaffey performed in minstrel shows and told stories that made people laugh. Before she entered high school, Christine took his name as her own. When she was in her teens, her parents presented her with two little half-brothers, Wyatt and Crichton.\textsuperscript{73}

Wyatt MacGaffey had been licensed to practice law in the state of Illinois in 1881.\textsuperscript{74} He was the son of an attorney who had married a woman who dared to depart from Victorian prescription: she ignored her house so that she could translate poetry from the Latin. Christine was fond of these step-grandparents, especially the step-grandfather who coached her in the art of oratory.\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{71}Marriage certificate of Wyatt McGaffey and Mimie S. Campbell, 7 August, 1894, file folder 14, Frederick Papers. This spelling of MacGaffey is a variation. Christine used both McGaffey and MacGaffey.

\textsuperscript{72}"Northwestern University College of Liberal Arts Entrance Statistics," entry form, 2 September, 1902, series 51/12, box 18, Alumni Biographical Files (Northwestern University Archives, photocopy). (Hereafter cited as Alum Files, Northwestern).

\textsuperscript{73}Joyce, interview, 14 September, 1994.

\textsuperscript{74}"State of Illinois Supreme Court," certificate to practice law, 23 March 1881, file folder 14, Frederick Papers.

\textsuperscript{75}Joyce, interview, 15 September, 1994.
Christine achieved an admirable record at Northwestern Division High School in Chicago. Inspired, perhaps, by her step-grandfather’s encouragement and coaching, she competed in oratory. She won first place in a competition in her third year, receiving the highest marks in all categories from all three judges for her speech, “The Consolidations of To-Day.” The school newspaper reported that she had delivered “the most logical oration of the evening,” and she was “complimented upon the easy way in which she treated the subject.” Her accomplishment made headlines in the Chicago American which reported that her oration “was a somewhat remarkable production considering the youth of the writer.” Christine made outstanding high school grades, and both Northwestern University and the University of Chicago offered her partial scholarships, though she still had to work for part of her tuition. She chose Northwestern because it offered a part-time student work program. With two additional children at home, Wyatt’s salary could not be stretched to pay Christine’s college expenses; and since Grandpa Robbie’s death, the mysterious box of gold pieces that were to have paid for her education had disappeared. Even before enrolling as a full-time student, she was admitted into J. Scott Clark’s English literature class. She was thrilled to study with

---

76 The Review, May, 1901, 7, clipping, file folder 14, Frederick Papers.

77 “Gifted Girl the Champion Orator,” [Chicago American, 29 May, 1901], n.p., file folder 14, Frederick Papers.
a professor who had taught so many writers, she later wrote in her autobiography.\textsuperscript{78}

Christine was to tell her own daughters many times that a woman must acquire an education in order to take care of herself. The memory of her mother, the timid and frightened Mimie, crying in an upstairs bedroom in Grandpa Robbie’s house because she had to depend on her father for her living and enlist his help in freeing herself from a disastrous marriage, aroused the girl’s determination to go to college and to prepare herself for a career.\textsuperscript{79}

In September, 1902, Christine entered Northwestern as a full-time student enrolled in the “scientific course” in the College of Liberal Arts.\textsuperscript{80} She was able to reduce her tuition by working an hour a day at cleaning, dishwashing, and maid’s work. She also worked as a tutor. To advertise, she distributed her calling cards on which she added in her own hand,

“Private Instruction in Science, English, and Mathematics, 3/9 Humboldt

\textsuperscript{78}Christine wrote in her autobiography that Grandpa Robbie’s only son, “Gentleman Bob,” a “handsome man” with a “deep interest in both ladies and horses,” took over the business when her grandfather died and that the “tun of gold” that had been promised her then disappeared. Her daughter does not remember this mysterious uncle, but there is a “Robert L. Scott” listed in the St. Louis directories during the period Christine lived with her grandparents. From 1887 until 1894, he, too, was living at the Scotts’ residence, 1116 St. Ange Avenue. [C. Frederick], “Only a Girl,” [10, 11]; \textit{Gould’s St. Louis Directory, 1883-1894}.

\textsuperscript{79}Joyce, interview, 16 September, 1994.

\textsuperscript{80}“Northwestern Entrance Statistics”; \textit{The Syllabus} (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 1906, photocopy), 187.
Avenue."81 In addition, the university's Vocational Bureau found her jobs with "the rich ladies of the community," serving tea on their cooks' Thursday afternoons off. She was sometimes called upon to prepare fancy foods for the ladies and sixty years later remembered specific recipes. This work was probably the nearest thing to home economics training that Christine had while in college.82

The scientific course at Northwestern was the alternative to the "classical course."83 Christine's curriculum did not include many science courses at all. Her emphasis was on speech, English, and writing. The only science courses she took in the four years at Northwestern were biology, problems in plant life, geology, and psychology.84 Chemistry is conspicuous by its absence, in view of the fact that Christine's later career would focus on women's work in the home. Many early home economists began their training in chemistry.85 While home economics had made its way into a number of universities by the time Christine started college,

81 "Miss MacGaffey," calling card, file folder 14, Frederick Papers.
82 [C. Frederick], "Only a Girl," [11-14].
83 The Syllabus, 1906, 187.
84 "Christine MacGaffey," transcript, series 51/12, box 18, Alum Files, Northwestern (photocopy).
85 Chemistry was linked to the new field of home economics as early as the 1890s. Ellen Swallow Richards, a pioneer in the field, was a chemist by training, p. 17, n. 36 above. See Ehrenreich and English, For Her Own Good, 141-143.
Northwestern did not offer such a course, and it is doubtful that she would have elected to take it even if it had been available.\textsuperscript{86} There is no evidence that she had any inclination in the direction of domestic science at this point in her life.

Christine concentrated on courses that utilized the talents she had already discovered in high school. She took elocution, rhetoric, narration, and a course entitled "Masterpieces in Eloquence." After oratory, her second emphasis was on literature and writing: editorial writing, prose masterpieces, paragraphing, and a variety of literature courses. She studied both German and French and had a smattering of history, philosophy, and math.\textsuperscript{87}

Christine studied under some very well known professors at Northwestern. She took oratory from Robert McClean Cumnock who had established the Cumnock School of Oratory, predecessor to Northwestern's prestigious School of Speech. J. Scott Clark instructed her in writing and literature. She enrolled in three courses taught by Walter Dill Scott, the early theorist on advertising.\textsuperscript{88} These men had a profound influence on

\textsuperscript{86}For a study of the growth of home economics as a curriculum in the land grant colleges established by the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, see Fritschner, "The Rise and Fall of Home Economics."

\textsuperscript{87}"Christine MacGaffey," transcript.

\textsuperscript{88}Ibid.; Patrick M. Quinn to the author, 31 August 1994; Mr. Quinn, archivist at Northwestern University, supplied the author with a list of professors who taught the courses listed in Christine MacGaffey's transcript for the years 1902 through 1906.
Christine. She was to make public speaking and writing central to her career. Years later, she recalled Professor Scott, playfully calling him “Walter Dill ‘Pickle’ Scott” in conversations with her children. She told of an encouraging encounter with Professor Cumnock in her autobiography. Cumnock, she wrote, called to her across campus one day, and said: “Miss MacGaffey, why do you waste your time with all this school stuff? I have heard you recite and speak, and that is what you should be doing--training that voice of yours which, with your unusual poise and stage presence, could make you a tremendous success just as a lecturer.” She replied that teaching offered steadier employment, but Cumnock disagreed. According to her story, he gave her the key to a luggage room on the top floor of one of the college buildings and advised her to “go up there and yell [her] head off.” She followed his advice and when she practiced in the “vast empty room filled with students’ trunks,” she would visualize before her a “mighty, enthusiastic and attentive audience.” Christine did not pretend modesty--then or later in life--and she added, characteristically, “when I became a worldwide lecturer, I realized that old Cumstock [sic] was right in his prognostication.” Allowing for the inaccurate recall of a memory resurrected after sixty years and for a tendency on Christine’s part to exaggerate and embellish, one can nevertheless assume that working with

---

89Joyce, interview, 15 September, 1994.

90[C. Frederick], “Only a Girl,” [15].

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Cumnock influenced her to polish her speaking skills and to imagine that she might put them to use one day.

By the time she entered Northwestern, Christine had begun to develop the sense of purpose and the capacity for hard work that would assure her later success. Besides working at three outside jobs, she participated in college life to the fullest. During her sophomore year, she was treasurer of *Le Cercle Français* and an honorary member of a mysterious group called the Top Heavy Club. The following year, she served as president of *Le Cercle Français*, sat on the literary board committee of the yearbook, joined the Alethenai Literary Society and the Y. W. C. A., and directed the Junior Class play, *She Stoops to Conquer*, in which she also played the role of Miss Neville. During her senior year, she was an officer (the "critic"), in the all-woman Alethenai Literary Society.91

Christine exhibited a sense of obligation to a task undertaken, a healthy disregard for Victorian propriety, and confidence in her own judgment during her theatrical experience as director of the junior play. When the dean asked her to remove one of the leading men from the cast because a young woman had been seen leaving his room during the wee hours of the morning, Christine resisted, asking the dean what that had to do with the play. The dean implied that there might, after all, be a baby, to

---

91 *The Syllabus*, 1905, 187, 222; 1906, 205, 218, 229; 1907, 235 (photocopies).
which Christine retorted, “But, Dean Holgate, the play is scheduled to open in six weeks. I may be stupid, but I do know it takes nine months for a baby to be born, so I cannot understand your attitude.” The dean’s response to Christine’s rather shocking pragmatism is not recorded, but the young man was removed from the play and she was forced to coach a new actor in a very short time.92

This incident is only one indication that Christine possessed bearing and self-assurance even at this early stage. She was known to have a sense of humor and fun, as well. At the end of her sophomore year, she was accorded the dubious honor of having her name appear in a “resolution” to “bawl . . . out” certain students who “have acquired the habit of asking foolish questions and of talking most of the time in the class rooms . . .” and who “exceedingly tire the rest of the class with their talk under the pretext of being seekers after truth while in fact they are only after ‘grand stand’ plays . . . .” She was included in this list of grandstanders for her performance in Professor Cumnock’s English B class: hence the professor’s knowledge of her speaking ability. Her fellow students found her interesting. The brief description of personality that appeared under her picture in the 1906 yearbook reads: “Her infinite variety.”93

92[C. Frederick], “Only a Girl,” [14].

Christine had become a tall, graceful, statuesque young woman blessed with an abundance of thick, dark hair that she drew softly up off her face in the Gibson girl fashion with a full, cascading chignon on her neck. She had inherited Grandmother Christine’s dark eyes, and they were set under black, arching brows in a clear, oval face. Her gaze was steady and serious, but her face could break into a sunburst of laughter at a good joke.⁹⁴

In the four years Christine spent at Northwestern, she received only eleven “B’s.” The rest of her grades were all “A’s,” and she was tapped for Phi Beta Kappa on May 25, 1906, an honor she cherished all of her life.⁹⁵ Like many young women who were graduating from college during this period, Christine assumed, as she had indicated to Professor Cumnock, that her education had groomed her for teaching. As a tutor during the years at Northwestern, she had discovered that she was a “‘born’ teacher of the first water.” Her professors agreed. Several wrote glowing letters of recommendation commending her teaching abilities in any number of subjects. Her French teacher considered her “the strongest student in her 

⁹⁴There are many photographs of Christine Frederick in the Frederick Papers at the Schlesinger Library, Folders 20-38. Her image appears in the Northwestern University yearbook, The Syllabus, several times from 1902 to 1907. Photographs accompany many newspaper and magazine articles by or about Frederick from the 1910s through the 1960s.

class." Two English professors, one of them, J. Scott Clark, recommended her highly for teaching English. And an official from the Garrett Biblical Institute in Evanston, with whom she had apparently boarded for a time, wrote that she could perform admirably in "any position she may accept." W. D. Scott remembered twenty-three years later that Christine "was one of the best students I ever had in my class. . . ."96

Christine accepted a position teaching biology in the small town of Ishpeming, Michigan, far to the north, only twenty-five miles from the southern shore of Lake Superior. A small hamlet nearly four hundred miles from Chicago, Ishpeming was bitter cold in the winter, and Christine learned to navigate the snowy landscape on skis. She would stay in Ishpeming for only one year. When she left in 1907, she would never again think of school teaching as a career.98

Before she left Chicago, Christine had met a charming young "Pennsylvania Dutchman" who was rapidly working his way up the ladder in the newly burgeoning field of advertising. Justus George Frederick, "J.


97Walter Dill Scott to J. George Frederick, 5 August 1929, file folder 3, Frederick Papers.

98Joyce, interview, 15 September, 1994; Photograph MC 261-20-5; "Personalities in the Village," [Villager], 9 March 1939, clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.
George" to his friends, was working for the J. Walter Thompson Company in Chicago when he attended a college function and was smitten by the tall, dark-eyed young woman who appeared so lively and interesting. She seemed to be a "go-getter," he remembered later, and he fell for her "right off the bat." He determined to get to know her better, and during the ensuing year he convinced her to come back to Chicago and marry him.99

What we know of Christine’s college career suggests that she was one of the growing number of young women who wished to free themselves from the confines of the domestic sphere, to learn how to perform in the world outside the home, and to exercise talents heretofore demonstrated only by men. She aggressively pursued a higher education, she worked for her school expenses, she tested her abilities against men’s in the classroom, she engaged in spirited debate with male professors, and she envisioned herself as a commanding orator. Yet after her marriage, Christine was to fashion a career that would use that aggressiveness and talent to counsel other women to stay in their homes and be happy as homemakers. Like most educated women of this period of rapid change, she faced conflict. Women were breaking out of the confining isolation of the domestic sphere, yet they were still counseled to hold fast to the notion that their special realm was the home. Christine’s thorough indoctrination

in the ideology of separate spheres was demonstrated by a paper she wrote as a student.

In "The Genius of Woman," the young Christine wrote that woman had always inspired painters and musicians because she was tender, lovely, and truthful. In her capacity as keeper of the home, she "guided and shaped the progress of the world." But alas, woman had achieved a place in man's world during the past century, and "we are now witnessing a condition weighed with grave possibilities," she wrote. While some of this achievement might be hailed as progress, it had gone too far. Christine believed that the position of the club woman and the business woman had been "glorified by the noisy and thoughtless as great triumphs," but in fact these women were merely trying to "gain public notice or escape [their] plain duty," that they were "out of [their] place" and a "dead weight on human progress."¹⁰⁰ She devoted much of this nine-page paper to warning of the dire consequences of women leaving the home:

Endless columns of women have entered into competition with man. They have toiled and struggled; they have worked and striven. And what has it availed? Reckon the two or three successful few against the countless hordes who have turned their backs on their homes and labored in vain. Some have done this urged on by a genuine love for their work; and many to earn their living. But there can be not [sic] doubt that the great majority were influenced by an unhealthy craving for public applause and public work, and by the desire to get away from the cares of domestic life.¹⁰¹


¹⁰¹Ibid., 3.
Instead, she wrote, women who were tempted to leave the home to earn extra money should learn to do with less "pomp and display" and "reduce life to its simple conditions. . . ." Changes had "tempted [American woman] to give up for this new occupation of money-making, her own true work of home-maker." "What Woman's Club," she asked, "can match the home made beautiful and sacred for husband and children?"¹⁰²

Christine specifically articulated the doctrine of two spheres in her paper. While men and women are equal, she argued, "their spheres are different; that of the man, public life; that of the woman the home. Man represents the force of nature; woman its beauty." Men, she wrote, will always struggle, fighting wars and engaging in strife. Women can influence men to subdue these tendencies and strive for nobility instead.¹⁰³

It is the sweet home-making woman, the wife, the mother, who has been the inspiration of the highest ideals of painting, the best efforts of song, the greatest achievements of history, the most glorious deeds of war. She has stretched out her hand to struggling man, has built his character and led him on to careers of distinction and fame; she has lifted a savage and barbarous condition into the resplendent civilization of to-day.¹⁰⁴

But woman must stay in the home, serving as helper to her husband who will accomplish great deeds. "Woman's true position is in her home. It is

¹⁰²Ibid., 4-5.
¹⁰³Ibid., 5-6.
¹⁰⁴Ibid., 8.
here that her highest development is attained; here is her greatest field of usefulness.  

3.5

As Christine grew to adulthood, honing her skills in oratory and writing as she prepared herself to teach school, other women were creating a new female profession: home economics. It would prove to be a significant development for Christine's future.

There had been interest in the home arts all through the latter half of the nineteenth century; Catharine Beecher promoted the idea that women should be trained to be homemakers. But home economics was not recognized as a discipline until the Columbian Exposition in Chicago displayed several household exhibits in 1893. It was in Chicago that the National Household Economics Association was founded by the Women's Congress under the auspices of the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

105 ibid., 6.

106 The term "home economics" will be used throughout this discussion, but it should be noted that the organized study of the home arts underwent several name changes between the time that Beecher wrote and the founding of the American Home Economics Association in 1909. It was variously called "domestic economy", "domestic science", "home economics" and "euthenics". The 1904 Lake Placid Conference decided to call it "handiwork" in the elementary schools, "domestic science" in the secondary schools, "home economics" in the normal schools, and "euthenics" in colleges and universities. See Ehrenreich and English, For Her Own Good, 140 and Matthews, "Just a Housewife", 145.

During the 1870s, cooking schools had appeared in several northeastern cities because, according to Ellen Swallow Richards, "the standard of the family table seemed to be deteriorating". Middle-class women’s groups instituted housekeeping classes as well. The School of Housekeeping in Boston serves as an example. Established by the Women’s Education and Industrial Union of Boston in 1897, it offered four courses its first year: Development of Domestic Service, House Sanitation, Philosophy of Cleaning, and Practical Side of Housekeeping. By 1900 this school boarded its students and offered a certificate of completion after a course of cooking, chamber work and parlor work. There were two curricula: one for young women studying housework “as a trade,” and one “designed to meet the needs of young college women and others who wish to fit themselves to manage a household on the best economic and hygienic basis.” The brochures that advertised the WEIU of Boston’s School of Housekeeping bolster the argument that the emergence of home


109“Women’s Educational and Industrial Union,” Leaflet, box 1, file folder 9, Women’s Educational and Industrial Union Papers (hereafter cited as WEIU Papers), Schlesinger Library.

110“The School of Housekeeping Courses for House-Workers,” brochure, box 1, file folder 9, WEIU Papers.

111“School of Housekeeping, Course for Employees, 1899-1900,” circular; “School of Housekeeping, Spring Quarter, April, 1900,” brochure, 6; box 1, file folder 9, WEIU Papers.
economics coincided with the spreading fear that the home was threatened. Training in the home arts and sciences might save it. One leaflet tells the reader:

The aim of the School of Housekeeping is a scientific study of the Home, to save what is of permanent good, to discard what is useless, and to bring it into line with present industrial tendencies and scientific facts, social and physical, that it shall work not against, but for progress. This study is not to the end that the homes of any one class may be bettered, but that the standard of living and life may be raised, in all homes, in the belief that this would make for better citizenship, for a greater country, for a nobler race.112

The school’s administrators, then, were joining with other early home economists to promote the idea that homemakers needed professional training. As Catharine Beecher had argued half a century earlier, this would elevate homemaking, and preserve the home. The medical profession agreed: in 1899 the American Medical Association praised the study of domestic science on the grounds that it would reduce “infant mortality, contagious diseases, intemperance (in eating and drinking), divorce, insanity, pauperism, competition of labor between the sexes, men’s and women’s clubs, etc.”113

At the same time, of course, the study of home economics blurred the division between the private and public spheres. Scientific training

112“The School of Housekeeping Course for House-Workers, 1900-1901,” brochure, box 1, file folder 9, WEIU Papers.

113Journal of American Medical Association, 32, 1899, quoted in Ehrenreich and English, For Her Own Good, 141.
would now be necessary to manage a home, and this would require the penetration of the domestic sphere by outside experts. A WEIU School of Housekeeping official wrote that, "No home, however isolated, can escape the social obligation that rests on it, i.e., responsibility for the quality, fineness, and strength of the men and women who are its output." The home, then, became a factory with "output" as its goal.\textsuperscript{114} For some, the home economics movement was a way to assure women the right to college educations. Chemistry was required of the college students who entered the "young college women" track of the WEIU of Boston's school, but if an applicant did not have chemistry training, the school offered twelve lessons.\textsuperscript{115} In 1899, Ellen Swallow Richards was on the faculty which included professors from Wellesley, Harvard, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as well.\textsuperscript{116} This professionalization of the training posed a dilemma: was home economics a new profession for women who wished to work outside the home or was it training to perfect in housewives the art of homemaking?

Six years after the Columbian Exposition, the first of a series of ten conferences on home economics was held in Lake Placid, New York. Ellen


\textsuperscript{115}"School of Housekeeping, Spring Quarter, April, 1900," brochure, box 1, file folder 9, WEIU Papers.

\textsuperscript{116}"School of Housekeeping," [1899], brochure, 4-8, box 1, file folder 9 WEIU Papers.
Swallow Richards led the move to mount this convocation, which was attended by ten women and one man. One of this group’s major goals was to put home economics into school curricula.\textsuperscript{117} In 1900, the second Lake Placid Conference resolved to urge the National Education Association to create a Department of Home Economics and to call upon women’s clubs to promote this objective.\textsuperscript{118} In 1909, the American Home Economics Association was founded at the tenth Lake Placid conference, a move that coordinated the efforts of developing and perfecting a science of housekeeping.\textsuperscript{119} The next year, Ellen Richards defined “Home Economics” as “the preservation of the home and the economics of living.”\textsuperscript{120}

The land grant colleges that were established under the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 were the first institutions of higher education to offer home economics courses. Early home economics students were required to work in the kitchens and dining rooms—not to earn money, as Christine Frederick was forced to do at Northwestern—but as a part of their course of study.\textsuperscript{121} By 1905, the year that Christine entered her senior year,  

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{117}Matthews, "Just a Housewife", 145; Handlin, \textit{The American Home}, 410.
  \item \textsuperscript{118}“School of Housekeeping,” unpaginated page from journal, box 1, file folder 9, WEIU Papers.
  \item \textsuperscript{119}Handlin, \textit{American Home}, 410.
  \item \textsuperscript{120}Ellen H. Richards, “The Outlook in Home Economics,” \textit{JHE} 2 (February, 1910): 17.
  \item \textsuperscript{121}Fritschner, “Rise and Fall,” 57, 59, 62.
\end{itemize}
thirty-six land grant institutions in the West and Middle West offered home economics courses.\textsuperscript{122} Public schools also began home economics instruction at the end of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{123}

Home economics became a more and more complicated subject. It incorporated the scientific advances and expert training acquired in the public sphere of educational institutions while it trained young women to keep the traditional domestic sphere. The application of scientific methods to housekeeping had the potential of destroying domesticity, the "home feeling" so prized in the nineteenth century, the "haven in a heartless world." Indeed, professionalizing homemaking might bring the heartless world into the home.\textsuperscript{124}

As home economics entered college and university curricula, academic home economists began to see themselves as professional women. Few married and those who did usually did not have children. Ellen Swallow Richards, for example, married at the age of thirty-three and remained childless. Henrietta Goodrich of the WEIU of Boston's School of

\textsuperscript{122}\textit{Ibid.}, 63.

\textsuperscript{123}\textit{Strasser, Never Done}, 206.

\textsuperscript{124}Several writers have discussed this paradox. See Handlin, \textit{American Home}, 412-414, Strasser, \textit{Never Done}, 203, and Matthews, "\textit{Just a Housewife}", 108-110, for example. Newer studies on home economics emphasize the fact that home economics provided women with an avenue to professionalism. See, for example, Sarah Stage and Virginia Vincente, eds., \textit{Rethinking Women in Home Economics in the Twentieth Century} (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, in press).
Housekeeping envisioned a full curriculum elevating Home Economics to a science, culminating in a Ph.D. This compounded the paradox. Among these professionally trained experts, there was “confusion about the housewife’s place. . . .”\textsuperscript{125} The President of the National Household Economics Association told the 1902 Lake Placid Conference:

Fortunately there are a few thinking, progressive persons in the world besides ourselves and they are just as firm as we are in the belief that homemaking is the most natural and therefore the most desirable vocation for women.\textsuperscript{126}

Adopting this view, Christine Frederick would, within eight years, begin to extol the virtues of the woman who kept house. In doing so, she would often leave her own home to speak out as an expert in the public sphere.

The fear among some home economists that the home was threatened was not without foundation. In 1903, Charlotte Perkins Gilman—socialist, evolutionary theoretician, feminist, and social commentator—wrote \textit{The Home}, a scathing critique of the single family dwelling as archaic and wasteful. The home, according to Gilman, had not progressed in evolutionary terms, and it arrested woman’s proper development.

“Traditional sentiments connected with home,” she wrote, caused “positive

\textsuperscript{125}Strasser, \textit{Never Done}, 207-208.

\textsuperscript{126}"Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Conference on Home Economics", Lake Placid, NY, 1902, quoted in Ehrenreich and English, \textit{For Her Own Good}, 141.
injury to the life of to-day.”¹²⁷ To Gilman, the domestic ideology of the
nineteenth century had damaged woman’s progress and inhibited her ability
to achieve full personhood. Gilman drew upon principles of evolution to
fashion a theory about gender roles. She believed that woman’s
development had been stunted by oppression and that one path to freeing
her was a complete revolution of the home.¹²⁸ “By the end of 1890,
Charlotte had produced a rather impressive array of subversive writings on
the fraudulence of love and marriage myths,” writes her biographer.¹²⁹

Born into the extended Beecher family in Connecticut in 1860, Gilman
grew up among people who devoted their lives to social issues. She lived
with her divorced mother, but both parents encouraged her to excel intel­
lectually.¹³⁰ Her talents were legion: she drew and painted, wrote poetry,
theses and stories, and she developed ideas. Writing to a friend about her
work on her autobiography late in life, she confessed that it did not interest


¹²⁸For Gilman’s own discussion of this particular theory, see Charlotte
Perkins Gilman, The Man-Made World or, Our Androcentric Culture (New
York: Charlton Company, 1914).

¹²⁹Mary A. Hill, Charlotte Perkins Gilman: The Making of a Radical

¹³⁰Polly Wynn Allen, Building Domestic Liberty: Charlotte Perkins
Gilman’s Architectural Feminism (Amherst: University of Massachusetts
her much. "My real interest," she reminded him, "is in ideas, as you
know."\textsuperscript{131}

As an adult, Gilman defied convention. After a divorce, she remained
on very good terms with her first husband, Charles Walter Stetson, who
later married her best friend and sometime collaborator, Grace Ellery
Channing. The three shared the care of Charlotte’s and Charles’s daughter,
Katharine. For several years thereafter, Gilman did not have a permanent
address, but traveled across the country, speaking and staying with
friends.\textsuperscript{132}

Gilman wrote prolifically and lectured widely. She was associated
with many women’s organizations, the Women’s Press Association, the
Woman’s Alliance, and the Parents Association, to name a few. After her
divorce, she had been a close associate, indeed a housemate, of Helen
Campbell, who had helped found the National Household Economics
Association. With Campbell, she founded the Chicago branch of this
organization, a group that formed committees on cooperative
housekeeping. She was a disciple of socialist theorist Edward Bellamy and
sociologist Lester Ward, responding enthusiastically to their ideas about
collectivism and equality between the sexes. Her association with Ward

\textsuperscript{131}Gilman, foreword to \textit{The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: An

\textsuperscript{132}Allen, \textit{Building Domestic Liberty}, 37-42.
influenced the writing of her first theoretical study of women, *Women and Economics*, in 1898. In this work, she examined the adverse results of women's economic dependence upon men.¹³³

In *The Home*, Gilman attacked nineteenth-century "mythology." The home, she wrote, was neither private nor sanctified. Furthermore, it did not promote economy. It was wasteful of time, energy, and woman's talent. Shockingly, she dismissed the idea that there was such a thing as maternal instinct. Mothers, she dared to write, didn't know any better than others how to care for the young. Society was laboring under a myth she called "matriolatry."¹³⁴ Therefore, home was not really a "little heaven," but rather a "bunch of ill-assorted trades, wherein everything costs more than it ought to cost, and nothing is done as it should be done. . . ."¹³⁵

Isolated in her home, woman labored for her family twelve hours a day and neglected the very purpose of the home, that is, caring for her children. This had resulted from the mistaken notion that housework was sex-specific. Americans had exalted this state of affairs, when actually it was wasteful and inefficient.¹³⁶


¹³⁴Gilman, *The Home*, 53, 58, 60. See Chapter 3 for Gilman's full critique of "Domestic Mythology."

¹³⁵Ibid., 70.

¹³⁶Ibid., 90-101.
Gilman proposed that advances in science and management be utilized to consolidate the tasks that had traditionally been done on a small scale in the home. A city block of two hundred homes housing perhaps one thousand people was traditionally fed by the labors of two hundred cooks, she wrote. How much better and more efficiently, she asked, might these two thousand souls be fed by a staff of thirty professional cooks? Like the home economists who argued that there was a need for training and expertise in managing the home, Gilman believed that most housewives were ignorant about their work. "Ignorance . . . is an essential condition of home-cooking," she noted sarcastically. She saved her most vitriolic language for affluent women of leisure, women who entertained lavishly in their homes in order to give their otherwise useless lives purpose. This life style, she argued, was hard on marriages. Men must bear the costs, and "to the expense of maintaining a useless woman is added the expense of entertaining her useless friends. . . ." Not only did the private home visit economic hardship upon the male of the species, it also perverted his view of human relations by teaching him that "women were made for service . . . and that his own particular tastes and preferences are of enormous importance." "The woman is narrowed by the home," she wrote, "and the man is narrowed by the woman."137

137Ibid., 133, 136, 193, 273, 277.
Gilman did not argue for the destruction of the home so much as she urged change. Her proposal was to free women, to allow them to become economically independent. In Gilman’s view, that was the greatest damage the home had done; it had made woman dependent. Instead, she should be allowed to enlarge her world, to become a competent mother in the way that men became competent fathers--by entering and working in the public sphere. Staying in the domestic sphere, in the home, had made women into “social idiots” and denied them progress. Change would come, Gilman predicted, through the woman’s movement. Women would lead a campaign to shrink domestic industries and to socialize them, collectivize them, so that wives and mothers need not stay at home. There would be nurseries and eating houses. The home should consume but a small part of a woman’s--or man’s--attention. While the home would continue to be the “base and background of our lives,” all humans, men and women alike, could live in the broader world. Gilman advocated alternatives to the isolated, single family home. She wrote of kitchenless apartments with cooperative eating facilities for working women with families and kitchenless suburban homes connected to a cooperative eating house.

Gilman’s influence was significant. *Women and Economics* was translated into seven languages and used as a text at colleges like Vassar.

138 Ibid., 311-315, 326-334, 342-347.

It inspired women's groups throughout the country to establish community kitchens and cooked food delivery services in an attempt to free women from full-time home duties.\textsuperscript{140} The breadth of her activities made it possible for even rural women to hear her message. Irene Calbraith, a Yamhill County, Oregon physician's wife who belonged to the Pacific Coast Women's Press Association from 1891 until the early 1900s, during which time Gilman served as its president, heard Gilman speak at an annual meeting in San Francisco in April, 1891.\textsuperscript{141} In Dolores Hayden's words, Gilman reached "small-town suffragists, metropolitan planners, and specialists in the higher education of women. . . ."\textsuperscript{142}

Yet at the same time that Gilman was denouncing the "domestic mythology" of the nineteenth century and writing that "nothing in the work of the house . . . requires . . . maternal affection,"\textsuperscript{143} the young Christine Frederick was earnestly giving vent to a very different, more traditional sentiment:

\begin{quote}
Woman's . . . relation to the world is as important as man's. To her belongs the education of the young. Since so much depends on that
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{140}Ibid., 202.

\textsuperscript{141}A. E. Knapp and Charlotte Perkins Stetson to members of PCWPA, July, 1892; "Constitution and By-Laws of the Pacific Coast Women's Press Association", n. d.; "An Evening with Charlotte Perkins Stetson," invitation, 10 April, 1891, box 1, file folder 13, Calbraith Family Collection, Special Collections, Knight Library, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

\textsuperscript{142}Hayden, \textit{Grand Domestic Revolution}, 205.

\textsuperscript{143}Gilman, \textit{The Home}, 101.
early training, woman's immense advantage in moral opportunity is clearly perceived. It also shows the incalculable wrong and loss if her work has been neglected or poorly done. A good woman will make a good home and will send out into the world sons taught in lessons of integrity and uprightness.144

Like Gilman, who was twenty-three years older, Christine would write thousands of words, deliver scores of speeches, and reach countless women. But her message would be quite different. Christine would adhere to the mythology, even as her own life would belie it.

Reformers like Gilman who wanted to see fundamental changes in the home looked to technology and industrialization. Advanced expertise, efficient production, and wider distribution of goods might mean that innovations like commercial laundries, bakeries, and food processors would take over the tasks that had traditionally fallen to the housewife. Women, then, would be free to pursue other interests and talents. Industrialization was, indeed, to have a significant impact on the home but not in the way the reformers imagined. When Frederick Taylor began to apply the principles of scientific management to factory production, the Ladies' Home Journal hailed it as a boon to the housewife. The next step, the editor wrote, was to send the expert into the home. There should be “visiting housekeeper[s]” to help desperate women “feed and clothe a family on a meager income” efficiently. Utilizing the principles of scientific

management in the home had opened to women "an enormous field."\textsuperscript{145} The \textit{Journal} was selling over one million copies annually by the dawn of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{146} And the same year that its editor hailed the advent of scientific management, Christine Frederick would be counseling its readers to apply scientific management principles to the single family home in a series of articles entitled "The New Housekeeping."\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{145}\textit{Ladies Home Journal} (hereafter cited as \textit{LHJ}) October 1912, 5.

\textsuperscript{146}\textit{LHJ}, January 1901, 16.

\textsuperscript{147}\textit{LHJ}, September-December 1912.
CHAPTER 4: CONCEIVING A CAREER: SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT

I was becoming more and more discouraged with what seemed my lack of ability to manage my household problem. Occasionally I was so depressed as to wish that I were not married and that I was back in my teaching "harness". . . .

I came to earnestly believe that scientific management could, and must, solve housework problems as it had already solved other work problems. I began to see where I had been losing time—where I had been taking waste motions and useless steps—where I could use different tools and methods. Formerly I had been doing my work in a dead, mechanical way, but now every little task was a new and interesting problem. I found that housework was just as interesting and more so than many other tasks of business.1

These words, written just eight years after Christine MacGaffey gave up a teaching career to marry J. George Frederick, articulate the premise on which she was to fashion a satisfying, active, and very public career. But they revealed an inherent conflict. Christine professed to believe that women could find a fulfilling life in the home, yet she made choices that would very often take her out of it. By doing so, she embodied the dilemma which faced many American women.

Christine Isobel MacGaffey and Justus George Frederick were married at Irving Park, Chicago on June 29, 1907. By the time the wedding took place, J. George had already relocated to New York City, and an apartment at 1008 Simpson Street in the Bronx awaited the young

1Christine Frederick, Household Engineering: Scientific Management in the Home (Chicago: American School of Home Economics, 1919), 7, 14.
couple. J. George was twenty-five years old, and Christine was twenty-
four.  

The Bronx was “a good middle-class suburb,” Christine told her
daughter years later. The Fredericks’ Simpson Street flat was located in a
ten-family apartment house. When the newlyweds settled into their new
home in October, Christine became a full-time homemaker. She could not
have resumed her fledgling teaching career even if she had wished to do
so. The New York City Board of Education, like many other public school
governing boards of the early twentieth century, did not hire married female
teachers.  

In September, 1908, nine months after the Fredericks settled into
their Bronx apartment, their first child, David Mansfield, was born. A  

\footnote{Wedding announcement, Christine Isobel McGaffey to Justus
George Frederick, 29 June 1907; Marriage license, Justus George Frederick
and Christine Isobel MacGaffey, 27 June 1907, Cook County, Illinois, file
folder 14, Frederick Papers.}

\footnote{Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.}

\footnote{Christine Frederick, “Getting the Most out of Country Living,”
speech before Farmers’ Institute, Streator, Illinois, [1917], 80, file folder
10, Frederick Papers.}

\footnote{Activist and New York teacher, Henrietta Rodman, fought this policy
through her radical organization, the Feminist Alliance, and saw it
overturned in 1914 after Christine had successfully launched a very
different career. June Sochen, *Movers and Shakers: American Women
41-43.
daughter, Jean Olive, joined the family two years later. Sometime before 1911, the Fredericks moved to another, nearby apartment at 830 Manida. Christine left only passing references to apartment life in the Bronx, but J. George gave the readers of a novel he wrote in 1924 a glimpse of what it might have been like. He described the three-room, third-floor front apartment in which the character, Phyllis, found herself upon marriage:

> It was one of the multitudinous brownstone residences of an age long since outgrown—a veritable deserted village of homes now peopled with wholly different human beings from their original occupants. . . .

More telling, perhaps, are the passages in which he described the frustrations suffered by this young woman, an aspiring journalist. She felt "entombed," he wrote. Even though she was at home all day, there seemed to be no end to the housework that needed doing. This distracted her from working on articles she had hoped to write. By late afternoon, J. George wrote, Phyllis's day seemed "increasingly leaden and gray," and she hated thinking of herself as "one of the colorless, innumerable army of women who are the valets of the home, with the petty responsibilities of a chambermaid." For Christine, the sudden change from the life of an

---


7 Deed Liber 762 at p. 251 (Suffolk County Clerk's Office, Riverhead, NY, photocopy).

8 J. George Frederick, *Two Women* (New York: Nicholas L. Brown, 1924), 116.

9 Ibid., 194, 196.
independent young woman who was just beginning to develop her considerable talent for pedagogy to the confined and laborious existence of a young housewife and mother was going to require the creative application of her skills.

J. George, on the other hand, was on the move in the exhilarating new field of advertising. The dichotomy was striking, for he might have been reflecting his own feelings when he had his fictional character’s admirer say:

She came from another world than mine--she had a college education and I hadn’t; she came from cultivated, artistic people and I came from a farm where six or seven books were thought to be about all anybody ought to fritter away time reading. She was all that I wasn’t.10

J. George had grown up among the Pennsylvania Dutch in Reading, born to parents who reared at least nine children. Many of his relatives still used the characteristic dialect. As a boy, he worked on his grandmother’s farm during the summer, often stirring huge pots of apple butter for her. The young man’s ticket out of Reading was the knowledge and inspiration he received as a printer’s devil for the local newspaper. He later wrote that his scholastic ability had been “mediocre” and that the printer’s devil job fascinated him because of the physical aspects of setting type. But it was during this experience that he was “bitten by writing and publishing.” As

10Ibid., 326.
he put it, he "was wanted for more important work," and would go on to put "thought into words" rather than "words into type."  

His early successes came by way of advertising, an adjunct to the business world that was just then beginning to come into its own as a recognized field of specialization. William Dean Howells's character, Fulkerson, had declared a decade and a half earlier, "The advertising department is the heart and soul of every business. . . ."  

Mass production required larger markets. Advertising was a way to expand those markets. J. George Frederick understood this well:

*Advertising is the only efficient tool available to accomplish the much-needed purpose of raising the buying power and consumption standards of the world to the level of the rapidly mounting capacity for production.* (Italics his.)  

Simple advertising that merely announced a product's availability had always been a part of American commerce. In the mid-nineteenth century, advertising agencies bought large blocks of space in newspapers and resold it to manufacturers. But sophisticated techniques such as jingle-writing and special type were used by only a few until late in the century. At that time,

---


13 For a discussion of the process of expanding markets in the early years of the twentieth century, see Susan Strasser, *Satisfaction*, 126-146.

advertisers began to establish professional organizations; the prestigious Sphinx Club in New York and the Agate Club in Chicago were early examples. The end of the century also saw the emergence of advertising journals. *Printers’ Ink*, launched in 1888 as a house organ for George P. Rowell, an advertising agent and dealer in ink, taught advertisers how to write copy, how to analyze businesses and markets, and how to apply the new science of psychology to advertising.\(^\text{15}\)

By the time J. George entered the field, more advertisers were forming associations. He was in Chicago in 1905 when the new Chicago Advertising Associates hosted the first meeting of the Associated Advertising Clubs of America.\(^\text{16}\) By 1907, the year that the Fredericks married, seventeen local advertising clubs had joined this national group.\(^\text{17}\)

Professional advertisers were beginning to tap the expertise available from the new fields of psychology and market research. In Chicago, Walter Dill Scott, Christine’s professor of psychology and logic, first spoke on psychology in advertising to the Agate Club in 1901. In 1903, he published *The Theory and Practice of Advertising*, and five years later, 


\(^{16}\)Ibid., 542.

\(^{17}\)Strasser, *Satisfaction*, 93.
wrote *The Psychology of Advertising*.\(^{18}\) Scott said that the element of choice in purchasing indicated that advertising should appeal to reason, and he counseled advertisers to write "reason-why" advertising copy.\(^{19}\)

Popular magazines such as the *Ladies’ Home Journal* became mass circulation periodicals thanks to increased revenue from selling advertising space. In 1904, the *Journal* charged $4,000 for a single one-page advertisement and its readership had risen to nearly one million.\(^{20}\) In 1911, the *Journal*’s publisher, Curtis Publishing, hired a market researcher who looked at national markets and distribution systems in order to more profitably choose and court advertisers. The large advertising agencies began to do market research at about the same time, establishing research departments within their operations by 1915. And it was during the early years of the twentieth century that manufacturers, with the help of advertising agencies, began to develop planned advertising strategies, campaigns based on market research.\(^{21}\) The growth of advertising meant

\(^{18}\)Ibid., 148.


\(^{21}\)Strasser, *Satisfaction*, 94-95, 150-155. For a detailed account of one of the most famous examples of these early campaigns, see Strasser’s discussion of J. Walter Thompson’s development of Procter and Gamble’s Crisco campaign between 1905 and 1912, 9-14.
that manufacturers were now spending large sums of money to get their messages to the buying public. Walter Dill Scott claimed that advertising spending reached $600,000,000 in 1904. Twenty years later, J. George used that figure for 1910 spending. Whatever the figure, by 1910 the advertising industry had become big business.

J. George was working for J. Walter Thompson, a major advertising agency with offices in both Chicago and New York, and editing the Chicago trade journal, Judicious Advertising, when he met Christine. At the time of their marriage, he was transferred to the New York office. He had begun writing at the age of twenty-two. In 1902, he had published a small volume that had originated as a tale for the Review of Reviews. Breezy was the story of a young grocery clerk who rose to the position of advertising manager because of his boundless energy, hard work, and aggressive sales ideas. J. George did not confine himself to pieces about

\[\text{22} \text{Scott, "The Psychology of Advertising," 30.}\]
\[\text{23} \text{J. G. Frederick, Masters, 32.}\]
\[\text{24} \text{Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994; Who Was Who in America with World Notables, vol. 9 (Wilmette, IL: Marquis Who's Who, Macmillan Directory Division, 1990), 125.}\]
\[\text{25} \text{J. George Frederick, Breezy, 3rd ed. (n.p., Doubleday, Page and Company for the Review of Reviews, 1909).}\]
marketing and advertising. Four years after he wrote *Breezy*, he sold a short story to the *American Magazine*.26

J. George had become sophisticated and urbane by the time he married Christine. He considered himself a self-made man, and doubted the necessity of college education, but his own self education was broad and deep. Through the years, his writings would reflect easy conversance with a wide variety of literature, philosophy, and science. In his 1930 work, *Humanism as a Way of Life*, J. George drew upon an eclectic knowledge of authors from Dickens to Aldous Huxley to Schopenhauer.27 From an early age, he was open to ideas and interested in current intellectual discourse. Later there would always be books and magazines “galore” in the Fredericks’ home.28

In 1909, J. George was made managing editor of *Printers’ Ink*. While there, he later claimed, he helped George Rowell educate businesses about the value of good copy.29 He was instrumental in changing the journal’s policy to meet the modern challenges of twentieth-century selling, advocating market research, a new aspect of the field in which he took

---


27 These authors are mentioned merely as examples; Frederick refers to literally dozens of works. J. George Frederick, *Humanism as a Way of Life* (New York: Business Bourse, 1930), 138, 192, 263.

28 Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994.

great interest.\textsuperscript{30} He remained at \textit{Printers’ Ink} until 1911 and wrote for it often afterwards.\textsuperscript{31} Drawing upon Walter Dill Scott’s ideas, perhaps, he helped revolutionize advertising techniques with “reason why” copy.\textsuperscript{32}

By 1910, J. George was sure enough of his own abilities to leave J. Walter Thompson and establish his own market research and publishing house, the Business Bourse. His first office was located at 347 Fifth Avenue, quarters he would occupy until the early 1920s.\textsuperscript{33} In addition to looking after his new enterprise (one that would allow him the luxury of seeing all his future works published), J. George continued to work in the field of advertising. He was active in the Advertising Men’s League of New York City and served on a committee organized in 1911 to promote “‘practical’ truth in advertising work.”\textsuperscript{34} Such committees, established in

\textsuperscript{30}Strasser, \textit{Satisfaction}, 156-157.

\textsuperscript{31}Harold J. Swart to Dorothy Dignam, 29 February 1952, carton 2, file folder 4, Advertising Women of New York Papers, Schlesinger Library (hereafter cited as AWNY Papers). J. George wrote an admiring article in 1913, for example, about Crisco’s marketing techniques. Strasser, \textit{Satisfaction}, 14.

\textsuperscript{32}J. G. Frederick claimed to have helped the publishers of \textit{Judicious Advertising} revolutionize copy writing by introducing “reason why” copy writing while still in Chicago. J. G. Frederick, \textit{Masters}, 25.

\textsuperscript{33}Park Mathewson to Beatrice Doerschuk, 2 April 1921, carton 7, file folder 347, Bureau of Vocational Information of New York Papers, Schlesinger Library (microfilm, Strozier Library, Florida State University, Tallahassee) (hereafter cited as BVI Papers).

\textsuperscript{34}Allen L. Beatty, Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc. to the author, 16 May 1994. Some sources, J. G. Frederick’s obituary in the \textit{New York Times}, for example, stated erroneously that he was founder of the
cities throughout the country, reflected widespread concern about honesty in the rapidly expanding field. In 1913, the Associated Advertising Clubs of America, to which the New York group belonged, endorsed “the work of the national Vigilance Committee” and publicly stated their support of “the continued and persistent education of the press and public regarding fraudulent advertising.” J. George also continued to write for advertising trade journals. He served as editor of Advertising and Selling from 1911 to 1915.

This background in advertising gave J. George entrée into the related field of management, another rapidly expanding specialization within the world of American business. He founded the New York Salesmanager’s Club and, several years after opening the Business Bourse, wrote a manual on the subject.

J. George quickly became involved with the exciting intellectual life in New York City. Through his interest in market research, he worked with Columbia’s Professor Harry Hollingworth, a market researcher who, like Better Business Bureau of New York. “J. G. Frederick, 82, a Writer, Is Dead,” New York Times (hereafter cited as NYT), 24 March 1964, p. 33, col. 1. In fact, he was a member of this early vigilance committee, a movement which eventually led to the establishment of Better Business Bureaus. See also Pope, Making of Modern Advertising, 208.


Who Was Who in America, 125.

Who Was Who in America, 125; J. George Frederick, Modern Sales Management (New York: Appleton, 1919).
Walter Dill Scott, promoted the use of psychology in advertising. Hollingworth wrote a text for the New York Advertising Men's League in 1913 in which he argued that advertisements should provide stimuli in order to elicit a response from the potential consumer. Associations like this led J. George to found the Psychology Roundtable, forerunner of the Economic Psychology Association of which he became president. He was stimulated by new ideas and people with experiences different from his own. He wrote affectionately about the kaleidoscope that was Manhattan. Its "sheer colors, line, mass and human character" delighted one of his fictional characters. With J. George, the latest thought on all sorts of topics "kept washing into the house." He seemed destined for a stellar career after the move to New York City. During the first three years of his marriage to Christine, he served as an editor to two important advertising periodicals, wrote articles for other magazines, participated in the founding of organizations that would influence the development of modern American business practices, and started his own business in a promising new field.

---


40 Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994.
4.2

In the first few months of marriage, Christine, like J. George’s character, Phyllis, came face to face with the realities of homemaking. For a young woman of her talents and aspirations, the new life seemed isolating, frustrating, and boring. She was proud of her degree, proud of the Phi Beta Kappa key for which she had worked so hard. Yet here she was, confined in a small apartment, faced with the arduous chores that she later described so often as “drudgery.”[^41] “[I]t was a daily struggle to ‘get ahead’ of household drudgery,” she wrote of this period. “And between it all, I knew I was not doing justice to myself. . . .”[^42] Christine faced a dilemma. She had chosen to marry and to bear children, decisions that launched a traditional life modeled upon Catharine Beecher’s injunction that a woman’s highest duty was to care for home and children. On the other hand, she grew to womanhood during a period when women were attending college, entering professions, and seeking positions in the wider world. She had been an ambitious student whose scholastic achievements and developing talents made her long for a way to put to use her speaking and writing abilities. But the nineteenth-century ideology was still a

[^41]: Her daughter remembered vividly the stories of these early years, and her description of Christine’s feeling about her new life are corroborated by Christine’s own writings. Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.

powerful influence in American life, and the majority of Americans, men and women alike, subscribed to it in 1910. Christine was caught between Catharine Beecher's ideal and an emerging feminism that would demand a place for women outside the home, the most radical element of which, like Charlotte Perkins Gilman, questioned the value of the home itself. Christine's dilemma was clear to her husband. In his 1924 novel, the character Phyllis found that housekeeping interfered with writing.

The house demanded attention more imperiously now that she was at home than when she was working. At cleaning alone she spent many hours and discovered to her own grim amusement, that the seeds latent of a fussy housewife in her were unquestionably sprouting. She would seat herself at her typewriter at 2 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon, with a sigh of satisfied expectation. Words then not coming readily, she would gaze about the narrow confines of her domicile, and shortly observe that the picture mouldings were scandalously dusty... Up she would rise, and an hour was gone before she returned again.

Christine wrote that during her own first months of married life, housework and cooking consumed every hour of every day, and that she

---

43 Examples of the pervasiveness of the old doctrine abound. The year before the Fredericks married, the Atlanta Woman's Club published the following statement: "The home is the center of the universe, and the mistress is the center of the home." "Eleventh Annual Announcement of the Atlanta Woman's Club," 1905-06, box 1, Atlanta Woman's Club Papers, Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, GA. Even those who advised women to take part in public activities subscribed to this ideology. University of Chicago educators wrote: "The woman's place is in the home is an old saying to which all subscribe, perhaps with varying appreciation of its significance." Marion Talbot and Sophonisba Preston Breckinridge, The Modern Household (Boston: Whitcomb and Barrows, 1912), 84.

44 J. G. Frederick, Two Women, 195.
had no time for a "higher life," no way to express her "individuality and independence." She was "forced to give up this individuality" to "babies and drudgifying housework." There was no time to read, write, or even take care of personal grooming, she wrote.  

Christine and J. George hired a nursemaid to provide help with the babies, but even so, Christine worked hard on housekeeping chores.

As she struggled to cope with the life of a homemaker, doors for women to enter the public sphere were opening ever wider. One historian has written, “The years 1870 - 1920 may be the high-water mark of women’s public influence: through voluntary organizations, lobbying, trade unions, professional education, and professional activity.”

In 1910, ten percent of all doctoral degrees conferred by American universities were granted to women. By 1920, that figure had risen to fifteen percent. Many middle-class women used their educations to work in reform movements. Those who worked in the settlement house movement developed the field of social work and successfully urged the creation of

---


46 Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.


the Children's Bureau in 1912. Other women sought activity outside their homes through clubs. In 1912, the General Federation of Women's Clubs claimed 1,000,000 members and many of these organizations participated in reform.

The array of opportunities available to women by 1911 is suggested in the brochures published by the Women's Educational and Industrial Union of Boston: probation work, publishing house work, real estate, industrial chemistry, and bacteriological work, for example. Many of these fields had previously been open only to men. Colleges offered vocational conferences for women after 1910, and these conferences optimistically encouraged young women to pursue careers other than school teaching.

Nevertheless, most middle-class women did not seek paid jobs outside of the home, and those who did were often criticized. The

49Robyn Muncy, Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 18, 38. Muncy's book offers evidence for her argument that women seized monopoly of government agencies responsible for child welfare policy as they created new professions that would serve the needs of educated women reformers.

50Edith Rickert, "What Women's Clubs Have Really Done," LHJ, October 1912, 12.

51A large number of these brochures for the years 1911 and 1912 can be found in the WEIU Papers, box 1, file folder 4.

52There were many such conferences for women during the 1910s and 1920s. Early ones were held at the University of Wisconsin in 1912, and Oberlin College in 1916. See carton 4, file folders 221, 226, BVI Papers.
secretary of Christine Frederick's contemporary, Jessie Daniel Ames, recalled that in 1914, when Jessie and her mother operated the local telephone company in Georgetown, Texas, "most of the men just thought it was terrible that she was trying to wear the pants." In 1915, the Ladies' Home Journal suggested that marriage was far more fulfilling than a career could be. One article told the Journal's readers that women could achieve the satisfaction of being needed only through marriage and motherhood. As in the nineteenth century, however, women of the working class worked outside the home out of necessity. At the turn of the century, twenty percent of all American women over sixteen years of age worked for pay, though most of them did not make enough to support themselves.

As Christine labored in her Bronx apartment, the women's movement to gain the vote was moving into its final decade. In 1910, three years after her marriage, the Women's Political Union of New York began marching in suffrage parades. When the New York legislature


decided to submit the question of woman suffrage to the voters, the New York Times ran an editorial urging that it be voted down.57 The question sparked a volley of responses, and the next week the Times devoted a seven-page section to the question, “Should Women Vote in New York State?”58 Edward Bok of the Ladies’ Home Journal, who had been against suffrage, warned his readers in 1914 that, like it or not, the American woman should prepare for the inevitable and “open her eyes to the big world.”59 Christine Frederick surely read these articles. Yet three months before Bok issued his warning, J. George Frederick had attended an Associated Advertising Clubs convention where several members of the New York Club signed a petition in favor of a woman’s suffrage amendment to New York’s state constitution. J. George’s name was not listed among the signatories.60 Though Christine later claimed that she had marched with the “suffragettes,” her daughter has no recollection of her mother taking part in the suffrage movement although several neighbor

1986), 25.


58“Should Women Vote in New York State?” NYT, 14 February 1915, sec. 8, pp. 1-7.

59LHJ, September 1914, 6.

60Advertising Clubs Widen Their Scope,” NYT, 23 June 1914, p. 6, col. 4.
women were active suffragists. Christine did not discuss her position on
suffrage in her writings.81

The word "feminism" was beginning to appear in the New York
tables soon after Christine married.62 Feminist leader Marie Jenney Howe
conducted two mass meetings at Cooper Union in February, 1914 on the
topics "What Is Feminism?" and "Breaking into the Human Race."63

According to one observer, Howe was "thoroughly impregnated with the
feeling that there was a conspiracy of men against women . . . a feeling
characteristic of that time. . . ."64 A writer who reviewed Charlotte Perkins
Gilman's work reported that there were "tens of thousands of other women
throughout this country who follow her leadership and accept her views as
their own."65 These observers exaggerated the public strength of the
feminist movement, but feminist attitudes were characteristic of the young

81 "Career Chronology of Mrs. Christine Frederick," 1, carton 2, file
folder 4, AWNY Papers; Joyce, interviews, 15, 16 September 1994.

82 Nancy Cott suggests that the term was first used in the American
press in a 1906 article in the Review of Reviews. See The Grounding of
Modern Feminism, 14.

83 "Talk on Feminism Stirs Great Crowd," NYT, 18 February 1914, p.
2, col. 4; "Feminists Ask for Equal Chance," NYT, 21 February 1914, p.
18, col. 1.

84 Hutchins Hapgood, A Victorian in the Modern World, quoted in
Schwarz, Heterodoxy, 10-11.

85 "Charlotte Perkins Gilman Puts Man on the Grill," clipping, n.p.,
n.d., file folder 46, Charlotte Perkins Gilman Papers Addendum, Schlesinger
Library.
set that lived in Greenwich Village. The members of a luncheon group called Heterodoxy that Howe organized in 1912 certainly embraced feminist ideas. They hosted speakers such as Margaret Sanger on birth control and Emma Goldman on the Russian revolution. Presumably, Christine kept abreast of all this through the many publications to which the Fredericks subscribed. And her friend Leta Hollingworth was a member of Heterodoxy.

Christine also probably read a 1913 article in which Gilman reiterated her critique of the home, arguing again that it forced women to squander their labor, that it required the needless repetition of tasks, and that it wasted power and energy. In 1914, Gilman published *The Man-Made World* in which she sought to explain why human beings had arranged their homes so ill-advisedly. Drawing again upon evolutionary theory, she argued that woman was the race type and man, the deviant. But man had

---

66 Schwarz, *Heterodoxy*, 19. The meaning of the term feminism has undergone many permutations since it was first used in America. As historians turned their attention to women's history in the 1960s, it became clear that women's movements have never been monolithic. Feminism, then, had to be explained, modified. Some feminists have wanted radical reform, while others have worked for moderate change within the existing system. The object here is simply to note that the concept arose around 1910, when Christine Frederick was a young bride facing decisions about her place in the world as a woman. For an excellent discussion of the usages and modifications of the term feminism, see Nancy Cott, “What’s In a Name?” *Journal of American History* 76 (December, 1989): 809-828.

67 Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994; Schwarz, *Heterodoxy*, 120.

managed to confine and isolate woman in the home, and therefore her natural evolution had been arrested. The home as Americans knew it, she argued, was designed by men to keep women from entering the wider world.69 She repeated her argument on the lecture circuit; on April 1, 1914, she spoke on “Our Male Civilization” to an audience of fifty women and two men at the Hotel Astor in New York.70 In August, Gilman wrote a short summary of her argument for the popular woman’s magazine, The Delineator.71 Thus Gilman’s views were widely publicized, especially in New York City, during Christine’s early years as a young housewife.

Consolidating household tasks into cooperative ventures, as Melusina Peirce had first attempted to do in the 1860s, was an idea that continued to attract attention during this period. The Journal of Home Economics, reporting on a successful cooperative community kitchen delivery service, noted that there was “a surprising number of community kitchens” operating in the United States in 1915.72 Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Henrietta Rodman, both early members of Heterodoxy, hired architect Max G. Heidelberg to design the “Feminist Apartment House” to

69Gilman, Man-Made World, [5-6], 37-41, 82.

70“Mrs. Gilman’s Scorn Strikes ‘Masculinism,’” NYT, 2 April 1914, p. 11, col. 1.


be built near Greenwich Village in New York City in 1914. The apartments would have no kitchens, food preparation and housekeeping would be done centrally by domestic science students, and there would be a collective nursery facility. But Gilman, Rodman and their associates failed to raise the necessary capital and the apartments were never built. Two years later, a radical innovation planned by architect Alice Constance Austin featured a "garden city of kitchenless houses" in the proposed socialist city of Llana del Rio, California, but it, too, failed for lack of funds. In a four-year experiment in Carthage, Missouri, suffragists busy with the voting rights campaign ran a cooperative kitchen using their own servants collectively.73 Christine was aware of these ideas, but rather than explore them as a way out of her own dilemma, she would soundly denounce them in her second book in 1919.74 Like many other Americans, she strongly supported the single family home, an ideal that would eventually be upheld by government policy. A National Conference on Housing, the purpose of which was to increase home ownership, was held in 1911.75

All of these trends—professional opportunities for women, the suffrage movement, feminism, and suggestions for cooperative living—


74Christine’s views on cooperative living will be discussed in Chapter 6. See Household Engineering, 405-408.

fueled the fear that had surfaced in the late nineteenth century that the home was threatened. By 1910, many social observers believed that in the light of full industrialization, the home had lost its primary purpose. The household no longer had "social value" as a center of production, but was now the "centre of consumption," wrote Chicago educators Marion Talbot and Sophonisba Breckinridge in 1912. Now, they argued, the housewife's role was to "administer incomes" and consume efficiently.76 "We may as well face the fact cheerfully that industry in the home is doomed...," advised home economist Martha Bruère. Like Talbot and Breckinridge, she urged women to exchange outdated tasks that could now be done by industry for municipal housekeeping, or the caretaking of the community.77 But none went as far as Charlotte Perkins Gilman in suggesting that the nineteenth-century home be abolished. Talbot and Breckinridge saw the woman as the "heart of things" at home, the person who must bring up children to form good habits. In fact the well-brought-up child was now the home's ultimate product.78 These professional women espoused a

---

76 Talbot and Breckinridge, Modern Household, 2, 10. For a challenge to the view that production had moved out of the home, see Ruth Schwartz Cowan's More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave (New York: Basic Books, 1983). She argues that even though many work processes did move out of the home, others moved in and created new work for the homemaker.

77 Martha Bruère, "The New Homemaking," Outlook, 16 March 1912, 595; Talbot and Breckinridge, Modern Household, 4-5, 21-24.

78 Talbot and Breckinridge, Modern Household, 6-8, 79.
traditional position—that woman should manage the home—from which to propose a new and radical suggestion—that as a homemaker, she was not only justified but compelled to take action in the public sphere.

The home and Catharine Beecher’s view of woman within it was fiercely defended during this period of feminist expansion and turmoil. “It is the distinct and essential function of the home to furnish privacy and repose, and it is the distinct business of women to see to it that the home performs this function,” stated the leaders of the Atlanta Woman’s Club in 1909. The president of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage wrote in 1915 that her group was “asking for a division of labor for the sexes in the State and in the home.” She argued that government was business, the province of the male sex. Edward Bok of the *Ladies’ Home Journal* told his readers that “normal” wives should be “at the side of man as the worker.” Even modern women like Talbot and Breckinridge, who counseled women to embrace modernization, agreed that they should also fill the traditional role of mother. True homemaking, they wrote, perpetuated the home feeling, the spirit of home. The problem was

---

79 “Fourteenth Annual Announcement of the Atlanta Woman’s Club,” 1908-09, 7, 8, box 1, Atlanta Woman’s Club Papers.


articulated by the president of the Woman’s Department of the Southeastern Fair Association in 1916. She wondered:

how woman can be helped to meet these new responsibilities which civilization demands of her, and at the same time not fail in her first and most essential duty as the home maker and home keeper.83

The middle-class American housewife, then, was in a quandary in 1910. Was she to remain within her sphere and manage a home as Catharine Beecher had urged? Should she enter the public work world? Should she work for suffrage so that she could tend to municipal housekeeping as so many writers of the day urged her to do? Writer Margaret Deland noticed a “prevailing discontent among women.” She wrote that housewives who appeared outwardly to be perfectly happy, might “confide in you that they are bored to death. . . .”84 Christine Frederick might have been one of them in 1910. She wrote that prior to her discovery of a way to make it efficient, housekeeping represented “the most dreary shackles of which [women] have ever complained.”85

But Christine recognized that in spite of the debate, most Americans did not want radical change; they wanted to preserve the traditional home. The solution offered by home economists drew from the current trends


85C. Frederick, New Housekeeping, ix.
toward specialization and expertise. If the home suffered because it must perform a new function, if women could not manage it because the tasks were now different, the solution was to bring expert knowledge to bear upon the problem. "I believe that many a home . . . is not what it ought to be, not because the woman is not trying to do her part, but because she does not know how," wrote the president of the Woman’s Department of the Southeastern Fair Association. The hope that the home could be saved by the experts provided Christine Frederick with a career.

Christine accepted the validity of the nineteenth-century ideology developed by Catharine Beecher, the ideology that she herself, influenced by the expectations of her class, had affirmed as a student when she had written "The Genius of Woman." Woman’s place was in the home. But for Christine, the old ideology would, paradoxically, join with full acceptance of the modern age. She would employ the new ideas and practices that the male world of business was developing to increase the nation’s productivity and distribution of goods, and she would embrace enthusiastically the technology that was creating labor-saving devices for the private home and developing the power sources to operate them. Christine’s solution to the educated American woman’s dilemma was not to encourage her to leave the home but to invite the public sphere into it. Ironically, the acceptance of the old assumption enabled her to fashion an exciting, influential career.

She would have the support of the majority of the middle class as she encouraged women to enjoy their roles as homemakers; she would also be able to enter into a very public life of her own as she spread the gospel of home modernization.

4.3

Among the purveyors of modern culture that J. George brought home were advocates of the new "scientific management" current among engineers who sought to improve factory output. These men talked of Frederick Taylor who had written the phenomenally influential volume, *Principles of Scientific Management*, in which he explained his revolutionary method of systematizing work. Hearing these men talk of the time saved by the efficiency of this system, Christine "had an intuition that perhaps in this new idea was the life-preserver" that would save her from her sea of drudgery.

Scientific management was a response to the desire for increased production. It promised to utilize the worker to maximum capacity. When the efficiency engineer Harrington Emerson showed that efficiency innovations could save the railroads one million dollars a day during the Eastern Rate Case of 1910, the terms "efficiency" and "scientific

---


management" became household words. \(^8\) Taylor, the leader of the movement, had conducted experiments to increase the production of pig-iron handlers at Bethlehem Steel Company and shovelers at Midvale Steel Company during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Using stopwatches to determine the minimum time required to perform these tasks, he was able to raise output considerably. This led to the "standardization" of each task. Plans could be drawn up that would detail the movements required, the tools necessary, and the "routing" of the process. Planners would generate work assignments, giving each worker precise instructions for the task of the day. The four principles Taylor developed to implement scientific management were: a) development of the "science of the task" through careful timing and analysis of required motion; b) selection and training of workers suited to that task; c) careful supervision of workers coupled with a reward or "bonus" when they increased production; and d) strict division of labor between workers and management so that management made all decisions about tasks. \(^9\)

Taylor's system became a movement. The Taylor Society, the Efficiency Society of New York, and the *Efficiency Magazine* promulgated his ideas. One of the most prominent of Taylor's early disciples was Frank

---

\(^8\) See Haber, *Efficiency and Uplift*, 51-55, for a description of the Eastern Rate Case in which shippers protested a railroad rate hike.

Bunker Gilbreth. Gilbreth’s work augmented Taylor’s by adding the element of motion study to the stopwatch analyses. He used the new medium of the motion picture to identify sixteen elementary motions the human hand could perform. By cataloguing these motions Gilbreth claimed to be able to standardize all human labor. Gilbreth’s widely publicized study of bricklaying seized the imagination of those interested in efficiency and increased production. By first studying the motions of bricklayers, then sorting bricks and changing the height of the pallet from which they worked, Gilbreth increased the single bricklayer’s output from 120 bricks per hour to 350, according to Taylor or, in another account, from 1,000 to 2,700 per day. Gilbreth, working with his wife, Lillian, sought to find the “one best way” to do work. The Taylor Society quickly grew to include not only engineers, but businessmen and industry managers, as well.

Nonmembers attended meetings, Secretary of War Felix Frankfurter and muckraking journalist Ida Tarbell among them. This broad dissemination of scientific management ideas naturally caught J. George Frederick’s

---


attention, and he in turn brought these ideas home to Christine. A friend of Harrington Emerson, who had testified in the rate case, was one of those who discussed scientific management with her. Emerson had developed the twelve principles she would use to revolutionize housework.95

4.4

Christine had two babies and *was struggling with young and inexperienced help* when she first began listening to her husband and his friends discuss scientific management.96 J. George’s fortuitous conversations furnished Christine with the first of many modern ideas that would make her life as a homemaker come alive with purpose. *"For once I found a use for some of the college training I had despaired of ever putting into practice,"* she later wrote. If she set to work developing scientific management systems for the household, she could use the analytical skills she had *"applied many a time in 'Zoology A' or 'Physics B.'"*97 Fundamental

---

95See C. Frederick, *Household Engineering*, 9-12 for an account of an efficiency engineer describing these principles to her. The principles are set forth in Harrington Emerson, *The Twelve Principles of Efficiency* (New York: The Engineering Magazine Company, 1913). They are listed in n. 101, below.


97Ibid., viii, ix. Christine did not study physics in college, but it became her custom to exaggerate to make a point. This reference in the preface of *The New Housekeeping*, her first book, was but the first of many instances where she stretched the truth a bit.
to her pleasure in discovering this possibility was the belief that applying scientific management to housework would make it just as interesting and worthwhile as the "business and industrial world which men tackle with zest and results."  

Christine listened to an account of Gilbreth's experiments with bricklayers and wondered if similar methods could be applied to housekeeping. Given a copy of Emerson's book, *The Twelve Principles of Efficiency*, she asked how his ideas might be applied to the home. "It seemed to me," she wrote, "that this was exactly what my aim was in my own home. . . ." "Do you know that I am going to work out those principles here in our home!" she exclaimed to J. George. "I'm going to find out how these experts conduct investigations, and all about it, and then apply it to my factory, my business, my home." Here, Christine significantly modified the old ideology. While woman's primary role in

---

98C. Frederick, *New Housekeeping*, ix.

99Ibid., 3-9.


101C. Frederick, *New Housekeeping*, 10. Emerson's twelve principles of efficiency, the components he believed necessary in an efficient manufacturing system, were: 1) ideals, 2) common sense and judgment, 3) competent counsel, 4) discipline, 5) the fair deal, 6) reliable, immediate and accurate records, 7) planning and despatching, 8) standards and schedules, 9) standardized conditions, 10) standardized operations, 11) written standard-practice instructions, and 12) efficiency reward. See Emerson, *Twelve Principles*, xiv-xvii. Christine repeated the principles in *New Housekeeping*, 14 and *Household Engineering*, 9.
Catharine Beecher’s domestic sphere was a moral one, Christine’s new homemaker would concentrate on operating the home efficiently.

The experts suggested to Christine that housewives might avail themselves of “competent counsel,” a tactic suggested in Emerson’s twelve efficiency principles, by reading government bulletins, women’s magazines, and manufacturers’ brochures, and she applied herself to the study of these sources with energy.\(^{102}\) To any reader of his book, *Principles of Scientific Management*, Frederick Taylor had made a standing offer of tours of the firms in Philadelphia where his system had been installed.\(^{103}\) Christine may have taken him up on his offer, for she later wrote of visiting several facilities while she was making her study of scientific management. She studied the advantages of grouping tools in a cash register factory, she saw labor-saving devices that counted pills in a chemist’s shop, and she witnessed the improved efficiency that resulted from decreasing the number of cuts made in the manufacture of envelopes.\(^{104}\)

As Christine set about applying the efficiency principles to her household tasks, she was participating in a growing trend. From the time she first learned of Taylor, Gilbreth, and Emerson, the American press was

\(^{102}\)C. Frederick, *New Housekeeping*, 17.

\(^{103}\)Taylor, *Principles*, 144.

\(^{104}\)C. Frederick, *Household* Engineering, 12-14.
filled with articles about applying scientific management to the home. In 1910 the *Journal of Home Economics* suggested that housewives should imitate factory and commercial laundry managers and calculate their hours.\(^{105}\) The next year, Ellen Richards advised homemakers to become "engineers" and learn to keep their homes "under modern conditions. . . ."\(^{106}\) In 1911 and 1912, *Outlook* ran a series of articles on homemaking, many of them urging the application of scientific management. One included a discussion of the standardization of dishwashing.\(^{107}\) Marion Talbot and Sophonisba Breckinridge observed in *The Modern Household* that everyone was talking about scientific management in 1912.\(^{108}\) The message was clear. Homemaking could be changed from drudgery to humming efficiency through scientific management, but only if housewives were properly trained by experts.

The Massachusetts State Board of Education began offering "domestic training" courses in 1912.\(^{109}\) Two years later, the Atlanta Woman's Club heard a paper "on the relation of the study of Home


\(^{106}\)Richards, "The Social Significance of the Home Economics Movement," 122-123.


\(^{108}\)Talbot and Breckinridge, *Modern Household*, 47.

\(^{109}\)"Domestic Training Courses Conducted by State," *Union News Item*, November 1912, 8, box 1, file folder 3, WEIU papers.
Economics to the future success in home making.” Christine took full advantage of the currency and intersection of two modern ideas: that scientific management could improve any work process and that expertise would save the home. Catharine Beecher had sought to convince women that their duties in the home were as important as any on earth for moral reasons. Christine Frederick would share her newfound knowledge of home efficiency with other women and thus show them that homemaking was a fulfilling and satisfying profession.

Early in 1912, Christine sent a series of four articles on efficiency in the home to Edward Bok’s Ladies’ Home Journal. She had chosen a conservative, middle-class audience. A typical reader of the Ladies’ Home Journal was white, married, operating a home without a servant, and had means enough to sample the many products the magazine advertised. The Journal’s readers believed in the traditional values of the nuclear family home and upheld the notion that women should be the keepers of those values. Christine had undoubtedly read the magazine as a new bride and understood its appeal for other women. Her series was entitled, “The New Housekeeping,” and Karl Harriman, the Journal’s literary editor liked it very much. He asked Christine to come to the Journal’s offices in the new

---

110 “19th Year Book of the Atlanta Woman’s Club,” 1913-14, 22-23, box 1, Atlanta Woman’s Club Papers.

111 Tebbel and Zuckerman, The Magazine in America, 93, 181, 195.
Curtis Building on Independence Square in Philadelphia to discuss her articles with Bok. Bok not only agreed to run “The New Housekeeping” series, but he also offered Christine a position answering letters to the magazine under a department called “How Can I Run My House More Easily?” He offered her $15.00 for every 100 letters answered and $600.00 for the four articles. They would begin listing her in their directory, “Whatever You Want to Know Ask the Ladies’ Home Journal” in the July issue. When Christine held out for a larger sum for the articles, the Journal, wanting her to “feel justly compensated. . .,” raised the fee to $750.00. Christine demonstrated remarkable self-confidence in this early negotiation for her first real professional fee. She also demonstrated that she already had plans for a larger writing career. She asked Harriman if the Journal would object to her peddling similar articles to other magazines. Harriman asked her to wait until after the pieces had run in the Journal.

In June, a supply of Ladies’ Home Journal stationery arrived at the country

112S. L. Laciar to Christine McGaffey Frederick, 29 January 1912; Karl Edwin Harriman to Frederick, 7 March 1912, file folder 1, Frederick Papers. Cyrus Curtis, owner of the LHJ, had built an imposing new building bounded by Walnut, Sixth, Seventh, and Sansom Streets in 1911. Edward W. Bok, A Man from Maine (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1923), 121.

113Bok to Frederick, 18 March 1912, 1 April 1912; Karl Edwin Harriman to Frederick, 16 April 1912, file folder 1, Frederick Papers.

114Harriman to Frederick, 16 April 1912, file folder 1, Frederick Papers.
home Christine and J. George had purchased on Long Island the year before, and she became the magazine's new housekeeping expert.\textsuperscript{115}

Encouraged and motivated by her immediate success, Christine produced another article about the reorganization of the kitchen in the old house on Long Island and sold it to the *Journal* for $100. It was published in July, 1913.\textsuperscript{116} Pursuing publication with great energy, Christine decided to expand her housekeeping articles into a book and offered to send chapters to Harriman for spring issues even as the *Journal* was running the first articles. But she moved too fast for him and he declined, saying that the magazine had already laid out the spring numbers.\textsuperscript{117} A piece drawn from the new material was published in the November issue.\textsuperscript{118}

Christine continued a cordial relationship with Bok and Harriman. At one point, Bok planned to publish some of her material in the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, a newspaper that Cyrus Curtis, owner of the *Journal*, had just bought.\textsuperscript{119} In the spring of 1913, she suggested that "the Ledger\textsuperscript{119}"

\textsuperscript{115}William E. Walter to Frederick, 20 June 1912, file folder 1, Frederick Papers.

\textsuperscript{116}C. Frederick, "How I Made My Country Kitchen Efficient," *LHJ*, July 1913, 20; Harriman to Frederick, 4 November 1912, file folder 1, Frederick Papers.

\textsuperscript{117}Harriman to Frederick, 4 November 1912, Frederick Papers.

\textsuperscript{118}Christine Frederick, "The Woman Who Buys Wisely," *LHJ*, November 1913, 95.

\textsuperscript{119}Bok, *Man From Maine*, 199-201.
material" be syndicated, and Harriman told her to wait. Within days, however, he wrote that the *Ladies’ Home Journal* no longer controlled the *Ledger* and that she should approach the *Public Ledger*’s circulation manager.\(^{120}\) Apparently she did so, for several years later she would claim to be a contributor to the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*.\(^{121}\) Bok continued to be pleased with Christine’s work. He ran six more of her articles during 1913 and 1914, and after a test of her letter-answering skills in which he sent her a dummy letter, he commended her on the “prompt answer” that was “full and comprehensive.” He was pleased that she was courteous and demonstrated personal interest in the writer.\(^{122}\) She worked continuously, sometimes jotting down ideas for new articles on the backs of envelopes. She conscientiously typed up lists of readers’ problems and summarized her responses.\(^{123}\) By now it was clear that Christine could not produce work at this rate and be the full-time housewife and mother that

\(^{120}\)Bok to Frederick, 17 March 1913; Harriman to Frederick, 16 April 1913; Harriman to Frederick, 28 April 1913, file folder 1, Frederick Papers.

\(^{121}\)“Turn Energy Wrong Way,” [1918], n.p., clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.

\(^{122}\)Bok to Frederick, 13 January 1914, file folder 1, Frederick Papers.

\(^{123}\)Notes on envelope dated 28 April 1913; Lists, “How Can I Run My Home More Easily?” file folder 1, Frederick Papers.
she represented herself to be. A housekeeper became a permanent part of
the Frederick household when they moved to Long Island.\textsuperscript{124}

Sometime before Bok accepted her articles for publication, Christine
joined an organization called the “Associated Clubs of Domestic Science,”
and she attended meetings every other Thursday.\textsuperscript{125} This provided her with
credentials as the “competent counsel” that the efficiency engineers
recommended, for she included under her name, “National Secretary of the
Associated Clubs of Domestic Science.”\textsuperscript{126} As such, she joined the ranks
of the home economists who argued that professional training in domestic
science would preserve the home. Christine believed that she could
demonstrate to other women that through modernization, housekeeping
could be made more pleasant than office work. “Certainly, baking a cake
or bathing a baby is not a whit as much ‘drudgery’ as monotonously
addressing envelopes or pounding a typewriter,” she wrote.\textsuperscript{127}

\textsuperscript{124}Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994; C. Frederick, \textit{Household
Engineering}, 418, 437.

\textsuperscript{125}The author has not been able to find evidence of this
organization’s existence, but Christine signed her work as the “National
Secretary” of this group until 1915. She mentioned attending alternate
Thursday meetings in her second “New Housekeeping” article, \textit{LHJ},
October 1912, 20.

\textsuperscript{126}See the first four articles in the \textit{LHJ}, September 1912, 13;
October 1912, 20; November 1912, 20; December 1912, 16.

\textsuperscript{127}C. Frederick, “The New Housekeeping,” \textit{LHJ}, October 1912, 100.
The New Housekeeping articles reflected Christine’s adoption of scientific management as one way to preserve the home by lightening the housewife’s burden and therefore making her happier and more productive. Each article was prefaced by the story of Frank Gilbreth’s improvement of bricklaying. Her first article recalled Catharine Beecher’s instructions on washing dishes. It included a detailed description of how she had standardized dishwashing, analyzing and reducing the number of motions necessary to complete the job, thus cutting the time necessary. Following the example of the efficiency engineers she had studied, she broke dishwashing into three separate operations: scraping and stacking, washing, drying and putting away. No element of the minutiae of this task escaped her analysis. “My first step was: pots and pans filled with water,” she wrote. “Note, please, that my drainer is at my left and the dishes are stacked up to the right.” (Italics hers.) She also suggested a formula for adjusting the height of the kitchen sink, a suggestion that would later prompt her to tell audiences that she would be remembered for “raising the kitchen sink.” She demonstrated the time saved by her analyses with charts. Not only did Christine adopt the methods of the efficiency experts, but she also used their lexicon. The housekeeper who washed the dishes, served the meals, and cleaned the rooms was the “worker.” Tasks were

“standardized,” and the work components were divided to create “specialization.” Tools should be grouped, supplies inventoried.\textsuperscript{129}

The second and third articles, again reminiscent of Catharine Beecher, dealt with scheduling and record-keeping. While she told her readers that she disliked “‘system’ as much as any woman,” she revealed a penchant for extremely detailed organization. The sample schedule, her own, set exact times for bathing the baby, working the bread, making the salad dressing, and cleaning the bathroom. Her record system involved a card file of 1,000 three-inch by five-inch cards on which she recorded everything from clothing sizes to financial records to jokes and quotations. The last stood her in good stead at a party, she wrote. She once brought out the quotation file and provided “entertainment by card system.” The wit and humor she had displayed when bantering with professors at Northwestern often relieved her no-nonsense efficiency style.\textsuperscript{130}

Christine ventured into Progressive reform in the fourth article of this first series. She discussed the “servant problem” at length, arguing that its solution lay in treating domestic help like workers in any other industry.


She advocated definite hours, hourly wages, work plans, and regular days off.\footnote{131}{C. Frederick, "The New Housekeeping," LHJ, December 1912, 16. Christine’s views on servants will be treated in depth in Chapter 6.}

Christine was not the only Frederick who was writing articles about efficiency in 1912. Although his focus was on advertising, J. George was also interested in scientific management and what it could do for the production efficiency of manufacturing. In an article that was intended to be the first in a series for \textit{Harper's Weekly}, he identified efficiency as the third major improvement in modern industry, the first and second being invention and organization. Efficiency could cut the administrative costs of selling by twenty percent, he claimed. J. George believed, as did Frederick Taylor, that scientific management promoted the most humane treatment of the work force, primarily because it offered bonuses for goals met. Revealing a natural bias for one who earned his living writing about advertising and management, he wrote that the efficiency movement “automatically shattered the coercive effects of the labor-unions.”\footnote{132}{J. G. Frederick, "The Efficiency Movement," \textit{Harper’s Weekly}, 2 November 1912, 11.} The promised series did not materialize, and J. George did not write any further efficiency articles for \textit{Harper’s} that year.
When, after nearly three years in New York City, the Fredericks had decided that they would prefer to rear their children in the country, they bought a house on over an acre and a half of property forty miles out on Long Island in the rural community of Greenlawn.\textsuperscript{133} The family temporarily moved across Long Island Sound to Port Washington while the old house, situated in a long-neglected apple orchard, was renovated. By the time Christine wrote the \textit{Journal} articles in 1912, they had moved into the house she christened “Applecroft,” honoring, perhaps, her Scottish heritage.\textsuperscript{134} Greenlawn was a small town of about 400 inhabitants when the Fredericks moved to Applecroft. The station where J. George caught the train to the city every morning was a mile and a half down the road. The nearest market town was Huntington, five miles distant. Widely scattered farms dotted Suffolk County, many of them owned by immigrants. German and Swedish neighbors grew cabbage and cucumbers which they sold to the

\textsuperscript{133}J. George bought the house and property in March, 1911. Deed Liber 762 at pp. 251-253 (Suffolk County Clerk’s Office, Riverhead, NY photocopy).

\textsuperscript{134}Jean Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994; “Applecroft ‘shack’ before remodeling into home,” photograph MC261-23-1, Frederick Papers; “The Experiment Station Itself,” photograph in “Household Expert Has Experiment Station,” clipping, Springfield, MA \textit{Republican}, 18 February 1923, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.
pickling works near the Greenlawn station. They kept dairy cows and hogs, fed in winter by home-grown corn silage.¹³⁵

By the time the Fredericks moved to Greenlawn, Christine was solidly launched as a household writer, busy enough to require an office of her own. The roof on the old garage at Applecroft was raised to accommodate a light, spacious loft that was furnished with desk, typewriter, file cabinets, Morris chair, and pot-bellied stove. Christine hired a secretary to help her with the large volume of letters and the continuous flow of articles.¹³⁶ Her writing suggested that she did her own housework, and for a time she did much of it. Certainly, she conducted the time study experiments and operated the equipment she acquired. Her daughter remembers that her mother was an “excellent housekeeper” and that “especially in the early years,” Christine “did a good bit of cooking.”¹³⁷ Still, the volume of her writing and the need for staff indicate that in her own home, she delegated much of the work she urged other women to find fulfilling.

Christine’s renovated kitchen at Applecroft reflected the transition to power-operated kitchen appliances. She cooked on a three-burner kerosene stove in the early years, supplemented by a “fireless cooker,” one of her

¹³⁵Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.
¹³⁶Ibid.; Photograph MC261-23-3, Frederick Papers.
¹³⁷Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.
favorite labor-saving devices. Though the Fredericks installed an electric
generator in their basement, she conducted her efficiency experiments
without the benefit of electricity in the beginning, "to show what could be
done in a kitchen in which electric current and city conveniences were not
possible." She made it efficient: counter top and sink height were
adjusted to her five-foot, six-inch frame, furniture and appliances were
arranged for the proper "routing" of food preparation and cleanup, and
drain board and serving surfaces were covered with galvanized iron for
easy cleaning. She also installed an elevator icebox, which operated "on
pulleys and counterweights" that could be "easily raised and lowered
through the kitchen floor into a cold storage closet." Christine repainted
her twelve-by-fourteen-foot kitchen in light cream with white woodwork to
enhance the light provided by large casement windows, mindful, perhaps,
of Catharine Beecher's advice to provide "a neat and cheerful kitchen," and

---

138 The early fireless cooker was an insulated, airtight metal box fitted
with wells that held removable covered pots. Preheated food was cooked
by radiation from preheated soapstone disks placed in the bottom of the
wells. See C. Frederick, *Meals That Cook Themselves and Cut the Costs*

139 Photograph MC261-23-10, Frederick Papers; C. Frederick, *New
Housekeeping*, 249-255.

140 Christine wrote that she needed a sink that was at least 31 inches
high. According to her working surface height charts, a 5' 6" woman
required a sink 31" high. Christine Frederick, "Putting the American
Woman and Her Home on a Business Basis," *American Review of Reviews*,
49 (February 1914): 202; C. Frederick, "How I Made My Country Kitchen
Efficient," 20; *Household Engineering*, 54.
“to promote a neat look and pure air.”  

A pressed cork floor afforded comfort during periods of standing, and all shelves were open for easy access. Photographs of Christine working in this model kitchen, dressed in long white apron and housekeeping cap, appear in her articles and books.

Life at Applecroft was happy for Christine’s children. They played in the orchard, occasionally getting shooed from beneath the office window by their busy mother who needed peace to concentrate on her writing. When they reached school age, they walked to the one-room Elwood Elementary School, about a mile and a half from the house. They played with the neighboring farm children, helped to tramp the pungent, fermenting silage as it was blown into the top of the silo, watched, wide-eyed, as pigs were killed and butchered for German sausage, helped with farm chores, and enjoyed the rewards of warm strudel and coffee.

The Fredericks owned a car, always a used one, from the time they moved to Applecroft. J. George would start its motor with the crank every morning before breakfast and Christine would drive him to the station after

---


143 See for example, C. Frederick, *Household Engineering*, [6], [32], 65, 110.

144 Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.
they had eaten.  “In the author’s home, five miles from fresh supplies, and 40 miles from a city, meat and perishables are bought once a week; monthly a large grocery order is sent to a city dealer. . . .,” Christine wrote of shopping. She hated to crank the car and she did not really like to make the drive to Huntington, but country living required it. The family used the car to drive to the shore or to a picnic. Not everyone on Long Island in those early years owned a car. A woman who sewed for the family from time to time drove to Applecroft by horse and buggy, a familiar sight in Greenlawn when the children were small.

Although Christine wrote much of her housekeeping advice for women who did not hire help, and often claimed that she did all her own work, she actually required the assistance of at least part-time help for child care, laundry, sewing, and cleaning. The Frederick family saw many nursemaids come and go, but the nursemaid-housekeeper who stayed the longest was a Norwegian woman who had a daughter of her own. Christine tried to hire mothers with the understanding that they could keep their children with them at Applecroft. This made the remote country life more attractive, and she trusted mature women to be more capable than

145 Ibid.
146 C. Frederick, Household Engineering, 326.
147 Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.
148 Ibid.
young single women. Women with children, she wrote, provided the most dependable and permanent help, especially for those who lived in the suburbs. Christine did not address the inconsistency that this situation revealed. While she advised other middle-class women to be happy in their own homes, she hired women who had to work for a living away from theirs.

The children called the Norwegian housekeeper "Nursie," and Christine’s daughter remembers her as “a delightful woman, motherly and clean.” Christine mentioned “the dearly beloved ‘nursie’-housekeeper” in her second book, describing how she was given Fridays off, but always joined the family for dinner on those evenings. Nursie didn’t meet all of Christine’s requirements, however. “The author confesses, regretfully, that in her own home an excellent ironing machine, gas iron, fireless cooker, dishwasher and washing machine stand unused by any save herself—more than one worker (and that, too, of education, and more than 15 years’ experience in managing homes of their own) refusing to be ‘bothered’ with ‘new-fangled’ ideas. . . .,” she wrote. Apparently Nursie and other household help did not share her enthusiasm for technology.

---


150 Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.


152 Ibid., 391.
When J. George and Christine moved to Applecroft, Christine was thirty-one years old. A journalist described her two years later: "[Y]ou would think she was a young college girl, keen and intelligent, but carefree and full of the joy of living." Her manner was "placid," her face "unlined." Another interviewer wrote that she "contrives somehow to look like a healthy and happy girl." She was still slim, lively, witty, and full of fun. Unlike her contemporary dress reformers, Christine still wore corsets and continued to wear them well into her old age. She believed that corsets were essential to health because they promoted erect posture and did not allow the abdomen to relax. "[S]ome form of corset or abdominal belt or supporter should always be worn when doing the manual tasks of housework, especially by women who have had children. . . ." she wrote. She believed in dressing for the evening, after the day’s work was done and before J. George returned home from the city. She would always put on a “clean waist” in the late afternoon, she wrote in 1912. She planned her day so that she would have to “spend only a minimum of time in the kitchen at night when she [was] dressed for the

---


155 C. Frederick, Household Engineering, 489-490; Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.

evening. . . ."\textsuperscript{157} "Nursie" doubtless made this possible by doing part of the work.

Home life was pleasant. Though she claimed to have a tin ear, Christine played the piano a bit, and J. George sang. The entire family gathered round the piano for "family sings" from time to time.\textsuperscript{158} J. George tinkered with do-it-yourself projects around the place. Since his printer's devil days he had enjoyed working with his hands. He had developed an interest in home projects like gardening, plumbing, paperhanging and painting when he and Christine were apartment-dwellers in the Bronx.\textsuperscript{159} At Applecroft, he and his young son, David, built a poured concrete picnic table and benches in the old orchard.\textsuperscript{160} The family also played tennis on their own concrete tennis court.\textsuperscript{161}

Sometime after the move to Long Island and before the birth of the Fredericks' third child, Phyllis, in the spring of 1915, Christine gave birth to a stillborn baby boy. Though she recovered fully, and rarely mentioned it, she thought of it more often as she aged. Four years before she died, she

\textsuperscript{157}C. Frederick, \textit{Household Engineering}, 198.


\textsuperscript{159}J. G. Frederick, "Play Confessions," 564-565.

\textsuperscript{160}Christine Frederick, "Equipping an Orchard as a Living Room," \textit{New Country Life}, March 1917, 108.

\textsuperscript{161}Christine Frederick, "Making a Tennis Court," \textit{Country Life}, May 1927, 66; Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.
told an audience that she had borne five children, and on her deathbed, she lamented that there should have been another son.\textsuperscript{162} In 1917, the family was made complete with the arrival of the fourth child and third daughter, Carol, who was born on August 22 of that year.\textsuperscript{163} Christine’s most creative, most active career years coincided with the rearing of four children at Applecroft. Although she wrote little about child-rearing, she occasionally revealed progressive beliefs on the subject. In her second book, she advised mothers to require their children to do chores according to efficiency principles, but to avoid using them as personal servants. She believed that children had rights.\textsuperscript{164} The Fredericks made sure their children’s health was monitored; they were vaccinated for measles and smallpox, had their eyes checked, and made regular trips to the dentist.\textsuperscript{165} Christine was fun-loving and affectionate with her children, and they addressed her by the familiar term, “Muzz,” an endearment they used all her life.\textsuperscript{166}

\textsuperscript{162}Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994; Christine Frederick, Laguna Library Book Day Speech, 22 November 1966, file folder 10, Frederick Papers.

\textsuperscript{163}Joyce to author, 15 January 1995.

\textsuperscript{164}C. Frederick, \textit{Household Engineering}, 383-384.


\textsuperscript{166}Joyce to the author, 15 January 1995; [David Frederick] to Christine Frederick, 17 February 1944, file folder 5, Frederick Papers.
The atmosphere was always stimulating. J. George believed that children should be taught to question and challenge. He often tossed out topics at the dinner table and encouraged the children to argue with him. His daughter remembered hearing “trial marriages” discussed, a subject explored in Elsie Clews Parsons’s 1906 work, *The Family*. No doubt, J. George and Christine were familiar with her arguments. Many magazines found their way into the Frederick home. Both J. George and Christine mentioned periodicals such as the *Atlantic*, the *North American Review*, the *Review of Reviews*, the *New Republic*, and the *Bookman*. Their daughter remembers reading *Harper’s* and the *Literary Digest*. Although they lived a considerable distance from the city and J. George’s contacts, there was often company.

Encouraged by her early success as a home efficiency writer, Christine worked to expand her career not only because it was exciting and enjoyable, but because the money mattered, too. Though J. George’s career showed promise, the truth was that he was an impractical visionary who “just held on to paying his office rent to the Business Bourse. . . .” The family needed Christine’s earnings. Even though she hired help to keep the household running while she wrote and traveled to speaking

---


169 Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.
engagements, she had to be frugal. A seamstress made all the children’s
clothes while they were small, and Christine bought cloth in quantity to
save money.170 Middle-class families who lived comfortably in 1912 did so
on incomes of between $1,000 and $3,500 a year.171 Harry Hollingworth,
for example, earned an annual salary of $1,000 as a professor at
Columbia.172 In 1919, Christine used a model income of $1,500 as the
basis of her typical family budget.173 That may suggest the Fredericks’
income bracket at the time. To help keep it at that level, Christine had to
maintain a prodigious work schedule.

4.6

Her book, *The New Housekeeping*, set forth the premises on which
Christine Frederick would base a career for the next three decades. She
quoted from Catharine Beecher’s *Treatise* to support her argument that
housekeeping could be transformed into a stimulating and satisfying
occupation for all women:

> When young ladies are taught rightly to appreciate and learn the
> most convenient and economical modes of performing all family


171Cowan, *More Work*, 158. For a description of the many “poor”
homes in which Americans lived in 1912, see Cowan, 160-172. Women in
these circumstances had difficulty keeping houses and bodies clean and
providing sufficient food for their families; they could not begin to think
about introducing scientific management into their households.

172Schwarz, *Heterodoxy*, 57.

duties, and of employing time and money; when they perceive the
true estimate accorded these things by teachers and friends, the
grand cause of this evil [of poor housekeeping] will be removed.\textsuperscript{174}

Christine blamed discontent among housewives on poor outlook. Too
many women let housework weigh them down, she wrote, by focusing on
the physical aspects of the work. Others lacked confidence and were
inert. Too many merely tolerated housework and felt contempt for it,
wishing they could do something else instead. All these attitudes, she
wrote, were “poisonous and antagonistic to either efficiency or the highest
personal happiness. . . .” If women would shake off these destructive
attitudes, they would then find that

\begin{quote}
far from being dull drudgery, homemaking in all its details is
fascinating and stimulating if a woman applies to it her best
intelligence and culture. (Italics hers.)\textsuperscript{175}
\end{quote}

She failed to acknowledge that she had overcome similar negative attitudes
not through housework, but through writing.

The primary inspiration for \textit{The New Housekeeping} had been
Christine’s discovery of scientific management, and that continued to be
central to her work. She refined her advice on efficiency in a second book
written in 1919. Imitating Taylor, Christine told her readers that “\textit{standard}
practice means . . . written directions as to methods and tools and time.”

\textsuperscript{174}Catharine Beecher, \textit{Treatise}, quoted in C. Frederick, \textit{New
Housekeeping}, 240.

\textsuperscript{175}C. Frederick, \textit{New Housekeeping}, 183-186.
(Italics hers.) She suggested that all processes be timed, written down in numbered, detailed steps, and put in a kitchen notebook.\textsuperscript{176} She continued to work on the efficient use of space, banishing the old-fashioned pantry because it wasted steps, suggesting shelves wide enough for only one object to avoid inefficient reaching, designing an ideal laundry room.\textsuperscript{177} She advised the homemaker to prepare a schedule based on timed motion studies and to follow it precisely. “The more closely work is timed the more nearly perfect the schedule will be,” she wrote.\textsuperscript{178}

Christine seemed unaware that much of the elaborate timing, planning, and record-keeping she suggested might actually result in more work for the housewife. Expanding the time spent on household chores would make it even harder to find time for activities outside the home. In addition, she held housewives to the new, higher standards of cleanliness that the advent of appliances inspired.\textsuperscript{179} “Increasingly high standards of sanitation in the home have made cleaning one of the most important divisions of housework,” she wrote in 1919.\textsuperscript{180} She recommended that bathrooms be cleaned and floors mopped daily. She even suggested that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{176}C. Frederick, \textit{Household Engineering}, 94-95, 152-155.
\item \textsuperscript{177}Ibid., 20, 46-47, 223-232.
\item \textsuperscript{178}Ibid., 69, 83.
\item \textsuperscript{179}See Ruth Cowan’s discussion of the increased labor necessitated by indoor plumbing in \textit{More Work for Mother}, 86-89.
\item \textsuperscript{180}C. Frederick, \textit{Household Engineering}, 147-148.
\end{itemize}
cleanliness was more important than minimizing labor. "[T]he vacuum cleaner, oil dusters and small removable rugs are important not so much as labor-savers as because they minimize the number of impurities and disease germs...," she wrote. But she also told the woman who did not hire a servant that she should avoid making her schedule too elaborate or raising her standards of cleanliness too high. "It is quite possible to keep the house too clean...," she wrote. "Housekeeping should never be an end in itself." (Italics hers).\(^{181}\) She failed to realize that following her prescription might make it just that.\(^{182}\)

Christine believed that women should continue to do most housekeeping tasks at home. In 1914, she assured the homemaker that "no matter how difficult and trying are the household tasks and burdens she finds placed upon her, there positively are ways to meet and conquer them efficiently--if she approaches these problems vigorously, hopefully, and patiently." (Italics hers.) She reported that she had spent hours working out methods for her tasks, analyzing the steps she took to make a cake or perform some other cooking chore. She provided charts that

\(^{181}\)Ibid., 82, 173, 389, 484.

\(^{182}\)A study of sixty "comfortable" New York families from 1912 to 1914 revealed that the housewives in these homes spent an average of fifty-six hours a week on housework. John B. Leeds, "The Household Budget: With a Special Inquiry into the Amount and Value of Household Work" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1917) cited in Cowan, More Work, 245 n. 1.
showed time saved by converting to "standardized" methods.\textsuperscript{183} This process, she believed, would make housework interesting and thus help save the home; women would be happier staying at home if they made it efficient. But by offering her own experience as a model, Christine ignored the fact that her typical reader would not be able to parlay housekeeping experiments into the exciting writing and speaking career that she had created for herself. Like the home economists who did not always make it clear whether their training would produce homemakers or teachers, Christine delivered a conflicted message. Sometimes she claimed that scientific management would make the woman content to stay home; at other times, she acknowledged many women’s desire to enter the outside world. The point of standardizing housework, she wrote in the \textit{Journal of Home Economics}, was to have time for other activities.\textsuperscript{184} The “new homemaking,” she had written five months earlier, would provide a “life for woman freed from demeaning house drudgery—the opportunity to give thought and care to the wider range of interests which it is now certain will be woman’s future sphere.”\textsuperscript{185} Yet the model schedule she developed in her 1919 housekeeping manual offered a full day of housekeeping chores

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{183}Christine Frederick, “How I Save Money in My Home,” \textit{LHJ}, January 1914, 38.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{184}Christine Frederick, “Points in Efficiency,” \textit{JHE} 6 (June 1914): 280.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{185}C. Frederick, “Putting the American Woman,” 208.}
with rest periods, but no time for venturing into the public sphere. When she did allow time out of the home, it was not for paid employment. A woman who prepared her dinner during lunch cleanup, for example, would have “more definite ‘off time’ in the afternoon for calling, club meetings, or rest.” (Italics hers.)

Despite the enthusiasm with which Christine and other writers embraced the scientific management model for housekeeping, its principles were misplaced in a home operated by a lone woman. Christine unintentionally acknowledged the problem herself: “It is the great misfortune of women as homemakers that each one of them must stand alone as the directing head of a separate establishment, without any trained, efficient mind to guide and direct them,” she wrote. Men in the work place, on the other hand, had foremen and overseers and “the social stimulus of working among other men in competition.” Taylor had used teachers, toolroom men, planning clerks, and, of course, the workers in factories. One of his four main principles was to choose the right worker for a given task. He wrote that his system worked well only when “the best man suited” to the work was “carefully selected. . . .” His planners

---


188 Taylor, *Principles*, 70.

189 Ibid., 43.
were specialists. "One . . . is a specialist on the proper speeds and cutting tools to be used. . . . Another man analyzes the best and quickest motions to be made by the workman. . . . Still a third . . . makes out a timetable." Christine ignored Taylor's careful division of labor when she suggested that any woman could be happy keeping house by scientific management, juggling alone all planning, scheduling and working.

In making scientific management the focus of housekeeping, Christine had departed from Catharine Beecher's injunction that women's primary task was to provide moral authority in the home. She replaced it with the canon of efficiency. Not all middle-class women were willing to make that exchange, however. One home economist protested in 1914 that the home was still an expression of "the law of God," the place where people are nurtured. "I hope," she entreated, "we shall not change for the thing called efficiency the real treasures of our home life." 

"Assailed of late by experts in domestic science," a reader of the New York Times wrote, she did not believe that she was as ignorant and wasteful as the home efficiency engineers would have her believe. She could "give chapter and verse" on how she operated her home and did not need to be taught scientific management. Nevertheless, the currency of scientific management makes out a timetable." Christine ignored Taylor's careful division of labor when she suggested that any woman could be happy keeping house by scientific management, juggling alone all planning, scheduling and working.

In making scientific management the focus of housekeeping, Christine had departed from Catharine Beecher's injunction that women's primary task was to provide moral authority in the home. She replaced it with the canon of efficiency. Not all middle-class women were willing to make that exchange, however. One home economist protested in 1914 that the home was still an expression of "the law of God," the place where people are nurtured. "I hope," she entreated, "we shall not change for the thing called efficiency the real treasures of our home life." "Assailed of late by experts in domestic science," a reader of the New York Times wrote, she did not believe that she was as ignorant and wasteful as the home efficiency engineers would have her believe. She could "give chapter and verse" on how she operated her home and did not need to be taught scientific management. Nevertheless, the currency of scientific

190 Ibid., 123.


management gave Christine’s articles and books great authority. Through her self-taught expertise in efficiency, Christine had launched an important career teaching other women how to make work in the home a fulfilling occupation. Her expert advice, of course, would keep her followers in their homes.
CHAPTER 5: APPLECROFT: PRESERVING THE HOME

We have never thought of the economic waste of the labor of the woman in the home. . . . We have been kept in and they are still saying the woman's place is the home. As if the world did not belong to her as much as to him. It is our world, men and women, too. . . . It is not possible for mothers to rightly fulfill their work while they practice at the same time that combined and chaotic group of industries which goes on inside the sacred circle of the home.¹

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 1915

[Why encourage women in the profession of home making at all? Why should a woman . . . cling to this archaic institution when the modern apartment hotel with its communistic kitchen, its communistic servants and its communistic laundry is bound in time to supplant this wasteful old institution of the home? . . . I believe that the individual home is going to last. . . . That is why I say that home making as a profession has a bigger future than any other single occupation.²

Christine Frederick, 1916

5.1

Christine Frederick and Charlotte Perkins Gilman both lectured for a course entitled, "Women in Industry: Her Opportunities in Business Today," sponsored by New York's Intercollegiate Bureau of Occupations during the winter of 1915-1916. The seven-month-long course was hosted by the School of Commerce at New York University. The school's dean, when


²Christine Frederick, "Household Economics," Women in Industry Lecture No. 15, 8 February 1916, 2, 7, carton 1, file folder 16, BVI Papers.
introducing Gilman as the first lecturer, told the attendees that “woman’s greatest need is the ability and the opportunity to earn a living independently of men.”\(^3\) Four months later, Christine tailored her own comments to this audience of women who sought professions by listing several paid occupations that training in homemaking might qualify them to pursue: dietitian, home economics teacher, restaurant manager, child care provider, or household engineer.\(^4\) But the tenor of Christine’s message contrasted sharply with that of Gilman’s. Gilman’s lecture drew from her well-developed criticism of the traditional home; Christine’s was a defense of it. Some twenty months earlier she had declared to an audience of home economists, “Our greatest enemy is the woman with the career.”\(^5\)

When the Fredericks moved into the remodeled house in Greenlawn in 1912, Christine had established the Applecroft Experiment Station, an idea that Edward Bok had proposed to her.\(^6\) The idea was not an original one. There were, in fact, two household experiment stations nearby.

Charles and Mary Barnard operated a home experiment station just across Long Island Sound in Darien, Connecticut. In 1908, the Barnards had built a country home on the outskirts of Darien where they hoped to

\(^3\)Women in Industry, Lecture No. 1, 1.


\(^5\)C. Frederick, “Points in Efficiency,” 280.

\(^6\)C. Frederick, Selling Mrs. Consumer, 167.
conduct a "simple servantless life" on "the principles of scientific management that rule the business world." Like Christine, they had been inspired by Gilbreth's bricklaying experiment and sought to apply motion-saving techniques to housekeeping. They operated their home without benefit of either gas or electricity, using a coal stove in the basement to heat water, an alcohol-burning range to cook food, and a fireless cooker that could be preheated for slow-cooking meals. The Barnards' experiments and bulletins were designed to help women who were too "isolated to work out their own salvation" from drudgery. Charles Barnard claimed to have received and answered 4,000 letters from housewives by 1910.7

Another nearby experiment station was established in 1909 under the auspices of the New Jersey Federation of Women's Clubs. The Barnards' project had given these women the idea for a broader testing station that they established in a wing built onto Mary Pattison's house. Pattison, the president of the Federation, described the station as "an attempt to standardize the demands at least of the club women of New Jersey for labor-saving devices and pure economical foods." The wing was equipped with four types of cookstove, but Pattison declared that "the future belongs to electricity." An electric motor operated a coffee mill, a

7"An Experiment Station for Making Housekeeping Easy," NYT, 7 May 1911, section 5, p. 13.
polisher, a washing machine and a chopper. This station differed from the Barnards’ in that its purpose was to test new products. Club members were enthusiastically in favor of appliances that saved housewives’ labor, and Pattison thought that once women knew about all the new devices on the market, they would “joyfully buy them.” She also believed such devices would eventually do away with the need for servants.⁸

Christine was undoubtedly influenced by these experiments. She wrote that there were “many excellent domestic science laboratories” when she created her “Applecroft Efficiency Kitchen,” as she initially called it.⁹ But Applecroft, she believed, was “the first to emphasize methods and the personal attitude of a woman toward her work, rather than mere tools and machinery.”¹⁰ In 1913 the dominant theme of her work was still efficiency, and she described Applecroft as a place where she could standardize household tasks by running time and motion studies in an efficiently planned kitchen.¹¹ But it would also be a laboratory where she, like the New Jersey Federation, could test new devices and appliances.

---

⁸“Experiment Station to Solve Housekeepers’ Problems,” NYT, 26 March 1911, sec. 5, p. 4; Mrs. Frank A. Pattison, “Scientific Management in Home-Making,” AAAPSS, 48(July 1913): 96-98.

⁹C. Frederick, New Housekeeping, 248, 250.

¹⁰C. Frederick, “Putting the American Woman,” 201.

¹¹Ibid., 252.
Applecroft, Christine developed a multi-faceted business that demonstrated her skills as an entrepreneur.

An early letterhead for “Applecroft Experiment Station” advertised several services: “The Efficiency Kitchen,” “Household and Pure Food Information Service,” “The Applecroft Press Publishers,” and “The New Womanhood Magazine.” Describing her operation as a publishing house was an exaggeration. Christine’s Applecroft publications amounted to little more than a short-lived series of bulletins she called the New Womanhood Magazine, brochures promoting her own services, and household charts that she sold by mail. Her first bulletin, entitled “Dishwashing Number,” was a time and motion analysis of hand dishwashing compared to the performances of four models of mechanical dishwashers, all of which she roundly criticized. In another, the “Cleaning

\[\text{\textsuperscript{12}“Applecroft Experiment Station,” billing statement, 30 November 1914, file folder 1, Frederick Papers.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{13}Christine often stretched the truth. On a later letterhead, in order to add extra “staff” to the Applecroft enterprise, she used the name Isobel Brands, the name of one of the great aunts who served as governesses in Russia. She also wrote under that name occasionally. Sometimes Christine invented the names of other businesses. On the backs of various photographs promoting her activities, she stamped “Phyllis Frederick Photo Service,” a “made-up name to sound businesslike,” according to her daughter. Christine Frederick to Mr. W. E. Loucks, 3 April 1919, file folder 2, Frederick Papers; Photograph M261-23-2, Frederick Papers; Jean Joyce to the author, 15 January 1995.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{14}Copies of the bulletin can be seen in file folder 12, and an example of a food wheel, “Mrs. Christine Frederick’s Housekeepers’ Food Guide,” in file folder 16 of the Frederick Papers.}\]
Number," she analyzed various methods of cleaning. Christine used these bulletins to advertise *The New Housekeeping* and a food chart that she had devised. In addition to developing written materials on housekeeping, she also offered her services to individual housewives and, on occasion, helped plan kitchens.\(^{15}\) In short, Christine created a consulting business.

In the spring of 1914, the Efficiency Society sponsored the Efficiency Exposition and Conference at the Grand Central Palace in New York. As the "high priestess of the gospel of home efficiency," Christine was invited to set up a kitchen arranged for efficient routing. She re-created Applecroft with stove, sink, work table, and doors arranged properly. The writer of a promotional article that appeared in the *New York Tribune* seemed eager to dissociate Christine's efficiency work from the feminist movement. "It is not so much that she wants to spend less time in dishwashing and more in running for alderman, but that she feels it is a moral disgrace to waste her energy."\(^{16}\) Christine occasionally claimed to promote efficiency because it could free women to work outside the home, but her usual argument was that it made housework itself more satisfying. Her vacillating advice about laundry over the years revealed Christine's conflict over liberating women further through industrializing housework.

\(^{15}\) C. Frederick, *Household Engineering*, 16; Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.

\(^{16}\) "Housekeepers to Learn to Save 1,000 Steps a Day," *New York Tribune*, 12 March 1914, clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.
Laundry was a household chore that might have moved out of the home and freed housekeepers from arduous work. In 1912, Martha Bruère suggested that laundry was becoming a "public utility" since so many families sent their soiled clothes out to commercial establishments. Christine once prepared a kitchen calendar for a commercial laundry that claimed a woman who sent her clothes out could save seven weeks a year to read, relax, "keep radiantly young," and be a "real partner" to her husband. But the combined forces of technology, business and consumerism assured that laundry would return to become a staple of housework, and Christine, too, changed her view of laundry's proper place. In 1915, she offered her readers detailed advice on how to do the laundry at home. The chapter on laundry in her second book resembles Catharine Beecher's long discussion on the subject. Christine explained nearly a dozen separate washday processes including boiling, stain removing, starching and sprinkling. Like Beecher, she discussed the

---


18 "Laundry Washing Brings Leisure Hours," calendar, oversize file folder 1, Frederick Papers.

19 For a discussion of how the manufacture of washing machines brought laundry back into the home even after it had appeared to move to the commercial laundry, see Strasser, Never Done, 109-113, 121-124. Siegfried Giedion provides an interesting account of the early development of the home washing machine in Mechanization Takes Command, 560-570.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
processing of chemicals and the use of garment stretchers, assuring the reader that laundry was easily standardized because it is "one set of tasks which can be planned and followed year after year after the same identical method, once that method is established." But she still assumed in 1919 that men's shirts and collars would be sent out.\textsuperscript{21} In 1922, she wrote (in a booklet prepared by The Hurley Machine Company) that sending laundry out was far more costly than investing in a washer. Discounting the housewife's time, she claimed that there were no labor costs when one did the laundry at home.\textsuperscript{22} But five years later she wrote in a British newspaper: "I do not . . . advocate the use of this washing machine in very small families. It is more economical to send the work to a laundry."\textsuperscript{23} Four years later she told the National Electric Light Association that manufacturers were making too many washing machines because women could send their clothes to good community laundries. She wanted them to concentrate on building dishwashers instead.\textsuperscript{24} By reversing her position on the use of commercial laundries several times over the years, Christine

\textsuperscript{21}C. Frederick, \textit{Household Engineering}, 211, 255.


\textsuperscript{23}Christine Frederick, "How America Simplifies Housekeeping," \textit{The Daily Mail}, 22 February 1927, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.

\textsuperscript{24}Christine Frederick, "What the Customer Needs," speech before the National Electric Light Association, 25 March 1931, 4, file folder 10, Frederick Papers.
revealed a conflict between advocating that household work be kept at home and embracing the industrialization that might allow women to participate in the public sphere.

In 1916, she turned to a new medium to promote keeping housework in the home and produced a motion picture on housekeeping at Applecroft. Movies were relatively new in 1916. Companies that manufactured projectors for the home advertised film exchanges which operated like lending libraries. They also provided rental machines in outlets such as Wanamaker’s department store. Corporations saw films as a way to test markets and used film as a medium of advertising. Camilla Donworth, "the only woman advertisement screen expert" and president of Films of Business Corporation, produced sales films for American companies that showed how fast their workers could move through the entire manufacturing process. One of Donworth’s tactics was to get her industrial films screened in local movie houses. Christine seized upon this idea and set about making her own commercial film to promote scientific management in the home. Her script told the story of a housewife who had lost her servant and found that she was incapable of keeping house by

25“Motion Picture Dancing Lessons at Home! With the Pathoscope,” NYT, 9 August 1914, picture sec., p. 9.

herself. Her home was delivered from chaos by a visiting housekeeper who showed her not only the "one best way" to do things, but also demonstrated all kinds of labor-saving devices. Christine's intention was to sell her film to home economics educators and women's clubs.  

She also approached the *Ladies' Home Journal* about the project, but Karl Harriman was not interested in "the story as such" although he suggested that he might use still photographs from the film.  If Christine's movie was distributed, there is no evidence that it was a success.

Christine's housekeeping experiments in efficiency fostered enthusiasm for new labor-saving devices. She began her writing career at the time when the new household technology was just emerging. In her first *Ladies' Home Journal* article, she wrote of "washing as it is done in most homes, without a washing-machine and with only a common boiler," and of the "thousands of women" who could not afford vacuum cleaners and who did not have hot water piped into their kitchens.  

Christine wrote that one of her main functions was to keep a file on every manufacturer of every piece of equipment that she used so that she could serve as a

---


28 Karl Edwin Harriman to Christine Frederick, 15 August 1916, file folder 1, Frederick Papers.

"clearing house between the manufacturer and the homemaker." In this way, she served not only the consumer, she wrote, but the manufacturer as well:

Manufacturers, too, often care to have a practical test of their devices before they are put on the market; already, several have received helpful criticism of their products.

Christine was entering the product testing business, and her assessments would appear in advertising pamphlets. But she did not promote all the new products she tested. She claimed to have an outbuilding she called the "cemetery" where she deposited useless or poorly designed gadgets.

In the 1912 *Outlook* series on housekeeping, home economist Martha Bruère reported that families with incomes of $3,000 to $4,000 a year were buying vacuum cleaners, washing machines, electric irons, gas ranges, fireless cookers, and many other home appliances just then becoming available. The use of these machines was the modern way to administer a home, she wrote. She believed that home appliances would replace the servant and relieve the housewife from concern about the fatigue, hunger, or health of her employees. Bruère rejoiced in the freedom from "moral responsibility" for another human being that this change would

---

30 C. Frederick, *New Housekeeping*, 256.

31 Ibid., 256-257.

bring.³³ Christine Frederick told the housewife of lesser means who could not afford a full-time servant that she, too, could justify the outlay of money for “every device she can afford.” Dishwashers, bread mixers, and electric washing machines would save the family the wages of “temporary’ or day service.” Tacitly averring that the housewife’s time had no monetary value, Christine told her readers that “there is no question of the economy in replacing the human by the mechanical servant.” The investment in equipment would average out to half of the $600 a year a servant might cost, she wrote.³⁴

Public enthusiasm for home appliances reflected the convergence of several early twentieth-century phenomena: advances in technology, increased production, the need for new markets, and the effort to preserve the home as an agent of consumption. Power companies brought gas and electricity into more and more American homes during this period and as electricity edged gas out of the lighting business, gas companies began promoting the home heating capability of their product. The American Gas Association subsidized work on the improvement of gas stoves, hot water heaters, and hot air furnaces. By 1930, more Americans cooked with gas than with any other fuel. Meantime, the trade associations formed by electric companies, the National Electric Light Association and the National


³⁴C. Frederick, Household Engineering, 391-392.
Electrical Manufacturers Association, had put America on standard alternating current and by 1910, electricity routinely entered American homes at 120 volts. This enabled manufacturers to produce small electrical household appliances at a profit. When Christine Frederick began to test products for the home, electric sewing machines, washing machines, vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, and dishwashers were just coming on the market in large numbers. In some cases, the fuel companies actually gave away these appliances in order to sell power.\(^{35}\) Christine played a role in creating the home market for these power sources by using their appliances and writing about their labor-saving qualities.

Like Mary Pattison and the New Jersey club women, Christine recognized the future of electricity. She, too, promoted the small, home electric motor that could operate washers, polishers, sewing machines, and ice cream freezers. She featured a photograph of a sewing machine operated by a Western Electric Company motor in her 1919 housekeeping manual. But she recommended a gas engine for operating the pump, washing machine, and ironer in her ideal laundry room.\(^{36}\)

Christine began passing along information about new household products in her earliest magazine articles. In 1913 she recommended

\(^{35}\)Cowan, *Mare Work*, 90-95.

several improved kitchen utensils. Some of the equipment at Applecroft, she confessed, was "fairly expensive," but she was trying "to see if the labour saved justifie[d] the expense." The kitchen cabinet she tested, for example, provided a complete pantry and saved the steps that would be necessary if pantry items were kept in a separate room. She collaborated with her efficiency mentor, Harrington Emerson, to conduct time and motion studies of meal preparation using the Nepane Dutch Kitchenet. Her model kitchen in the New York Efficiency Exposition of 1914 featured equipment such as the Hoosier kitchen cabinet furnished by department store owner John Wanamaker. By 1919, Christine claimed to be testing "new tools" at Applecroft every month. Throughout her second housekeeping manual Christine mentioned specific brand names: Kitchencraft kitchen cabinets, Simplex ironers, and Walker Electric dishwashers, for example. She featured at least one product—a Sentinel


38 Christine Frederick, New Housekeeping, 253-254.


41 C. Frederick, Household Engineering, 16.
automatic tireless gas range—for which she wrote a promotional pamphlet.\textsuperscript{42}

And she often casually mentioned specific cleaning products: Ivory soap, Bon Ami, Brillo pads, and Parson's ammonia.\textsuperscript{43}

The commercial nature of her work notwithstanding, Christine promoted modern equipment in a sincere effort to make housework less arduous. She did not see herself as primarily a spokesperson for manufacturers, but rather as "competent counsel" to housewives. In her second book, for example, she included an informed discussion of modern fuels, revealing both the benefits and the drawbacks of each. Although she included photographs of specific cookstoves—Westinghouse, Hughes, and Perfection were three—she did not promote any of them in the text.\textsuperscript{44} Many of the household devices that Christine recommended to her readers really did save labor. Hot water heaters eliminated the heavy and uncomfortable work of heating large boiling pots full of water on the cookstove, washing machines lessened the time spent laundering each week, and vacuum cleaners made carpet cleaning easier. Her manuals provided important information about these products. Her discussion of washing machines, for example, included an informed description of how the various types worked.

\textsuperscript{42}C. Frederick, \textit{Household Engineering}, 116, 135, 203, 240-241. The pamphlet was \textit{Meals that Cook Themselves}.

\textsuperscript{43}C. Frederick, \textit{Household Engineering}, 173-175.

\textsuperscript{44}C. Frederick, \textit{Household Engineering}, 117-124.
and the processes by which they cleaned.\textsuperscript{45} She dispensed sound buying advice. Believing that women should understand the mechanical principles upon which their equipment operated, she counseled housewives to learn everything they could about an appliance before purchasing it. A particular purée strainer, for example, was impractical because it took too long to clean its many parts, she wrote. In 1919, she was advising against purchasing anything the family did not really need.\textsuperscript{46}

Most of the labor-saving devices Christine tested at Applecroft were new on the market, and she was introducing them to the American housewife for the first time. In 1916, for example, she wrote an informative article about the new electric toaster, percolator, and chafing dish. These appliances modernized simple kitchen tasks by reducing the number of steps required to perform them.\textsuperscript{47} Some of the items tested did not last to become standard equipment in the modern kitchen--the electric kitchen table with a warming compartment is an example--and some, like the early mechanical dishwashers, were far from perfected.\textsuperscript{48} A commentator who wrote about Christine's work years later claimed that many of the products she tested were redesigned according to her

\textsuperscript{45}Ibid., 244-249.

\textsuperscript{46}Ibid., 100-108.

\textsuperscript{47}Christine Frederick, "Push Button Cookery," [1916], clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.

\textsuperscript{48}C. Frederick, \textit{Household Engineering}, 199, 111-116.
By 1938, Christine claimed to "have tested some 10,000 devices, appliances, and food products."\(^5\) Christine was ahead of her time in soliciting products for testing. American manufacturers were only beginning to realize the importance that testing, instruction, and endorsements would have in the marketing of their new products. Eventually, most developed in-house laboratories where they tested their new appliances and devices before putting them on the market. This practice opened up a whole new field for women who were trained as home economists. But Christine began providing this assistance to manufacturers by contract long before they moved to create their own "experiment stations." Sears, Roebuck, for example, did not install a testing laboratory in its textile division until 1919. After 1920, in-house testing became more scientific. In 1936, as an example, Elizabeth Weirick, head of Sears' textile testing lab, drafted a company policy that required Sears to seek accurate, scientific, and unbiased information about their products, a move that would require the services of personnel trained in chemistry.\(^5\) This professionalization of product testing eventually closed the field to women who were not formally trained, but Christine tested


\(^5\)Christine Frederick, "Mrs. Consumer Speaks Up," speech before the New York Rotary, 10 March 1938, 4, file folder 10, Frederick Papers.

\(^5\)Carolyn Goldstein, "Part of the Package," 18-19.
products and enjoyed a brisk business writing advertising pamphlets through the 1920s.

5.2

From the beginning, Christine had been interested in J. George’s work in advertising. In 1910, at his request, she had even written a series of articles for *Printers’ Ink* on the prevalence of trademarked goods in New York department stores.\(^5^2\) J. George would write some years after Christine’s first advertising pamphlet appeared that there was no “fundamental difference” between the writer and the advertiser. Both wished to sell something to the public.\(^5^3\) Booklets offering information about manufactured products were widespread by 1905; many were offered by mail through magazines. This tactic also provided a crude sort of market research: companies counted pamphlets sold and set production schedules accordingly.\(^5^4\) In 1914, when she and Emerson were photographed with the Nepanee Dutch Cabinet, Christine wrote a pamphlet promoting a competitor, the Hoosier cabinet.\(^5^5\) The next year, she produced a booklet that described the advantages of owning a fireless

\(^5^2\)There are references to these early articles in C. Frederick, “Mrs. Consumer Speaks Up,” 4, and “Career Chronology.”


\(^5^4\)Strasser, *Satisfaction*, 165-166.

\(^5^5\)Christine Frederick, *You and Your Kitchen* (New Castle, IN: Hoosier Manufacturing Company, 1914).
cooker manufactured by Sentinel. During the following three decades, she would write the copy for pamphlets promoting a variety of manufactured and processed goods: washing machines, chocolate, frankfurters, and enamel ware. She wrote promotional copy for the Florida Citrus Exchange, the International Nickel Company, and the League of Advertising Women. Some of these booklets were published by magazines and covered an entire genre of goods. *Farm and Home Magazine*, for example, commissioned Christine to write about a variety of household appliances and the *Ladies' Home Journal* published her booklet on planning and equipping a kitchen.\(^5\) Christine held that the interests of manufacturers and consumers were identical; thus she believed that by writing promotional pamphlets she was helping both the producers of modern goods and the women who would

---

buy them. In her view, advertising provided the housewife with important information.\(^ {57}\)

Those who promoted careers for women outside the home were just then recognizing advertising as a potential field for women. In 1911, the Women’s Educational and Industrial Union of Boston offered a booklet entitled, “Advertising as a Vocation for Women,” that suggested department store or advertising agency work.\(^ {58}\) A woman advertiser told the attendees at the Women in Industry course for which Christine and Charlotte Perkins Gilman lectured that advertising was a natural choice for women since “ninety-five per cent of the purchasing power of the world is in women.”\(^ {59}\) A vocational conference held at Vassar College in 1917 offered two lectures on salesmanship entitled “Opportunities for the College Graduate in Department Store Education” and “The College Woman and the Magazine Game.”\(^ {60}\) Two years later, the University of Pittsburgh included a presentation on advertising in its vocational conference for women.\(^ {61}\)

\(^{57}\)Christine’s views on the common interests of manufacturers, advertisers, and consumers is treated in depth below.

\(^{58}\)WEIU, “Advertising as a Vocation for Women,” 1911, booklet, box 1, file folder 9, WEIU Papers.


\(^{60}\)“Vocational Conference,” 22-24 February 1917, Vassar College, program, carton 4, file folder 225, BVI Papers.

\(^{61}\)“Vocational Conference,” 11 April 1919, University of Pittsburgh, program, carton 4, file folder 221, BVI Papers.
During World War I, women got jobs in the advertising field partly because there was a shortage of men. And war’s end saw a host of new products designed to enhance women’s appeal to men enter the market. Many thought that women copy writers were better able to promote these products.\(^\text{62}\) By 1919, J. Walter Thompson assigned “all material of interest to women” to women copy writers and everything else to men. “The J. Walter Thompson Co. has a very large per cent of women in responsible positions...,” wrote an interviewer for the Intercollegiate Bureau of Occupations. She added that Thompson was “quite the exception among other companies doing the same kind of work.”\(^\text{63}\) Although women were breaking into the field of advertising during Christine’s early career, their numbers were still few and there was an immutable division of labor according to gender. Women were not allowed to attend the meetings of the Advertising Men’s League of New York, and the discrimination led Christine to become involved in the organization of a professional association for women advertisers.

Despite advances, women still encountered discrimination in most fields that had heretofore been dominated by men. One of the most widely


\(^{63}\) “Women in the Field of Advertising,” [10 April 1919], 1-3, typescript, carton 2, file folder 75, BVI Papers.
used mechanisms of exclusion was to establish employment standards through professional associations from which women were barred. As a result, women formed a number of women’s professional organizations between 1910 and 1930. The American Medical Association’s standards made it difficult for women to practice medicine, so female physicians organized the Medical Women’s National Association in 1915. Because there was no female equivalent to the all-male Chamber of Commerce, business women established the National Federation of Business and Professional Women’s Clubs three years later. By 1919, ten states had organizations for women in advertising. Christine played a role in establishing the group in New York City.

Early in 1912, Marie Bronson, the advertising manager of Macy’s department store, asked J. George Frederick if she could attend a meeting of the Advertising Men’s League. “No,” he told her, “but why don’t you advertising women of New York have your own club?” Miss Bronson refused to initiate such a move, but J. George enlisted Christine’s help in organizing a meeting for that purpose. The Fredericks invited all the advertising women they knew to a dinner at Reisenweber’s restaurant on

---

64 Cott, *Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 230.


66 "Organizations of Advertising Women," 3 September 1919, typescript, carton 2, file folder 74, BVI Papers.
Eighth Avenue on March 11 and more than forty women attended. The group christened itself the League of Advertising Women, and J. George, serving as chairperson, appointed an organizing committee headed by Claudia Q. Murphy. The inclusion of one of J. George’s employees caused dissension right away. “When Anna Rosenblatt came on the scene as Mr. Frederick’s secretary,” a club historian wrote later, “and when she became a member of the club, Miss Pomeroy resigned as stenographers were not allowed.” J. George later recalled that Rosenblatt, who was “with the Business Bourse,” was one of the organizers of the League.67

Christine, who was not working in the advertising industry either, never became a dues-paying member of the League she helped to establish. She would later explain that, “I was not much of a joiner--just a

67This version of AWNY’s beginnings was synthesized from the following sources: “Beginnings--Formation of the League,” n.d., typescript; J. George Frederick, “Notes on the Formation of the Advertising Women’s Club of New York,” October 1961, typescript; “Founders’ Section,” n.d., typescript; “History of Club,” n.d., typescript, carton 2, file folder 1, AWNY Papers; Wiseman, “Christine Frederick,” 17; Helen Peffer Oakley, “AWNY--An Informal History, 1912-1962,” 60, in AWNY Golden Salute; Dorothy Dignam, “Some Women Have Made Good in Advertising, But As to Other--,” Printers’ Ink, 27 April 1939, 18, clipping, carton 3, file folder 18; “History of Advertising Women of New York, Inc., Chronological Record of the Year 1958,” carton 3, file folder 17, Dignam Papers. Twenty years after she had repeated this account, Christine changed her own version of the story, claiming that she was the one who asked to attend the men’s league. She wrote that J. George had replied that she could attend only if she wanted to sit “in the boxes above, behind the curtains--in kind of a purdah.” Angry, she decided to form the women’s group. Since this version, written in the 1950s, is quite different from the one she told in a 1938 speech, it must be viewed with suspicion. “Excerpts from a letter from Christine Frederick,” [1951], carton 2, file folder 4, AWNY Papers.
crusader. . . "68 But she attended meetings frequently, spoke to the group on occasion, and was made an honorary member. The League named a scholarship for her in 1952 and when it celebrated its golden anniversary ten years later, she was honored as its cofounder.69 At her death, she left the League a bequest of $500.70

Christine spoke before other advertising groups too. In 1914, she was the principal speaker at the annual women’s dinner and fashion exhibit sponsored by the Advertising Men’s League (the same group that barred women from its regular meetings). Her topic was “advertising from the consumer’s viewpoint.”71 Nine months later, she participated in a Pure Food Show put on by the Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Advertisers’ Club, joining other prominent speakers who discussed the Pure Food and Drug Act from the advertiser’s perspective.72 Christine shared her husband’s views about advertising; J. George, too, argued that advertising provided an invaluable service to the consumer. It cost no more than old-fashioned

68 Excerpt from a letter from Christine Frederick to Sally [Martin], November 1951, carton 2, file folder 1, AWNY Papers.


70 Nadine Miller to Christine Frederick, 9 June 1952, file folder 8, Frederick Papers; “Founders’ Section,” n.d., 7-8; Oakley, “AWNY.”

71 “Dazzling Styles Bewilder Diners,” NYT, 13 March 1914, p. 11, col.3.

traveling salesmen, and it generated far more sales. To criticisms that advertising exploited a guileless public, J. George responded in 1925 that the public’s willingness to buy manufactured goods had made the U. S. economy boom.\footnote{J. G. Frederick, Masters, 33-34, 39.} Christine echoed these sentiments. In her second household manual, she wrote:

> Modern advertising in periodicals, on billboards, cards, etc., is another means of bringing goods of all kinds to the consumer’s attention. The costs of advertising must be included in the general cost of distribution of an article, and do not add any more to the price of an article than any other means of display, such as store window exhibits, circular letters, and the older forms of traveling salesmen which were practiced in the days before periodical publication made modern advertising methods possible.\footnote{C. Frederick, Household Engineering, 357.}

She argued that advertising was in the consumer’s interest because “our daily papers and periodicals would be impossible if it were not that the advertising they carry pays largely for their printing.”\footnote{Ibid.}

Even in this early stage of its development, advertising raised doubts in certain quarters. At the same time that Christine’s fourth efficiency article was being published in the \textit{Ladies’ Home Journal}, Charlotte Perkins Gilman wrote in her own magazine, the \textit{Forerunner}, that advertising was the “ceaseless, desperate effort to compel patronage.” She blamed it for making “our cities hideous with signs and posters” and for defiling “the face of Nature with huge, begging, boards.” If industries were socialized,
she wrote, advertising would be unnecessary. Advertisers themselves were ambivalent about the ethics of promoting consumption. Some were concerned about the moral implications of manipulating the public. Walter F. Albert, a window dresser at Macy’s from 1907 until 1916, sometimes worried about tempting people to want what they could not afford. In a series of articles on advertising in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Charles Mulford Robinson, like Gilman, objected to billboards that infringed upon the “public’s aesthetic rights.” Tacks used to affix bills killed trees, advertisements posted on church walls showed disrespect for religion, and advertising in general blighted scenery, he wrote. Robinson’s solution, however, was not to eliminate advertising, which he thought useful, but to regulate it.

Christine Frederick shared none of these doubts. She believed that advertising helped make life better. In *Household Engineering*, she wrote, “Because [advertising] has brought so many thousand articles of furnishing, comfort, and luxury before the consumer, it has, naturally, tended to raise the standard of living.”

---


79 C. Frederick, *Household Engineering*, 357.
5.3

*Household Engineering*, first published as a 109-page bulletin in 1915, became a greatly expanded version of Christine’s first book, *The New Housekeeping*, in 1919. Her success with the first volume had brought her a great deal of notoriety. It was reviewed widely, went through several printings, and was translated into several foreign languages. The *Journal of Home Economics* praised Christine for making “a strong stand for educating the housewife to demand good quality. . . ,” and suggested that *The New Housekeeping* was a good supplement to books written by professional home economists. The *Bookman* ran a portrait of Christine, and reported her claim that household efficiency could

---


81 An undated *New Housekeeping* book jacket in Christine’s papers is imprinted, “Seventh Large Printing,” file folder 11, Frederick Papers. The Online Computer Library Center (hereafter cited as OCLC) lists four separate publication years: 1913, 1914, 1918, 1919, and 1926. Christine at one time claimed that the book was translated into “French, German, Polish, Scandinavian, and Japanese.” C. Frederick, “Advertising Copy,” 223. In a speech given three years before she died, she added Italian, Czechoslovakian, and Dutch to the list. C. Frederick, Laguna Library Book Day Speech. The 1914 printing included the copyright notice: “All rights reserved, including that of translation into Foreign Languages, including the Scandinavian.” C. Frederick, *New Housekeeping*, iv. OCLC lists a Polish translation published in 1926 and a German one in 1921.

save the nation $1,000,000 a day.\textsuperscript{83} Several newspapers ran columns praising the book. One wrote of Christine, “Any person who can lessen the drudgery of housekeeping, thereby saving time for intellectual gratification should be considered a benefactor of the most useful character. . . .”\textsuperscript{84} But the most noteworthy of the reviews was the full-page article with photographs that appeared in the Sunday \textit{New York Times}, July 6, 1913. Shown in her kitchen at Applecroft, Christine was touted as the woman who had most completely imitated the male model of “systemized ‘business efficiency.’” The \textit{Times} reviewed her basic scientific management premises and claimed that the book could serve as a substitute for an efficiency engineer for the housewife. Praise for Christine was effusive: “[T]o this young woman belongs the distinction of finding perhaps the most practical and at the same time the most scientific solution of the household problem.” Although the piece repeated Christine’s contention that she had once done her own work in a flat, the reporter noted that she had since transferred her system to a country home where “she must necessarily have the assistance of servants.”\textsuperscript{85} Christine took pride in this success for

\textsuperscript{83}“Chronicle and Comment,” a review of \textit{The New Housekeeping} by Christine Frederick, \textit{The Bookman}, September 1913, 3.

\textsuperscript{84}“The New Housekeeping,” [12 June 1913], clipping; “Servant Question Solved,” n.d. clipping; Marguerite Mooers Marshall, “American Housewives Losing $1,000,000 a Day by Domestic Inefficiency,” [1913], clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.

the rest of her life. In 1929, she wrote of *The New Housekeeping* that it “was largely instrumental in interesting women in this new and more scientific attitude toward their households,” and eight years before her death, she reminded the Advertising Women’s League historian that her first book had “initiated widespread changes in the home and its equipment.”86 The book’s success inspired the larger project, *Household Engineering*, which in turn further allied Christine with the home economics movement.

In *The New Housekeeping*, Christine had praised the land grant colleges for giving “the greatest possible stimulus to the teaching of home economics . . . .” They were teaching women applied science, not to run tractors but to operate the kitchen stove, she wrote.87 She had read the current literature, citing facts about the movement available in works by home economics leaders like Ellen Richards, Isabel Bevier and Susannah Usher.88 The growing interest in home economics education created a brisk

86C. Frederick, *Selling Mrs. Consumer*, 166; “Career Chronology.”


88The bibliography of *The New Housekeeping* lists several works about the home economics movement, including Ellen Richards, *The Art of Right Living* and Isabel Bevier and Susannah Usher, *The Home Economics Movement*, 260. Historians of the home economics movement hasten to distance their subjects from Christine. Carolyn Goldstein has pointed out that she was not a member of the home economists’ community because she lacked formal training in the discipline. Furthermore, Goldstein asserts, the home economists were uncomfortable with her association with advertising. On Christine’s part, she privately referred to home economists as “lima beans,” and considered her own work to be based on “broader”
market for textbooks on the subject. In 1903, the Department of Agriculture reported: “Satisfactory text-books on food and nutrition (important branches of home economics) are not available, and at present a large proportion of the teachers depend on Department publications to supply their place.”

By 1912, when The New Housekeeping was published, there were several home economics textbooks available, but the demand was growing. The American School, a Chicago correspondence school that had been established in 1897, organized a separate department, the American School of Home Economics. Its textbooks were widely used in university home economics programs and were well-publicized.

thinking than theirs. Goldstein, “Part of the Package” 5; Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.

89Quoted in Isabel Bevier and Susannah Usher, The Home Economics Movement, Part I (Boston: Whitcomb and Barrows, 1906) 40.

90Some of the home economics textbooks mentioned by Talbot and Breckinridge in 1912 were: Bertha Terrill, Household Management; T. M. Clark, Care of the House; Isabel Bevier, The House; S. Maria Elliot, Household Hygiene; Caroline L. Hunt, Home Problems from a New Standpoint; Maria Parloa, Home Economics; Ellen Richards, Euthenics, and Helen Campbell, Household Economics. Modern Household, 27-28, 36, 81.

Christine was surely aware of this growing market when she contacted the American School of Home Economics about publishing her second book. The expanded *Household Engineering: Scientific Management in the Home* was designed as a home-study program divided into twelve parts and sent to the student one part at a time. Each part, a chapter in the completed book, included a list of study questions. Like *The New Housekeeping*, this second book argued that efficiency in the home would make the housewife’s life more pleasant. Widely read, it eventually appeared in seven editions, the last entitled *Efficient Housekeeping: Or, Household Engineering, Scientific Management in the Home* in 1925.

Three male mentors figured prominently in the production of *Household Engineering*. Christine dedicated the 1919 edition to Edward Bok “to whose encouragement and progressive leadership in reaching the mass of American homemakers with the gospel of home efficiency,” she wrote, “I owe much inspiration.” Frank Gilbreth wrote a brief preface praising Christine for eliminating “from housework that monotony that comes from doing uninteresting and repetitive work without an


94C. Frederick, *Household Engineering*, [1].
incentive. . . .”

And Harrington Emerson contributed a foreword which commended Christine for “specializing and standardizing the tools and methods for the many ever changing occupations of the home.” But Emerson sounded a note of caution, too. “Because Household Engineering makes tasks as formerly done much easier,” he told her readers, “do not take on a great deal more ‘unessential’ work.”

These male supporters suggest a key to understanding Christine’s concept of women’s work. “[M]en and women have parted company industrially,” Emerson wrote in his foreword. “Man may be at fault because he rushed impetuously ahead, woman may be at fault because she has held too long to the old.”

Though her mission was to change women’s work, Christine rarely sought advice from other women, and she rejected the ideas of feminists such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Her models were men and the work place she sought to emulate was the predominately male factory.

The 1919 edition of Household Engineering, Christine told her readers, included “in greater detail everything given in my book ‘The New Housekeeping,’ and all the help and suggestions gathered from constant study during the five years which have elapsed since its publication.”

95 Frank Gilbreth, preface to Household Engineering, [4].

96 Harrington Emerson, foreword to Household Engineering, [2-3].

97 Ibid., [3].

98 C. Frederick, Household Engineering, 17.
The laundry chapter was a new, modernized guide to the use of labor-saving equipment. She added a chapter on “The Servantless Household” and expanded her theories on employing servants in “Management of Houseworkers.” The chapter entitled “Health and Personal Efficiency” included new information about personal hygiene, and she wrote entirely new chapters on planning food for the family and on home design. Like the home economics educators, Christine relied heavily on U. S. Department of Agriculture bulletins for her research.99 Her lack of formal home economics training did not deter her from offering herself as “competent counsel.” She told her readers that her expertise derived from “studying, visiting plants and factories, and getting in touch more widely with the movement.” She also gleaned information, she said, from the experiences of friends.100

The book offered much useful information that most housewives needed to know if they were to operate modern homes with the new powered appliances. One reviewer described the book as “a complete manual on the economics of up-do-date housekeeping and homemaking.”101 Christine wrote authoritatively about electricity, for example,

99 See Household Engineering, 325, 336, 337, 339, and 347, for reference to specific numbers.

100 C. Frederick, Household Engineering, 15-16.

explaining watts, volts, amperes and the importance of understanding the
difference between alternating and direct current. She also gave examples
of figuring the cost of electricity per kilowatt hour.\textsuperscript{102} Like Catharine
Beecher, she provided instruction on cleaning the different surfaces one
might find in the modern home: varnished wood, enameled woodwork,
linoleum, and cork.\textsuperscript{103} In her updated laundry chapter, she discussed the
effects of temperature, water chemistry, and types of soap on different
fibers.\textsuperscript{104} And like Beecher who had written an extensive chapter on health
in her 1841 \textit{Treatise}, Christine considered herself a health reformer.

\textit{Household Engineering} discussed the importance of fresh air, sleeping
conditions, nutrition, posture, clothing, exercise, and mental health. But
Christine believed that health was the “basis for personal efficiency,” while
Beecher held that good health was necessary because women were in
charge of their family’s health and morality.\textsuperscript{105} In \textit{Household Engineering},
Christine also ventured more deeply into interior decoration than she had
before. She advised against buying suites of period furniture and counseled
women to eliminate Victoriana from their homes in order to create modern,
efficient households. Kitchens should be light, she warned. “Ugly green”

\textsuperscript{102}C. Frederick, \textit{Household Engineering}, 124-127.

\textsuperscript{103}Ibid., 170-175.

\textsuperscript{104}Ibid., 212-221.

\textsuperscript{105}Ibid., 169-170, 331-333, 481-503; Beecher, \textit{Treatise}, 47-70.
and "hideous blue" were to be banished. If possible, a housewife should match her cookware and utensils to the overall decorating scheme. Even the laundry room could be attractive, she wrote, and she promoted the use of Monel metal, a highly polished, rustproof sheet metal used for work surfaces.¹⁰⁶

*Household Engineering* was an even greater success than *The New Housekeeping*. Reviewers praised Christine for lightening "the burden of [housewives'] labours" and for giving them "release from the tyranny of the household 'general.'" The book would, one reviewer claimed, enable any woman, unless her household is especially large, to cope singly, or at most, with one non-resident servant, with every house duty . . . and yet to have time for self-development, for practical sympathy in her husband's interests, and for 'outside' interests of her own. . . .¹⁰⁷

It served not only as a correspondence course in housekeeping, but was also adopted by home economics educators. "[W]hen I was young in the vineyard," one Cornell research associate wrote to Christine in 1947, "you were a most inspiring leader and I learned at your feet (or from your printed

---


pages). For many years at the University of Chicago your advanced ideas were spoon fed to my charges.\textsuperscript{108}

Finally, \textit{Household Engineering} foreshadowed Christine's later role as an outspoken commentator on the subject of consumerism. In this book, she thoroughly expounded a position favoring trademarked merchandise and what contemporary business leaders called "price maintenance" on manufactured goods. A reviewer sensed the importance of the business aspect of Christine's work:

Mrs. Frederick is as much a business woman as a "household engineer"; has enjoyed a rich and varied experience in many fields, notably advertising and publicity. . . . I am of opinion that husbands as well as wives, business men as well as business women, will dip repeatedly, and with equal profit and pleasure, into the pages of a book that is the triumphant efficiency-record of an uncommonly accomplished woman.\textsuperscript{109}

5.4

Convinced that the home had been transformed from a place of production to an agent of consumption, Christine assumed the role of consumer advocate for the American housewife. Many others were advising women on buying, for it was clear that women were becoming important consumers. "As newspapers and magazines are both particularly eager to please women, who are the principal purchasers and therefore the

\textsuperscript{108}Mary Koll Heiner to Christine Frederick, 28 February 1947, file folder 6, Frederick Papers.

most important readers of advertisements,” wrote a journalist in 1915, “the woman’s point of view ought to be expressed as adequately as possible in almost all publications. . . .”\textsuperscript{110} Purchasing, wrote John Guernsey in his 1912 piece on scientific management in the home, was so important in industry that it warranted a separate department. The housewife should consider it important, too, for it was an area in which she could economize.\textsuperscript{111} Most authorities agreed. Home economist Ellen Richards told women that they should learn “the new science, the economics of consumption.” In fact, since consumption included “the ethics of spending,” Richards thought it should “have a place in our higher education.”\textsuperscript{112} Talbot and Breckinridge recommended that housekeepers be “trained in the technique of spending,” and suggested books and articles that would assist woman in her new role as consumer.\textsuperscript{113} Christine recognized very early that women consumers would be the target of manufacturers, advertisers, and retailers, and she understood that this gave women power:

The hand that rocks the cradle also rocks most of the world’s industries, and that life in the cradle will be as deeply affected by the

\textsuperscript{110}Norman Hapgood, “Journalism for Women,” \textit{Art Life}, February 1915, 1, clipping, carton 7, file folder 352, BVI Papers.

\textsuperscript{111}Guernsey, “Scientific Management in the Home,” 821-822.

\textsuperscript{112}Richards, “The Social Significance of the Home Economics Movement,” 117, 124.

\textsuperscript{113}Talbot and Breckinridge, \textit{Modern Household}, 15-19.
manner in which we, as women, rock the world’s industries, through the influence we wield as purchasers, as the manner in which we rock the cradle.\textsuperscript{114}

In \textit{The New Housekeeping}, Christine supported the use of brand names and what she then called “single pricing,” that is, maintaining the suggested prices of manufacturers in retail stores. Manufacturers’ right to set prices was a volatile issue at the time and by speaking out on the matter, Christine jumped into the middle of a long-standing battle between manufacturers and retailers. She argued that most manufacturers were hard-working and motivated by the desire to produce quality products. They could not maintain quality, she insisted, if retailers cut their suggested prices. Christine believed that retailers and jobbers, not manufacturers, caused prices to be too high in the first place. She counseled buyers to insist on brand-named products and to refuse to buy the imitations that dealers might try to sell instead, but she was unable to explain how this might lower prices. She suggested that retailers would not want to mark items up so high if they knew these items would move; and she believed that prices would come down if consumers consistently asked for quality products. The “one-price idea,” wrote Christine, would enable the customer to depend on “standardized branded articles.” She argued that consumers should not succumb to a retailer’s cut price of a named brand--what modern retailers might call a “loss leader”--because the retailer only

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{114}C. Frederick, “The Woman Who Buys Wisely,” 95.
\end{itemize}
wanted to get the consumer into the store in order to sell other items. Meantime, this technique injured the manufacturer of the superior product whose price had been cut, because his good name had been “stolen.” Christine believed that when dealers engaged in price wars, selling brand-named articles below cost, they would eventually quit carrying those items because they could not make a profit on them. And so she urged consumers not to buy at discounted prices.\textsuperscript{115} Christine wanted an orderly market where everyone—manufacturer, retailer, and consumer—received fair value. If everyone supported fair prices, she believed, the manufacturer could keep costs down and make a fair profit, the retailer would realize reasonable returns, and the consumer would enjoy quality merchandise. She assumed that such a market would result if all parties acted out of concern for the whole. Retailers should sell the items for a fair price, and the consumer should pay what an item was worth, she believed.\textsuperscript{116} Christine also wrote that the small dealer should not have to pay more for wholesale goods than large stores that bought in quantity. She told housewives to patronize the small retailers in their neighborhoods. “It is not fair to buy locally sugar and other articles on which there is little or no profit and then go downtown for other articles,” she admonished.\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{115} C. Frederick, \textit{The New Housekeeping}, 205-212.

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 213-214, 217.

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 218-219.
position suggested an unrealistic view of consumer behavior in a free market.

In spite of her claim to be the housewife's representative, Christine's position on price maintenance put her squarely in the manufacturers' camp, as did her argument against buying products that were cheaper imitations of the brand-named products. When a consumer bought such an imitation, Christine wrote, she was "harming the distribution of the good article, and lessening its sales, thereby decreasing the possibility of the continuance of the good article in the market." She added that buying substitutes "destroys the judgement of the purchaser. . . ." Here, Christine seemed to blame women for business practices that injured the consumer.

Apparently, when housewives patronized price-cutting dealers, they became responsible for the questionable behavior of those dealers.\textsuperscript{118}

Christine repeated this argument often. It was the focus of the article she gleaned from her first book for the \textit{Ladies' Home Journal} in the fall of 1913,\textsuperscript{119} and she polished and expanded it for \textit{Household Engineering}, six years later. In the chapter entitled "Efficient Household Purchasing," Christine told the housewife that she "must occupy a . . . position as the 'purchasing agent' of the family, because in her hands lies

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[118] Ibid., 223-224.
\item[119] See C. Frederick, "The Woman Who Buys Wisely," 95.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the spending of the family funds."\textsuperscript{120} For that reason, she should understand the distribution system and how it works. Christine traced the product from manufacturer to jobber to retailer to consumer, explaining that the consumer needed the retailer "to give us service in providing necessities and perishables. . . ." (Italics hers.) She argued that the consumer had a duty to buy more costly items from the retailer (rather than use parcel post or buy cooperatively) to keep him in business because the cost of distribution "includes the risk taken by each one of the distributors that the consumer will actually buy this product. . . ." (Italics hers.) While it was quite proper for the consumer to pay for delivery, service, and convenience, these costs should not be excessive. For that reason, Christine departed from her usual support of a free market to advocate regulatory legislation, though she did not suggest specific measures.\textsuperscript{121} In \textit{Household Engineering}, she again argued for buying brand-named or "trademarked" brands exclusively: "The one means of protection the consumer can rely on is the 'trademark' on the package or product she buys."\textsuperscript{122} If the consumer purchased products packaged for a handler, Christine explained, she could not track down the packer should there be a complaint. "In every case, the

\textsuperscript{120}C. Frederick, \textit{Household Engineering}, 315.

\textsuperscript{121}Ibid., 318-323.

\textsuperscript{122}Ibid., 353. Congress passed an updated version of the trademark statute in 1905. At that time, companies could register their trademark to protect ownership. See Strasser, \textit{Satisfaction}, 45.
trademarked brand carries more integrity or guarantee,” she wrote.\textsuperscript{123} Christine called price cutting “bait,” and told the reader that this kind of buying was “demoralizing” because it “trap[ped] women into buying” things they did not need, and it gave “them a false idea of the price which they should pay for the article. . . .” The cut price, Christine believed, lulled the customer into assigning false values to goods, and prompted her to “demand ‘bargains.’”\textsuperscript{124} This argument, of course, ignored the fact that most consumers preferred bargains to helping maintain Christine’s notion of a fair market system. It ignored evidence that the free market would respond to supply and demand.

Christine was undoubtedly influenced by discussions with J. George who had written an article defending price maintenance for patented goods while she was putting the finishing touches on her articles for the \textit{Ladies’ Home Journal} in the summer of 1912. Inspired by legislation before the U. S. House of Representatives that sought to repeal the law that, at the time, allowed producers of patented goods to set prices, J. George wrote that fixing retail prices had been universally supported by manufacturers and that most dealers favored it too. Sellers of patented goods had to develop a market at great expense, he wrote. In order to pay for this, they needed fair prices for the goods. J. George argued that a maintained price was not

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{123}C. Frederick, \textit{Household Engineering}, 355-356.
  \item \textsuperscript{124}Ibid., 358.
\end{itemize}
necessarily a high price, but a stable price. As Christine would subsequently do, he argued that price maintenance (that is, price fixing by manufacturers) meant quality products:

If the public desires to get a good article of uniform quality and responsible guarantee, which will stay in the market, it is necessary that the public should agree to the doctrine of a standard price.\textsuperscript{125}

Price-cutting, he wrote, had caused many well-intentioned manufacturers to either lower the quality of their goods or lower the weight or volume of units in order to meet the cut prices offered by retailers.\textsuperscript{126}

In fact, manufacturers did sometimes withhold their products from stores that cut the suggested prices. On their side, wholesalers might refuse to carry brand names if they did not like the manufacturer's terms. After 1913, when A & P started a chain of economy stores, cash and carry operators discovered that they could profitably cut prices, even on brand-named, trademarked goods, by eliminating services such as delivery, phone orders, and credit. Manufacturers of brand-named goods thereupon began the campaign in which Christine enlisted: they demanded the legal right to set retail prices. Between 1909 and 1914, there were several bills before Congress on the subject of price maintenance. In 1912, the Supreme Court upheld price fixing by the makers of patented products, but it

\textsuperscript{125}J. George Frederick, "Is It Right to Maintain Prices on Patented Articles?" \emph{Scientific American}, 106 (1 June 1912): 501.

\textsuperscript{126}Ibid.
reversed itself two years later. In one of the first lawsuits on this issue in 1915, Cream of Wheat charged A & P with selling its cereal three cents under the regular price and refused to fill A & P's orders. A & P sued Cream of Wheat. Both the federal district court and the circuit court of appeals held that Cream of Wheat had the right to refuse sales to A & P because it could not enforce its fixed prices and refusing to sell was its only legal recourse.\textsuperscript{127}

In 1914, Christine testified in favor of price maintenance before the House Judiciary Committee.\textsuperscript{128} A test of the Kellogg Toasted Corn Flake Company's right to set the wholesale and retail prices of its product was before the committee.\textsuperscript{129} Christine testified on behalf of the Housewives' League, a group founded in 1911 for the purpose of protecting the housewives' interest on consumer issues.\textsuperscript{130} She told the committee that one consistent price for a particular item saved the housewife time for she would not have to test a new product each time she went shopping if she

\textsuperscript{127}For a thorough discussion of this struggle and the reasons behind it, see Strasser, \textit{Satisfaction}, especially 37-43, 81-88, 194-206, 224-284.

\textsuperscript{128}House Committee on the Judiciary, \textit{Hearings before the Committee on the Judiciary on Trust Legislation}, 63rd Congr., 2nd sess., 18 February 1914, 725-733.

\textsuperscript{129}Strasser, \textit{Satisfaction}, 272-273.

could rely on one she knew. She did not adequately explain why the same price was required, but she argued that it would maintain a “standard.” As a consumer, she said, she was in favor of uniformly maintained prices for they guaranteed quality. A consistent price, regardless of where a product was purchased, protected the consumer, she argued, and it assisted the housewife in preparing her budget and staying within it. Furthermore, discounted prices were nothing more than bait used to attract customers to items that were not trademarked. Christine told the committee, “I wish I could compel every manufacturer to mark every package at its price, and let me take it or leave it at that price, and not have it offered to me at all kinds of prices. . . !” Christine admitted that she was defending not only the housewife’s interests, for cutting prices was also hard on small businesses. They could not compete with the lower prices offered by the “downtown” stores. Nor did she hesitate to align herself with the manufacturers. The manufacturer, she argued, not retailers, bore the costs of all the advertising; retailers who cut prices “tr[ied] to rob him.” Christine concluded by asking that Congress pass legislation assuring price maintenance, for by doing so, she said, it would be giving “permission to manufacturers to protect their prices for my benefit. . . .”

131

131 House Committee on the Judiciary, Hearings on Trust Legislation, 725-733.
Christine’s argument was seriously flawed. She evidently did not understand that lower prices could lead to greater sales or that retailers, when faced with requests for certain goods, would eventually respond to customer demands. But these issues were relatively new in 1914, and consumers in markets driven by advertising were an untried constituency. Both the Baltimore Star and the New York Times covered Christine’s testimony. The Times reported that it “aroused intense interest,” primarily because she criticized housewives who chased down bargains.¹³²

Christine traveled to the nation’s capital to testify in favor of price maintenance on two more occasions in 1917. When Congressman Dan Voorhees Stephens of Nebraska introduced a new price maintenance bill in April of that year, Christine reiterated her position before the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee of the U. S. House of Representatives. She claimed to be speaking “purely in the interest of the consumer” and said this time that she did not care about “the rights or wrongs of retailer or manufacturer except as they affect the consumer.” Before the Federal Trade Commission in October, she recited the statistics that demonstrated women’s purchasing power. In both hearings, she argued again that the trademark on goods allowed the purchaser to identify value and to save

time and money. Christine was well received. A newspaper reporter who witnessed the FTC hearing wrote:

Perhaps the advocate who above all others received the large measure of friendly interest from the commissioners and others at the hearing on price maintenance before the Federal Trade Commission, last week, was Mrs. Christine Frederick.

A year after Christine appeared, the FTC recommended to Congress that producers "be protected in their . . . good will," but be denied "unlimited power" in fixing and maintaining prices. Since the commission found that "unrestricted price cutting" was "not in the public interest," manufacturers should be able to apply to "an agency designated by Congress" that would review "terms of resale contracts." A manufacturer, the commission advised, should be able to fix prices only by negotiating such a contract agreed upon by all parties, for price fixing by any other means was restraining trade.

Almost from the beginning, then, Christine portrayed herself as a spokesperson for and adviser to the female consumer. But underlying her arguments was a strong faith in American business, and she believed that it had an unfailingly beneficial impact on the American home. She seemed


[134]"Brands Needed by Consumer."

unaware of the contradictions in her discussion of price maintenance. Her assertion that she cared only for the housewife belied the bulk of her argument which, to the modern observer, seemed clearly in the interests of business and against the interests of the consumer.

But Christine's involvement in consumerism helped her accomplish several of her missions. She could act as expert "competent counsel" for the manager of the new consumer household, she could promote the technology that she believed would relieve the housewife's burden, and she could help preserve the home by showing how the use of that technology to promote efficiency would make the American woman happier in her traditional role as homemaker.
CHAPTER 6: ACCOMMODATING PROGRESSIVISM

To win [women under thirty-five] is to establish the new homemaking, . . . the opportunity to give thought and care to the wider range of interests which it is now certain will be woman’s future sphere. She will follow the old home interests out into wider life where they have scattered, and she will be as she always has been, faithful first to home and family interests, once she had found the key to her own personal development to meet her greatly changed environment.¹

Christine Frederick, 1914

6.1

Christine Frederick’s early career as a home expert coincided with the Progressive movements that dominated American society for the first two decades of the twentieth century, and she often couched her advice in language that acknowledged women’s participation in reform. Regulatory legislation, the efficiency movement, woman suffrage, municipal housekeeping, and feminism were but a few manifestations of Progressivism. The infusion of new ideas along with the belief that humankind was naturally progressing toward a better civilization inspired a wave of reform. Many of the leaders of these movements (although there were vastly different reform programs promoted by vastly different people) were, like Christine and J. George Frederick, white, middle-class, native-born, educated Protestants. Like many Progressives, the Fredericks adhered to old values regarding the family while believing that science,

¹C. Frederick, “Putting the American Woman and Her Home on a Business Basis,” 208.

198
technology, organization, and management—in a word, modernization—applied to society would hasten it along the road to perfection. An important aspect of Progressive reform was the need for expertise that the process of modernization generated.² Many Progressives believed that expert advice and professional guidance could benefit all levels of society. Popular magazines now brought new scientific theories to millions of Americans. New disciplines like psychology encouraged people to believe that even day-to-day life required expert advice.³

Progressive reform influenced both of the Fredericks. J. George’s participation in movements toward organization, efficiency, and management was a manifestation of the Progressive impulse.⁴ Similarly, Christine’s interest in scientific management was a response to Progressive ideas. The optimistic view that scientific discoveries would lead to a better


³See, for example, “What Causes Slips of the Tongue? Why Do We Forget?” NYT, 18 October 1914, sec. 5, p. 10, col. 1.

⁴See Sklar’s discussion of the transformation of capitalism from a proprietary-competitive model to a corporate-administered one during this period, Corporate Reconstruction, 1-11.
life informed her celebration of technology, for example. She praised an audience of farmers in Illinois for modernizing: "The modern farmer of today is willing to experiment, to try new methods, and to take the advice of scientific agriculturalists."\(^6\) In 1911, an article in the *Journal of Home Economics* had blamed a perceived exodus of women from the home on the failure of the home to modernize. While men had access to machines and labor-saving devices, their wives wasted the best years of their lives "in a round of mechanical drudgeries."\(^6\) Christine, too, preached the Progressive idea that technology would lighten housework and thus improve the housewife's lot. She believed that farm women, in particular, could benefit from technology. "With the conditions improved, and better tools and equipment, the farm woman will have time not only for recreation and the higher family interests, but she will also have the *longed-for leisure to study books and courses on advanced home-making.*" (Italics mine.)\(^7\) Although Christine often mentioned leisure time as one of the benefits of technology, this last statement underscores her resistance to the idea that labor-saving devices might enable women to pursue work outside the home. She

\(^5\)C. Frederick, "What the New Housekeeping Means to the Farm Home," 85.


\(^7\)C. Frederick, "What the New Housekeeping Means to the Farm Home," 91.
implied that the farm woman’s leisure time should be spent acquiring more expertise in housekeeping.

For Christine, the most important reform was changing drudgery into efficient, satisfying accomplishment within the four walls of the home. But she took cues from other writers who were encouraging women to get involved in broader reforms. In an effort to discourage the exploitation of workers, Marion Talbot and Sophonisba Breckinridge exhorted the consumer housewife to ask how merchandise was made before purchasing it.8 The following year, Christine argued in *The New Housekeeping* that if women were lured by cut prices, they were helping to lower the wages of workers and deprive them of sanitary, healthful working conditions. Women could “prevent social injustice” by paying “the needed price” for merchandise, she wrote.9 Thus she used the social justice reform campaign to argue against price cutting.

She also acknowledged the municipal housekeeping movement. In her 1916 address to the Farmers’ Institute, she told the audience that if the farm wife’s kitchen were modernized, she would have time for “community housekeeping”: schools, sanitation, and pure food.10 In 1917, she praised the efforts of visiting housekeepers to encourage country wives to join in

---

8Talbot and Breckinridge, *Modern Household*, 41.
10C. Frederick, “What the New Housekeeping Means to the Farm Home,” 93.
"united effort toward schools of better standard, in improved roads and in neighborliness."\(^1\) And during the last months of the women's suffrage campaign, she toyed with the idea of writing an article entitled, "The Housewife and the Vote," in which she would demonstrate how homemaking reached "out into national housekeeping."\(^2\)

She admonished the readers of *Household Engineering* to familiarize themselves with the Pure Food and Drug Act and then to help enforce it. "It is a large share of the modern consumer's work and training to detect . . . frauds, boycott them and bring them to the attention of the proper inspectors," she wrote.\(^3\) She played a small role in the pure food movement when a Huntington women's group to which she belonged, inspired by an expose in *Collier's* magazine, organized a pure food show in 1913. Joining with the local chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the local historical society and several reluctant food retailers, the women exposed food and drug adulteration and deceptive weighing methods. Christine wrote that the exhibit actually "boost[ed] the dealers, dairymen, bakeries, etc.," of Huntington "if they were up to standard." In fact, it boosted her efforts at Applecroft, too, for she

\(^{11}\)C. Frederick, "The 'Professional Grandma,'" *LHJ*, April 1917, 102.


demonstrated efficiency with equipment such as the fireless cooker, the
gasoline iron, and various electric appliances from her kitchen.\textsuperscript{14}

Christine carried the pure food and drug message into rural America.

She chided Illinois farmers in 1916 for using ineffective and impure
medications:

\begin{quote}
[I]t is a known fact that the patent medicine industry in this country
is supported by the farmer. Doan’s kidney pills, Swamp-root, stomach
bitters and Peruna have long ago been expelled from the
good metropolitan newspapers and national weeklies. But where do they
still thrive? On the pages of the best country weeklies. . . . I
want you to use your influence to get honest advertising in your
country papers.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

Christine’s admonition was patronizing, but it might have been well-placed.

Before doctors or drugstores were available on the frontier, nineteenth-
century Americans had become accustomed to the patent medicines sold
by traveling salesmen.\textsuperscript{16} In Ruth Suckow’s novel about Iowan farm families
during the years before and after World War I, August Kaetterhenry, who
had been told by the Mayo Clinic that he had high blood pressure, was
advised by a neighbor:

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{14}\textsuperscript{14}Christine Frederick, “Rousing the Small Town,” \textit{Collier’s}, 11
October 1913, 22-23.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{15}\textsuperscript{15}C. Frederick, “What the New Housekeeping Means to the Farm
Home,” 91.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{16}\textsuperscript{16}Adelaide Hechtlinger, \textit{The Great Era of Patent Medicines} (New
\end{quote}
Them places makes a big noise, but there’s some stuff right down here at the drug-store that me and the missus always takes when we got anything the matter with us, and it does the business.\textsuperscript{17}

And when August’s daughter had become ill with seizures, “August and Emma bought her large bottles of ‘nerve tonic’ at the drug-store, but that didn’t seem to help.”\textsuperscript{18}

Christine occasionally supported other reforms, too. She joined feminists who urged dress reform, for example. Like Catharine Beecher, who, in the nineteenth century, had urged that women throw away their corsets, Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Henrietta Rodman believed that women were restricted by confining clothes. Gilman argued against blind adherence to fashion, which she attributed to women’s need to attract men.\textsuperscript{19} Christine, too, argued against slavery to fashion. She cautioned a group of farmers and their wives against “aping foreign fashions” as the city women did. But her argument was not based on feminist principles; she was telling the farm wives to dress appropriately and comfortably for their housework.\textsuperscript{20}


\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., 87.

\textsuperscript{19}Sklar, \textit{Catharine Beecher}, 213; Schwarz, \textit{Heterodoxy}, 57; Gilman, \textit{Man-Made World}, 172-177, 255.

\textsuperscript{20}C. Frederick, “Getting the Most Out of Country Living,” 77-79.
Although Christine seemed to have exchanged the moral dimension of the nineteenth-century home for the modernization of the twentieth, she was nevertheless interested in the new religious thinking that accompanied the rise of Progressivism. The housewife needed to have “spiritual qualities,” she wrote in 1914. That was why there was such a “strong attraction” to New Thought, Christian Science, and astrology. This attraction, Christine wrote, was an indication that women were trying to expand their mental faculties.21

Christine subscribed to the middle-class values that characterized the Progressive movement, and like the home economists who were dedicated to bringing expertise to homemaking, her counsel reinforced these values. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 funded extension programs designed to teach farm women to manage their homes efficiently, thus “improving the general conditions of country life.”22 Agents sought to teach farm women how to “properly” prepare “wholesome food,” how to care for “the family linen and wardrobe,” even how to care for and manage their children. The home economists wanted the farm wife to gain “time for reading,

---

21C. Frederick, “Putting the American Woman,” 200. William Leach discusses the proliferation of new philosophical and religious systems such as Christian Science, Unity, Theosophy, and New Thought during the period of Progressive reform in Land of Desire, 225-229. For an example of advertisements for New Thought in popular magazines, see the LHJ, September 1915, 54.

self-development, child teaching, social life, and recreation.” The U. S. Department of Agriculture told the readers of the Journal of Home Economics that city women could help “through greater social intercourse with farm women. . . .” These reformers implied that farm women needed to be taught proper values. Although Christine was not a home economist, she shared their vision of how the Smith-Lever Act could further middle-class values. She suggested that the extension program include “Rural Social Advisors” who might “stimulate country dwellers in the formation of distinctive ideas of living, in dress and furnishings, and recreation.” Farmers should instill in their daughters “ideals about country living,” “honesty,” and “simple right living.” As her 1916 housekeeping movie had demonstrated, Christine was especially enthusiastic about the extension program’s visiting housekeepers whom she dubbed “professional grandmothers.” She praised them for helping young wives with family budgets, ignoring the potential for intrusion. There were visiting housekeepers in the cities, too, and some of them passed harsh judgement on the working-class beneficiaries of their advice. One who shared the podium with Christine at the sixth annual meeting of the American Home

---


24Christine Frederick, “Getting the Most out of Country Living,” 71, 79.

Economics Association said that the mother of one of her families in Detroit was "shiftless in the extreme, [and] had no interest whatever in the condition of her home." The "shiftless" woman in question was married to an unemployed alcoholic and the family's goods had been repossessed.26 Nevertheless, the visiting housekeeper held her to middle-class standards. Only two years earlier, Jacob Riis had published photographs of entire families working in dark tenements making cigars. Hearings before the New York State factory investigating commission revealed that children as young as three years were making artificial flowers "late into the night." Testimony indicated that mothers generally beat them to keep them working.27 The purveyors of middle-class housekeeping standards did not acknowledge that scientific management or nutrition charts had little relevance in the face of the extreme poverty that drove people to such desperation.

Christine was more realistic, perhaps, when she admitted that her advice on scientific management was useful primarily to middle-class women. Wealthy women, she wrote, could hire servants while others, deferring marriage, lived in apartments or boarding houses. She dismissed poor women because their housekeeping was not complex and in any


event, settlement workers could teach them at no charge. On the other hand, she felt that society expected much of middle-class women. They were "refined, educated women, many with a college or business training," she wrote, and they must keep up the "fair standard of appearances obligatory on the middle class. . . ."28

The Progressive reformers' paternalism embraced not only white working class women, but also women of non-Western European groups. Ellen Richards developed a syllabus for use in domestic science education in 1900 that suggested that the social development of the Anglo-Saxon home life was superior to all others. Subtopics in the syllabus included: "The psychology of the races--expression of the home idea in races other than the Anglo-Saxon," and "The home life of the Anglo-Saxon vs. The Communistic family system."29 The paternalism, of course, extended to attitudes about African Americans. In fact, black Americans were taking it upon themselves to teach home and community values in institutions of their own. In the South, both Tuskegee and the Hampton Institute provided courses in home economics and nursing.30 These programs

28C. Frederick, The New Housekeeping, 10-12.

29Quoted from the 1901 Lake Placid Conference in Ehrenreich and English, For Her Own Good, 159.

trained teachers, visiting rural nurses, and extension agents. 31 The home was important to these young black women, wrote one home economist, because they had not had real homes before 1865. Training for home life, she wrote, was “the most essential part” of a girl’s training. Like the white Progressive reformers, she believed that home economics training would provide instruction in “right living.”32 The majority of these black students, however, were not destined to manage middle-class homes of their own. A telling statement about the training at the Hampton Institute in 1925 revealed that “the prospective teacher is trained to wait on table and to serve large numbers.” Food preparation and serving was one of the primary subjects taught at Tuskegee.33 Many would eventually use their home economics training as domestic servants.

The servant question was a concern of Progressive reformers about which Christine wrote a great deal during her early career. Servants had been a “problem” for middle-class homemakers since Catharine Beecher wrote her Treatise in 1841. “They ought ever to be looked upon, not as the mere ministers to our comfort and convenience,” Beecher wrote, “but


as the humbler and more neglected children of our Heavenly Father, whom he has sent to claim our sympathy and aid.”  

Beecher believed that the woman of the house had a moral responsibility to her employees. By 1869, she had decided that servants should be accorded the same respect shown to dress-makers or milliners. A servant should receive “courteous treatment from all whom [the mistress’s] roof shelters,” she wrote in her second housekeeping manual. And she advised that employers refrain from interfering in their servants’ activities during their free hours.  

By the time Christine began her writing career, a public discussion about servants was taking place. An official from the U. S. Department of Commerce wrote in 1911 that servants in American homes labored under “antiquated labor contracts” that amounted to “social discrimination.” Young women who had previously worked in homes were now moving into factories and offices. He agreed with the promoters of scientific management who maintained that its adoption by homemakers would eliminate the necessity for servants, but in the meantime he urged that they be given decent wages and working conditions.  

This theme recurred in

---


many commentaries prior to World War I. Servants were, of course, still treated as social inferiors. Helen Calbreath, born and reared in rural Oregon, wrote to her mother from Europe in 1909:

I think you should have the orphan girl to wash dishes and sweep . . . . a girl (unfortunately) born in that position has to work . . . . Of course one doesn’t expect a maid—old or young—to eat with them. That is easily regulated from the first. Someone has to wait on the table. . . . It isn’t a question of ‘equality.’ It is a question of service.

In 1913, Charlotte Perkins Gilman decried the bargaining position of the servant:

The domestic servant is still expected to take part wage in barter, food and shelter being given instead of the full price in money; to live in the house of the employing family, to show . . . humility, loyalty, faithfulness. . . .

In 1913, J. George Frederick’s Business Bourse found that only eight percent of American families employed servants. Still, many middle-class families wanted “intelligent and skilled service within the home . . . .” Willing domestic workers who met these requirements were difficult to find.

---


38 Helen Calbreath to Dr. and Mrs. Calbreath, 2 May 1909, box 3, file folder 4, Calbreath Family Collection.


41 Talbot and Breckinridge, *Modern Household*, 57.
One proposed solution was to employ servants for regular hours at wages generous enough to allow them to live in their own lodgings. As early as 1907, the Women’s Educational and Industrial Union of Boston promoted “fair conditions” spelled out in a formal contract for domestic service. In 1912, Talbot and Breckinridge, recognizing that social barriers were exacerbated when servants lived in the home, suggested standardizing hours so that they could live away from their employers. Christine first expanded upon this idea in the fourth article of her original Ladies’ Home Journal series, which argued that scientific management could help solve the servant problem. She framed her ideas within a conversational format. A “friend” told her that her maid, “Katy,” by using the new, efficient methods of housekeeping, accomplished more in less time than she had formerly. Yet the friend had not increased the maid’s wages, nor had she given her extra time off. Christine commented, “Katy is still in the same barbaric state of vassalage which was once common in all industries.” Christine’s friend eventually changed her policy, dropping “the dictatorial idea of ordering [Katy] around,” as a “subordinate.”

42 “Domestic Reform League, Form of Contract,” [August 1907], box 1, file folder 5, WEIU Papers.

43 Talbot and Breckinridge, Modern Household, 58-63.

44 C. Frederick, “The New Housekeeping,” LHJ, December 1912, 16. Christine often used the fictitious name, “Katy,” when discussing servants. This reflected the fact that in the years prior to World War I, Irish women comprised nearly one-third of the servant population in the United States. Fritschner, Rise and Fall, 53.
scientific management she was able to promote "team work," and to change her own attitude about homemaking. Christine’s suggestion that the friend consult the manager of a shop yielded these happy results, for she discovered that when an employer “assumes the responsibility of enabling the employee to work under the best conditions . . . the worker cannot fail.” Christine’s story revealed her complete faith in the efficiency engineers’ system, and her belief that it improved the lot of the worker.

The friend confided:

My plans must be carried out; she must feel the responsibility of her work and not shirk it. When she understands my plans, based on the best way to do her work, she must accept this program and carry it through.45

Like the shop manager, Christine’s friend “standardized” her maid’s hours and pay, setting an hourly wage, a uniform eleven-hour day, and regular days off. Although this early article was designed to promote scientific management, Christine’s ideas about regular hours and wages that enabled “Katy” to live in her own flat and the even more radical suggestion that servants be given two weeks paid vacation after a full year’s employment were informed by Progressivism.46

Edward Bok liked Christine’s first article on servants and, in the spring of 1914, asked her to supply another suggesting the title, “Suppose

---

46Ibid., 16, 79.
Our Servants Didn’t Live with Us?”⁴⁷ That article appeared the following October. Here, Christine used the views of prominent Progressive activists Jane Addams and Grace Abbott, who believed that servants were vulnerable to immoral influences, to argue that servant girls who lived away from their employers’ homes were less likely to lead “an immoral life.” “More girls ‘go wrong’ and become insane, from the servant class...,” she wrote, because of indefinite hours and the “feudal relationship” between mistress and maid. She again advised that women convert their household routines to the scientific management model and added that the installation of “labor-saving equipment” would help standardize the servant’s work.⁴⁸

Christine blamed unstandardized conditions and a poor psychological atmosphere for young women’s resistance to domestic work. She argued that the work itself did not deter applicants. Given “standardized” work and provided with enough money to live in their own quarters, young women would find the servant’s position “as dignified, independent and professional as the factory worker, the telephone girl or the shopgirl.”⁴⁹ To objections that the wages she suggested were too high, Christine

---

⁴⁷Edward Bok to Christine Frederick, 25 May 1914, file folder 1, Frederick Papers.

⁴⁸Christine Frederick, “Suppose Our Servants Didn’t Live With Us?” LHJ, October 1914, 102.

⁴⁹Ibid.
responded with a list of the overhead costs involved in housing a servant: food, fuel for heat and light, and plumbing, for example. Christine suggested a contract that clarified terms of employment, including hours, wages, and severance notice.\textsuperscript{50} Like Catharine Beecher, who had written that a mistress had “no more right to interfere with [her servants] in the disposal of their time than with any mechanic whom [she] employ[ed],”\textsuperscript{51} Christine argued that a contract would prevent a mistress from attempting to “‘regulate’ a girl’s personal life.” Still, Christine’s middle-class bias was revealed by the suggestion that a mistress would be well within her rights to insist that the maid bathe during her “off-time.”\textsuperscript{52}

Christine seemed sincere in her wish to see reform. She pointed out that her plan would give the mistress more privacy, provide incentive to the servant to work extra hours when asked, place the relationship on the level of a business transaction rather than “emotional loyalty,” and provide the servant with the means to live as “independent and thoroughly human a life as is possible.”\textsuperscript{53}

Christine’s third article on servants appeared in the \textit{Ladies’ Home Journal} in October of 1915. She revisited the advantages of employing

\textsuperscript{50}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{51}Beecher and Stowe, \textit{American Woman’s Home}, 324.

\textsuperscript{52}C. Frederick, “Suppose Our Servants,” 102.

\textsuperscript{53}Ibid.
servants on a contractual basis, providing them with certain benefits, and paying them enough to rent their own living quarters. Again, she promoted scientific management, or “standardized housework” as the key to success. In this piece, she emphasized training for house workers, suggesting a rather grand plan for “domestic centers” where young women would not only be trained as house workers, but also be given room and board during their course. Citing an operating example in an unnamed western city, she suggested that potential employers cooperate to buy and furnish a house, hire a matron, and deduct the costs from future wages. Reflecting both her humanity and her biases, Christine wrote, “I believe ‘standardized work and sleeping out of the home will dignify housework and attract a better class of girls.” She underscored her earlier admonitions against mistresses trying to control their servants’ lives, “Her personal life should not be questioned as long as it does not interfere with the work she is doing for you.” She suggested that the more businesslike arrangement would improve the mistress, as well:

[W]hen we are able to treat workers in the home on the same plane as we treat intelligent coequal human beings, I think it will be much better for the woman herself. It will develop and broaden her.54

54Christine Frederick, “Why Should Our Servants Live With Us?” LHJ, October 1915, 47.
In *Household Engineering*, Christine included a chapter entitled “Management of Houseworkers” which further defined her views on servants. She scolded women’s clubs for ignoring the matter:

> It seems futile for women’s clubs to discuss ‘Browning’ and the ‘early Aztec pottery,’ while they neglect to solve or make any progress in the great problem of woman as an employer of labor in the home. . . .

She urged more democratic ways of treating employees, suggesting that the term “houseworker” be used instead of “servant” or “maid,” and that domestic workers be addressed as “Miss” or “Mrs.” But at the same time, she wrote:

> It is generally unsafe to trust the common grade of household worker with the costly and delicate apparatus of electric cooking, or expect her to understand and use it economically.

Christine, then, did not treat all houseworkers with equal respect. But unlike the young Oregon woman who did not expect servants to eat with their employers, Christine wrote, “There seems to be no reason why a high grade worker should not take at least the noon meal of informal luncheon with her employer. It is a little thing, but its psychological influence is great.” Despite her campaign to raise the status of houseworkers, she held tightly to the paternalism of middle-class propriety.

---

55 C. Frederick, *Household Engineering*, 441.
56 *ibid.*, 422-423.
57 *ibid.*, 393.
58 *ibid.*, 437.
Christine’s program for elevating the status of houseworkers was consistent with the views of other Progressive reformers. The same year she published *Household Engineering*, the Committee on Home Assistants, a division of the U. S. Employment Service, brought employers and non-resident houseworkers together under a contract that would stipulate eight-hour days and overtime pay. This experiment was funded for only seven weeks, but its promoters were convinced that a businesslike arrangement similar to the one Christine had first proposed in 1912 would solve the “domestic problem.”\(^{59}\) Similar experiments in several northeastern cities placed eight-hour-a-day houseworkers for several years after World War I.\(^{60}\)

6.2

Christine’s work reflected the tensions between more radical Progressive ideas such as feminism and her persistent nineteenth-century view of women as homemakers. Her readership broadened considerably in the years prior to World War I. Early in 1914, she reiterated her views on scientific housekeeping for the *American Review of Reviews*. The inherent conflict in her message resonates in this article, for she frankly admitted that housekeeping was “distasteful to . . . the livest [sic] and most intelligent portion of housekeepers, and is only endured in a dull way by the

\(^{59}\)Committee on Household Assistants, “The Seven Weeks Experiment,” [1919], typescript, carton 2, file folder 126, BVI Papers.

\(^{60}\)“Eight Hour Service,” *JHE*, December 1920, 9, (carton 2, file folder 129, BVI Papers, photocopy).
masses of women." But efficiency could do for women what it had done for men, she wrote, and in fact would help the sexes to join "their spheres . . . toward the real American ideal of comradeship. . . ."\footnote{61} If women would apply "the modern ideas of efficiency" to their own minds, homemaking could become "the most all-satisfying, broadening and stimulating career open to any woman, and one which offers her widest talents their most varied scope."\footnote{62} Blaming women who failed to make this leap for their own unhappiness, Christine once again ignored the fact that her own solution to the problem was to leave the home for a public career.

She also wrote articles for the \textit{Ladies' Home Journal}'s competitors, occasionally under the pen name, Isobel Brands, paying homage to the great-aunt who had been a Russian governess.\footnote{63} A variety of periodicals published her work. \textit{The New Country Life}, for example, ran an article she wrote about J. George's concrete picnic table in the apple orchard.\footnote{64} And in 1915, she reached a European audience when the French journal \textit{Revue

\footnote{61}C. Frederick, "Putting the American Woman," 200.
\footnote{62}Ibid., 205-206.
\footnote{64}C. Frederick, "Equipping an Orchard," 108.
*de Metallurgie,* published a translation of extracts from *The New Housekeeping.*

Early in her career Christine discovered that newspaper syndication could provide a larger readership than magazines could. In 1913, not only did she write for the *Philadelphia Public Ledger,* but she also contributed a column to the short-lived Wheeler Syndicate in New York. Her most important newspaper assignment was as household writer for William Randolph Hearst’s giant newspaper chain. She told an audience years later that “Mr. Hearst snapped up” her work and “writing talents.” From 1917 until 1944, she wrote a column for Hearst’s Sunday supplement, *American Weekly.* When Christine first began writing for Hearst, he had papers in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, Boston, Atlanta, and Washington, D. C. By the early 1920s, he had added Milwaukee, Seattle, and Detroit to

---


67 Christine told an audience in 1966 that she had written for the Hearst papers for 29 years, which would have meant that she began in 1915. But in a typed note she attached to a 1942 letter, she wrote that she had begun a “syndicate for Am. Weekly in 1917. . . .” Laguna Library Book Day Speech; Christine Frederick to Portus Baxter, 12 May 1942, file folder 4, Frederick Papers.
his empire. Thus, within a decade after she first began writing about household efficiency, Christine's columns were reaching people across the entire country.

Christine continued to write and answer housekeeping letters for the *Ladies' Home Journal* until the 1920s. In the beginning, the volume of her mail was impressive; she billed the *Journal* for 478 letters during the month of November, 1914. Letters from all over the country poured in to thank Christine for introducing them to the "New Housekeeping." Occasionally the *Journal*’s staff had to mediate misunderstandings that arose between Christine and her readers: it was suggested that she might have "exploited" another’s work on one occasion. And advertisers sometimes took issue with her advice if it ignored their products. The manufacturers of Valspar varnish complained that her advice regarding oils and finishes was inaccurate, for example, and the California Packing Corporation objected

---


69 Applecroft Experiment Station statement to Curtis Publishing Company, 30 November 1914, file folder 1, Frederick Papers.


71 Karl Harriman asked Christine to have a talk with a disgruntled correspondent who apparently felt she had used a plan he had devised in a *Journal* article. "It is possible that it may have been exploited by us without his knowledge. . . . You, of course could tell him that at once," Harriman wrote. K. E. Harriman to Christine Frederick, 13 July 1914, file folder 1, Frederick Papers.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
when an article on fruit consumption did not promote canned goods.\textsuperscript{72} As Christine noted in her response to the packers, it was impossible "for every article to cover all interests. . . ."\textsuperscript{73}

This dilemma was compounded by the fact that the \textit{Journal} sometimes blatantly used Christine’s work to court advertisers. In 1915, Harriman asked her to recommend the Whirlpool dishwasher in her responses to letters.\textsuperscript{74} The household editor who corresponded with Christine in 1918 asked her to suggest new labor-saving equipment, noting, "I know you are in close touch with the manufacturers."\textsuperscript{75} Christine, too, used the relationship to sell. In the early years, the following preface preceded Christine’s \textit{Journal} articles:

Mrs. Frederick is an expert in helping women solve the problems of housekeeping. Her ‘Applecroft Experiment Station’ is a real home, where she tests appliances and new materials.\textsuperscript{76}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{72}K. E. Harriman to Christine Frederick 3 March 1916, file folder 1; W. E. Loucks to Curtis Publishing Company, 27 February 1919, file folder 2, Frederick Papers.

\textsuperscript{73}[Christine Frederick] to W. E. Loucks, 3 April 1919, file folder 2, Frederick Papers.

\textsuperscript{74}Harriman to Frederick, 22 September 1915, file folder 1, Frederick Papers.

\textsuperscript{75}Theresa H. Wolcott to Christine Frederick, 16 January 1918, file folder 1, Frederick Papers.

\textsuperscript{76}See, for example, Christine Frederick, "The Housewife’s Tools,” \textit{LHJ}, November 1915, 66.
\end{flushright}
This notice surely boosted her product-testing business. After Harriman asked her to include her *New Womanhood* bulletins in her responses to mail, she sent him her revolving food chart for inclusion in the magazine. The $400.00 she asked for the chart was too steep for the *Journal*, and after Bok had seen it, she was offered $200.00.\(^{77}\) Christine’s work for the *Journal* was beginning to reveal the difficulties inherent in fusing advertising with journalism.

Until 1916, Christine’s name had appeared as editor of the regular column, “The New Housekeeping,” the title of which had been inspired by her first articles.\(^{78}\) But that year another editor took the column and the magazine printed only two of Christine’s articles. In March, her name ceased to appear as the correspondent for “How Can I Run My Home More Easily?”\(^{79}\) Anna East, a home economist who had worked for the New York Edison Company, took over as household editor in January. Perhaps feeling insecure about her position with the magazine, Christine had invited East to visit Applecroft in the fall. A month after East assumed her post,

\(^{77}\)Harriman to Frederick, 9 March 1914; 28 May 1914; 23 June 1914; 13 July 1914; 23 July 1914, file folder 1, Frederick Papers.

\(^{78}\)See, for example, Christine Frederick, ed., “The New Housekeeping,” *LHJ*, September 1915, 21 and December 1915, 47.

she responded to a “moving” letter from Christine, assuring her that she was “indelibly [sic] connected with The Journal.” East stayed only a year, and her replacement only six months. In 1918, Theresa Wolcott, who had handled Christine’s articles prior to East’s arrival, resumed as head of the household department. Though Christine visited the Journal’s offices in June of 1917 and the magazine published four of her articles that year, Wolcott rejected as many. When Christine proposed an article on the family, Harriman quashed the idea, writing her that “it would hardly be typical.” Two years later, Wolcott sent Christine four pages of suggested changes when she submitted an article on the eight-hour day for houseworkers and suggested that another article could be reduced to a chart. Christine’s relationship with the Journal was clearly strained.

In 1919, the Journal confronted the conflict of interests that resulted when articles mentioned advertisers’ products. Christine wrote to tell

---

80 Theresa H. Wolcott to Christine Frederick, 8 September 1915; 16 September 1915; Anna M. East to Frederick, 20 October 1915; 12 February 1916, file folder 1, Frederick Papers.

81 Virginia E. Kift to Christine Frederick, 30 July 1917; Theresa H. Wolcott to Frederick, 16 January 1918, file folder 1, Frederick Papers.

82 Theresa H. Wolcott to Christine Frederick, 21 June 1917; 12 July 1917, file folder 1, Frederick Papers.

83 Karl E. Harriman to Christine Frederick, 13 December 1917, file folder 1, Frederick Papers.

84 [Theresa Wolcott] to Christine Frederick, 28 May 1919, file folder 2, Frederick Papers.
Theresa Wolcott that she had been asked to promote a product in an article. Wolcott replied that she and the managing editor believed such an article would damage Christine’s reputation, and that if she proceeded with the idea, the Journal would not want to use her again. “I think the time is coming,” Wolcott wrote, “when there will have to be a distinction [sic] between the editorial and advertising domestic science and household writers.” Christine had apparently accompanied her suggestion with the names of two other household writers who had advertised products. “I think the two women, whom you mention in your letter,” Wolcott responded, “have already greatly injured themselves by doing this very thing that is asked of you.”

Wolcott also took Christine to task for claiming to be the magazine’s “household editor.” After receiving letters for Christine that were obviously generated by articles in other publications, Wolcott cautioned her to use an accurate title when referring to her connection with the Ladies’ Home Journal. Wolcott suggested “‘contributor to the Ladies’ Home Journal’ . . . eliminating the idea of permanent association.” Nevertheless, Christine and Theresa Wolcott remained friends; Wolcott visited Applecroft and they exchanged gifts and cards throughout 1919 and 1920.

---

85 Theresa H. Wolcott to Christine Frederick, 27 August 1919, file folder 2, Frederick Papers.

86 Wolcott to Frederick, 19 December 1919, file folder 2, Frederick Papers.
managing editor and eight of his staff quit the *Journal*, Wolcott continued for a time to try to serve Christine’s interests. But after a trying two years, she finally left the *Journal* “because of changed conditions” in October of 1920.\(^8^7\) The turmoil at the *Journal* resulted in Christine’s removal as the household correspondent and in the rejection of many of her proposed articles. Nonetheless, several of her pieces were published by the magazine through 1920.\(^8^8\) By this time her work was appearing in other publications and she was actively pursuing another important component of her career as a public speaker.

### 6.3

Soon after she had established herself as a home efficiency writer, Christine Frederick began to speak about the “new housekeeping” on the lecture circuit. An early brochure declared:

> Mrs. Frederick is a lecturer of trained and proven ability and attractiveness, specializing on subjects upon which she is a recognized authority and on which she has had first-hand practical experience—home efficiency, dietetics, purchasing, the consumer viewpoint and other phases of woman’s work.

Produced for the purpose of promoting her talks, this leaflet praised her “Ability to Draw and Hold Audiences,” and listed fourteen groups, as

---

\(^{8^7}\) Theresa H. Wolcott to Christine Frederick, 29 December 1919; 2 April 1920; 22 May 1920; 3 June 1920; 24 September 1920; 25 October 1920, file folder 2, Frederick Papers.

\(^{8^8}\) Helen Ormsbee to Christine Frederick, 22 April 1920; Theresa H. Wolcott to Christine Frederick, 12 March 1920; 30 March 1920; 16 June 1920, file folder 2, Frederick Papers.
diverse as the U. S. Congress, Columbia University, and the National Cash Register employees, to whom she had spoken. The list of topics upon which she could speak included efficiency, purchasing, food, country life, and civic issues. She even advertised a lecture entitled, “The Home Efficiency Basis for Suffrage.” She did not list her fees, but suggested that prospective clients write for “constructive suggestions for making her lectures pay best. . . .”

In June, 1913, just after Christine had published “The New Housekeeping,” she was invited to speak before the annual meeting of the American Home Economics Association at Cornell University. Her topic was “The Best Way Yet,” “a discussion of housekeeping equipment and methods.” Excerpts from this speech were printed a year later as “Points in Efficiency” in the association’s journal. It was in this early speech that Christine, having launched an extremely promising career as writer and lecturer, proclaimed, “Our greatest enemy is the woman with the career.” Her point was that if women sought work outside the home, they would be all the more likely to view housework as drudgery. This addressed the fear

---

89“Mrs. Christine Frederick, Author and Lecturer,” brochure, [1916], file folder 15, Frederick Papers. There are dozens of Applecroft brochures in this file. Some promote her books as well as her lectures.


91C. Frederick, “Points in Efficiency,” 280.
that the home was in danger, a theme she would return to it again and again during the next decade. Her goal was to elevate homemaking by convincing women of its value. "[H]ome making is not drudgery," she told the home economists, "home making is big business, and . . . it is just as interesting and just as stimulating to make a splendid cake on a schedule as it is to pound a typewriter all day for nine dollars a week." She hinted that the cultural activities of the club woman and the charitable work of the reformer were as detrimental to homemaking (and by extension, the home) as work for pay. The woman who was interested in art "or in any of the fields in which women are running with eager feet because it expresses their wonderful individuality," she said rather sarcastically, should "come into the home and express her art through its decoration. . . ." Let the reformer "find it just as interesting to care for her own children as it is to go down on the east side and take care of Annie Bolowski," she advised.92 Never more clearly than in this early speech, did Christine reveal the conflict that her own life embodied.

After 1913, her speaking career kept pace with her writing. In 1914 she appeared before the Efficiency Society in Lake Placid and the Advertising Men's League in New York City. She also testified before the

92Ibid.
House Judiciary Committee that year. Her two children, David and Jean, were then four and six years old and when their mother was traveling, Nursie cared for them. Her speaking schedule for 1915 slowed when her third child, Phyllis, was born in May, but three months before her confinement, she spoke before the Lancaster Advertising group. During the first three months of 1916, Christine traveled in the Middle West for several weeks, addressing groups in Iowa, Indiana, and Illinois, where she spoke before the Farmers' Institute. The promotional material for the third annual convention of the Indiana Home Economics Association at Purdue University heralded Christine's address, "Women, Home Making and Careers," by urging, "Those who are familiar with Mrs. Frederick's brilliant contributions to the leading journals should appreciate this opportunity to see and hear one of her ability and reputation."

It was during her Midwestern tour that she hurried back to New York to deliver the lecture on Household Economics for the Intercollegiate Bureau of Occupations. If Christine's earlier speech to the home economists had
revealed her own inner conflicts, her lecture for the IBO's course exposed her differences with contemporary feminists. Gilman had said in the first lecture of the course that women should be changing their "industrial relation to the world" by entering fields other than homemaking.97 Other speakers in the series included Frances Perkins who lectured on civil service work, Ida Tarbell on journalism, Mary Beard on work in the community, and Fay Kellogg on architecture.98 Christine countered the thrust of the course by arguing that professions that took women out of the home were becoming overcrowded. "I often say that the woman with the career is my greatest enemy," she admitted, but she quickly added, "she is not tonight in this particular address."99

The Illinois Farmers' Institute was so impressed by Christine's 1916 address that it asked her back to its meeting in 1917. She spoke before the Institute in Streator, Illinois, that February, capitalizing on her Long Island experience in order to claim expertise in country living. Later in the year, Christine spoke in Louisville, Kentucky, and twice she traveled to the


99C. Frederick, "Household Economics," 4-6.
nation's capital to testify on price maintenance. Her fourth child, Carol, had been born in August.

Christine was a popular speaker because she had seized upon trends that appealed to modern early twentieth-century Americans: efficiency, streamlined management, technology, and consumerism. She also addressed the middle-class fear that the home was under siege. While she encouraged American families to modernize, she reassured them that change need not disturb the traditional structure of the family, because women could modernize by staying home. But Christine was also in demand because of the considerable talent as a speaker that she had discovered and developed as a student at Northwestern.

"Mrs. Frederick has a remarkable platform presence," reported the *Louisville Herald*. She had "a wonderful speaking voice, and magnetism. . . ." Her style was brisk; a reporter who covered a lecture in Rochester, New York, wrote that Christine delivered a "succession of rapid fire ideas. . . ." She often relieved her practical and efficient demeanor with a playful sense of humor. In 1917, she teased the Illinois farmers:

---

100 "Farmers Will Meet at Streator," n.p., [February 1917], clipping; "Urges Women to Be ‘Kitchen Soldiers,’" *Louisville Herald*, [1917], clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers; "Price Maintenance Again"; "Brands Needed by Consumer."

101 "Urges Women to Be ‘Kitchen Soldiers.’"

"You all know I made an unfortunate marriage and married a farmboy from Pennsylvania!" She good-naturedly chided them with comic exaggeration for their diets of "pickled this and pickled that," "three-story cakes," and "seven kinds of pies and fourteen other kinds of sweets." Christine often flattered her male audiences. "You are the man of the hour," she told the 1916 gathering of the Farmers' Institute, "with your 12,000,000,000 bushels you are feeding the world." The flattery sometimes became a bit flirtatious. Explaining the percentages of goods that women buy, she would tell a male audience:

Therefore, I say that of the handsome members of the institute before me this evening, 34% of them are wearing clothing chosen for them by women!

Although Christine's message was ostensibly aimed at women, she often spoke to men. "You see," she told the Illinois farmers, "I speak to so very many groups of gentlemen. I spoke to about 700 in Toledo the other afternoon. . . ." In 1921, when asked to list her hobbies for a pamphlet about women in advertising, she wrote that after her "hubby," the four children, and clam digging, her favorite hobby was "addressing 3000 men."

---

103 C. Frederick, "Getting the Most Out of Country Living," 74.

104 C. Frederick, "What the New Housekeeping Means to the Farm Home," 86.

105 "Mrs. Consumer Speaks Her Mind," speech, 20 October 1930, [1], file folder 10, Frederick Papers.

108 C. Frederick, "Getting the Most Out of Country Living," 74.
In fact, she added, "I'm sure it's this last hobby I love best."\textsuperscript{107} By speaking so often to men, Christine could promote modernization of the home to those who had an interest in encouraging women to remain there.

Christine had a flair for drama and often used stage props. Before the Federal Trade Commission, she exhibited products to illustrate the difference between trademarked and independently labeled goods.\textsuperscript{108} On several occasions, especially if she were addressing a group of men, she produced a pail and scrub brush. In evening dress, she dropped to the floor on hands and knees to illustrate the drudgery of housekeeping before technology, asking the gentlemen if this was how they wished their wives to labor.\textsuperscript{109} Her appearance added to her charm as a speaker. An observer at the Rochester, New York, lecture described her as "a charming young woman in a modish green gown with a big bunch of daisies at her belt." On her head, she wore a "bandeau hat with a velvet chin strap."\textsuperscript{110} Christine liked fine clothes; as a mature woman, she often lectured in a long black lace gown with an apricot satin under slip.\textsuperscript{111} Flair, humor,

\textsuperscript{107}League of Advertising Women, "Advertising Women Minus Blue Spectacles," 1921, [7], carton 1, file folder 2, AWNY Papers.

\textsuperscript{108}"Brands Needed by Consumer."

\textsuperscript{109}Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.

\textsuperscript{110}"Ad Club Will Hear Interesting Address."

\textsuperscript{111}Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994; Photograph MC261-34-1, Frederick Papers.
compelling delivery, and a modern message that could be tailored to meet wartime imperatives made Christine a natural choice for the entertainment and cultural phenomenon of the period: in 1918, she joined a Chautauqua show.

Chautauqua had a long and distinguished history by the time Christine joined a circuit during the second year of America’s involvement in World War I. A lyceum movement that sprang from an 1874 Sunday School Assembly on Chautauqua Lake in New York had established study circles around the country by the 1880s. By 1890, there were two hundred groups offering lectures on popular subjects. Mark Twain, Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, and Julia Ward Howe all lectured for the Boston Lyceum Bureau. Elizabeth Cady Stanton spoke on the lyceum circuit during the 1870s. The Redpath Chautauqua circuits, named for James Redpath who had begun a lecture bureau in Boston in 1867, were organized by Keith Vawter in 1904. Other promoters established their own circuits and soon twenty-two separate Chautauqua circuits traveled around the United States. Those who wanted to use the Redpath name paid a royalty to the Redpath Lyceum Bureau in Boston. From its inception until

---


113 Griffith, *In Her Own Right*, 160-161.
its decline in the late 1920s, Chautauqua brought a variety of programs to more than eight thousand cities and towns. In 1912, Redpath split, and the Redpath-Chicago circuit concentrated on the states of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, and Kentucky.\footnote{Harrison, \textit{Culture under Canvas}, 30-38, 53, 81-83; Gould, \textit{Chautauqua Movement}, 78-79.} It was with this circuit that Christine traveled in 1918.

Seven-day shows were presented in each town, the lecturers and performers for the first day traveling to the next city as soon as they had finished. Chautauqua’s educational function was considered important enough that President Wilson eased the restrictions that reserved trains for troop movement, and Chautauquans were allowed train passage. They were also exempted from the draft.\footnote{Harrison, \textit{Culture Under Canvas}, 90, 211.} Talent was paid well; top performers drew salaries as high as $1,500 per week.\footnote{Ibid., 208.}

Chautauqua nurtured Progressive reform. Kansas editor William Allen White once said that the Progressive Party emerged from a few Midwestern Chautauqua speeches. All the reforms of the period—tariff revision, initiative and referendum, woman suffrage, child labor reform, school reform—were expounded under the Chautauqua tents.\footnote{Ibid., 123; Gould, \textit{Chautauqua Movement}, 81-82.} The first year that Redpath-Chicago operated, it engaged William Jennings Bryan to

---

\footnote{Harrison, \textit{Culture under Canvas}, 30-38, 53, 81-83; Gould, \textit{Chautauqua Movement}, 78-79.}

\footnote{Harrison, \textit{Culture Under Canvas}, 90, 211.}

\footnote{Ibid., 208.}

\footnote{Ibid., 123; Gould, \textit{Chautauqua Movement}, 81-82.}
deliver his famous lecture, “Prince of Peace,” from Tennessee to Michigan. He sometimes drew crowds of 5,000 people to the enormous, brown Chautauqua tent emblazoned with four-foot high letters.\textsuperscript{118}

Both instructive programs and elocution were popular with Chautauqua audiences, so Christine seemed well-suited for the circuit.\textsuperscript{119} It is true that one testy Chautauqua manager proclaimed the most dangerous subject for the tents was housekeeping because it was a subject “more thickly covered with a concrete mixture of prejudice and ignorance than any other.”\textsuperscript{120} Nonetheless, Christine was hired by an agent who had heard her speak in Waltham, Massachusetts.\textsuperscript{121}

Christine traveled for several months from spring to fall in 1918, speaking to audiences of two and three thousand people in ten states from South Carolina to Illinois.\textsuperscript{122} In tents where the temperature sometimes reached 117 degrees, she delivered a speech entitled, “Keeping House for Uncle Sam,” during which she enlisted women as “‘kitchen soldiers’ to help

\textsuperscript{118}Harrison, \textit{Culture under Canvas}, 91-96, 158; Gould, \textit{Chautauqua Movement}, 81.

\textsuperscript{119}Ibid., 181-182; 191.

\textsuperscript{120}Ibid., 224.

\textsuperscript{121}[C. Frederick], “Only a Girl,” [22].

\textsuperscript{122}C. Frederick, Laguna Library Book Day Speech; “Career Chronology,” 2.
win this great war for democracy." Christine’s wartime Chautauqua troupe was led by British newspaper correspondent John Foster Fraser whose lecture, “The Checkerboard of Europe,” was thought by some to be a political argument in favor of war. Redpath-Chautauqua had added opera to its program five years earlier, and the year Christine lectured the light opera, The Chocolate Soldier, was featured. Other musical acts included Dunbar’s Revue, a Croatian orchestra, and an operatic soloist.

Christine was very proud of her Chautauqua tour. She later wrote that she gave “Wm. Jennings Bryan and his curls and his ‘Cross of Gold’ a run for his money.” The years had clouded her memory, for Bryan had given “Prince of Peace” for Chautauqua. She may also have embellished her contribution, for she told an interviewer many years later that, while with Chautauqua, she had started canning clubs, baby welfare programs, and municipal markets in several towns. Her Chautauqua lecture drew from her previous work. She concentrated on household efficiency and

123“Career Chronology,” 2; “Consumer Work,” typescript, 2, carton 1, file folder 15, Dignam Papers.

124Harrison, Culture under Canvas, 212.

125Ibid., 199; “Take Your Vacation at the Big Redpath Chautauqua,” n.d., poster, Frederick Papers (filed in map case, drawer 4, Schlesinger Library); “Redpath Chautauqua Program DeLuxe,” 10 August [1918], flyer, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.

126[C. Frederick], “Only a Girl,” [22].

127“Consumer Work,” 2.
labor-saving devices. Incorporating efficiency and technology into homemaking, she told her audiences, would further the war effort by conserving food, time and energy. She exhorted women to create good homes for the returning veterans, to use fewer foods at each meal, to be good homemakers. Though she added the obligatory list of municipal housekeeping projects--pure food, child welfare, better schools, Red Cross service--she told her audiences that German women backed their soldiers by being good homemakers.128 She had harsh words for American women who participated in the “band playing, flag-flying stage of war.” They were “unmindful of the great responsibilities that [were] theirs,” she said. Women who expressed their patriotism through benefits, teas, and dances for servicemen, or who donned “trouserettes” to sit on “an attractive tractor” so that their pictures would “appear in some Sunday feature page,” were ignoring their real job as “food producer[s].” Christine told them to awaken to “the dignity of household labor.”129 “I’d rather wear a kitchen apron and help win the war for President Wilson than wear the trained robes of a Queen of England,” she told a Louisville, Kentucky group.130

Christine, who was spending several months away from her husband and

128 “Mrs. Frederick Shows How to Put Home on Conservative Basis,” Fayetteville Observer, 4 July 1918, clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.

129 “Turn Energy Wrong Way.”

130 “Urges Women to Be ‘Kitchen Soldiers.’”
four small children, was living a contradiction by telling other American
women to stay at home.

The Chautauqua experience was an invigorating one for Christine. There were hardships, of course. The tents were oppressively hot. One had to sleep in lumpy beds and eat "wretched" hotel meals. Christine "longed for food that was crisp and refreshing" instead of the restaurant fare of canned vegetables and "greasy fried meats." Performers had to carry their own luggage, and personal grooming was sometimes difficult. But there were also adventures. Christine was occasionally stranded, for example. She once hitched a ride with a Coca Cola truck in South Carolina. On another occasion, deciding to take an alternate route from the rest of the group, she visited Horse's Neck, Alabama, on the manager's recommendation. Detraining at a lonely stop where only a platform and a water tank betrayed any sign of civilization, Christine spent five hours watching dusk fall and the moon rise. Later she wrote, "I was not afraid because I am not a scary woman."

---


132 Christine Frederick, "Your Health Depends upon Your Eating," *LHJ*, February 1919, 53.

133 La Follette, "Suffragetting," 27.

134 Harrison, *Culture under Canvas*, 107.

135 [C. Frederick], "Only a Girl," [27-28].
Neither was Christine afraid of people. Although the Eighteenth Amendment banning alcohol had not yet been ratified, many of the towns through which the Chautauqua train passed prohibited its sale or consumption. But Christine’s fellow performer, John Foster Fraser, liked his whiskey. Christine knocked on his door one afternoon after she had heard him complain of feeling ill that morning. “He was sunk on his pillows,” she wrote, “and declared that . . . all he wanted was brandy or whiskey.” Christine had the temerity to ask the president of the local women’s club (who had approached to congratulate her after her talk that same afternoon) if she could procure a bottle of brandy, explaining that it was for the evening speaker. The woman’s son, she informed Christine, was the local “Revenue Agent.” Nevertheless, a bottle appeared in due course, and Christine took her gift to Fraser. The evening lecture proceeded successfully.

Christine’s Chautauqua experience, which coincided with the decline of Progressivism, was the culmination of the first phase of her career. By war’s end, she had established herself as a writer and speaker of considerable stature. She had applied her talents to the modern trends of

---


137 [C. Frederick], “Only a Girl,” [24-26].

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
her time, and she had capitalized upon the countervailing fears bred by those trends. As she responded to exciting developments in the public sphere—efficiency, technology, consumerism—she echoed Catharine Beecher and advised other women that their highest duty was housekeeping. She suggested that she had found homemaking satisfying by applying scientific management principles, the substitute, perhaps, for Beecher’s religious and moral fulfillment. But she did not address the disparity between what she was saying and what she was doing. Christine was, in fact, a career woman, one of those she called her “greatest enemies.” She tried to free women from sheer drudgery, but she did not want to free them from confinement to the home. She did not, perhaps could not, join with those who suggested that married women should be free to choose other occupations. Although she occasionally mentioned municipal housekeeping, or briefly recognized that some women did work outside the home for pay, she always returned to the theme that housekeeping was woman’s primary role and duty.

Christine reinforced the traditional attitude that Ruth Suckow found in the Midwestern farm wife: “Emma had always had the feeling that she must be responsible for all that was done in the house.” And many women in America responded to Christine’s message. They were happy to adopt her suggestions and ease their household chores. They did so under

138Suckow, Country People, 115.
the assumption that they were, after all, "responsible for all that was done in the house." When the Ladies' Home Journal hired Christine, it tapped the strong desire of many women to improve, but not eliminate, housekeeping. From Minnesota, South Dakota, Illinois, and Arkansas came responses to her articles. "[T]he freedom from the old drudgery of dishwashing . . .," wrote one, was her "greatest delight." Another wrote in praise of Christine's record-keeping system: "I follow Mrs. Frederick's system of division and grouping quite exactly." A Minnesota woman claimed that Christine's suggestions saved her $2,000 per year. The new appliances that a South Dakota housewife acquired at Christine's suggestion made "the 'New Housekeeping' a pleasure," she wrote. New appliances allowed another to dispense with the "hired girl." Christine was speaking to a large majority of American women who had no intention of either leaving the home or of changing it radically. As one of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's feminist readers put it,

I send check for renewal for The Forerunner. I enjoy it so much. So many of my friends I loan to, but they cannot appreciate it; have not climbed high enough."

Christine knew that her readers believed that the private, single-family home was the best living arrangement. Because she subscribed to


the argument that it was in danger, she defended woman’s traditional place in it. When asked early in her career if she advocated the community schemes that Gilman and others had proposed to lighten individual housework, she answered:

I do not! . . . I don’t believe in giving up the home as an impossible proposition. . . . Women are trying to escape from the kitchen because they don’t understand how to manage the kitchen.141

In *Household Engineering*, she specifically addressed the apartment hotel that Gilman had planned with Henrietta Rodman. She argued that the advocates of apartment hotels “entirely leave out of account the cost of managing any cooperative plan.” (Italics hers.) She maintained that families with moderate incomes could not afford to pay the managers of these institutions.142 This, of course, was a tacit admission that managers of homes, housewives, worked without pay. Secondly, she argued that apartment living was not ideal for children or family life. She and J. George had acted upon that belief when they moved from the Bronx to Greenlawn.143 But perhaps her most perceptive argument against cooperative or group living of any kind was this:

[F]amilies are, and prefer to be, individual in their taste and living habits. Co-operation would be very easy if every one of us is willing

141Marshall, “American Housewives Losing $1,000,000 a Day.”


143Christine would advocate apartment dwelling over “suburbiana” in later writings. See Chapter 7 below.
to become 'standardized'—that is, eat just what the rest do, be
served the same way without preference, choice, or personal
taste. . . . The truth is . . . that most of us still prefer inefficiency in
service and management to being deprived of our love of privacy,
individual preference and choice—this is the real reason why
cooperation has, and possibly will always continue to fail.144

Christine understood how highly most Americans prized individualism; but
she did not acknowledge that requiring all women to be happy as
homemakers denied them that very prize. "[M]arriage excluded women
from individualism," Elizabeth Fox-Genovese has written, but "it also
offered them important benefits in return."145 Christine’s prescription for
other women ignored the first part of this argument.

Not only did Christine reinforce women’s feelings of responsibility for
the home, she also excused men from assuming any part of it:

If the father works hard and faithfully at his task of earning money
during his work day, it is not more fair to ask him to turn choreman
as soon as he comes home, than it would be to ask the woman who
has cooked and cleaned all day to turn around and do office or busi-
ness work after five o’clock.146

Conversely, a man’s responsibility was to earn the family’s income:

[H]is hours at home should be hours of recuperation, or so that he
can study *his own work*, become more proficient, and thus secure
advancement or a better economic position. (Italics hers.)147

144 Ibid., 407-408.

145 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Feminism without Illusions: A Critique of


147 Ibid.
Christine did not agree with feminists who believed that gender differences were socially constructed. Because women, she believed, were more emotional than men, they had "not lifted their sphere of labour out of the hard physical drudgery era," as men had "lifted [the] office and shop, by scientific management and invention".\textsuperscript{148} And because women mismanaged their households, she implied, they impaired their husband's ability to succeed. In her second book, she told a cautionary tale of a man who was forced to do household chores at home and therefore failed to advance at the office "because of his wife's poor management."\textsuperscript{149} She seemed to blame women for the drudgery from which she hoped to free them. Christine's public view of marriage, that the woman manage an efficient home and be a "fit companion" to her husband who should be "progressing," belied the fact that in the Frederick household, she was making a respectable income while J. George's earnings had stagnated.\textsuperscript{150}

The contradictions of Christine Frederick's life might suggest opportunism, hypocrisy, even duplicity. In fact, Christine was deceiving herself. She was caught between the ideology of the nineteenth century and the modern reality of the twentieth. Awakened to her own capabilities by a college education, drawn to new ideas, stimulated by progress and

\textsuperscript{148}C. Frederick, \textit{New Housekeeping}, 189-190.

\textsuperscript{149}C. Frederick, \textit{Household Engineering}, 384.

\textsuperscript{150}C. Frederick, "What the New Housekeeping Means to the Farm Home," 93.
modernization, she was nevertheless held fast by the prescriptive ideas of her Victorian upbringing. When she first began experimenting with scientific management, the stimulation of research and the joy of discovery made her own work in the home far more enjoyable than it had been. She wrote in *The New Housekeeping* that treating housekeeping like a science was "a fine antidote against the unnatural craving for 'careers'..."¹⁵¹ She may have felt--and suppressed--guilt over her initial dislike of housekeeping in the Bronx apartment. That she quickly moved out of the home herself did not diminish her conviction that her discoveries changed her attitude toward homemaking. She believed she was helping to elevate what had been drudgery into a modern, satisfying occupation. Christine’s writings did help to improve the daily routines and lighten the heavy tasks of women who wished to be--or who had no choice but to be--housewives. But she never acknowledged that she was no longer one them. When she contrasted housework to work in the public sphere, she used office work as the measure, and she could write with complete conviction:

> Look at the tasks of the woman who works in an office in unaesthetic surroundings filing, keeping books, writing letters about a business in which she has no particular interest--often no knowledge even. Would she not be infinitely happier and would she not be more mentally active in applying those same instincts to the business of home-making?¹⁵²

¹⁵²"The Woman Who Invented Scientific Housekeeping."
She did not compare housekeeping to writing and speaking. When she told audiences that career women were her greatest enemies, she could ignore the fact that she herself had a career because she was working in the interest of the home. She also ignored the economic implications of her position.

One of Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s arguments for allowing women access to the public sphere was that women needed to be economically independent of men in order to develop fully. She observed that in the United States, housework was “not regarded as labor, in any economic sense, but as a sex-function proper to woman.”\(^{153}\) Christine, on the other hand, argued that homemaking compensated the woman economically because it saved the wages of domestic workers:

> I always feel that the time I put into any task has an actual money value. For instance, I know that the time spent in sewing has actual cash value if it is done by a seamstress, and I consider my time also has this value when I do the sewing myself. . . . [T]he time I spend on these tasks represents money which I would have to give some other person if I did not do these things myself.\(^{154}\)

While dismissing the housewife’s economic dependence, Christine assigned her power in the market place and blamed her for conditions over which she clearly had no control. When arguing for price maintenance, she wrote, “[B]usiness will never be more moral than we women . . . will allow


\(^{154}\)C. Frederick, “How I Save Money in My Home,” *LHJ*, January 1914, 38.
it to be by our own actions."155 If Christine hoped to be a liaison between
the woman consumer and business, she betrayed a confused sense of
loyalty when she wrote:

No transaction can be moral which is based on deception, baiting,
injury to manufacturers, loss to dealers, unfairness to competitors, or
eventual throwing out of work of factory laborers, or on sweatshop
methods, underpay, bad working conditions, etc. Yet millions of
housewives’ boasts of ‘bargains’ have cost all these things.156

By the time that Christine Frederick completed the Chautauqua
circuit, the armistice that ended the fighting of World War I was only weeks
away. The war had drawn women into the public sphere on a greater scale
than even the feminists could have imagined. Women’s numbers in civil
service climbed from five percent before the war to twenty during the
fighting. Women lawyers served on various boards and commissions and
women physicians and nurses joined the military effort by the thousands.
By war’s end, there were 20,000 women bankers on Wall Street. Women
also filled such traditionally male jobs as streetcar conductor and steel mill
worker.157 The increase of women in the work force prompted the creation
of the Women’s Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor in 1920.158 Yet

156Ibid.
157Lemons, Woman Citizen, 17-22; “Banking for Women,” News-
Bulletin of the Bureau of Vocational Information, 1 November 1922, 2,
carton 1, file folder 29, BVI Papers.
158Lemons, Woman Citizen, 27-30.
in 1918, Christine urged women to help the war effort by staying "in the kitchen of the farm where" they were "so badly needed."\textsuperscript{159}

Christine had had ample opportunity to read and understand feminist ideas. The public debate over suffrage, the home, and women’s entry into the public sphere had been conducted not only in the publications the Fredericks read, but also in those for which they wrote. Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s works were well-known, and she had begun publishing her \textit{Forerunner} magazine in New York in 1909.\textsuperscript{160} Christine’s rejection of feminism, then, was a conscious choice. In 1912, Gilman had written that woman’s very "shame" was "that she [had] no other business," and made "her living by ‘Being a Woman.’"\textsuperscript{161} That same year, Christine advised women to improve their attitudes toward housekeeping in the \textit{Ladies’ Home Journal}. While some women marched to gain suffrage, Christine counseled her readers to become efficient homemakers. When Gilman wrote that woman’s "political activities, rightly fulfilled, will decrease her other cares


\textsuperscript{161}Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “Mrs. Tarbell’s ‘Uneasy Woman,’” \textit{Forerunner}, February 1912, 39.
and labors,” Christine believed that most women “knew or cared little” about politics.162

Still, Christine would occasionally suggest that women should take interest in things outside the home. She told the Illinois farmers in 1916 that their daughters should have the opportunity to acquire education for “the work she would like to do. . . .” Yet in the same speech, she said that farm girls must be encouraged not to leave the farm.163 The contradiction in Christine Frederick’s life was underscored by her determination to instill independence in her own daughters. “It was just taken for granted with my mother’s milk that a woman had a career. . . .” one of her daughters remembered, “I [was] brought up by a career woman.”164


164Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.
"ONLY A GIRL": CHRISTINE FREDERICK,
EFFICIENCY, CONSUMERISM, AND WOMAN'S SPHERE

VOLUME II

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of History

by

Janice Williams Rutherford
B.A., University of Oregon, 1963
M.A., Portland State University, 1981
August, 1996
CHAPTER 7: BECOMING MRS. CONSUMER

[T]he American woman has accomplished something which no other women [sic] in any other civilization appears to have done. She has struck up a closer entente cordial and co-partnership with industry and trade (even if it is so largely unconscious), than has ever before been known in the history of trading. Encouraged by the combined wisdom of the periodicals which have set up high standards of advertising acceptance, and given ever more benefits through the enlightened efforts of high-class manufacturers, she has developed a “consumer acceptance” spirit,—a readiness to follow where she is led, that has had an immense bearing upon American industrial prosperity and standards of living.¹

Christine Frederick, 1929

7.1

Efficiency had captured Christine Frederick’s imagination in 1910; by 1920, although she continued to promote scientific management, she had shifted her emphasis to consumption. Educating American women in the art of buying became an even more compelling imperative than teaching them to be efficient; indeed, Christine saw consumption as the only path to efficiency. In 1929, she told her readers that because she had been “a participant” in the household revolution that introduced efficiency in housekeeping, she was “unusually and deeply interested in selling household equipment to Mrs. Consumer.”² Equally important was teaching advertisers how to persuade women to purchase that equipment.

¹C. Frederick, Selling Mrs. Consumer, 334.
²Ibid., 168.
The home remained the focus of Christine’s work and she continued to write and speak on homemaking. In 1925, she told a reporter that from the beginning, her aim had been to “help the American housewife.” She provided articles on nutrition, kitchen utensils, household budgets, and kitchen planning for a variety of publications: the Designer, Modern Woman, Correct Eating, and Shrine Magazine, to name just a few. From time to time Christine published her homemaking pieces under the pen name Isobel Brands, unwilling, perhaps, to become stereotyped as a kitchen writer. After World War I, Christine told American women that the American home was “more badly in need of reconstruction than anything else.” Appealing to those who feared for the home’s survival, she spoke of saving the “separate family unit” by putting into every home “improved mechanical labor savers.”


Christine now invited home economists and their students to come view the products that she tested at Applecroft. In 1921, for example, when she requested a refrigerator of a certain size and color from the McCray Refrigerator Company, she assured McCray’s sales manager that 500 women including classes of domestic science students from Columbia’s Teachers College visited the kitchen and laundry room of her experiment station every year. She promised to distribute literature and write articles about the refrigerator while it was in use at her home. She asked the H. J. Smith Tool Company to send her a dish drainer and washer and promised publicity in 200 newspapers. In another request she agreed to list a trial appliance in her Shrine Magazine’s “Tested Devices” column.\(^6\) Her solicitations did not mention fees for these services. Presumably, she negotiated remuneration in person. In 1929 she expressed disgust with manufacturers who were surprised to learn from her that new products should be thoroughly tested and that she charged a fee for such tests.\(^7\)

After 1920, Christine expanded the services she offered from Applecroft. In a 1928 brochure, she advertised kitchen installation, photography, and the development of home service departments for

\(^6\)Christine Frederick to Sales or Advertising Manager, McCray Refrigerator Company, 7 July 1921, file folder 2; Director of Applecroft Experiment Station to the H. J. Smith Tool Company, 15 April 1921, file folder 2; Director, Shrine Home Service to Dear Sir, n.d., file folder 8, Frederick Papers.

\(^7\)C. Frederick, *Selling Mrs. Consumer*, 224-225.
manufacturers, for example. Her lectures were divided into two categories: those offered to women's clubs and those appropriate for business groups. By the late twenties most of her services were offered not to housewives but to businesses. The 1922 campaign to encourage the use of gas ranges that she developed for the People's Gas, Light and Coke Company in Chicago—a campaign that led to the establishment of a home service department—serves as an example.

In 1929 People's Gas executives asked Christine to help them "bring Chicago housewives back to more home cooking." Cafeterias and restaurants were keeping women away from their kitchens. "Up to that time," Christine wrote, "educational work by utilities had been largely perfunctory. I started and laid out the extensive plans on which this most successful home service is now run." She hired Anna I. Peterson who, she believed, "had the 'market basket' point of view" necessary to conduct the campaign. Peterson, presumably with Christine's guidance, created a display kitchen and laundry for the company. They printed leaflets, inserted recipes in gas bills, and designed an advertising campaign for Chicago newspapers. Tapping new technologies, they broadcast a weekly radio show, "Mrs. Peterson's 'radio teas,'" and offered free telephone consultations. The campaign moved out into the neighborhoods with a

---

8 "Applecroft Home Experiment Station," [1928], brochure, file folder 15, Frederick Papers.

---
demonstration kitchen on wheels staffed with assistance from Marshall Fields' tea room manager. Christine claimed that by 1928, well over 200,000 women attended the company's free lectures each year, and thousands of its canning and recipe booklets were in circulation. By 1929, the home service staff at People's Gas had grown to eighteen and the radio "teas" were broadcast daily.9

In the mid-1920s, Applecroft became the home testing station for Shrine Magazine and Farm and Home Magazine. Billed as a wife and mother whose laboratory was a warm home, Christine helped families find "the most desirable goods at the most favorable prices."10 By mid-decade, she was also writing regularly for trade journals such as the Hardware Dealers' Magazine, Hardware Age, and Wireless Age.11 In 1923, she scolded hardware retailers for failing to show home appliances to farmers' wives. Posing as one herself, she wrote that rural women were sophisticated buyers who now wore stylish clothes and French perfume.

9C. Frederick, Selling Mrs. Consumer, 281-282.


11See, for example, Christine Frederick, "A Woman's Advice on How to Sell Kitchen Utensils," Hardware Age, 1 April 1920, 93-96; "Pink Paint," Hardware Dealers' Magazine, June 1923, 33-35; "The Night Before Xmas," Wireless Age, December 1924, 36, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.
They wanted tireless cookers and washing machines in their homes.\textsuperscript{12} Christine had become an “apostle of modernity,” as one historian of advertising has called the advertisers of the 1920s. They brought new technologies, new styles, and modern conveniences to all Americans, urban dweller and farmer alike, promoting the idea that consumption was a democratic ideal.\textsuperscript{13} In 1926, Christine suggested a “Begin Housekeeping All Over Again” campaign to induce women to buy new home products and modernize their homes.\textsuperscript{14}

During the twenties Christine cultivated a wider audience among advertisers, promising to help them sell to Mrs. Consumer. In 1920, as “the first woman to address a general session” at the annual convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, she said that a woman’s viewpoint was necessary to create advertising for home products. She also suggested that she could help advertisers “create good-will for advertising” among women.\textsuperscript{15} In a similar speech that year, she warned that unless

\textsuperscript{12}Christine Frederick, “The ‘Hick’ Housekeeper,” \textit{Hardware Dealers’ Magazine}, August 1923, 20-23, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.

\textsuperscript{13}Marchand, \textit{Advertising the American Dream}, 1-2, 9, 68.

\textsuperscript{14}Christine Frederick, “If I Could Begin Housekeeping All Over Again,” September 1926, \textit{Hardware Dealers’ Magazine}, 62-63, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.

\textsuperscript{15}“Urges Advertisers to Tell the Truth,” \textit{NYT}, 10 June 1920, p. 16, col 2.
women understood why advertising was important to them, they were likely to blame advertisers for cost of living increases.\textsuperscript{16}

Christine assured male advertisers that she knew women well, telling the New York Men’s Advertising Club, “During the past five years I have lectured in thirty states among every type of woman’s club and consumer league. . . .” She used statistics to illustrate the volume of merchandise purchased by women. She claimed to have helped Columbia professor Harry Hollingworth compile figures that she used, unchanged, for many years. “‘Even 34 per cent of the distinguished advertising fraternity I see before me is wearing clothes chosen and bought for them by women,’” she told the advertising clubs.\textsuperscript{17} The club reported in its newsletter that she had provided “the soundest kind of practical advertising philosophy that has been heard by the members in many a day.”\textsuperscript{18}

A second appearance before the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World in 1921 earned her an invitation to Ohio. There, she spoke before the Advertisers’ Club of Cincinnati, the \textit{Ohio State Journal} Trade Show, ...

\textsuperscript{16}“Mrs. Frederick Scores a Hit,” \textit{Advertising Club News}, 8 November 1920, [1, 3], microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.

\textsuperscript{17}“Urges Advertisers to Tell the Truth.” Christine arrived at the 34 percent by adding the 11 percent of men’s clothing found to be purchased by women and the 23 percent found to be purchased by men and women together in a survey of 25 New York families in 1912. Harry L. Hollingworth, \textit{Advertising and Selling: Principles of Appeal and Response} (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1918), 290. The claim to have assisted in this research appears in \textit{Selling Mrs. Consumer}, 54.

\textsuperscript{18}“Mrs. Frederick Scores a Hit,” [1].
and a joint meeting of the Women’s Advertising Club of Toledo and the Toledo Woman’s Club. A promotional piece billed her as an “economist” who made “brilliant, practical and illuminating talks on retail salesmanship, advertising and kindred topics, before business organizations the country over.” Building on Christine’s reputation as a broker between advertisers and women, it promised that she could teach “men in business how to advertise ‘in the feminine gender,’ how to make their advertising . . . appeal to the average feminine mind, in short, how to sell to the American woman.” She told the Toledo women, on the other side, that “advertising is more powerful than the vote. . . .” Women could acquire better homes and clothes by expressing “a consumer demand.” Legislation, she said, would not do as much for the American woman as cooperation between consumer and advertiser. Every woman “‘should have as many of the labor-saving devices as she can possibly secure.’”¹⁹

Throughout the decade, Christine fought the use of the “Pretty Girl” as bait in advertising products for the home. The “‘plain woman consumer,’” she said, wanted “‘real facts and common sense.’” “‘You have the wrong feminine psychology when you show a picture of the goods being used by a prettier woman than I am,’’” she told male


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
advertisers. The "eyebrow-shaved, massaged, short-skirted doll of anaemic New York life" appealed to men, not women. Those who used the "chicken type of girl in advertising" suffered from a "poverty of ideas." She also railed against the "Pretty Girl" in advertising before female audiences. One such speech before the League of Advertising Women was published as a booklet. Castigating the "lurid," "chorustype of beauty" used as "bait" in advertising, Christine confidently predicted its demise because female buyers preferred the "reason why" approach that depicted "natural" women.

In 1923, Christine repeated these themes in a speech before the Springfield Publicity Club in Massachusetts. In 1924, she used her showmanship to publicize aluminum at the New York Advertising Club Ball dressed as "Miss Aluminum." Decked out in aluminum kitchen utensils from head to toe, a kettle on her head and pots and pans hanging from her belt, she won first prize for best costume. Disregarding accusations that aluminum was held hostage by unfair business practices, Christine staged

---

20"Urges Advertisers to Tell the Truth"; "Mrs. Frederick Scores a Hit," [3].

21Christine Frederick, Woman As Bait in Advertising (New York: League of Advertising Women, 1921), 7, 17, file folder 12, Frederick Papers.

22"Household Expert Has Experiment Station."

23"Miss Aluminum: Mrs. Christine Frederick," n.p., 13 November 1924, clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.
this walking advertisement just one month after the Federal Trade Commission charged that the Aluminum Company of America, virtually the only source of the metal in the country, and its subsidiary, the Aluminum Goods Manufacturing Company, had a monopoly on aluminum and aluminum kitchen utensils. The Aluminum Company refused to fill orders from independent utensil manufacturers. The company, coincidentally, was “active in maintaining retail prices,” one of Christine’s favorite causes.24

Large numbers of retailers listened to what Christine had to say; an audience of over one thousand heard her speech before the Louisville, Kentucky Retail Institute.25 Her consulting business included helping “a new chain of food stores” organize a system for taking telephone orders.26 Solitaire Coffee quoted her on an advertising poster: “Mrs. Christine Frederick says: ‘Any housewife can make good coffee every day with Solitaire,’” and the makers of Eskimo Pies used her photograph and testimonial, along with those of other “experts,” in a 1929 advertisement.27

Along with over twenty prominent advertising executives, Christine contributed to a book on writing advertising copy that J. George edited in


26C. Frederick, Selling Mrs. Consumer, 312.

27“Mrs. Christine Frederick Says,” poster, oversize folder 1; “What Do the Experts Say?” advertisement, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.
1925. Bruce Barton, the man who elevated advertising to a spiritual plane by transforming Jesus into a business man in his best-selling book, *The Man Nobody Knows*, was just one of the well-known contributors. In her essay, Christine revisited (as she would again and again) her caustic admonitions against using the “Pretty Girl” in advertisements aimed at women. The public, she said, was “satiated withgoo-goos and tar-dipped eye-lashes. . . .” She set forth her notion of the “Average Woman,” an image she believed would help the male advertiser (who visualized women, she claimed, as a “cross between Pola Negri and his stenographer”) appeal to the typical American housewife. She told advertisers that they must conduct surveys in order to classify women into groups that could be approached with advertising specific to their ages, incomes, and so on.

This article revealed a nasty tendency to belittle the American housewife, a recurring contradiction in Christine’s writing. While she often told advertisers that they must appeal to the American woman with “reason why” advertising, she wrote here that expensive advertising was often “pathetically over her pretty head. . . .” She portrayed women as childish

---


and shallow, writing that most wanted to think themselves different from other women but liked to wear "what is 'the mode.'” The average woman tried to “imitate the ‘best people’” and “accept[ed] authority readily.” She was “not interested in mechanics or abstract ideas” and was not “alert to new ideas.” Moreover, she could be “educated only slowly. . . .”

Christine told advertisers that there were “not enough practically and theoretically trained women brought into consultation to dig out . . . broadening-out possibilities.” Women could help manufacturers promote new uses for products already on the market. She recounted her successes in boosting the sales of a soup manufacturer by urging housewives to use canned soup in sauces and casseroles and those of “a great California fruit-growing association” by encouraging women to bake home-made pies. Women consultants could educate housewives to use disinfectant in many new ways, she said. Besides sanitizing the garbage pail and toilet, they should be encouraged to use disinfectant in the ice box, the sick room, the bath tub, and the scrub bucket. This advice, of course, not only suggested ways to sell more of certain products, it also encouraged women to spend more time on their housekeeping chores.

---


31Ibid., 238, 240-243.
As advertising consultant and household writer, Christine continued to promote, through consumerism, woman’s role in the domestic sphere. In one article, written for publication before Christmas, her recommendations for toy electric appliances promoted the education of little girls in the ways of housewifery. Echoing nineteenth-century ideology, Christine wrote that these realistic new toys would “satisfy the little girls’ natural love of home activities.”\(^{32}\) Christine sensed a significant development that resulted from the intersection of housekeeping and consumerism: to many advertisers of the twenties, consumers were female. *Printers’ Ink* told its readers in 1929 that “the proper study of markets is woman.” (Italics theirs.)\(^{33}\) As the decade progressed, advertisers came to think of female consumers, according to one historian, as “an emotional, feminized mass, characterized by mental lethargy, bad taste, and ignorance.”\(^{34}\) Christine’s description of the American woman reinforced this view.

But the advertising industry also provided well-paid work for the few who were admitted into the field. Women copy writers could make $100 per week and those at the top such as Dorothy Dignam could earn an

---


\(^{33}\) *Printers’ Ink*, 7 November 1929, 133, quoted in Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 66.

\(^{34}\) Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 69.
annual salary of $7,800 by the end of the decade.\textsuperscript{35} Still, the advertising field remained largely male through the 1920s; major agencies employed ten men to every woman, and the women were not in top executive positions.\textsuperscript{38}

7.2

When the Fredericks founded the women's advertising league in 1912, modern advertising was in its infancy. During the 1920s, it experienced phenomenal growth and dramatic change. In 1919 it was a $1,409 million industry; that figure had grown to $2,987 million by 1929.\textsuperscript{37} Magazines took in $200 million in advertising revenue in 1929, three times as much as they had earned in 1918.\textsuperscript{38} Makers of the antiseptic mouthwash, Listerine, increased their advertising spending from $100,000 in 1922 to $5,000,000 in 1929.\textsuperscript{39} Along with movies, comic strips, telephones and automobiles, advertising became one of the decade's "new cultural forms."\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{35}"Women in Advertising," \textit{News Bulletin of the Bureau of Vocational Information}, 1 April 1924, 51, carton 1, file folder 30, BVI Papers; Marchand, \textit{Advertising the American Dream}, 34.

\textsuperscript{36}Marchand, \textit{Advertising the American Dream}, 33.

\textsuperscript{37}Pope, \textit{The Making of Modern Advertising}, 22-29, quoted in Marchand, \textit{Advertising the American Dream}, 6.

\textsuperscript{38}Strasser, \textit{Never Done}, 253.

\textsuperscript{39}Marchand, \textit{Advertising the American Dream}, 20.

\textsuperscript{40}Susman, \textit{Culture as History}, xxvi.
J. George's *Masters of Advertising Copy* represented the transition from an emphasis on "reason why" copy to focusing on personal, emotional appeals that sold the benefits of the product rather than the product itself.\(^1\) New York advertising agency president George L. Dyer counseled advertisers to avoid emotional appeals that told "how the heroine wins a husband by the grace of her advertised footwear," whereas his younger competitor Bruce Barton touted the effectiveness of human interest stories in advertising.\(^2\)

During the twenties, the question of ethics in advertising gained urgency. A movement to promote truth in advertising was heralded by the opening speaker at the 1920 Associated Advertising Clubs of the World conference who spoke to thousands of advertisers about the group's National Vigilance Committee.\(^3\) J. George had helped establish the New York club's vigilance committee a few years earlier.\(^4\) Christine's relationship with manufacturers had escaped legal censure, but in 1918 the president of the National Housewives' League faced legal charges when

---

\(^1\)Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 10.


\(^3\)"Advertising Clubs Meet in Indianapolis," *NYT*, 7 June 1920, p. 15, col. 3.

\(^4\)Allen L. Beatty to the author, 16 May 1994; *Who Was Who In America with World Notables*, 125.
she promised an endorsement in return for a manufacturer's business.45 Christine was not the only writer to warn against "baiting." The advertising vigilance groups recognized the "bait and switch" deception—advertising one product at a low price and then substituting a product of lower quality—as a problem, and there was a significant campaign to stop it.46 Some advertisers, like writer Sherwood Anderson who left the business, worried about "a dreadful decay of taste" in advertisements.47 The League of Women Voters supported the work of the National Committee for the Restriction of Outdoor Advertising in 1924.48

Yet advertisers sometimes seemed to contradict these emerging standards. In 1925, J. George did not shrink from recommending strategies meant to fool the public, and he portrayed the relationship between advertiser and consumer as a military conflict. He wrote of "flank movement[s]," "frontal attack[s]," "feint moves," "wedge action[s]," and

45"Question Mrs. Heath," NYT, 4 January 1918, p. 9, col. 2.


47Quoted in Ewen, Captains of Consciousness, 66.

48"Consumer Work."
“time annihilation strategy.” Although they believed they were curtailing deception, advertisers during the twenties honed persuasion to a fine art, using new knowledge provided by psychologists.

When John B. Watson, the behaviorist, was forced to leave his post at Johns Hopkins University for “sexual misbehavior” in 1920, he turned to advertising and went to work for J. Walter Thompson, eventually becoming the firm’s vice president. Watson showed advertisers how to mask their messages in ostensibly educational material. In 1923, he colluded with the manufacturer of Pebeco tooth paste to repeat the language from their magazine advertisements in his radio talk, “Glands in the Human Body.” He told the readers of the company bulletin:

This talk illustrates fairly well the technique of commercial advertising by radio. . . . The speaker does not have to say anything about the product being advertised--scientific men would not in general be willing to speak if the product had to be mentioned in the body of the talk. . . .

Walter Dill Scott and Harry Hollingworth had understood the role that psychology would play in advertising long before Watson entered the field, but it was the advertisers of the 1920s who made full use of it. One

---


historian of advertising has written, "By the 1920s, advertisers had come to recognize a public demand for broad guidance--not just about product attributes, but about taste, social correctness, and psychological satisfactions." They came to see themselves as the experts who could provide that guidance. "People bought the car because they trusted the manufacturers," wrote one advertising executive in 1925. "And they trusted the manufacturers because of the suggestive copy in the advertising."53

Advertising became more and more important as the advance guard for business.54 J. George had begun the decade by writing a book entitled The Great Game of Business, an almost giddy celebration of business as "the greatest game left to man to play," a form of contest that would peacefully replace war, a doctrine that would save the world.55 Bruce Barton believed that business was "the operation of Divine Purpose" and

52Marchand, Advertising the American Dream, 347.


54Not all successful manufacturers agreed in the beginning. Henry Ford disapproved of advertising and in 1926, decided not to advertise at all. But even he recapitulated the following year and launched a big campaign to sell the Model A. Marchand, Advertising the American Dream, 7.

that "Jesus was . . . the greatest of all advertisers." Indeed, churches appropriated advertising techniques. The Associated Advertising Clubs of the World convention held a "Church Division" session in 1920, and one church told of raising $113,000,000 through advertising.57

This idealistic view of business and its moguls offers a clue to J. George's life after 1920. He was a visionary who wrote prolifically on business, sales management, economics, and advertising, yet never operated any business other than the Business Bourse, his market research and publishing firm which failed to provide a comfortable living for the Frederick family. He was also a humanist and a man of catholic interests who wrote on subjects ranging from psychology to cuisine to religion to relationships.58 In the preface to his 1923 manual for sales managers, the director of sales at the Celluloid Company of New York wrote, "Through your broad experience in salesmanagers' organizations, and as a sales counsellor, you have had an excellent opportunity to develop a great deal

56Barton, "Human Appeals in Copy," 71, 73.

57“Urges Advertisers to Tell the Truth.”

58See for example, J. George Frederick, What Is Your Emotional Age?; Cooking As Men Like It (New York: Business Bourse, 1930); Humanism As a Way of Life; How to Understand a Man, Emotionally and Temperamente and How to Understand a Woman, Emotionally and Temperamente (New York: Business Bourse, 1941). The Cumulative Book Indexes from 1912-1960 list over forty books by J. George Frederick. After 1925, all but five were published by his own firm, the Business Bourse.
of valuable information on your subject. . . .”59 Missing from this résumé, of course, was experience as a sales manager.

Christine's view of the relationship between business and the consumer developed in tandem with J. George's. His 1926 book on industrial consolidation, for example, sounded many of the themes Christine took up in her own work. He advocated consolidation because the nation had "a great excess plant capacity. . . ." (Italics his.)60 Increased consumption, he wrote, was the only way to dispose of over production, and advertising, refined by market research, was the way to promote consumption. Only a large organization could lower the cost of production, making surplus goods available to the ordinary worker. Such consolidation, he argued, was the key to America's economic progress which was founded on mass production, high wages, low prices, and the amicable relationship between labor and capital.61 Labor's "greatest benefits," he wrote, lay in "close economic partnership with aggressive capital. . . ." Workers did not talk of strikes when they could buy houses, cars, and even stock in the large companies. To J. George, the rise of commerce and the


60 J. George Frederick, Modern Industrial Consolidation (New York: Frank-Maurice, Inc., 1926), 205.

61 Ibid., 9-10.
amassing of capital had signaled the beginning of progress. Again, in *Modern Industrial Consolidation*, he offered his expertise as one who could tell others how to go about consolidating companies, though he himself had never engineered a merger.

J. George's firm, the Business Bourse (relocated in the early twenties to 80 West 40th Street in the Beaux Arts Building overlooking Bryant Park), conducted industry investigations and market surveys and sold prepared reports and analyses. The vice president of the company reported to the Bureau of Vocational Information that the Business Bourse employed a number of "statistical workers in 1921." Still, the Fredericks' daughter's memories of a father who never made very much money, along with J. George's remarkably wide range of interests and activities, suggest that he did not apply enough of his boundless energy to the Business Bourse to make it succeed. And although he advised others on playing the stock market, he did not invest his own money successfully. Christine may have been thinking of J. George when she wrote, in 1929:

---

62 Ibid., 65, 81-82, 292-293.

63 Ibid., 155-195.

64 Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994; "J. G. Frederick, 82, A Writer, Is Dead"; J. George Frederick, form letter attached to letter from Park Mathewson to Beatrice Doerschuk, 2 April 1921, carton 7, file folder 347, BVI Papers.

65 Mathewson to Doerschuk.

66 Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.
[T]he American man . . . is not especially competent at personal or family purchasing. It is he, not his wife, who . . . gambles in Wall Street and loses like other lambs, and who buys cat-and-dog stocks and various other useless appendages which sap the family patrimony.⁶⁷

Dissonance between them is revealed in J. George’s views, written a year later:

Very few women should attempt to make their own investment analyses. It is not unfair to say that they have not the same coolness of judgment, as a rule, as men.⁶⁸

If J. George was less than successful at accumulating personal wealth, he excelled at gaining access to New York’s interesting intellectual, literary, and artistic communities. In a 1928 volume of mental exercises intended as parlor games, he described himself as “a sophisticated New Yorker” and implied that his friends were “the most sophisticated, blasé habitués of literary circles.”⁶⁹ As secretary to the Society of Arts and Sciences, he was on familiar terms with popular authors of the day. In 1923, J. George wrote a teasing letter to humorist Ellis Parker Butler who was slated to speak to the Society addressing him as “Dear Pigs Is Pigsy.”⁷⁰

⁶⁷C. Frederick, Selling Mrs. Consumer, 14.

⁶⁸J. George Frederick, Common Stocks and the Average Man (New York: Business Bourse, 1930), 289.

⁶⁹J. George Frederick, What Is Your Emotional Age? viii.

⁷⁰J. George Frederick to Ellis Parker Butler, 31 March 1923, Manuscript Letters Collection, Special Collection Department, (University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, IA, photocopy). One of Butler’s humorous works

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
J. George's own writing career, though he produced dozens of books over six decades, was not lucrative. In a 1928 volume, he used the introduction to ask readers to recommend the book to friends. His one attempt at fiction was not a success. *Two Women*, written in 1924, received a scathing review from the *New York Times*. "Just what J. George Frederick intended to prove in 'Two Women,' wrote the reviewer, "is hard to discover." It was "daring," no doubt, but "poor writing" weakened it. His portrayal of Phyllis, the "blue-stockling," was "unconvincing," and his climactic scene where the four unconventional protagonists meet was "abyssmal." The book lacked humor, the characters were unreal, and their speeches were "forced." His theme--that one man could love two women "if he can get away with it"--required far more delicate writing than J. George could manage.

The Fredericks' optimistic view of business and their deep involvement in advertising, selling, and consumerism, was a perfect reflection of the nation's mood in the 1920s. Historians would later echo J. George's label for the decade's remarkable increase in production: he

was *Pigs Is Pigs* (New York: McClure, Phillips and Company, 1906).


called it the "new industrial 'revolution.'" Production almost doubled; by mid-decade, Henry Ford could produce a car every ten seconds. The nation was becoming a "culture of abundance" thanks to this mighty production force and the technological ability to distribute its goods. The organizational model that J. George praised in his books and articles created the need for the managers, the sales people, and the engineers for whom he wrote. Christine found a way to relate these trends to the homemaker.

When J. George advocated business consolidation, he was defending a fait accompli. Eight thousand businesses disappeared through consolidation between 1919 and 1930. Herbert Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce and a fierce defender of individual initiative, called for the coordination of transportation systems in order to facilitate distribution. Christine was a great admirer of Hoover and dedicated her 1929 best seller on consumerism to him.

---

73 J. G. Frederick, Modern Industrial Consolidation, 211. William Leuchtenberg dubbed the twenties the "Second Industrial Revolution" in Perils of Prosperity, 178.

74 Leuchtenberg, Perils of Prosperity, 179-180.

75 Susman, Culture As History, xx-xxii.

76 Leuchtenberg, Perils of Prosperity, 190.


78 C. Frederick, Selling Mrs. Consumer, xvii.
The Fredericks rarely mentioned the darker side of the business boom. The textile and garment industries still exploited labor through the subcontracting system, a proposed amendment to prohibit child labor was defeated in 1925, over twenty-one percent of the nation's families received incomes of less than $1,000 per year, and many suffered from substandard living and working conditions. But the Fredericks chose to focus on the higher standard of living enjoyed by most Americans, and they agreed that workers who were paid well enough to consume more were happy Americans. By 1929, 26 million automobiles were on the road, Americans spent $852 million on radios, 17 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity coursed through homes and businesses, and more and more American families were buying houses, furnishing them with electrical appliances, eating varied diets, and shopping at chain stores.

Many people assumed that government should create a favorable environment for business prosperity. The *New York Times* urged that the government help the "disorganized selling and advertising machine" by telling the public to buy. Under President Calvin Coolidge, who

---


81"Time for People to Learn to Buy," *NYT*, 16 March 1919, sec. 3, p. 5, col. 3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
succeeded to office upon Warren Harding's death in 1923, the federal
government favored business even more than it had before. There were
tax cuts for high income earners and corporations, and conservative
appointments to the Supreme Court led to anti-union decisions.82 When
Herbert Hoover was elected President in 1928, the nation voted its
satisfaction with the perceived prosperity that the favorable business
climate of Republican administrations had brought.83

This was the climate that fostered the advertising boom of the
production is absolutely impossible and large scale production is the sine
qua non of low prices."84

7.3

The 1920s was perhaps the most satisfying period of Christine
Frederick's career. In 1924, she spent a year developing a booklet, also
published as an article in the scholarly journal, Annals of the Academy of
Political and Social Science, that amounted to a position paper for the rest
of her career as a consumer advocate.85 "New Wealth, New Standards of

82Leuchtenberg, Perils of Prosperity, 96-99.
83Noggle, "Configurations," 467.
84"Urges Advertising as Church Benefit," NYT, 8 June 1920, p. 10, col. 8.
85"Expert on Labor Saving Devices Says Use Brains"; Christine
Frederick, "New Wealth, New Standards of Living and Changed Family
Budgets," AAAPSS 115 (September 1924): 74-82. A copy of the paper in
Living and Changed Family Budgets" seemed to signal a seriousness of purpose in her work as a consumer advocate. In it she analyzed economic trends and explained her theory that future prosperity depended upon increased consumption. “The America of 1913 has been altered astonishingly,” she wrote. Using statistics gathered from a variety of government reports and contemporary business journals, she reviewed the immense growth of the American economy. Although prices had risen, she did not believe that this should cause alarm, for wages had “outdistanced all price increases.” Christine believed that the future held “a vast broadening of the level of comfortable family budgets.” (Italics hers.)86 Her message was very like J. George’s during the 1920s:

“[I]t is . . . the soundest of national welfare policies that the standards of living be high among all classes, so that our increased manufacturing capacity may be used, and so that good wages be paid for competent productive labor.”87

Advertising to increase sales brought even greater prosperity, she argued, for when “artificial stimulations to consumption” were used, the American diet and standard of living improved. “Always the trend is toward something better. . . .” Poor families were now becoming “‘regular American families’--capable of purchasing modern sanitary articles, a more
varied and healthful diet, more and better clothes, and providing more schooling for their children."\(^{88}\)

Christine's blueprint for the future, of course, included the use of new technology. She conducted a decade-long romance with the radio, tirelessly promoting its benefits to the housewife. Both Fredericks were enthusiastic about the possibilities of radio; J. George wrote an article on its rapid growth in 1925.\(^{89}\) In the beginning, Christine responded to this new machine with skepticism. "I remember how I resented it when my husband first brought into the parlor the messy-looking box called a radio set, and how I was annoyed lest the acid from the battery spoil my rugs," she wrote in 1929.\(^{90}\) But she soon overcame her distaste. "The youngsters and their father have been having a beautiful time with the radio phone," she told an interviewer.\(^{91}\) By the time the family had a "three-stage set," they all listened together in the living room.\(^{92}\)

\(^{88}\)Ibid., 78, 82.

\(^{89}\)"Topics of the Times," \textit{NYT}, 29 January 1925, p. 18, col. 5.

\(^{90}\)C. Frederick, \textit{Selling Mrs. Consumer}, 50.


Christine's reference to a "three-stage-set" indicates the number of "stages" of radio frequency their set could receive. See reprinted advertisements in Alan Douglas, \textit{Radio Manufacturers of the 1920s} (Vestal,
Early in 1922, Christine’s ideas for a radio program were featured in the *Evening World*’s “Ten-Second News Movies.” Under a series of eight photographs of her animated face, she announced plans to broadcast a household show from Applecroft to thousands of women, fifteen minutes of household tips every week to listeners within a 500-mile radius of Greenlawn.93

Christine promoted radio as an antidote to the housewife’s loneliness and an educational tool for the whole family.94 In 1922, when radio was “still a toy” according to the editor of the popular women’s magazine, *Good Housekeeping*, she wrote an article exploring its usefulness in the home. She thought that exercise drills broadcast between 6 and 7 o’clock in the morning would encourage the family to exercise together. Health talks and first aid programs would promote hygiene. For children, programs on chemistry, electricity, and mechanical construction would further their education. She was most enthusiastic, however, about the radio’s appeal to women.

---


94Christine Frederick, “Enter Radio--Exit Loneliness: Radiophone Banishes Isolation from Farm Home,” [*Farm and Home*, June 1922], clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.
The radio-telephone, it seems to me, is primarily an invention for the benefit of woman. . . . Housekeepers . . . as a class have felt that they were imprisoned within the four walls of the house, that they were 'tied down' to the monotony of household tasks, and that often they were deprived participation in cultural pleasures because they had to stay home and take care of young children.\footnote{Christine Frederick, "A Real Use for the Radio," \textit{Good Housekeeping}, July 1922, 77.}

In 1923, only one of several stations in New York provided regularly scheduled women's programs. Some felt that the public wanted general entertainment.\footnote{Elsie Jean, "What Radio Features Do Women Like Best?" [\textit{Radio Review}, 24 November 1923], 3, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.} But Christine saw the radio as a "godsend" especially for farm women.\footnote{Elsie Jean, "Mrs. Christine Frederick Looks Ahead," \textit{Evening Mail Radio Review}, 27 October 1923, 6, clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.} She suggested regular programming for women, featuring physical education, talks on beauty, household topics, cultural programs, and issues of social interest. As she had once promoted the proper attitude toward efficiency as the way to relieve the housewife's unhappiness, she now promoted the radio as the way to relieve her loneliness. In 1924, Christine wrote that radio would lead women to take a greater interest in the presidential elections, predicting that because of radio, more women than men would vote.\footnote{C. Frederick, "Women, Politics, and Radio."}

Christine's penchant for pedagogy dictated her vision for radio: everything broadcast should be uplifting and educational. It was this sort
of programming that gave birth to Washburn-Crosby's Betty Crocker program which Christine praised as one of the six cooking schools on radio in 1924. Two of the others were conducted by large companies, too.99 But in the beginning, Christine did not suggest direct advertising, and advertisers shied away from the medium. Several factors militated against early radio advertising. The newspapers objected to the competition, advertising agencies were slow to develop radio expertise because they feared audience resentment, and no one could estimate the size of this new market. Like Christine, advertisers, still unsure of their ethical parameters, saw the radio as an educational opportunity; and it was not until a year after Christine wrote the article for Good Housekeeping that they began to sponsor radio programs.100

Advertising's slow start on radio did not prevent Christine from advertising the mechanism itself and she wrote many articles for trade journals promoting the sale of radios. She advised hardware retailers to tidy up their stores, create inviting displays and listening alcoves, and emphasize the beauty of the new radio cabinets as furniture.101 She spent

99 "Women Won to Better Cooking By Radio; Nation's Health Is Given a Decided Boost," [Toledo (OH) Times, 23 November 1924], clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.

100 Marchand, Advertising the American Dream, 90-94.

so much energy on promoting the radio that she once claimed to have
made a career out of it.102 Christine’s articles encouraging women to buy
radios appeared in such faraway newspapers as the Toledo Times and the
Dayton News.103 To illustrate them, she had dozens of photographs taken
of the family and friends listening to radios in many different situations:
camping, picnicking, exercising, in the sick bed, or relaxing before the
fire.104 Her articles reflected some of the early problems electronic
communication presented. In a 1922 article for a children’s magazine, she
wrote:

I am sure that readers of St. Nicholas will be glad to know that the
chief reason why America leads the world to-day in radio progress is
just because Uncle Sam is a wise old person and allows the radio
amateurs to remain unmolested by hampering government
restrictions.105

102 Christine Frederick, “How I Made a Career out of Home and
Radio,” Home and Radio, August 1924, 34-35, microfilm M-107, Frederick
Papers.

103 Christine Frederick, “Listening-in as a Stimulus to Hard Work,”
[Dayton (Ohio) News, 9 November 1924], 2-3, clipping microfilm M-107,
Frederick Papers; “Women Won to Better Cooking By Radio.”

104 There are six folders (file folders 26-31) of photographs of the
Frederick family, their friends, neighbors, and employees in scenes
illustrating daily life lived to the sound of the radio in the Frederick Papers.
For examples of the articles in which she used these photographs, see E.
Jean, “Mrs. Frederick Looks Ahead” and C. Frederick, “A Real Use for
Radio:”

105 Christine Frederick, “Radio--The New Aladdin’s Lamp,” St.
Nicholas, [November 1922], microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.
She went on to say that the boys of Europe had to hide their ham radio activities because “the French army owns the air!”\textsuperscript{106} Girls, apparently, were not interested in ham radio. Another piece, written in 1924, suggested limiting the content of programs. Sectarian church services should be eliminated “in the interest of the greater good to the greater number. . . .,” she wrote, although she would support a “radio church of general human appeal. . . .”\textsuperscript{107}

Christine’s enthusiasm for radio was yet another instance of her ability to perceive important trends and to capitalize upon them. Although her early, utilitarian vision for the radio failed to accommodate Americans’ desire for pure entertainment, she understood that radio would become a significant cultural phenomenon and was one of the first to say so. But by 1929, the most popular programs were not the lectures and exercise sessions she had promoted. America listened to “Roxy and His Gang,” “The Ipana Troubadours,” and the “A&P Gypsies.” That year, millions of Americans tuned in every week to a new show called, “Amos ‘n’ Andy.”\textsuperscript{108}

Her interest in radio enlarged the scope of Christine’s influence. Her reputation had also grown through her writing, and from 1927 to 1929 she

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{108} Leuchtenberg, \textit{Perils of Prosperity}, 196-197.
received invitations to speak in England, France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Czechoslovakia. The Women’s Electrical Association of London, chaired by Lady Astor, invited Christine to give a series of lectures on modernizing the home. In February, 1927, her portable typewriter in tow, she settled into Berner’s Hotel, Oxford Street, London, for a three-month stay. Despite a wall heater, a wood-burning fireplace (for which she had to pay), and layers of clothing, her teeth chattered in the cold. “No wonder,” she wrote years later, “my women sponsors wanted me to present the advantages of central heating!”

During her stay in Great Britain, she lectured at King’s College, the Publicity Club and the Chamber of Commerce in London, Queen’s College in Birmingham, and various groups in Lancashire, Liverpool, and Glasgow. She told British housewives how Americans had solved the servant problem by simplifying housekeeping through labor-saving devices. She gave the impression that most American homes had such conveniences and stated on one occasion that American women “simply will not move into an old-fashioned house or apartment until it has been brought . . . up to date.”

109 “Housewife’s Face Is International—Expression the Same in All Lands,” n.p., 1927, clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers. Christine claimed to have gone to France in 1924 as well, but there is no other evidence that she did so. Selling Mrs. Consumer, 355.

110 “Chronology of Mrs. Christine Frederick,” 2; [C. Frederick], “Only a Girl,” [18].


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
She was astonished by the lack of efficiency in British establishments. The maids in her Brighton boarding-house carried every dish up and down eighteen "narrow, ladder-like steps" from kitchen to dining room and back.\textsuperscript{112}

Christine's reputation preceded her to France, where she had intended a restful sight-seeing tour of two weeks. Instead, Paulette Bernège, a French home expert who was promoting "Taylorisme" in France, and who knew of Christine's work from her 1915 article in the \textit{Revue de Metallurgie}, hastily organized a meeting of the League for Household Efficiency, the Association for Household Electric Appliances, and her own organization, \textit{Mon Chez Moi} (My Home) presided over by the French minister of housing. On April 22, 1927, Christine addressed the group in passable French, reiterating her efficiency principles, her advocacy of labor-saving devices, and her views on the housewife's attitude. Bernège published the text in the May issue of her publication, \textit{Mon Chez Moi}, and shared a full-page advertisement with Christine that promoted their joint efforts to teach household efficiency.\textsuperscript{113} Christine and Paulette Bernège


\textsuperscript{112}[C. Frederick], "Only a Girl," [19].


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
shared a mutual regard for one another. Christine wrote of Bernège’s work:

In France a small but brave attempt is being made by my brilliant, self-sacrificing friend, Mlle. Paulette Bernège, who has sponsored and directs that unique home-management periodical, Mon-Chez-Moi which more than perhaps any other in Europe is attempting to educate the woman in modern scientific housekeeping.  

Christine left Paris in late April and traveled to Rotterdam, Berlin, and Czechoslovakia where she spoke to groups of housewives. Returning to London in early May, she addressed the Publicity Club of London and the London Chamber of Commerce before returning to New York. To these last groups, Christine spoke of the woman buyer and how to approach her. She was hailed as a celebrated American expert by the European press. The Birmingham Mail called her the “mistress of the science of housewifery,” the Edinburgh Scotsman reported that she was “one of America’s greatest household efficiency experts,” and the London Chamber of Commerce Journal was pleased to welcome the “well-known American lecturer and writer.”

---

Mon Chez Moi, May 1927, 350, file folder 15, Frederick Papers; “Housewife’s Face Is International.”

114 C. Frederick, Selling Mrs. Consumer, 284-285.

115 “American Home Economist in Paris”; “Mrs Christine Frederick”; “How Women Shop”; “Chambers of Commerce at Work.”

116 “How Women Shop.”

117 “Electricity and the Home” “Labour Saving in America,” The (Edinburgh) Scotsman, 21 February 1927, clipping, microfilm M-107,
In the fall of that year, Christine returned to Europe to speak before the International Home Economics Congress in Rome and the Home Exposition in Paris. While in France, she indulged in a bit of fun on a trip to Lyons where she was the guest of Mme. Bernège at an agricultural fair banquet. Christine wrote later that after she ate a special mushroom dish, she fell into a trance and kissed the chef. The "trance" was very likely the result of partaking in a ten-course extravaganza that included seven champagnes and ten other wines. The 99th Infantry Regiment offered a musical program, and Christine met the future French president, Edouard Herriot.\textsuperscript{118}

Christine was photographed with a far more notorious European leader when she went to Italy. The climax of a thirty-nine-nation home economics congress in Rome, where she exhibited a miniature efficiency kitchen equipped with doll figures and toy appliances, was a dinner attended by Benito Mussolini on the evening of November 17, 1927. Christine, along with eight other conferees, was photographed with \textit{Il Duce} who, despite a magnetic quality, she wrote years later, reminded her of "a head-waiter in an Italian restaurant on 45th Street, New York City."\textsuperscript{119}

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{118}C. Frederick, \textit{Selling Mrs. Consumer}, 335; "Journée Gastronomique," 10 November 1927, program menu, file folder 17, Frederick Papers; [C. Frederick], "Only a Girl," [43-44].

\textsuperscript{119}Photographs MC261-32-1, MC261-32-2, and MC261-32-3, Frederick Papers; "Only a Girl," [42].
\end{footnotes}
Christine returned to Europe in late spring, 1929, to speak to the British Housewife's Congress in New Castle, the International Management Congress in Paris, and the International Advertising Clubs Convention in Berlin.\textsuperscript{120} The Fredericks' nineteen-year-old daughter, Jean, and J. George, who had a speaking engagement of his own in Paris, accompanied her on this trip.\textsuperscript{121} This time, Christine took a "suitcase laundry," a model efficiency laundry room occupied by a doll laundress and fitted with toy washing machine, stationary tubs, and ironer. The point, Christine wrote, was to show European housewives how to make laundering efficient without servants.\textsuperscript{122} In Berlin, she helped German advertising women form their own league.\textsuperscript{123} After Christine had performed her speaking duties, the family took a vacation trip that included Holland and Switzerland, J. George at the wheel of a rented bus.\textsuperscript{124}

The European engagements were but the most dramatic of the many accolades Christine received while building an international reputation as an

\textsuperscript{120}C. Frederick, \textit{Selling Mrs. Consumer}, 80; J. Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.
\textsuperscript{121}J. Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.
\textsuperscript{123}“Bostonian Founder of Advertising League of Berlin Women,” [\textit{Boston Sunday Post}, 13 October 1929], clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.
\textsuperscript{124}J. Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.
expert on home efficiency, the economics of consumerism, and advertising. From 1920 to 1929, she kept an even busier schedule of writing, traveling, and speaking, than she had during the previous decade. At Applecroft, meanwhile, her children were growing up in an organized and healthful home.

7.4

"If ever I doubted that wifehood, motherhood and a successful career could be happily combined, these doubts were all dispelled [sic] when I left the home of Mrs. Christine Frederick," a household writer reported after interviewing Christine at Applecroft in 1925. While she talked with Christine in the apple orchard, they heard "the merry laughter of the youngsters . . . through the trees." Christine told her that she had plenty of time for her husband and children because she worked efficiently. "Her home," the reporter marveled, "runs like a well-oiled machine." But she also noted that Christine spent at least six hours a day, five days a week, in the "well-ordered" office over the garage.125

Christine had never believed in hovering over her children, and indeed, with the schedule she kept, she could hardly have done so. In 1919 she had told an interviewer:

\[125\]"Expert on Labor Saving Devices Says Use Brains."
My babies are brought up on what a clever friend calls supervised neglect—that is, they are let alone, not fussed over, and their clothes kept very simple indeed—and yet it seems to agree with them.126

Christine was able to spend some time with her children. Despite her advice to manage the household with elaborate detail, she set priorities for herself:

I myself have always felt that every moment I spent in cooking or unnecessary work when I might be spending it with my husband and children was unfair to them as well as to myself.127

Her daughter remembers fun-filled trips to the city with her mother. Christine and her children, with perhaps one or two of their friends, would board the Long Island Railroad at Huntington and ride the forty miles to Pennsylvania Station on 34th Street in Manhattan. They might shop at Macy’s and meet friends at a Chinese restaurant around the corner. Often, the trip would include an expedition to the Lower East Side where they would “load up on vegetables [and] exotic fruits.” Christine, ever conscious of nutrition, loved the fresh produce.128

Christine continued to do much of the cooking at home. The wonderful mussels the family collected from Long Island Sound might go into a favorite dish that she christened, “Wop and Consequence.” Even

126“Nothing in the World Is More in Need of Reconstruction Than the American Home.”

127Christine Frederick, “Cooking Sunday’s Dinner on Saturday,” LHJ, November 1919, 117.

128J. Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994.
liberal thinkers like the Fredericks thoughtlessly used derogatory ethnic epithets in the 1920s.\textsuperscript{129} She might treat the family to fancy desserts in "company-like . . . tall glasses thoroughly chilled."\textsuperscript{130} To save precious time with the family on Sundays, she and the housekeeper sometimes cooked and served "Sunday dinner" on Saturday night, preparing leftovers for a picnic the next day.\textsuperscript{131}

In a charming article in which she compared the magic of radio to the magic of Christmas, Christine depicted a quaint holiday scene at Applecroft. As she and J. George decorated the tree on Christmas Eve, they listened to radio music as snow fell outside. To surprise the children, they rigged their radio to a speaker attached to the Santa Claus figure at the top of their tree. The speaking Santa was greeted with "wild excitement" on Christmas morning.\textsuperscript{132}

The elder of Christine’s two half-brothers, Crichton MacGaffey, often traveled from Chicago to spend part of his summer vacation with the Fredericks during the twenties. Christine was fond of Crichton, sometimes referring to him as her first baby since she was in her teens when he was born. He entertained the Frederick children on the piano and flute. "He

\textsuperscript{129}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{130}C. Frederick, "Your Health Depends Upon Your Eating," 53.

\textsuperscript{131}C. Frederick, "Cooking Sunday’s Dinner," 117.

\textsuperscript{132}C. Frederick, "The Night Before Christmas," 36, 87-88.
just lit up the whole summer for us," Christine's daughter remembered. Christine was delighted to have Crichton visit, too. "[T]hen she could work uninterrupted." 133

Christine managed her household, as a consumer advocate should, by shopping carefully. She did her "routine buying" in nearby Huntington and patronized local vendors from the farms in Greenlawn. She bought eggs, for example, from a Polish woman who raised chickens at a "humble farm home." In New York, she not only visited the Lower East Side grocers, but she also frequented a specific chain store where she came to know the manager well enough that he gave her personal attention and remembered her "usual order" each time she shopped, even going so far as to send a clerk to a competitor if he lacked what she needed. Christine rewarded this special service by giving him fine Christmas gifts. 134

Of course her busy speaking schedule meant that Christine was away from her children for long periods of time, and she tried to compensate by involving them in her work. When her eldest daughter was ten years old, she took her to a Fuller Brush banquet where the child sat next to a gentleman who was kind enough to help her choose the proper fork for the oyster course while her mother was busy giving the address. 135

133 J. Joyce, interview, 14 September 1994.
134 C. Frederick, Selling Mrs. Consumer, 124-125, 304-306.
135 J. Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994; Photograph MC261-22-4, Frederick Papers.
Christine fictionalized a photography business for her second daughter, crediting the "Phyllis Frederick Photo Service" with many of the professional photographs that accompanied articles she wrote.\textsuperscript{136} Carol, the baby of the family, was included as coauthor of the children’s cooking articles Christine wrote for \textit{Designer Magazine}.\textsuperscript{137}

The children took part in the Fredericks’ social life, too. Their friend, the psychologist Leta Hollingworth, included the Frederick brood in a study of exceptional children, giving them I. Q. tests periodically.\textsuperscript{138} The older children were invited to attend the annual summer picnics of the Walt Whitman Society, of which J. George was a member. After eating in the Applecroft orchard, the club would troop to the Whitman house, just a few miles away. These folks were a “motley and interesting group for a kid to run into,” the Fredericks’ daughter remembered.\textsuperscript{139} For many years, there were annual Christmas parties when guests were invited from the city for a day in the country. There would be theatricals, turkey dinners, and walks in the countryside. The company was stimulating, usually made up of the writers, actors, and reformers that J. George knew in the city. Louis

\textsuperscript{136}This credit appears on the back of many of the photographs in the Frederick Papers and it appears on the photograph of Christine as "Miss Aluminum" at the New York Advertising Club Ball.

\textsuperscript{137}C. Frederick, “The Children’s Cooking Corner.”

\textsuperscript{138}Schwarz, \textit{Heterodoxy}, 20; Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.

\textsuperscript{139}J. Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994.
Brandeis's daughter Susan, film actor Beatrice Kaye, and radio personality Mary Margaret McBride were among the guests who frequented these events.\textsuperscript{140}

The children did not spend all their time at adult parties. Like many young American boys, David sold the \textit{Saturday Evening Post} from door to door to earn spending money. And like many American families in the days before children could be immunized against most childhood diseases, the Fredericks knew the terrible anxiety of nursing a child through infantile paralysis. In 1923, J. George took thirteen-year-old Jean duck hunting on Long Island. When the dog failed to retrieve on command, Jean went after a felled duck and got very wet and chilled. The next morning, she could not rise from her bed. Their family doctor recognized the symptoms and prescribed exercise for the muscles, salt water soaks, and massage. A woman was hired to move the leg regularly while Jean was still bedridden. Thanks to this treatment, the child walked again. J. George was inconsolable and wept with guilt for endangering the "apple of his eye."\textsuperscript{141}

Absent though she often was, Christine remained emotionally close to her children. In 1928, she wrote an article on the mother-daughter

\textsuperscript{140}Ibid.; "An Invitation," 26 December 1926, file folder 15, Frederick Papers; "General Program," 30 December 1928, Christine Frederick Collection, Huntington Historical Society, Huntington, NY.

\textsuperscript{141}J. Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994; Christine Frederick, "Putting Happiness into Housework," \textit{Hardware Dealers' Magazine}, March 1925, clipping, microfilm M-107.
relationship for the *Christian Advocate*. She advised including children in their parents’ activities at an early age, and wisely suggested turning a deaf ear to the teen-aged daughter’s criticism. She disapproved of mothers who tried to be their daughters’ “chums,” but she heartily advocated sharing laughter and fun.\textsuperscript{142} As adults, at least two of her daughters remembered her as a good mother and inspiring role model.\textsuperscript{143} Others found her engaging.

In 1925, a reporter described Christine as “a charming woman who looked as if she had just excused herself from a garden party. White-frocked, carrying colorful field flowers . . ., brown wavy hair and laughing brown eyes, exceedingly feminine. . . .”\textsuperscript{144} Yet she was not a particularly social woman. Although she occasionally invited members of the Advertising Women of New York to Applecroft, she did not join other women’s groups nor did she enlist in organized causes.\textsuperscript{145} She was completely absorbed in her work, and her children provided a partial outlet for any need for intimacy she might have had.

\textsuperscript{142}Christine Frederick, “How Can Mothers and Daughters Be Friends?” *Christian Advocate*, 15 November 1928, 1394-1395, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.

\textsuperscript{143}J. Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994; Phyllis [Filis] Frederick, “The Older Woman,” interview by Adele Wolkin, typescript, Redondo Beach, CA, 10 May 1982, 1.

\textsuperscript{144}“Expert on Labor Saving Devices Says Use Brains.”

\textsuperscript{145}Dorothy Dignam to Christine Frederick, 4 October 1951, file folder 8, Frederick Papers; Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.
Christine had another outlet, too. Like Catharine Beecher who repaired to health spas whenever she had suffered a failure or felt overwhelmed by the work she had taken on, Christine found a refuge from the hectic pace of her professional life in a dance camp. When she could, she would escape to the Connecticut countryside to spend two weeks at the Noyes School of Rhythm. Florence Fleming Noyes held that rhythmic movement was a "medium of creative expression and release," and she taught dance as she imagined the ancient Greeks might have practiced it. She established the Noyes School of Rhythm summer school in a rural setting near Portland, Connecticut, in 1919. Noyes called her dance pavilion the Pavelon after the Parthenon, and she had her students choreograph "masques" representing the Greek myths. Campers made their own flowing costumes from cheesecloth that they dyed themselves and hung from the trees to dry. Christine adored the time spent at Noyes. The barefoot Greek dancing represented liberation from corsets and from the demands of her work. After Jean had recovered sufficiently from her polio, Christine took her to the Noyes School for three summers after her fifteenth birthday. The girl worked for her tuition, helping to dye the cloth, carrying water, and incidentally building the strength in her weak leg.

146 Sklar, Catharine Beecher, 184.

147 J. Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994; "Noyes Rhythm, Past, Present, Future," n.d., booklet, 1-5, 6-7, 9; Christine Frederick to Thetis, 24 September 1969, file folder 8, Frederick Papers.
Christine made friends at Noyes School, and the school nurtured a part of her personality that rarely surfaced in her well-ordered, efficient, no-nonsense daily life.\textsuperscript{148} The mystical quality of the dance, Florence Noyes’s spirituality, and the mystery of the association with ancient Greece appealed to Christine. Her household and consumer work did not reveal a fascination for mysticism, spirituality, even the occult which would surface later in her life. She remembered Noyes as “the one place to which I would like most to return (if that were possible).”\textsuperscript{149}

At Applecroft, things continued to run smoothly because Christine could leave the details to a full-time housekeeper when she was away. Since the days of “Nursie” when her older children were small, the Fredericks had employed a servant who lived at Applecroft. The faces changed, but there was always a housekeeper. In 1924, Christine employed “a rather lively young girl” as her “housekeeping assistant.”\textsuperscript{150} The next year, she hired a woman who had a twelve-year-old son.\textsuperscript{151} In 1927, she explained to an audience in Paris:

\begin{flushright}
\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item 148 J. Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.
  \item 149 C. Frederick to Thetis.
  \item 150 C. Frederick, “Listening-in as a Stimulus to Hard Work,” 2.
  \item 151 Christine Frederick, “Putting Happiness into Housework.”
\end{itemize}
\end{flushright}
As for me, completely absorbed in my professional work, I pay $100 a month to my housekeeper, and I provide board and room for her small child. (My translation.)

There was money enough to manage the housekeeper’s salary in the busiest years of the twenties. And the Fredericks were able to make improvements to Applecroft. They electrified the entire house and office with their own electric plant so that Christine could operate the many appliances she tested. As “streamlined” design came into fashion, Christine hired New York decorative artist Russell Wright to help her renovate the Applecroft kitchen. They installed Monel metal counters, tables, and shelves that reflected the architectural vogue for curved lines and smooth surfaces. In 1929, Christine bought four waterfront lots on Northport Bay, an inlet of Long Island Sound just northeast of Huntington. The lots were part of a private development, the Huntington Beach Community Association. The Fredericks had camped on the property for

152“Mrs. Christine Frederick,” 346.

153C. Frederick, Selling Mrs. Consumer, 167-168.

154J. Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994; Photographs 261-24-1 through 261-24-6, Frederick Papers. For a discussion of streamlined design, see Giedion, Mechanization, 607-608.

155Deed Liber 1657 at p. 9353.45 (Suffolk County Clerk’s Office, Riverhead, NY, photocopy); “Huntington Beach Community Association: 60th Anniversary, 1928-1988,” booklet, Greenlawn-Centerport Historical Association, Greenlawn, NY.
years, but they bought just months before the stock market crash of 1929 and were never able to build a summer home on it.\textsuperscript{156}

As the children grew older, Christine and J. George decided that although country living had provided a wholesome atmosphere for small children, it was not satisfactory for maturing adolescents. Getting to Huntington High School involved a long train ride, and friends lived too far away.\textsuperscript{157} In 1923, after two years at Huntington High, David was sent to the Peddie School in Hightstown, New Jersey, a college preparatory school for boys.\textsuperscript{158} Boarding tuition during his tenure there approached $1,000.\textsuperscript{159} Two years later, Jean entered the Abbott Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, a distinguished girls' school which cost $1,400 per year.\textsuperscript{160} Phyllis, the Fredericks' third child, was sent to the Abbott Academy for the last two years of high school too, but Carol, their youngest, whose high school career coincided with the Great Depression, graduated from

\textsuperscript{156} Jean Joyce to the author, 23 September 1995.

\textsuperscript{157} J. Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994; Christine Frederick, "Is Suburban Life a Delusion?" \textit{Outlook}, 22 February 1928, 313.

\textsuperscript{158} J. Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994; \textit{The Old Gold and Blue}, yearbook, 1924, p. 57 (The Peddie School Office of Alumni and Development, Hightstown, NJ, photocopy).

\textsuperscript{159} A \textit{Handbook of Private Schools for American Boys and Girls: An Annual Survey} (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1928), 299.

\textsuperscript{160} J. Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994; \textit{The Abbott Circle}, yearbook, 1928, 14 (Phillips Academy Archives, Hanover, MA, photocopy); \textit{Handbook of Private Schools for American Boys and Girls}, 1928, 905.
Huntington High.\textsuperscript{161} It was during the twenties, then, that the question of college for the two eldest children arose.

Christine was “absolutely committed to getting all three of [her] girls through college.” She told her daughters that she could not allow them to go out into the world “without something that could earn [them their] place.” The memory of her own young mother, obliged to depend upon a dictatorial father after leaving an abusive marriage, gave Christine a keen appreciation for female independence, at least where her own daughters were concerned.\textsuperscript{162} Paradoxically, J. George decided that college was not for David. Although he encouraged Jean to become a lawyer, once purchasing a set of legal volumes for her, he stood firm in his refusal to fund David’s education beyond preparatory school. David had been active at Peddie, editing the school’s student directory, playing in the orchestra, and winning prizes for debates. In his senior year he had indicated a desire to attend Dartmouth. His marks, though good, were not outstanding, and when he graduated at eighteen years of age, J. George saw to it that he seek employment. After working briefly for two Boston advertising firms, David took a job with the \textit{Boston Herald}.\textsuperscript{163}

\textsuperscript{161}\textit{The Abbott Circle}, 1932, 20 (photocopy); J. Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994.

\textsuperscript{162} J. Joyce, interviews, 15-16 September 1994.

\textsuperscript{163} J. Joyce, interviews, 15-16 September 1994; \textit{Old Gold and Blue}, 1925, 39 (photocopy); “Frederick, David Mansfield,” grade cards (The Peddie School, photocopy); “David Frederick of Harper’s Dead,” \textit{NYT}, 3
J. George's reasons for preventing his son from getting a college education are complex. On the one hand, he praised the young "university-trained men in business" who were "more appreciative of analytical thinking and research." On the other, he took pride in being a self-made man and did not believe that college was necessary to success. Soon after David went to work for the Herald, J. George wrote an article entitled "I'm Glad I'm Not a College Man." His protagonist claimed that even though he had been terribly disappointed when the lack of funds prevented him from going to college, he later came to appreciate the sales job he took instead. His father had not been able to pay his tuition, and when faced with earning the money himself, he cast about for a job. In the end, he realized that college was "not for a man of my temperament. . . ." It would have been wasted on him. He would have been "easily led" into becoming "a snob of the first water." J. George, apparently, did not believe that his son was suited for higher education. Money, however, was certainly a consideration, too. For whatever reason, Christine did not insist that David be sent to college.

As her children entered expensive preparatory schools, Christine decided to establish contact with her biological father, William R. Campbell, January 1952, p. 46, col. 2.

164 J. G. Frederick, Modern Industrial Consolidation, 203-204.

165 J. George Frederick, "I'm Glad I'm Not a College Man," Outlook, 4 January 1928, 20-21.
hoping that he would help pay for his grandchildren’s schooling. “She always greatly resented Campbell’s failure to help with her education,” her daughter recalled. Campbell did not believe in higher education for women. Although it hurt her mother, Christine represented herself as “the daughter of Rev. William R. Campbell of the Highland Congregational Church” in an interview with the *Boston Post* in 1927, perhaps hoping to win his favor.166

The Campbell family had no use for Mimie MacGaffey, and through the years, only William’s sister Mary had been willing to speak to Christine’s family. But when David and Jean were both in Boston, they were occasionally invited to dinner at their grandfather’s home, and when he died, he left each of the Frederick children $1,000.167 That sum far exceeded their father’s contribution to their education. In 1928 J. George gave Jean the only college money he would ever give her: fifty dollars.168

Unlike her brother, Jean attended Cornell University and earned a bachelor of science degree in home economics in 1932.169

Christine apparently understood J. George’s difficulty. In 1929, she wrote that the reason many women worked outside the home was that

166 J. Joyce, interview, 14 September 1994; “Bostonian Founder of Advertising League.”

167 J. Joyce, interviews, 14, 16 September 1994.

168 J. Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.

169 David S. Yeh, Assistant Vice President and University Registrar, Cornell University, to the author, 11 January 1995.
more families were trying to put their children through college. In a one-
income family, the father "would need to strap himself to the wheel
practically until old age, living in next-to-impossible economy to accumulate
the thousands of dollars required for his children's college expenses."\(^{170}\)
Still, the disagreement about college caused tension between Christine and
J. George. By the end of the twenties, there were other difficulties, too.

J. George supported Christine in her work, even putting at her
disposal the resources of the Business Bourse. But Christine's schedule,
notwithstanding her protestations of making time for her family, did not
allow much energy for the marriage. J. George sought the companionship
of other women and used his city apartment as a hideaway to conduct
extramarital affairs.\(^{171}\) Christine pretended, at least in her writings, that the
marriage was solid. She once told a reporter, indirectly admitting that her
life did not match her model for other women, that one had "to be very
careful in the selection of a husband, careful to get one in sympathy with
his wife's work, if domestic harmony is to be maintained."\(^{172}\) Later, she
would intensify her campaign to encourage women to support their
husbands' careers, suggesting, of course, that she supported J. George's
work. The Fredericks did often work together, but very early in the

\(^{170}\) C. Frederick, *Selling Mrs. Consumer*, 398.

\(^{171}\) J. Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994.

\(^{172}\) "Turn Energy Wrong Way."
marriage, Christine put limits on intimacy; in *The New Housekeeping*, she advised that all family members, especially the hard-working housewife, should sleep in separate beds.¹⁷³ J. George’s fictional description of a female character’s distaste for the marriage bed may be telling:

> To Phyllis the sexual *denouement* had been crude and undramatic—even noxious; and the injury to her imagination was considerable. She had found herself spent, exasperated, even nauseated; and finally unresponsive and petulant, yet realizing vaguely that there was more travail to endure as a matter of duty.¹⁷⁴

The Fredericks were familiar with the modern ideas expounded by Judge Ben B. Lindsey in his widely read *The Companionate Marriage* published in 1929.¹⁷⁵ Lindsey advocated legalized birth control, easier divorce, and even suggested that married couples who agreed to have extramarital affairs could be happy. This thinking may have freed J. George’s conscience, but Christine denounced the “‘companionate marriage’ idea.”¹⁷⁶

Whatever the status of the Frederick marriage, Christine’s career had become an international success story by 1929. That year, representing herself as the American housewife’s advocate, she gathered between the


¹⁷⁶Christine referred to the current interest in “Judge Ben Lindsey’s ‘companionate marriage’ idea” in *Selling Mrs. Consumer*, 388. She called it a “myth” in “Man’s Business and the Woman’s,” *Outlook*, 1 February 1928, 188.
covers of a very successful book, her work of the decade. She wrote a
manual for manufacturers and advertisers entitled *Selling Mrs. Consumer.*
CHAPTER 8: SELLING OUT MRS. CONSUMER

Woman is of course powerful in buying largely because of her secondary position to man. She is not man's equal in earning and doing and building, therefore she gravitates toward the position of quartermaster rather than general in their mutual organization. She takes charge of supplies largely for the very reason that she can't lead the forces in the field.¹

Christine Frederick, 1929

8.1

During the 1920s, while she was building her reputation among male advertisers as an expert on women, Christine Frederick developed a conflicted view of her own sex. Rejecting feminist thought, she subscribed to the view that men and women were not equal. She sometimes wrote as if she believed that women as a whole were practical, reasonable, and competent, but much of her rhetoric reflected disdain for women, portraying them as petty, dense, or shallow.

Speaking to a group of men about women's view of the "Pretty Girl" in advertising, Christine said:

Like the cats we are, we say to ourselves that if this impossible French doll were to tuck up her clothes and actually use the device upon which she is leering she would lose her frozen smile. (Italics mine.)²

She sometimes implied that women were unable to understand complexity. 

"[T]he average woman," she told the New York advertisers in 1920, "does

¹C. Frederick, Selling Mrs. Consumer, 15.

²"Urges Advertisers to Tell the Truth."

306
not understand machinery any more than she understands her husband or her watch."\(^3\) On the other hand, she wrote elsewhere that "many men understand women very well. . . ."\(^4\) In her 1922 laundry booklet, she advised, "[L]et your husband read over this chapter with you, because men are more familiar with the technical construction of machinery. . . ." Yet in the same booklet, she admitted that the war "showed that woman could run machinery as well as man," and three years later, she wrote that "there is no sex difference in the use of tools and machinery. . . ."\(^5\) She claimed in 1924 that "nine-tenths of all women" were "not at all politically-minded." The suffrage leaders, she thought, were overly optimistic when they assumed women would become involved in politics after the passage of the nineteenth amendment. But radio might pique women’s interest in the presidential election because women didn’t learn easily from the printed word.\(^6\) She sometimes portrayed women as childish in the extreme. In an article about the use of color in advertising, she wrote that "women jump at a colored article the way a child grabs at pink ice cream."\(^7\) Some of

\(^3\)“Mrs. Frederick Scores a Hit.” [3].


\(^5\)C. Frederick, You and Your Laundry, 30-31; Christine Frederick, “Every Woman Her Own Repairman.”


\(^7\)Christine Frederick, “Is the Advertiser Over-Playing the Color Appeal?” *Advertising and Selling*, 2 May 1928, 66.
Christine’s supercilious conclusions were as class-conscious as they were sexist; she expressed the middle-class view that unschooled people were inferior to her educated peers. But she specifically targeted women, usually implying that the “average” woman was less competent than her male counterpart.

Christine was quite capable of misogynistic generalizations. She castigated “Housewives Who Fail,” in a series for the *World* in 1922. One article, “The ‘Scourer,’” blamed small town women who nag and make “the entire family . . . miserable” by insisting on perfection in housekeeping for “man’s frequent relinquishment of the home living room in favor of his club or the pool parlor. . . .” The “slacker,” on the other hand, who refused to do her own mending, make her own potato salad, or sew any of her children’s clothes did not please her husband either. “It is . . . not surprising that one out of every twelve marriages ends in divorce,” Christine wrote, “when we know that at least one out of every twelve women is a “slacker housewife.”” Apparently husbands bore no responsibility for failures in marriage. Christine sometimes impugned women’s mental stability. “Mrs. Consumer,” she wrote in 1931, was in “a

---


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
neurotic state” over electricity. Women all had an “unstable sex basis” and chafed at the lack of choice in utilities.9

Christine remained a strong advocate for maintaining the domestic sphere during the twenties, even when pretending to sympathize with career women. In a 1922 response to Swedish home economist Ellen Key’s contention that women could not be good homemakers and have careers too, Christine stated that women could indeed do both, but only if they could make enough money to pay competent employees to replace them. The competent help, in Christine’s view, would include “a servant, a nursemaid, a business manager and an evangelist!” Most, she went on, could not hire replacements, for even college graduates made only $12 to $15 per week. Women’s duty, she concluded, was to manage the home, and if she could not pay several assistants out of her own salary, she should do the job herself.10 Christine encouraged young college women to find satisfaction in homemaking. Her protagonist in a 1919 article, a graduate who was about to marry, debated with an older woman who questioned her wisdom in wasting four years on a degree. Homemaking was a “real vocation,” the young woman exclaimed. And college courses were excellent training for it because household tasks, after all, were just


10“Shall the Housekeeper Have an Understudy?,” New York Evening World, [13 May 1922], clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.
like trigonometry problems. While in college she had learned to concentrate amidst noise and to keep her things in order, important skills for the housekeeper. Her science courses had given her the right attitude of mind, she said. She would “investigate,” and keep notes on her findings. She had learned to be so organized that she would have time for other activities, too. And to the charge that homemaking was drudgery, she claimed that efficiency and the status housewives had gained during the war gave it “standing.”

“Married or unmarried, old-fashioned or new-fangled, domestic or followers of a career,” wrote Christine in 1927, “it is all one--women do not truly express the best that is in them unless they are in a home setting.” Christine understood that most middle-class American women were content to remain within the domestic sphere. She once wrote that only fifteen percent of American women were “truly interested in careers” outside the home. But she exhorted women to support their husbands in their work in the public sphere.

“If nine-tenths of women are going to make wifehood their career, as they are,” she wrote in 1928, “we have got to develop in America a wifehood which will count in man’s life more than a ‘neck to hang pearls

-------------


Twice during the decade she published a piece blaming women for men's business failures. Men, Christine wrote, need to put their ideas across. Wives' duty was to support this masculine urge, but "too few wives" were willing to share "inspired penury" while their husbands rose in the world. Many women, in fact, were "a problem as wives." Christine deliberately rejected feminism when she wrote that women "with tortoise-shell glasses" who called for change in men's attitudes were preaching "twaddle." Instead of acquiring "prattle about Ibsen and Browning," she advised, women should be acquiring an understanding of their husbands' careers. Citing novels by Sherwood Anderson, Scott Fitzgerald, and Theodore Dreiser as evidence that the "companionate marriage" was a sham, Christine portrayed men as victims. They were expected to earn the family's living and at the same time participate in their wives' "garden of leisurely interests." She warned that, instead, the "American wife had better follow [her husband's] soul into man's work, or realize quite clearly that their souls" were "apart." "American wifehood" should "hang its head" when reminded that great men like Mark Twain and Abraham Lincoln

14Christine Frederick, "Man's Business and the Woman's," *Outlook*, 1 February 1928, 189.
15Ibid., 169, 188.
16C. Frederick, "The Modern Wife Faces a Problem."
17Ibid.
were held back by their wives. Christine was at her misogynistic worst when she recounted the story of a young wife who refused to relocate when her husband wanted to move West. Remaining where he was to please her, the young man failed to prosper and the wife died of overwork, “a true but not a palatable poetic justice,” Christine concluded.

Christine wanted women to remain in the home, but she suggested that complete separation of spheres was unfair to men. Women should use their talents and education to help their husbands advance, become their husbands’ “aide-de-camp[s].” This was Christine’s new solution to twentieth-century woman’s dilemma: women should forego careers for themselves in favor of helping their husbands fully realize their potential. In this way, women could seem to step out of the nineteenth-century domestic sphere, but they would enter the public sphere only as their husband’s helpers. She encouraged women to understand the business world, but not to join it independent of men. She had written at the beginning of the decade that “the average man’s ideal” was a woman “who openly and avowedly loves housekeeping.” Wives were still expected to be “responsible for the operation and management of” the home. But now

18 C. Frederick, “Man’s Business,” 169, 189.
19 Ibid., 169.
20 Ibid., 168-169.
21 C. Frederick, “Shall the Housekeeper Have an Understudy?”
Christine offered a taste of the public sphere through woman’s duty to her husband’s career. Her harsh judgment of women who did not support their husbands was surely a manifestation of Christine’s own conflict. She had taken an interest in J. George’s work, but she had appropriated it for a career of her own.

Pragmatist that she was, Christine also acknowledged the large numbers of women who worked outside the home when it suited her purpose. Contradicting her own advice, she once told a reporter, “Any woman of intelligence can have both babies and a career.” On another occasion she qualified the assertion: “if she only simplifies her housekeeping.” She had no intention of allowing her own daughters to grow up unprepared to earn a living:

I am the last person who shall say that every woman should run a home. If any one of my three daughters wishes to be a plumber or a lawyer or a woman doctor, she may do so.

In 1922, she wrote a letter to the editor of the New York Times praising a piece on twelve great American women because, she wrote, it illustrated how many “lines of work” women can do and “the great progress of women as a group within the last half century.” She wished to add home economist’s Mary Harland’s name, however, because she had worked to

\[\text{\textsuperscript{22}}\text{"Calls Frying Pan the U. S. Emblem."}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{23}}\text{"Nothing in the World is More in Need."}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{24}}\text{Ibid.}\]
improve the home. Christine recognized the trend toward smaller families and "the decline of complete concentration of feminine energies on the home." She reminded advertisers in 1929 that many women who worked for pay had changed their eating habits and wanted packaged food.

"Where formerly a woman's place was settled upon as being in the home, now it is more and more the case that women are choosing a business career. . . .," she wrote. Apparently Christine did not wish to alienate feminists, no matter how harsh her rhetoric at times. Sometimes she claimed to be one of them. "Feminist that I may be," she said in 1938, "I have no desire to throw added fuel to the flames. But . . . I believe it is necessary to place women on the boards of large corporations. . . ." This proclamation, however, did not signal an attempt to raise women's status in the business world, although that would certainly have resulted from her suggestion. Christine's purpose was to help boards of directors understand the woman consumer.

Christine had always advocated more leisure time for women. Creating leisure had been one of the main purposes of making housekeeping efficient. The war, she wrote at the beginning of the decade,


26C. Frederick, Selling Mrs. Consumer, 241-242.

27Ibid., 59.

28C. Frederick, "Mrs. Consumer Speaks Up," 16.
had shown women that they could afford to spend a few hours away from their homes. Now they could use that time for educational and spiritual growth. She suggested several Progressive reforms such as schools, sanitation, peace, and even "standardizing divorce laws" in 1919. Ten years later, she acknowledged that many women spent time on charity, politics, child welfare, or women's clubs. Still, she did not suggest gainful employment.

Christine did not believe that women who chose to work for pay had a real need to do so:

Everybody knows that the great bulk of women in factory and office are there to add to their dress allowance, get away a little from home discipline, and have more opportunity to meet beaux!

Yet the Women's Bureau refuted the "pin money" theory when, after the first World War, women were forced to leave their wartime jobs:

Back to the home was a slogan all too easily and indiscriminately flung at the wage-earning woman by those who had little conception of the causes which forced her into wage-earning pursuits.

---

29 C. Frederick, "The College Graduate's New View of Home."

30 "Nothing in the World Is More in Need."

31 C. Frederick, "Selling Mrs. Consumer," 168.

32 C. Frederick, "Advertising Copy and the So-Called Average Woman," 232.

A feminist contemporary of Christine's wrote that "the woman in industry" was "not merely working for pin-money, as thoughtless people assume[d]. . . .," but that she was either supporting herself or dependents or helping the family make ends meet.\textsuperscript{34} By 1930, thirty percent of the women in the labor force were married, and Women's Bureau investigations suggested that most worked because they had to.\textsuperscript{35} Christine's attitude on this issue was only one indication that, despite the occasional reference to her own independence, she was not in sympathy with the feminists.\textsuperscript{36}

8.2

After the sixteenth amendment granted women the franchise in 1920, the early feminist movement lost impetus, although there was a campaign to add an Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution led by Alice Paul of the National Woman's Party.\textsuperscript{37} Immediately after the war, outspoken critic of the home Charlotte Perkins Gilman still lectured in favor of changing the home and woman's role, but within a few years her

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{34}Ibid., 165.
\item \textsuperscript{35}Cott, \textit{Grounding}, 129-130. Not all historians agree that middle-class women who worked for pay felt that they had to do so. See Cowan, \textit{More Work for Mother}, 188; Lemons, \textit{Woman Citizen}, 141.
\item \textsuperscript{36}Christine's daughter told the author that her mother had never discussed the "feminism problem" with her; she believed that her mother was more interested in what she was doing to make housework efficient than in securing votes for women. J. Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.
\item \textsuperscript{37}Cott, \textit{Grounding}, 120-129.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
advertisements stated that she disliked to be called a feminist because her interest was in humanity. Her passionate appeals to change women’s status gave way to other interests after 1923, and in a symposium for *Current History* in 1927, she took a relatively positive view of women’s achievements since they had won the vote. Yet there were still a few feminist voices raised in the crusade to achieve full equality during the twenties.

Two books by feminists who argued for total gender equality did appear. Alice Beal Parsons’s *Woman’s Dilemma* and Suzanne La Follette’s *Concerning Women* both drew from natural rights arguments found in the works of eighteenth-century writer Mary Wollstonecraft and nineteenth-century philosopher John Stuart Mill. Parsons examined obvious differences between the sexes to illustrate that they need not impose limitations on women. La Follette argued that the established social and economic order was not in women’s best interests, comparing the wife to the prostitute since both were dependent upon pleasing men for their livelihood. Both writers rejected the idea that all women were suited for


homemaking, and both argued against special protective legislation for women, a reform goal of many women’s groups during the twenties.\(^4^0\)

In 1931, historian Mary Beard criticized her male colleagues for eliminating women from history. She pointed out that H. G. Wells’s popular *Outline of History*, the *Encyclopaedia Brittanica*, and the *Biographical Dictionary of American Men of Science* had all failed to mention women. “According to [H. G.] Wells,” she wrote, “man even raised the curtain on culture as the farmer, cook and artisan.”\(^4^1\)

These few instances of remaining revolt notwithstanding, the radical feminism that had sought to change the fundamental role of women lost ground in the twenties.\(^4^2\) Leta Hollingworth blamed women’s failure to achieve equality on biology and gave men credit for the progress women had made up to that time: “Men of science, inventors and philosophers were the real makers of the New Woman,” she wrote.\(^4^3\) Martha Bruère, who had been encouraged about women’s progress under the efficiency

\(^{40}\)Alice Beal Parsons, *Woman’s Dilemma* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1926), 5-6, 7-11, 55, 79-80, 201, 247-248; S. La Follette, *Concerning Women*, 4-5, 10, 20-21, 33-34, 36, 46, 95, 165-174.


\(^{42}\)For a discussion of this retreat, see Sochen, *The New Woman in Greenwich Village*, 126-129.

movement, wrote that even though women no longer judged their worth by their quilts or their pie crusts, their sphere was “the sphere of the human female still.”

Many of the Progressive era’s revolutionary feminists expressed disillusionment in the twenties. A contributor to the *Ladies’ Home Journal* scoffed at her own “radical” college days when she foresaw complete economic independence. After marriage, she found that sharing expenses with a better-paid husband left her with little spending money, while he spent his larger surplus on clothes and entertainment for himself. She now envied her conventional friends who lived in nice houses, drove fine automobiles, and were “spoiled” by their husbands. Another disillusioned feminist writing in 1929 contrasted her own generation of feminists with those earlier women who chose career over marriage: “We were determined to have both,” she wrote. But they had advocated a marriage of equals, following Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “blueprint,” and now many had found that complete honesty between partners could be painful while promises to share housekeeping had proven false. The world was still arranged “primarily for man’s technic and convenience,” she lamented, and

---

44. Martha Bruère, “The Highway to Women’s Happiness,” *Current History*, October 1927, 28.

she had begun to question her feminist belief that gender differences were merely cultural.46

Christine had reason to assume that women were apolitical in 1924, for most did not vote in the 1920 election, and only one of the seven women candidates won a Congressional seat that year.47 A woman commentator claimed that women reformers did not want "feminism in politics," or status as a "separate class."48 Many of those who had worked for suffrage retreated from the movement to pursue their own careers.49 Among those still working for women's political rights there was wide division between champions of the Equal Rights Amendment and those who wanted to enact a broad program of reforms.50 Peace, prohibition, and protective legislation for women workers were other issues over which women were badly split.51 While some social reforms were adopted during the decade--the Sheppard-Towner and Married Women's Independent


47Lemons, Woman Citizen, 51, 103.

48Esther Everett Lape, "What Do Women Want with the Vote?" LHJ, March 1920, 91.


50Lemons, Woman Citizen, 184-187.

51Cott, Grounding, 255-257, 263-264,
Citizenship Acts were examples--there were also failures such as the defeat of the proposed child labor amendment.\textsuperscript{52} The failures were due in part to a growing conservatism in the United States. A female state representative in Connecticut remonstrated, “Women should be more concerned over the breaking down of homes than over the breaking down of the jury system.”\textsuperscript{53} This was but the tip of a reactionary iceberg.

A Boston cardinal told his followers that “sinister feminism” would have “disastrous results for humanity.”\textsuperscript{54} Another Catholic official wrote that it was “quite impossible for a woman to engage successfully in business and politics and at the same time create a happy home.”\textsuperscript{55} Union pressure had forced women to leave their wartime jobs as streetcar conductors.\textsuperscript{56} By 1931, Mary Beard believed that women had become scapegoats and by then it was fascism, she warned, which held that women should return to kitchen, children, and church.\textsuperscript{57}

---

\textsuperscript{52}Brown, \textit{Setting a Course}, 54; Lemons, \textit{Woman Citizen}, 65-68.

\textsuperscript{53}Quoted in Lemons, \textit{Woman Citizen}, 71.

\textsuperscript{54}“O’Connell Deplores ‘Sinister Feminism,’” \textit{NYT}, 9 March 1920, p. 8, col. 2

\textsuperscript{55}Hugh L. McMenamin, “Evils of Woman’s Revolt Against the Old Standards,” \textit{Current History}, October 1927, 32.

\textsuperscript{56}Lemons, \textit{Woman Citizen}, 22-23.

\textsuperscript{57}Beard, \textit{On Understanding Women}, 28-29.
Perhaps the most frightening aspect of the reaction to feminism during the twenties was the growing conviction among right-wing patriots that many women's organizations were the agents of Communism. Early in the decade the Massachusetts Civics Alliance sent a protest to President Harding that called the Sheppard-Towner Act the "beginning of Communism in Medicine."\footnote{Quoted in Lemons, \textit{Woman Citizen}, 171.} When the head of the War Department denounced the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom as a threat to the social order, Brigadier General Amos Fries of the Army's Chemical Warfare Service issued the infamous Spider-Web Chart which showed linkages among fifteen women's organizations and labeled them "Part of International Socialism" in 1922. The American Home Economics Association, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the League of Women Voters, the National Consumers' League, the American Association of University Women, the National Federation of Business and Professional Women, and the National Council of Jewish Women were among the accused.\footnote{Cott, \textit{Grounding}, 242, 249-250.} In 1924, the Adjutant General of the National Military Order of the World War told the New York Women's Republican Club that these organizations were "a menace to the present Government by reason of their subversive teaching or their affiliation with radical groups."\footnote{"Sees Menace to Country," \textit{NYT}, 10 December 1924, p. 30, col. 6.} By

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize

\footnotesize
mid-decade, several conservative women’s groups, the Daughters of the American Revolution and the American Legion Auxiliary among them, had joined the military establishment’s attack on women’s organizations that participated in social reform or peace efforts. Carrie Chapman Catt, who had successfully organized the final push for woman suffrage, was blacklisted by the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1925 for attempting to bring women’s groups together for a peace conference.61

Christine Frederick was not among these right-wing accusers, but she recognized and affirmed the reactionary mood that resisted women’s involvement in the public sphere:

It seems that many ‘feminists’ of today are somewhat disillusioned over working. There is something profound to be said of the relative effects on man of the creative . . . types of women. It is a philosophical problem as to whether . . . we wish a civilization in which women work and create, or one in which women merely consume. In my own opinion this depends on how well women solve their work and personal problems; how well they are able to maintain the male sex tension by working. If we fail in this, we may move toward the more savage standard where only women work.”62

This confused observation illustrates Christine’s own conflict over the “woman question.”

But women were entering the work force in ever greater numbers and there was a continuing debate over whether women could work for pay and at the same time maintain a home. In 1927 the American

Association of University Women undertook a study of "the effects on the home of . . . work of women and consequent fear for family life."\(^8\) Christine, reflecting her own situation while maintaining her opposition to careers for women, wrote that a marriage in which the wife continued to work outside the home was "fraught with psychological dangers . . . because of the lessening of man's traditional sense of economic responsibility." The "two-earner standard," she wrote, was not "a generally feasible solution."\(^6\) In one instance she was roundly criticized for maintaining that wives should not work; a critic responded that he hoped Mrs. Frederick was not married "lest her husband raise hell" when she received "her check for the article."\(^6\) Christine took part in the conservative movement to encourage married women to stay at home. So did most of the magazines for which she wrote.

One writer criticized women's magazines for doing nothing "to adapt women to a changing world."\(^6\) "[M]illions of American women, although the vote is won," wrote another critic, "are still inside the four walls of their houses. . . . And 'their' magazines continue to tell them in honeyed


\(^6\) C. Frederick, *Selling Mrs. Consumer*, 396, 397.


words to stay there." Advertisers now recognized an enormous market in
the American homemaker, and their business determined the magazines’
policies. Most women were content to stay home; an opinion poll
conducted at a Young Women’s Christian Association family conference in
1925 revealed that seventy percent of the participants believed that
women were happiest and best fulfilled through home, husband, and
children.

Christine Frederick was among those who continued to use
nineteenth-century ideology to keep women at home. Many young
unmarried women read parents’ magazines, she contended, because they
were unconsciously “dreaming of a home and children.” Upon her return
from Europe in 1927, she announced, “There is a universal, international
housewife’s face!” Women the world over were more “natural” when
involved in their home, she said. “The moment women step out of their
innate home-loving character and become this, that, or the other
pretentious, artificial type, they seem to don masks.” Women had been
made to hate their kitchens by pre-suffrage, feminist literature such as Alice

September 1922, 92.

68 See Cott, Grounding, 163.

69 Mrs. Abel J. Gregg, “What Women are Thinking: The Y.W.C.A.
Talks It Over,” Survey, 1 December 1926, 301.

70 C. Frederick, Selling Mrs. Consumer, 47; “Housewife’s Face Is
International.”
Duer's *Come Out of the Kitchen*, Christine claimed. But "Mrs. Consumer" of the 1920s "went into the kitchen, not out of it." She loved managing her home.\(^7^1\)

In 1928, Herbert Hoover used the home as a campaign issue, with the slogan, "Hoover, Home and Happiness."\(^7^2\) During the decade, the home had become a symbol of American prosperity and superiority. The secretary of the Macon, Georgia Chamber of Commerce lamented in 1920 that while there were 1,000,000 marriages in the United States each year, only 70,000 new homes were built. He urged that 1,250,000 new single family homes be built annually.\(^7^3\) In 1922, Hoover had served as president of "Better Homes in America, Inc.," a cooperative effort between government and private interests to urge home ownership and home improvement as a way to build American character.\(^7^4\) Throughout the decade, real estate associations promoted "Own Your Home," and "Build Your Home" campaigns.\(^7^5\) As President, Hoover launched his 1931

\(^{71}\) C. Frederick, *Selling Mrs. Consumer*, 355-356.

\(^{72}\) Brown, *Setting a Course*, 71.

\(^{73}\) "1,000,000 Weddings in 1919," *NYT*, 26 October 1920, p. 21, col. 2.

\(^{74}\) Wright, *Building the Dream*, 197.

\(^{75}\) See, for example, "‘Own Your Own Home’ Show," *NYT*, 28 October 1923, sec. 10, p. 2, col. 6; "Sixth Annual ‘Own Your Home’ Show," *NYT*, 13 April 1924, sec. 11, p. 2, col. 8; "To Show Gas Units," *NYT*, 21 December 1924, sec. 10, p. 2, col. 3; "Building Booms Started to Order," *NYT*, 22 December 1924, p. 33, col. 1.
Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership with a speech confirming the goal of universal home ownership:

I am confident that the sentiment for home ownership is so embedded in the American heart that the millions of people who dwell in tenements, apartments, and rented rows of solid brick have the aspiration for wider opportunity in ownership of their own homes. To possess one’s own home is the hope and ambition of almost every individual in our country, whether he lives in hotel, apartment, or tenement.  

Women were encouraged to seek marriage and home instead of careers not only by the builders of homes and the manufacturers of home appliances, but also by the advertisers who promoted an ideal of youth and beauty during the 1920s. The relaxing of Victorian sexual restraints meant that young women were far more interested and informed about sex; participants in the Y. W. C. A.’s 1925 family conference exhibited a great deal of curiosity and eagerness to learn about the subject. This trend encouraged women to find fulfillment through male approval. “It does not matter how clever or independent you may be,” cautioned a perfume advertisement, “if you fail to influence the men you meet . . . you are not fulfilling your fundamental duty as a woman. . . .” Behaviorist-turned-advertiser John B. Watson told women that the business world would “rob”

---


78 Quoted in Ewen, Captains of Consciousness, 182.
them of their "feminine qualities." If a woman became self-sufficient, he warned, she would not be able to "yield to love," and no man would want to "possess her permanently."79

Feminist Alice Parsons criticized the work of psychologist Havelock Ellis because she believed that by urging women to cultivate satisfactory sex lives he had relegated their newly found independence to secondary importance.80 Sexual freedom was accompanied by the breaching of other Victorian norms. Some women, particularly college students, now smoked cigarettes, drank alcohol, went dancing, and engaged in petting.81 Such freedom, however, was in part the freedom to appeal to men more blatantly, not the freedom to pursue independence.82

Christine Frederick joined the chorus, if conditionally, of those who assumed that women's dearest wish was to attract men. She wrote in 1929:

As a 'feminist' I hate to say it, but the bare truth is that woman's chief business in life still appears to be to charm and hold a man, and . . . women rely heavily upon cosmetics for success.83


80 Parsons, Woman's Dilemma, 101-102.

81 Brown, Setting a Course, 142-143.

82 See Cott's discussion of this paradox in Grounding, 150-158.

83 C. Frederick, Selling Mrs. Consumer, 189.
Despite her harsh criticism of "pretty girl" advertising, Christine agreed that, in order to "charm and hold a man," women needed the help of beautifying preparations. Since a woman held her place "in man's affections" by her "physical charms," she would spend great sums on creams, powders, perfumes, and rouges as she grew older, Christine told advertisers. \(^8\) "[O]ne of the marked characteristics of Mrs. Consumer," she wrote, was that she insisted "on being somewhat girlish even until past 35." \(^8\) Advertising consultant Helen Woodward advised cosmetic manufacturers, "Remember that what we are selling . . . is youth." \(^8\) Watson reinforced fears of aging, too. "A woman is at her best between 19 and 28," he wrote. "After that her wrinkles begin." \(^8\) Christine's accommodation to the cosmetics industry conflicted with her contention that women objected to sexually attractive female images in advertising. Indeed, she agreed that they wanted to emulate the "pretty girl."

Manufacturers of cosmetics and clothing exploited the new sexual freedom and promoted youthful standards of beauty to sell their products. "To strengthen woman's awareness of sex in relation to herself, to other women, and to man, the advertiser of toiletries relies on both the picture

\(^8\)Ibid., 190, 191.

\(^8\)Ibid., 25.

\(^8\)Quoted in Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness*, 147.

\(^8\)L. G. Genn, "Business Unfits Girls."
and the printed word," wrote the author of an advertising manual in 1928.88 Even a shoe company might appeal to this standard: "Thousands of women have been made to look much older than they are because of the shoes they wear." American girls, wrote a commentator in the early twenties, were now "conforming to our new ideals of beauty." They trained "down to a type" by staying slim, they plucked their eyebrows, blackened their eyelids, and rouged their cheeks and lips.89 Historian Mary Beard noted that the "creators and distributors of women's wear, cosmetics, and perfumes" had determined the "tastes and modes of females."90

For advertisers, the field of home economics served as something of a bridge between the nineteenth-century and twentieth-century views of women. By the mid-1920s, home economics curricula included consumption, family budgets, standards of living, economics of housekeeping, and labor-saving devices, all topics that would prepare women for professional opportunities in business while training them to

89Ibid., 81.
90"American Beauty Hand Made in America," NYT, 6 March 1921, sec. 3, p. 11.
91Beard, On Understanding Women, 9.
teach others how to operate a home.\cite{92} Even academically elite women’s colleges were beginning to respond to the conservative shift of the twenties by incorporating home economics. Vassar, which had been established in 1875 with the intention of offering courses identical to those of men’s colleges, offered “euthenics,” or home economics, for the first time in 1923.\cite{93} Home economists usually promoted their discipline as a means to educate homemakers, teachers of home economics, and professional women in related fields.\cite{94} But by mid-decade, there was a growing demand for women trained in “the economics of consumption” and able to write advertising copy.\cite{95} Home economists went to work for appliance manufacturers and utilities such as the People’s Gas Company, for which Christine had established a home service department.\cite{96} So many home economists were entering business that the American Home Economics Association established a special arm, the Home Economics in

\begin{itemize}
\item[92]Hildegarde Kneeland to Beatrice Doerschuk, 12 June 1925, carton 2, file folder 126, BVI Papers.
\item[94]University of Minnesota, “Training Courses for Occupations for Women,” leaflet, 5-8 March 1924, carton 4, file folder 195, BVI Papers.
\item[95]Helen W. Atwater to Beatrice Doerschuk, 30 March 1925, carton 2, file folder 126; \textit{Vocational Education News Notes}, June 1926, 15, carton 2, file folder 127, BVI Papers.
\end{itemize}
Business section, and by 1925, it listed ninety-one members. Like Christine Frederick, many home economists who worked for businesses believed that the interests of consumers and manufacturers were the same. Though some were ambivalent about their relationship with business, most saw themselves as mediators and educators helping American business train the housewife to better utilize the technological advances of the twentieth century. Still, there was no escaping the connection between the business home economists and advertisers. In 1925, representatives from the Home Economics Association of Greater New York told the city’s female advertisers that eighteen percent of their members were connected with business.

8.3

Christine Frederick, too, was intimately connected with business. Selling Mrs. Consumer, her third book, was the culmination of fifteen years of promoting advertising as the means by which the American home—and the homemaker’s life within it—might be improved through consumerism. She frankly marketed the book as a manual for advertisers and manufacturers. Promotional literature billed Christine as "'the' Mrs.


98Goldstein, “Part of the Package,” 11-13, 16.

99“Consumer Work.”
“Consumer” and the book as “the great standard reference work for all who sell to consumers.” Flyers claimed that “famous manufacturers” had “made a lot of money from her professional advice” and that others could “make money from what Mrs. Frederick discloses.” The president of the International Advertising Association, the publisher of the Chicago Daily News, and the head of the home economics department at Cornell University provided testimonials regarding the book’s sound advice and breadth of information.¹⁰⁰

Christine had cast her lot with commercial interests. If she had ever aspired to scholarly investigation, as she seemed to do when she contributed the article on economics to the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science’s issue on market distribution in 1924, she had forsaken that ambition. She was not included in the May, 1929, issue of AAAPSS devoted to “Women in the Modern World”; another writer contributed an article on her special field of expertise, “The Home Woman as Buyer and Controller of Consumption.”¹⁰¹ Instead, Christine had perceived and exploited advertisers’ enormous interest in consumer research. Selling Mrs. Consumer was her magnum opus on the subject.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

The idea of teaching advertisers how to tailor their appeals to the woman consumer was certainly not new when Christine wrote *Selling Mrs. Consumer*. She merely anthologized her own previous advice on the subject. She had spoken out on the subject often, many of her ideas appearing in “Advertising and the So-Called Average Woman” in J. George’s *Masters of Advertising Copy* in 1925. Others saw the need for the feminine viewpoint in advertising, too. A year before *Selling* appeared, Carl Naether, a University of Southern California professor of business English, published *Advertising to Women* in which he discussed specific copy writing styles based on a survey of three women’s magazines. Naether was aware of Christine’s work and quoted from her 1920 speech before the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World. Like Christine, he used the figures from Harry Hollingworth’s study of twenty-five New York families that she repeated so often, though Naether was more candid about the study’s limitations. Naether called woman the “buyer-in-chief for the household,” a variation on Christine’s family “purchasing agent.” But his manual was narrower in scope, concentrating on the writing of advertisements, pamphlets, and letters for clothing and toiletries manufacturers.\(^{102}\) *Selling Mrs. Consumer* covered all kinds of merchandise and advertising advice.

Christine reiterated her view that the “trinity of consumer/

---

\(^{102}\) Naether, *Advertising to Women*, v, 4-5, 7-9, 12, 53.
distributor/producer" had helped raise the standard of living for all Americans, pointing out that increased consumption relieved America’s industry of surplus goods.\(^{103}\) She praised advertising as a reliable source of information, comparing it to a movie that showed “all the good things that manufacturers make everywhere, set in a dramatic scenario. . . .” She devoted a chapter to her perennial cause, price maintenance, and encouraged loyal patronage to trademarked goods as a way to induce cost decreases through mass production.\(^{104}\) On occasion, Christine seemed to represent the consumer’s interests by urging better products, better service, and better information from manufacturers and dealers. “[G]oods should more closely fit the market,” she advised. The merchandiser who acted as “liaison officer between consumer and manufacturer” would influence the manufacture of products that consumers really needed.\(^{105}\) She spoke out against the gradual shrinkage of product volume in standard can sizes and urged better, more complete labeling. Food packers, she wrote, should grade their products and display the grade on the label. Instruction booklets should be intelligible. And Christine pointed out that an important aspect of selling appliances was following up with good service and parts replacement. She had refused to recommend several

\(^{103}\) C. Frederick, *Selling Mrs. Consumer*, 3-7.

\(^{104}\) Ibid., 334-337, 369-378.

\(^{105}\) Ibid., 223.
otherwise satisfactory pieces of equipment because parts had to be sent for
or service calls were too expensive.\textsuperscript{106}

Christine's adherence to her standard arguments trapped her in
several absurd contradictions in \textit{Selling}. She cited investigations by the
Federal Trade Commission that showed that seventy-two percent of
American consumers were against price maintenance, but she dismissed
the figure by claiming that, "it was folly to ask consumers such questions,
for the average consumer is not familiar with economic terms and has no
economic training and is misled by the term, 'maintaining price.'"\textsuperscript{107}

Although Christine was a champion of big business, she disapproved of the
new chain stores on the grounds that they cut prices and threatened
independent retailers. However, she reported that seventy-one percent of
housewives responding to a survey believed they got better prices in the
chains. The chain stores, she explained, "appealed to the poorer and lower
middle classes who do not think very logically and who have always until
recent years been short-sighted buyers."\textsuperscript{108} Christine misjudged other new
trends, declaring that installment buying had run its course\textsuperscript{109} and

\begin{flushright}
106\textsuperscript{ibid.}, 157-160, 185-187.

107\textsuperscript{ibid.}, 378.

108\textsuperscript{ibid.}, 308, 377.

109\textsuperscript{ibid.}, 381-382.
\end{flushright}
reiterating J. George's praise of Hoover's standardization campaign which included reducing the varieties of manufactured items.\textsuperscript{110}

True to her faith in manufacturers, Christine denounced the "big-business-hating" consumer clubs that sought to obtain better value by purchasing by specifications rather than by brand. She urged consumers to rely instead on the safeguards of "consumer voting power," magazine consumer services, the Federal Trade Commission, and the Better Business Bureaus.\textsuperscript{111} Christine abhorred political action in the marketplace. "The consumer's real hope is not political agitation, \textit{but cooperation and consultation with manufacturers, plus the use of the purchasing vote,} instead of the political ballot," she wrote. \textit{(Italics hers.)}\textsuperscript{112}

Christine devoted much of the book to practical advice to the seller including chapters on food, clothing, household equipment, and furniture. Along with consumer information, she discussed merchandising and distribution.\textsuperscript{113} She proposed a plan for enabling young couples to increase

\textsuperscript{110}ibid., 225. J. George had advocated reducing styles of collars from over 100 to fewer than 50 and kinds of pocket knives from over 1,000 to under 500. Christine wrote that "the more shapes and sizes and items offered the housewife, the more difficult her choice." J. George Frederick, "Standardization--Bane of Blessing?" \textit{Outlook}, 12 January 1927, 50; [C. Frederick, \textit{Hardware Dealers' Magazine}, September 1926], 64, clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.

\textsuperscript{111}C. Frederick, \textit{Selling Mrs. Consumer}, 320.

\textsuperscript{112}ibid., 331.

\textsuperscript{113}C. Frederick, \textit{Selling Mrs. Consumer}, chapters 13 through 22, 115-230.
their consumption by "capitalizing," or underwriting, the purchase of new homes for them. "'Industrial banking' corporations," she suggested, should make interest free loans "to be used in the financing of new homes." Such a plan would encourage home ownership and eliminate the "temptation to have the wife continue at work." 114

Christine elaborated on earlier descriptions of Mrs. Consumer, much of her rhetoric uncomplimentary, and all of it intended to help the advertiser exploit Mrs. Consumer's vulnerability. She listed eighteen female "instincts" to which the advertiser might appeal. They included sex love, mother love, vanity, love of style, jealousy and ostentation. 115 Christine classified Mrs. Consumer in various ways: by time of life, by economics, and by physical characteristics. Borrowing from Freud, she wrote that the "inferiority-superiority feelings, so prominent a part of modern psychoanalysis," were much stronger in women than in men, engendering in women "powerful social snobbery." 116 Repeating the observations she had made in Masters of Advertising Copy, she described the average female consumer as a poorly educated, emotionally and mentally immature housewife who could not remember seven digits and who probably did not

114 Ibid., 392-395.
115 Ibid., 45.
brush her teeth.117 Yet this same Mrs. Consumer knew what she wanted, decided trends, and possessed both common sense and “selective thought processes.” She was more alert, more sophisticated, and more powerful than previous generations of American women.118 Selling Mrs. Consumer was riddled with the same contradictions regarding women that Christine had exhibited throughout the decade. She declared in one instance that Mrs. Consumer would “probably ‘blow herself’ to a French face powder of identically the same chemical composition, at twice the price, because she wants the French trade name. . . .” and lectured advertisers in another that they “must realize that American women are not exactly morons, and that they have a most excellent record of intelligent buying.”119

Christine was unable to produce solid evidence for her pronouncements about women; to bolster her contentions, she drew from the sixteen-year-old findings of Harry Hollingworth.120 Yet she ignored Hollingworth’s warning that sex differences were not very large and that

117Ibid., 19-22.
118Ibid., 8, 23, 29.
119Ibid., 326, 384.
120For example, Hollingworth found that women disagree on advertising “appeals made to the instincts and impulses underlying social solidarity, such as the recommendation, the reputation of the firm, family affection, guarantee, union made, sympathy, growth of the business, etc. . . .” Advertising and Selling, 296. Christine changed this to “Women are . . . less prone than men to be influenced by appeals to social solidarity such as guarantee, union made, sympathy, recommendation of others, etc.” Selling Mrs. Consumer, 51.
they were not true of everyone. In fact, he had been careful to question "the popular notion that women are prone to react more strongly to emotional situations than men."\textsuperscript{121} Day Monroe’s criticism that Christine based much of her argument on her own views was a valid one.

*Selling Mrs. Consumer*’s most surprising new contribution was the theory of consumer economics that Christine unveiled:

It is now time to assert and proclaim for the American family, on all levels above the Minimum Comfort Level, a bold new policy, already in existence, without fear of being called extravagant or wasteful. This is the *policy of creative waste in spending*. (Italics hers.)\textsuperscript{122}

The year before, J. George had advocated “progressive obsolescence,” a term he claimed to have coined. Americans must be taught to trade in or discard manufactured items “when new or more attractive goods or models come out,” he wrote. (Italics his.) This was the key to solving manufacturers’ problem of “securing more sales” and disposing of surplus.\textsuperscript{123} Although Christine had urged readers to make 1928 “a saving year” just nine months before J. George wrote this piece, she took up and elaborated upon his theme in *Selling*, sometimes borrowing material verbatim:

\textsuperscript{121}Hollingworth, *Advertising and Selling*, 299-300.

\textsuperscript{122}C. Frederick, *Selling Mrs. Consumer*, 79.

\textsuperscript{123}J. George Frederick, “Is Progressive Obsolescence the Path toward Increased Consumption?” *Advertising and Selling*, 5 September 1928, 19-20.
Mrs. Jones [or Mrs. Consumer] no longer takes pride in the great square ebony piano of excellent tone her mother handed down to her, but on the contrary, unsentimentally considers it a horror, and has perhaps bought several pianos of different shapes and woods in recent years. . . .

Christine took great delight in the “Consumer-Jones” family’s progression through three homes, each more modern than the previous one because it “seemed obsolescent to this family so rapidly moving up on the social scale.” So enthusiastic was Christine over this concept that she claimed she would like to “burn up gradually a third of our houses!” Christine made a distinction between “real” waste (letting oranges rot in the crate) and “creative” waste (replacing an object with a new model before it was worn out). “There isn’t the slightest reason in the world why materials which are inexhaustibly replenishable should not be creatively ‘wasted,’” she exclaimed.

Borrowing “[Thorstein] Veblen’s excellent phrase,” Christine condoned Americans’ “conspicuous consumption” of clothing, furnishings, jewelry, automobiles, and houses. Christine misunderstood Veblen’s indictment of the middle class’s “emulation” of the wealthy and encouraged the practice because it would lead to everyone buying more household

\footnotesize


125 C. Frederick, Selling Mrs. Consumer, 253.

126 Ibid., 81-83.

127 Ibid., 120-121.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
goods, an "important means of expressing the family’s ‘conspicuous consumption’ or wealth." She wrote disparagingly of the British woman who might wear one evening gown for five or ten years. To an American, she claimed, such frugality was "unheard of and preposterous." Mrs. Consumer was happiest when she consumed goods "at the same approximate rate of change and improvement that science and art and machinery can make possible." Christine did not completely forget the "93 millions who are too close to necessity to dispose of their purchases much before the last usage is out of them"; she claimed that progressive obsolescence would improve their lives, too, for they could buy the goods that more fortunate Americans traded in for new. But her target was the prosperous middle-class American: "Mrs. Consumer has billions to spend. . . . She is having a gorgeous time spending it--and American industry, science, art, literature, invention is having the peak of its development catering to her quick appreciation, which does not hesitate to throw out of her house much that is still useful. . . ."

---

129 Ibid., 169. Veblen, in fact, scorned the middle-class wife’s absorption in “vicarious” consumption, writing that her daily routines showed “that she does not occupy herself with anything that is gainful or that is of substantial use.” Thorstein Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899; reprint, with an introduction by C. Wright Mills, New York: New American Library, 1953), 66-69.


130 Ibid., 251.
Home economist Day Monroe, writing for the *Journal of Home Economics*, called *Selling* a “guide for the manufacturer who wishes to sell his wares to Mrs. Consumer.” Christine had based her conclusions, Monroe wrote, on her own point of view. Good, bad, and indifferent investigations were “quoted indiscriminately.” She took umbrage at Christine’s description of Mrs. Consumer as the creature that advertising copy writers wanted her to be: emotional, volatile, and suggestible. “We can only hope she is wrong in her diagnosis of Mrs. Consumer’s characteristics,” Monroe wrote. As for the advice, Monroe judged much of it unsound for any but the manufacturer.\(^{131}\)

Other reviews were more enthusiastic. “[T]here is probably no one in this country,” wrote the *New York Times* reviewer, “who has studied woman as a buyer and user of goods and as a factor in the economic life of the country as has Mrs. Frederick.” Unlike Monroe, this reviewer found Christine’s evidence sound.\(^{132}\) The *Saturday Review of Literature* called the book “a worthy exemplar of the new method of scrutinizing the characteristics of buyers and taking from them the cue as to how to find out what and how they will buy.”\(^{133}\) The *Boston Transcript* reported that


\(^{132}\)“Woman’s Hand in the Market Place,” *NYT*, 25 August 1929, sec. 4, p. 26, col. 2.

\(^{133}\)Ordway Tead, “The New Consumer,” review of *Selling Mrs. Consumer* by Christine Frederick, *Saturday Review of Literature*, 2
Selling was sure to "attract attention on the part of efficient housewives," casting doubt on the care with which the reviewer read the book.\textsuperscript{134}

Christine submitted Selling Mrs. Consumer to her publisher, J. George's Business Bourse, shortly after she returned from her European tour during the spring and summer of 1929. There had been nervous talk aboard ship of rumblings from Wall Street; stocks fell in early September, rallying shortly thereafter.\textsuperscript{135} Christine seemed oblivious:

If the credit of the United States is the most solid credit in the world today, it must be because consumers make it so. The great bankers and great nations look to the American consumer for their money supply. . . .\textsuperscript{136}

On October 29, the stock market crashed. During the next three years, the prosperity of the twenties would come apart at the seams as the value of the securities of many great corporations plummeted.\textsuperscript{137}

Christine virtually ignored the Crash in her writing, and she paid scant attention to the ensuing Great Depression. The publication of Selling had secured her reputation as Mrs. Consumer's representative, and business groups were now more interested than ever in hearing what she

November 1929, 338.

\textsuperscript{134}Book Review Digest, 1930 ed., 332.

\textsuperscript{135}J. Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994; Leuchtenberg, Perils of Prosperity, 244.

\textsuperscript{136}C. Frederick, Selling Mrs. Consumer, 379.

\textsuperscript{137}Leuchtenberg, Perils of Prosperity, 244-245.
had to say. For the next few years, she spoke on themes she had developed in the book in cities across the country.\textsuperscript{138} A Columbus, Ohio, newspaper hailed her as a "nationally known analyst."\textsuperscript{139} "Whether you think it or not," she would tell her audiences, "I am the most important woman in your lives. I am Mrs. Consumer."\textsuperscript{140} She continued to speak out for increased consumption. In the fall of 1930, she told the National Retail Institute in Columbus, Ohio, that the secret of American well-being was not mass production, but rather "industry's close alliance with the woman


\textsuperscript{140}C. Frederick, "Mrs. Consumer Speaks Her Mind."
buyer," who drove the real engine of prosperity, "mass consumption."\textsuperscript{141} The business failures of the past year, she said, were the fault of "misleading, exaggerated statements, inefficiency of clerks and inattention" to the consumer.\textsuperscript{142} Five months later in Chicago, Christine told the Home Service Conference of the National Electric Light Association, a group of home economists working in industry, that homes of the future would have many more electrical appliances and conveniences. Bankers were wrong, she said, to warn that the standard of living would fall. What electric companies must do was convince Mrs. Consumer to use more power.\textsuperscript{143} The following year, Christine again blamed businesses' poor consumer relations for the Depression in a speech before a fashion group.\textsuperscript{144}

Christine was still using material from \textit{Selling Mrs. Consumer} when she spoke before the New York Rotary Club in 1938. Telling the Rotarians that she was "female, feminist, and Freudian," she entertained them with her list of Mrs. Consumer's foibles and called for more responsible advertising, better labeling, lower distribution costs, and closer contact between manufacturer and consumer. It was in this speech that she

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{141} C. Frederick, "Mrs. Consumer Speaks Her Mind," [2].
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., [8].
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{143} C. Frederick, "What the Customer Needs."
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{144} "Urges Consumer Study," \textit{NYT}, 28 October 1932, p. 37, col. 1.
\end{flushright}
suggested that women should serve on the Boards of corporations.\textsuperscript{145} Christine’s lectures did not endear her to the group of women upon whose province she sometimes encroached. Home economist Anna L. Burdick of the Federal Board for Vocational Education wrote an irate letter to the head of the Bureau of Home Economics upon reading of Christine’s speech to the National Retail Institute. “Is Christine playing to the Gallery?” she asked. “Is she interested in Education or exploitation?”\textsuperscript{146} \textit{Selling Mrs. Consumer} appealed to its target audience, however. The business community accepted Christine’s insights about the woman consumer as wisdom from an expert.

8.4

With the publication of \textit{Selling Mrs. Consumer}, Christine concluded two decades of exploiting the country’s friendly mood toward business. She and J. George reflected the trends of the 1920s in other ways, too. Although some pronounced Progressivism dead after World War I, the passage of the Sheppard-Towner Act and the campaign to adopt protective legislation were signs that it had survived. The Fredericks were among those who still espoused some Progressive views. Christine put Woodrow Wilson at the top of her list of the twelve greatest American men in 1922, and she seemed to sympathize with the protective legislation movement

\textsuperscript{145}C. Frederick, “Mrs. Consumer Speaks Up,” 6, 12.

\textsuperscript{146}A. L. Burdick to L. Stanley.
when she told buyers to remember the “sisters in sweatshops” and pay fair prices to ensure that women workers “fare more humanely. . . .”\(^{147}\) The “national mania” for psychology engaged the attention of both Fredericks, and J. George took great interest in the Humanist movement, writing a book on the subject in 1930.\(^{148}\) The Fredericks participated in the decade’s “rapid accumulation of . . . new knowledge” and in the movement to popularize it.\(^{149}\) And if Christine was not strictly modern in the cultural sense of the word, she was certainly an apostle of modernization, heralding the possibilities of technology and advocating modern design. She wished to bring order to American middle-class life and cast out the trappings of Victorian material values.\(^{150}\) The abandon with which she responded to Greek dance at the Noyes School suggests the influence of Isadora Duncan who revolutionized the art with controversial performances in flowing, gossamer gowns and bare feet.\(^{151}\) Along with her celebration of the new,

\(^{147}\)C. Frederick, “Twelve Supermen”; \textit{Selling Mrs. Consumer}, 266.


\(^{149}\)Susman, \textit{Culture As History}, 106, 118.

\(^{150}\)See Daniel Joseph Singal, “Towards a Definition of American Modernism,” \textit{American Quarterly} 39 (Spring 1987): 7-8, for a discussion of the difference between modernism and modernization.

Christine also reflected a traditional component of 1920s America, particularly in her adherence to the nineteenth-century view of woman’s role as a homemaker. Two of her heroes were Herbert Hoover and Edward Bok, both spokesmen for traditional values. Like Henry Ford, she defended the home, motherhood, hard work, and individualism.\textsuperscript{152}

On the other hand, as the decade drew to a disastrous economic close, J. George recognized that the country must make adjustments in its methods of pursuing prosperity through business. In a curiously ill-timed book written in 1929 and hastily edited to address changed conditions in 1930, he encouraged middle-class investors to buy common stock and condemned the rampant speculation of financiers that he believed had led to the debacle. The Crash, he told his readers, was “purely a state of mind.” Like Christine, he was still convinced that “consumptionism” was the key to America’s regaining its prosperity.\textsuperscript{153}

The 1929 Crash plunged America into a calamitous depression that would take another decade and the economic stimulus of war to surmount, but the prosperity of the twenties had modernized the country irreversibly. Business triumphed, more Americans now lived in towns and cities than on farms, consumerism had become a way of life, and the automobile, the

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{152}For a commentary on traditional values during the 1920s, see Nash, \textit{Nervous Generation}, especially 61-77, 155-156.
\item\textsuperscript{153}J. G. Frederick, \textit{Common Stocks and the Average Man}, 18-23.
\end{itemize}
radio, and the movies all helped to transform Americans' daily existence. Christine Frederick had worked very hard to promote all these changes.\(^{154}\)

In 1927, journalist Walter Lippmann identified several issues in public life that divided Americans: prohibition, fears of immigration and Catholicism, the influence of the Ku Klux Klan, and the reactionary mood bred by religious fundamentalism. These anxieties arose, Lippmann wrote, "out of the great migration of the last fifty years, out of the growth of cities, and out of the spread of that rationalism and the deepening of that breach with tradition which invariably accompany the development of a metropolitan civilization."\(^{155}\) Lippmann saw prohibition, the Klan, fundamentalism, and xenophobia, all movements of considerable strength during the 1920s, as manifestations of the fear of the old "American village civilization making its last stand against" what looked "like an alien invasion."\(^{156}\)

Christine Frederick, on balance, was with the invading forces. Even though she often portrayed herself as a country woman, her perspective


was that of an urban American. In 1922, she wrote an article that
condemned suburban living as "a snare and a delusion from almost any
angle." For sophisticated Americans, she wrote, the suburbs were "the
very apotheosis of standardization at its bitter worst."\(^{157}\) Quick to point out
that her life-long campaign to standardize was meant for the mechanics of
life, she claimed that suburban living standardized things that people did
not want standardized. She sneered with urban, middle-class disdain at the
"neat little toy houses on their neat little patches of lawn and their neat
colonial lives, to say nothing of the neat little housewives and their neat
little children--all set in neat rows for all the world like children's blocks."
This arrangement, she charged, was a "pretense of individualism" and
country living. City apartments offered more privacy, and suburban
planning wasted resources by requiring separate utilities. "Suburbiana"
was bourgeois and appealed to social climbers. It was merely the re-
creation of the small town where people practiced the "gossipy, prying
standard of the village." Christine hoped that Sinclair Lewis, the novelist
who satirized small town America in *Main Street*, would expose the
"naïveté" and "boobery" of the suburbs one day.\(^{158}\) Ignoring nearly all of
rural America, she wrote that in the country--preferable to the suburbs--one
could enjoy simplicity and privacy and still be within driving distance of a

\(^{157}\)Christine Frederick, "Is Suburban Living a Delusion?" 290.

\(^{158}\)Ibid., 290-291.
railway station where one could commute to the city. In one of her most stunning misapprehensions, Christine predicted the demise of "suburbiana."\textsuperscript{159}

Christine and J. George were also aligned with the faction that inspired the fears of the fundamentalists. J. George wrote that the Scopes trial, the 1925 trial of John Scopes for teaching evolution in a Tennessee classroom, dominated one of "the three great misguided periods" in American history, and criticized prosecutor William Jennings Bryan for his defense of fundamentalism. "[T]he fundamentalist agitation," wrote J. George, was "fear of the vastly larger horizon which science gives to human knowledge." Bryan had served as a "mouthpiece for ignorant herd instincts."\textsuperscript{160} The Fredericks' daughter remembers being "trotted to Sunday School a couple of times in Huntington," but her parents were not churchgoers nor did they adhere to any orthodoxy.\textsuperscript{161}

J. George's wide circle of friends, many of them members of the intelligentsia, bore evidence of the Fredericks' acceptance of Americans of different backgrounds and religions. Many of the people who visited from the city were Jewish, and the neighboring farmers from whom Christine

\textsuperscript{159}Ibid., 313.

\textsuperscript{160}J. G. Frederick, \textit{Modern Industrial Consolidation}, 27. For a description of the Scopes trial, see Leuchtenberg, \textit{Perils of Prosperity}, 222-223.

\textsuperscript{161}Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994.
bought produce and with whose children David and Jean romped were immigrants. Still, both Fredericks accepted the stereotypes of the period. Christine wrote that one often encountered "a dirty, illiterate, short-sighted, half-Americanized foreigner" managing a store in 1929. J. George believed that people of American, Scots, English, or Jewish background were more likely to be geniuses than were Italians, Spaniards, or Germans. In an article about Tahiti, he described the native women as fat and silly, beguiled by "blousy" clothes and "glass beads." But the Fredericks were not xenophobic. Christine genuinely wished to help immigrant women learn how to operate their homes with unfamiliar American technology.

The Fredericks were not vocal prohibitionists, but they did not indulge in alcohol themselves. J. George had been deeply influenced by the Women's Christian Temperance Union as a boy, and he showed strong disapproval of one of his daughter's college friends who prescribed gin for menstrual cramps. But as he became interested in cuisine and joined gourmet groups, he relaxed his standards and occasionally took wine with

---

162 Ibid.

163 C. Frederick, *Selling Mrs. Consumer*, 306.


166 C. Frederick, "What the Customer Needs," 3.
Christine had been quite willing to defy prohibition laws in order to find whiskey for her Chautauquan colleague in 1918, but during the twenties she often wrote favorably of prohibition because it had freed billions of dollars for the consumption of manufactured goods.\textsuperscript{168} The last of Lippmann's indicators of 1920s reaction, the Ku Klux Klan, attracted scant attention from either Christine or J. George.

Christine Frederick was in many ways a barometer of the 1920s, but her views were sometimes contradictory. She celebrated the prosperity brought on by increased industrial production and enthusiastically joined in the move to develop the domestic market. She seized upon advertising and broke new ground with the advocacy of “creative waste.” She advocated modernization in technology and design. Yet she also maintained her adherence to the nineteenth-century ideology that kept women at home and appropriated the reaction to pre-war feminism to enforce it. As the twenties drew to a close, Christine had clearly taken an anti-feminist position about how women should conduct their lives while she led an independent and satisfying life of her own.

\textsuperscript{167} J. Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994.

\textsuperscript{168} C. Frederick, “New Wealth, New Standards,” 7; \textit{Selling Mrs. Consumer}, 270.
CHAPTER 9: THE TWILIGHT OF A CAREER: FROM APPLÉCROFT TO LAGUNA

I believe that every writer is his own STAR, and must write or produce the inner urge his personality, character, and above all, his location and his ‘age’ provide him. . . .

[L]ooking over my world as I first did in about 1906, I thought houses were badly designed, the status of women appalling [sic], the distribution of merchandise inadequate and based on a false premise. . . . So I started to write (and talk) to the public.¹

Christine Frederick, 1966

9.1

In the spring of 1935, Christine Frederick was honored at a dinner given by eighty of New York’s business and professional clubs in the grand ballroom of the Hotel Astor. Chosen as one of the “thirty most successful Career Women of Greater New York,” she shared the honor with pilot Amelia Earhart, medical researcher Dr. Florence R. Sabin, and National Labor Relations Board regional director Elinore Herrick, among others. Writer Fannie Hurst and historian Mary Beard were two of the seven speakers at the event.² Christine received this tribute at the very time that her career was beginning its decline. Four years later, she would leave Applecroft.

During the first half of the decade that was marked by the Great Depression, Christine worked on momentum generated by the publication

¹C. Frederick, Laguna Library Book Day Speech.

²Emma Dot Partridge to [Christine] Frederick, 3 March [1935] and 19 March 1935, file folder 3, Frederick Papers.

355
of *Selling Mrs. Consumer* in 1929. In addition to giving lectures and
writing articles that sprang directly from the book, Christine was sometimes
engaged as an advertising consultant. The organizing meeting of the
Advertising Women of New York's speakers bureau took place at J.
George's office on 40th Street in 1935, and Christine drafted the first
speech the bureau would offer.³ The following year, she was invited to
participate as a judge in a promotional contest conceived by the firm that
handled the Colgate company's advertising.⁴ In 1938 she took part in a
study that found that advertising cost the consumer only .036 of a cent for
every can of soup sold and 1.5 cents for every three-dollar ham.⁵ That
same year her speech on the history of women in advertising became an
essay for a book edited by Dorothy Dignam.⁶

³"Speakers' Bureau Carries Consumer Message," typescript, carton
1, file folder 15, Dignam Papers.

⁴Helen Strauss to Christine Frederick, telegram, 4 June 1936, file
folder 3, Frederick Papers.

⁵"Advertising Cost Really a Saving," *New York Journal and
American*, [9 February 1938], clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.

⁶Christine Frederick, "The Rise of Advertising Women," speech
before Advertising Women of Philadelphia, September 1938, carton 2, file
folder 4; "Rosy-Hued Futures," *New York Herald Tribune*, 23 July 1939,
clipping, carton 2, file folder 2, AWNY Papers.
am strongly opposed to all forms of trade deception," she told a reporter just prior to appearing before the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce. "The present-day price cut shambles" caused confusion and "ill-will." In 1935 she joined a member of the Advertising Women of New York to attend subcommittee hearings on bills that would affect advertising. After the Supreme Court had ruled that the National Labor Relations Act, more commonly known as the Wagner Act, was constitutional in 1937, Christine and J. George both took part in a radio discussion of the decision. The National Labor Relations Board's representative, Elinore Herrick, and James Bambrick, president of local 32B of the International Building Service Workers, were among the other panelists who explored the topic: "Are the Interests of Capital and Labor Identical?" All agreed that the Court's decision was good for both. A newspaper report of the program indicated that Christine sounded the only "belligerent" note of the evening. She threatened that Mrs. Consumer would strike if prices kept rising.

---


9"Wagner Ruling Hailed as Aid to Labor, Capital," n.p., [1937], clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.
Notwithstanding her reputation as an expert, Christine did not always stay abreast of the latest consumer information. In 1930 when a member of an audience asked her to name firms engaged in consumer research, a subject she constantly promoted, she could not tell him "offhand" and made vague references to "national organizations" and "public relations departments." In the 1938 speech before the New York Rotary Club, she claimed to have done "recent research," but the statistics she quoted were identical (as was much of the speech) to those that appeared in an address delivered eight years earlier. Her consumer work was growing stale.

Christine continued to dispense household advice, too. Her column for The American Weekly supplement to the Hearst papers had run for nearly two decades. From 1937 to 1941 she also served as household editor for Fawcett Women’s Group magazines. For several years, Christine prepared a household calendar with hints and recipes for a company in Coshocton, Ohio. And in 1932 a third book on housekeeping

\[\text{References}\]

10 C. Frederick, “Mrs. Consumer Speaks Her Mind,” [6].

11 C. Frederick, “Mrs. Consumer Speaks Up,” 3, 7, 8-10; C. Frederick, “Mrs. Consumer Speaks Her Mind,” 2, 3.


13 S. V. Cox, “Noted Household Authority Sees Growth of ‘Civic Housekeeping,’” [Coshocton (OH) Tribune, 11 February 1937], clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.
problems from table settings to buying a home appeared. A condensed and modernized version of her earlier housekeeping manuals, it offered useful housekeeping information based on Christine’s advocacy of labor-saving devices, efficient practices, and modern decorating. In this volume, Christine repeated the view that she had espoused for twenty years: the married woman’s highest duty was running the home. Leisure time gained through efficiency should be spent keeping fit and sharing interests with her husband. Further, Christine again warned that “none of the responsibility for the smooth running of the house should be put on the man’s shoulders, except, of course, in an emergency.” A husband should not even be expected to help with the dinner dishes after his day’s work, she advised.\textsuperscript{14} Although she had spent the previous seventeen years encouraging modernization, Christine still adhered to the nineteenth-century view that women alone were responsible for the home.

In 1932, when her modern Monel metal kitchen was featured in Home and Field, Christine was identified as a specialist in kitchen planning, and that year she organized a home-building session for the Small House Forum sponsored by the American Institute of Steel Construction. Women must play a role in designing homes, she said, and she sent out 1,000 questionnaires asking women what they wanted in a house. As a result of

\textsuperscript{14}Christine Frederick, The Ignoramus Book of Housekeeping (New York: Sears Publishing Company, Inc., 1932), 174-175.
this exercise, Christine predicted that the house of the future would have
no cellar, no attic, no dining room and no porch. Air conditioning would
enable builders to install stationary windows (a prediction which came true
for commercial buildings if not for homes), and heating and cooling systems
would be combined. These prophecies demonstrated Christine’s grasp of
modernization’s continuing impact on the American home. Working for
builders, Christine now exchanged the view that apartments were
preferable to detached houses for the ideal that Hoover had promoted the
year before. “Our problem now is to lure the woman out of the multiple
dwelling with its identical shoebox apartments,” she told a reporter. The
detached home was “where family life really belong[ed],” she said,
completely reversing the position she had taken four years earlier when she
wrote the article on “suburbiana.” Then she had extolled the “frank
standardization” of city apartment buildings and harshly criticized suburban
homes for their “neat rows, for all the world like children’s blocks.”

Christine’s interest in architecture and planning led to a brief return
to school. Her second daughter, Phyllis, was ill during much of her youth.
In order to be near her, Christine took an apartment in Ithaca, New York,
where Phyllis was enrolled at Cornell University, and registered for two

---

15Phyllis Carroll, “Two Kitchens Assume Modern Attire,” Home and
Field, August 1932, 22; “Farewell Cellar, Attic,” New York Evening Post,
23 May 1932, clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers; C. Frederick,
“Is Suburban Living a Delusion?” 290.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
classes herself in the fall of 1935. She completed the fall semester of "Principles of City and Regional Planning" and a design seminar for which she submitted a report entitled, "Kitchen Design in Low Cost Housing," earning a grade of 90 in both courses. Christine may already have begun to consider a change in her professional direction. Her housekeeping and consumer advocacy ideas were no longer fresh, and opportunities for stimulating work came her way less often. Planning and design training would open new doors.

By 1937, although Christine was still asked to address business groups and still wrote regularly for the two syndicates, there were signs that her work was stagnating. An article featuring her career that year focused entirely on past accomplishments with no mention of current work or future plans. She worked less for manufacturers, because trained home economists had taken over the field of product-testing. Christine did not have the scientific background to develop specifications such as those

\[\text{16} \text{Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994; E. D. Partridge to C. Frederick, 27 February, 6 April 1936, file folder 3; Thomas W. Mackesey to Christine Frederick, 29 September 1949, file folder 7, Frederick Papers. Mackesey was responding to Christine's request for proof of enrollment, but he indicated that he could find no record of her registration. He found her name and scores in the roll books of the courses mentioned.}

\[\text{17} \text{“The Latest Jazz Model Kitchen of 10 Years Ago,” n.p., 24 September 1937, clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.}\]
home economist Margaret Mitchell designed for Wear-Ever's pots and pans in the 1930s.19

Yet Christine maintained the faith in progress that had been dashed for many of her contemporaries by the First World War and snuffed out completely during the dark years of the Depression for others. Her speeches optimistically encouraged business to target the housewife and watch sales climb. She predicted that the manufacturers of labor-saving devices and the providers of leisure activities would see a rise in profits during 1933. "If you would sell successfully in 1934," she told a Miami advertising group the next year, "you must understand women. . . ."19 That Christine virtually ignored the Depression was the result of her association with advertising. Advertisements changed very little in the thirties; copy writers chose not to portray the true state of affairs for the average American consumer.20 Christine not only glossed over the Depression, she increasingly enhanced her own accomplishments, too.

She told the interviewer who reported her association with the Fawcett Women's Group that she had "assistants in many parts of the country, who experiment[ed] with local recipes which [were] finally


19"Mrs. Frederick to Speak Here," [Cincinnati Post, 19 February 1931], clipping; "Selling Mrs. Consumer,,'" Spokes, 24 January 1933, 4; "Selling to Women Outlined by Editor," Miami Herald Telephone, 9 February 1934, clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.

20Marchand, Advertising the American Dream, xvi.
forwarded to the Applecroft Station for final testing.” These “assistants” were no doubt readers who shared recipes or food tips as a result of reading her syndicated columns. There is no evidence that Christine hired such people. In the thirties, she began to assert that she had attended the University of Chicago, a fabrication which she later embroidered when she claimed to have done “special work” at Chicago’s Lewis Institute. Christine had always been willing to stretch the truth to make a point, but as she grew older the exaggerations took on a slightly desperate tone as she sought to reaffirm her public stature. Still, accustomed to hard work and assertiveness, she never allowed her drive and determination to falter, and she continued to provide much of the family’s income through the 1930s.

Although J. George was writing prolifically, he was evidently not selling many books. Reviews of his work were mixed. The reviewer for the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science praised

21 “Christine Frederick Joins Fawcett Women’s Group.”

22 “Personalities in the Village,” The Villager, 9 March 1939, clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers; C. Frederick, “Personal Record,” attachment to C. Frederick to New York Times, 6 December 1947, file folder 6, Frederick Papers. Christine’s daughter stated that her mother never attended the University of Chicago, and the University has no record of her. Joyce, interview, 15 September, 1994; Maxine Hunsinger Sullivan to the author, 15 March 1995.

23 Their daughter told the author that Christine was “the large or sole support of” the family, and other informants who knew Christine had the same impression. Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994; Arnold, telephone conversation, 13 May 1994.
his 1932 analysis of seventeen economic systems, *Readings in Economics*, as a “valuable source book” that was “refreshingly undogmatic.” But the *International Journal of Ethics* called *Humanism As a Way of Life* “vague,” “not wholly frank,” and lacking in moral direction.24 Christine’s articles, lectures, and consulting jobs were paying for their daughters’ college tuition. As their collaboration on the Wagner Act radio broadcast and the women advertisers’ speakers bureau demonstrates, the Fredericks sometimes worked together. Christine provided an introduction to J. George’s 1930 edition of a book on cooking, and she used his office as her city address on Applecroft stationary.25 The repetition of the piano story found in Christine’s *Selling Mrs. Consumer* and J. George’s article on progressive obsolescence was not an isolated instance; J. George borrowed language from *Selling* in the book on cooking, for example.26 Still, an unhealthy element of competition was inevitable although Christine made


25Christine Frederick, introduction to *Cooking As Men Like It*, by J. George Frederick, [xv]; Christine Frederick to Bernice Cronkhite, 1 October 1936, Phyllis Frederick student file, (Radcliffe College Archives, Cambridge, MA, photocopy).

26Christine wrote, “Woman has always been judged for what she is or seems, personally; while men are judged by what they do. . . .” *Selling Mrs. Consumer*, 191. J. George wrote, “At the same time, men are judged by what they do, while women are more definitely judged by what they are.” *Cooking As Men Like It*, 9-10.
attempts, at least publicly, to validate her husband’s prominence. She told an Ohio reporter in 1937 that her “internationally famous” husband was an “illustrious author and advertising expert.” Both he and she, Christine was careful to say, were included in *Who’s Who in America.*\(^{27}\) When she spoke before the Rotary Club in 1938, the notice to the Sales Managers’ Club, in a rare instance, identified her as the “wife of J. George Fredericks [sic].”\(^{28}\)

In spite of her advice to other women, however, Christine did not play the secondary role of helpmeet to J. George. For his part, he conducted a virtually separate social life in New York. In the early 1930s, he served on the Board of Governors and as editor of the annual for the Artists and Writers Dinner Club, an illustrious group that included John Dewey, Edna Ferber, Sinclair Lewis, Walter Lippmann, and even feminist Suzanne La Follette.\(^{29}\) As president of the Gourmet Society, a group he had helped found, he dined regularly with a sophisticated, privileged group of New Yorkers, and he continued membership in a number of business and advertising groups.\(^{30}\) The city apartment served another aspect of his social life; it provided a place to conduct love affairs with other women.

\(^{27}\) Cox, “Noted Household Authority Sees Growth.”

\(^{28}\) Elon G. Pratt to Members of the New York Sales Managers’ Club, 2 March 1938, file folder 3, Frederick Papers.

\(^{29}\) J. George Frederick to Evelyn Light, 23 November 1933, file folder 273, Theodore Dreiser Papers, Special Collections (Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, photocopy).

\(^{30}\) *Who Was Who in America*, 125.
In a chapter devoted to sex in his 1930 treatise on humanism, J. George wrote that the humanist philosophy called for “full complete, rhythmic sex expression, as free from self-consciousness and from the sin complex or fear as it was with the Greeks.” Women, however, could not handle “casual” “sex relationships” as easily as men. Their “sensitivity to the character of any emotional relationship to a man,” he wrote, made them prone to hysteria and insanity. Apparently full sexual expression was for men only:

The man who falls out of love, but not out of affection, with his wife, may debate very humanistically whether one hundred percent sincerity is called for. The basis of life cannot be changed with every wind of impulse. It would appear that moderation even in frankness may be a sounder philosophy of life, if the end sought is humanistically good, and if elemental sincerity is served.

This telltale passage might be read as J. George’s defense of his peccadilloes. Whatever Christine’s reaction, she remained in the marriage for another nine years.

Although she claimed to believe that women should subordinate themselves to their husbands, Christine’s self-esteem was based upon her own work. She continued to impress most observers as “very human, gracious and understanding, full of life.” But hers was a commanding

---


32 Ibid., 249-250.

33 Ibid., 252.

34 “Personalities in the Village.”
presence, too. In 1937, an interviewer found that she emanated a "force of personality, intellect and abilities." Sometimes her forcefulness could seem curt and imperious. In response to a question from the floor after a speech she might impatiently snap, "Why of course not!" or "Nothing so silly." A granddaughter found her "strong-minded," "dominant," and even "arrogant." By the end of the thirties, Christine had grown heavy and her hair was graying. She referred to herself in 1938 as a "stout, fat-legged lady."

A year later she admitted to herself that her marriage was no longer the partnership she represented it to be. Christine turned her back on Applecroft at the age of fifty-six to pursue a new career and a new life. By that time, unfortunately, she was earning less money than she had during most of the decade. Hearst paid her "approximately" sixty dollars per week.

---

35 "Mrs. Frederick's Career Started by Edward Bok," [1937?], clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.

36 C. Frederick, "Mrs. Consumer Speaks Her Mind," 7, 8.

37 Deborah Frederick, telephone conversation with author, 20 February 1996.

38 C. Frederick, "Mrs. Consumer Speaks Up," 15.

39 A. Merritt to Whom It May Concern, 25 October 1935, file folder 7, Frederick Papers.
9.2

"Souvenir! One of the happiest days of my life!" Christine scrawled across her copy of the auction notice that advertised the sale of the furnishings at Applecroft in 1943. The dining room, bedroom, and sitting room furniture was all for sale. Among the many items listed, Christine’s desk, her many filing cabinets, and her card files served as poignant reminders of her successful career in household efficiency. But she was selling everything; even the potbellied stove from her office over the garage went on the auction block. The following year Christine sold the 1.6 acres of Applecroft to André and Mildred Fontaine for $10,000, just a year too early to profit from inflated postwar housing prices. There is no evidence that J. George was party to this transaction.

Christine had moved out of Applecroft five years earlier in 1939. Bitter and hurt by J. George’s continued infidelity, she was finally leaving her thirty-two-year marriage, although neither she nor J. George talked of divorce, then or later. It may have suited J. George to remain married in

---

40 At Auction, 1943, notice, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.

41 Deed Liber 2394 at p. 91 (Suffolk County Clerk’s Office, Riverhead, NY, photocopy); Renée Krusa, telephone conversation with author, 15 August 1994; Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.

Although Christine left no evidence that she acknowledged J. George’s infidelity, all informants confirmed it. Their daughter, their granddaughter, Christine’s California friends, friends of a deceased daughter and even the daughter of the couple who bought Applecroft from Christine all reported that J. George had affairs with other women.
order to avoid inconvenient demands from other women. For her part, Christine may have wanted continued association with her husband's New York contacts. In any case, they did not openly speak of their separation and at times pretended that the marriage was still viable. When Christine first moved to New York City, a local newspaper erroneously reported that she and J. George had taken an apartment together, and one of Christine's correspondents asked her to convey "kindest regards to Mr. Frederick" in 1944. A brief biography that accompanied an essay J. George wrote in 1952 noted that "other members of the busy Frederick family include his wife, Christine who is a noted household editor..." Still, rumors about J. George's infidelity circulated. When the Fontaines bought Applecroft from Christine in 1944, they had no contact with her husband, but had heard that "he was a gay blade that kept another woman somewhere."

By 1939 only the youngest daughter, Carol, was still in college and she would graduate the following year. Since Christine's income was no

---

43 Both the Fredericks' daughter and the friend of another, deceased daughter speculated on these reasons for the Fredericks' avoiding divorce. Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994; Wolkin, telephone conversation 22 June 1995.

44 "Personalities in the Village"; Dorothy B. Marsh to Christine Frederick, 7 April 1944, file folder 5, Frederick Papers.


46 Krusa, telephone conversation.
longer what it had been, she asked J. George for support. He gave her only forty dollars per month for a short time after the separation. After she moved to New York and before the auction and sale of Applecroft, she sold some of her most prized personal possessions to make ends meet. Mimie’s jewelry and a samovar they had brought from Russia fetched enough to help her survive.47

Christine took a small apartment at 6 Grove Court in Greenwich Village early in 1939. Three years later, in November of 1942, she moved a few blocks north to a “nice brownstone” at 55 West 11th Street where she would remain for the next eight years.48 She had Applecroft business cards printed with the new address and the words, “Christine Frederick is staying in town! ‘For the duration,’” implying that the move from Applecroft was only a temporary wartime relocation.49 She also continued to use Applecroft letterhead for the correspondence generated by her columns during the early 1940s. The banner still advertised food and

---

47Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994.

48Christine Frederick to Mortimer Berkowitz, 16 January 1942; Ellen Stillman to Christine Frederick, 2 November, 1942; Richard Shapira to Christine Frederick, 9 November, 1942, file folder 4, Frederick Papers; Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994.

49“Christine Frederick Is Staying in Town!” [1942], business card, file folder 15, Frederick Papers.
appliance testing, household photographs, lectures and home planning. But there were few contracts for these services.

For the first five years that Christine lived in New York, her main occupation was writing the columns for Hearst's *American Weekly* and the Fawcett publications. Christine's early *American Weekly* columns had covered a wide variety of subjects: insurance, automobiles, travel, and music in addition to the usual household advice. After 1941, however, the articles dealt almost exclusively with food and homemaking hints. From that point on, Christine's work was clearly used by the magazine to court its advertisers. In June, 1941, the advertising manager of the American Molasses Company wrote Christine to thank her for an article entitled, "Try Molasses in Your Spring Diet." Later that year, a publicity agent sent her thanks for a story on spices and told Christine she had forwarded copies to all the members of the American Spice Trade Association. A December article that promoted cranberries prompted a thank-you letter from the director of advertising for Cranberry Canners, Inc. The following month, Christine was asked by her boss at *The American Weekly* to pass vitamin information along to the folks at Purity Stores because "the Purity Stores

---

50Christine Frederick to Portus Baxter, 12 May 1942, file folder 4, Frederick Papers.

51[Christine Frederick], "American Weekly Household Articles, 1934-1943," lists, file folder 13, Frederick Papers.
people are good friends of ours. . . .”52 To her credit, Christine responded to this request with indignation, not because of its commercial nature, but because she thought retailers were not qualified to dispense nutritional advice. “I turn thumbs down on the retailer himself, or any inexperienced dealers working [vitamin comparisons] out for themselves,” she wrote. “[E]ven a good Home Economist is not able . . . to do this very technical job. I wouldn’t do it myself!”53

In the spring and summer of 1942, Christine participated in a conspiracy to induce Cranberry Canners, Inc. of Hanson, Massachusetts, to place their advertising with The American Weekly. The magazine’s Boston manager wrote to Christine’s boss suggesting that Christine ask the advertising director of Cranberry Canners for help on an upcoming article about cranberries. The letter from Boston referred to the plan as “scheming” and “skullduggery,” but Christine’s boss assured her that it was “according to Hoyle.”54 Christine not only complied with the request,

52 John Godston to Christine Frederick, 13 June 1941; Amy Vanderbilt to Christine Frederick, 6 November 1941; E. Stillman to C. Frederick, 12 December 1941; Mortimer Berkowitz to Christine Frederick, 12 January 1942, file folder 4, Frederick Papers. File folders 4, 5, and 13 in the Frederick Papers contain many more thank-you letters from manufacturers about whose products Christine wrote articles between 1941 and 1943.

53 Christine Frederick to Mortimer Berkowitz, 16 January 1942, file folder 4, Frederick Papers.

54 Leon W. Stetson to Mortimer Berkowitz, 27 May 1942; Mortimer Berkowitz to Christine Frederick, 28 May 1942, file folder 4, Frederick Papers.
she took the advertiser to lunch and presented her with a gift. She shared the resulting thank-you note with her boss who wrote on it, "Many thanks. Your luncheon should be very helpful." The article appeared three months later and prompted another thank-you letter from the cranberry advertiser who was grateful for the "nice things" Christine had written about "the all-important cranberry sauce and cranberry juice cocktail." Her gratitude was further demonstrated by the case of juice she sent to Christine. As soon as her holiday cranberry article was out, Christine was prevailed upon to mention the recipes from a rival cranberry company as a hedge against losing its advertising.55

Christine tried to generate product-testing work through her correspondence with manufacturers about whose products she wrote. The Will and Baumer Candle Company responded to such a solicitation with a free carton of candles and an instrument company sent her two thermometers. But these were merely gifts in appreciation for articles that she had already written.56 The American Weekly work generated only a few speaking engagements. In 1941 she spoke to a group connected with

55Ellen Stillman to Christine Frederick, 2 July 1942, 20 July 1942; Whitney Payne to Christine Frederick, 20 October 1942, 2 November 1942, file folder 4, Frederick Papers. The correspondence about this particular campaign ends here; there is no mention of resulting advertising, but Christine's superiors were pleased with her efforts.

56Leo Nerenberg to Christine Frederick 16 December 1941; W. W. Lockwood to Christine Frederick, 28 November 1941, file folder 4, Frederick Papers.
the California Dried Fruit Research Institute and the next year, she attended a meeting on nutrition sponsored by several big grocery chains.\(^5\)\(^7\) She worked hard to please her employers, often suggesting products she might feature, timely topics for homemaking articles, and even booklets she hoped *The American Weekly* would publish. On one occasion, she proposed that the magazine underwrite her visits to manufacturers' laboratories.\(^5\)\(^8\) Admiring letters from readers suggest that her articles pleased the consumers.\(^5\)\(^9\) But her hard work and long association with the Hearst chain could not stem the tide of change. In 1944, Christine lost this primary means of support.

Only two months before Christine was relieved of her household column for *The American Weekly*, a pleased advertiser had endorsed her good work to the editors.\(^6\)\(^0\) The following month, however, the magazine launched a change in format which eliminated the food section. Alarmed, Christine arranged a meeting with one of the editors and a canned food

\(^{57}\) L. B. Williams to Coulter McKeever, 27 November 1941; [Christine Frederick] to A. Merritt, 23 April 1942, file folder 4, Frederick Papers.

\(^{58}\) Richard S. Shapira to Christine Frederick, 9 July 1942, file folder 5; Christine Frederick to [Mortimer] Berkowitz, January 1943, file folder 13, Frederick Papers.

\(^{59}\) J. A. Beauparlant to Christine Frederick, 17 November 1941; Mrs. C. Van deVelde to Christine Frederick, 21 July 1942; Portus Baxter to Christine Frederick, 19 December 1942, file folder 4, Frederick Papers.

\(^{60}\) Happer Payne to Whitney Payne, 17 December 1943; Whitney Payne to Kennedy and [Mortimer] Berkowitz, 20 December 1943, file folder 5, Frederick Papers.
advertiser, hoping perhaps that the advertiser would plead her case. Not two weeks later, she received notice that her services were no longer needed. The magazine explained that it was reducing its size, modernizing, and hiring a new staff member to handle women’s issues. There would be no more “regular outside contributors.” Christine was devastated. She scribbled across the notice that it severed a 27-year-long relationship and noted the exact time that she read it: “Recd Feb 16th/1944 Read at 8:45AM.”

Christine notified her children immediately, asking their advice. Her son David wrote her the next day suggesting that she go see Mortimer Berkowitz, the Hearst editor for whom she had worked, but rejected her proposal that she write to Hearst himself. David assured his mother that there were many things to which she might turn her hand. A letter from his wife echoed that assessment. “We know that you will land on your feet with the dust of Mr. Hearst off them,” she wrote. “You’re a grand gal for sure, Muzzle, and not to be beat!”

61[Christine Frederick] to E[mile] C. Shermacher [sic], 15 January 1944; Emile C. Shnurmacher to Christine Frederick 17 January 1944; Whitney Payne to Christine Frederick, 29 January 1944, file folder 5; Harry J. Carl to Christine Frederick, 14 February 1944, file folder 7, Frederick Papers.

62David [Frederick] to [Christine Frederick], [17 February 1944]; [Barbara Bement Frederick] to [Christine Frederick], n.d., file folder 5, Frederick Papers.
David’s wife knew her mother-in-law well. Christine set about stemming the damage immediately. First, she wrote several letters of resignation to *American Weekly* executives. Then she launched a flurry of notes to companies with which she had worked over the years. She notified them that she had left the Hearst papers and requested that they send all promotional literature to her address on West 11th Street. But these contacts represented a phase of her life that was already over. Christine found new challenges in the pursuit of an entirely different career.

The courses at Cornell eight years earlier had whetted her interest in home interiors; Christine had always loved beautiful materials, color, and design. She found work as a teacher of advanced interior decoration at the Ballard School of the Young Women’s Christian Association, an institution that offered day and evening courses in tea room management, household arts, practical nursing, and dressmaking. One of thirty-nine teachers, Christine taught classes at Ballard for the next five years. This

---

63 James B. Meigs to Christine Frederick, 9 March 1944; Franklin S. Allen to Christine Frederick 28 March 1944; Coulter McKeever to Christine Frederick 7 April 1944; Arthur H. Anson to Christine Frederick 16 March 1944, file folder 5, Frederick Papers.

This file contains 25 responses to Christine’s solicitation letters of 1944. They include letters from many food and household products manufacturers and at least two advertising agencies including Bruce Barton’s Batten, Barton, Durstine and Osborn.

64 Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994.

65 *Handbook of Private Schools for American Boys and Girls*, 1944, 383; “Christine Frederick, Here for Visit, Won National Attention with Work to Improve Efficiency of Kitchens,” *South Coast News*, 22 September

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
work opened other doors; invitations to speak to the manufacturers of home decorating products led to decorating commissions. In 1949, for example, she redecorated a private vacation lodge in Shelter Island Heights, Long Island. She also claimed to have decorated “swank Park Avenue apartments” during this period.66 And in addition to the courses she taught at Ballard, she offered private instruction. In 1949, she advertised an eight-session decorating course for a fee of fifteen dollars.67

Hoping for steady, full-time work, Christine applied for a job as interior decorator in 1947. Her four-page cover letter informed the prospective employer that she had had “exceptional experience” as an interior decoration teacher and that her name appeared on the “accredited lists” of several wallpaper and fabric dealers. She wrote that, “as a speaker,” she had “platform presence, wit, humor, and a flair” for helping her audience understand facts. The attached “personal record” highlighted her many achievements in advertising and speaking, but it revealed all too


67“Are You Happy With . . . ,” [Villager, 10 February 1949], advertisement, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.
clearly that she had scant interior decorating experience. She claimed to be “in the mid-fifties.” She was, in fact, just two months shy of sixty-five.68

Shortly after her birthday, Christine applied for Social Security, a frustrating and humiliating experience. She wrote letters to many of the editors for whom she had worked over the years at The American Weekly and Fawcett Publications asking for proof of employment only to be told that she had not been a permanent employee in either organization. The American Weekly confirmed the fact that she had contributed articles for twenty-seven years, but, they wrote, “we never considered you as an employee of American Weekly, Inc. Because your work was not performed on the premises of American Weekly, Inc.” Therefore, they had not withheld social security payments.69 Fawcett responded, “[W]e fail to find that you were ever an employee of Fawcett Publications, Inc.--your association with this organization being in the form of an editorial contributor.”70 Christine persisted, however. She sent the Social Security Administration copies of Fawcett letterhead that were printed with her name, an early letter from The American Weekly reflecting her fees in 1935, several letters from officials at The American Weekly who mentioned

68Christine Frederick to New York Times; “Personal Record.”

69J. E. Fontana to Christine Frederick, 26 February 1948, file folder 7, Frederick Papers.

70Donald M. Vanderbilt to Christine Frederick, 2 March 1948, file folder 7, Frederick Papers.
payments, assignments, or compliments, several from advertisers who expressed pleasure with her work, and even news clippings that identified her as *American Weekly*’s household editor. In 1949, she attempted to collect Social Security based on her employment at the Ballard School, sending as proof of employment a letter thanking her for her services.\(^7\) Christine’s busy and fulfilling career had never included full-time employment working for someone else; thus, she did not qualify.

Christine took advantage of New York’s cultural offerings during the decade she spent in Greenwich Village. She developed a “coterie” of “distinguished” friends among the artists, actors, and writers who lived in the Village.\(^7\) And she patronized concerts, galleries, and museums when she could.\(^7\) Although she may have had financial difficulties of her own,

\(^7\)“Fawcett Women’s Group,” letterhead; A. Merritt to Whom It May Concern; Mortimer Berkowitz to Christine Frederick, 18 July 1941; A. Merritt to Christine Frederick, 27 April 1942; H. J. Carl to Christine Frederick, 7 May 1942; Arthur H. Anson to Christine Frederick, 3 December 1942; “Leading Food Editors Attend AIB’s Wartime Cake Luncheon, *Bakers’ Weekly*, 19 October 1942, clipping, file folder 7; Julia Elsen to Christine Frederick, 13 June 1947, file folder 6, Frederick Papers.

Christine labeled this group of documents, “Prepared for Social Security Administration, 42 Bdw’y NYC,” and affixed a note to each explaining how it proved that she was considered a regular employee by her editors. The last letter was stamped “Received Sept. 27, 1949, Accounting Office” by the Social Security Administration. There is no evidence of the Administration’s response.

\(^7\)Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994; D. Frederick, telephone conversation.

\(^7\)Olga Samaroff Stokowski to Christine Frederick, 3 March 1945, file folder 6, Frederick Papers; D. Frederick telephone conversation.
she remembered her European friends during and after World War II. Emilie Van Waveren, whom the Fredericks had visited while in Holland in 1929, was profuse in her thanks for the sugar, bacon, rice, and roast beef Christine sent her in 1946. Christine had sent Mrs. Van Waveren her entire ration of sugar for the month.74 She stayed in touch with her old friend Paulette Bernêge, too.75

The stress of life in the city began to take its toll by the end of the decade when she slipped and fell one icy winter and tore the cartilage in her knee, an injury that bothered her for the rest of her life. The constant financial worries, the weather, the proximity of J. George, and the personal tragedy of seeing her youngest daughter succumb to incurable mental illness combined to induce Christine to make a change. In 1949, one of her Greenwich Village friends, Betty MacMonnies, daughter of sculptor Frederick MacMonnies, invited her along on a visit to California.76

Ironically, on the eve of her journey, Christine told an interviewer, “[T]he sense of permanence . . . is the essence of home.”77

74Emilie Van Waveren to Christine Frederick, 17 September 1946, file folder 6, Frederick Papers.

75Paulette [Bernêge] to Dorothy [Dignam], 9 December 1946, file folder 8, Frederick Papers.

76Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994.

Christine’s home had not been permanent after all. Her marriage had become untenable, she had left the house in which she had reared her children, and in 1942, her youngest daughter Carol had been diagnosed with juvenile schizophrenia and committed to King’s Park Psychiatric Center, three miles east of Greenlawn. Later, she was transferred to Pilgrim State Hospital at Brentwood, a short distance to the south. Carol had graduated from Drexel University in Philadelphia with a home economics degree in 1940. Within a year of her subsequent marriage to a young engineer whom she had met while in school, she fell violently ill. Although the young husband was a kind and patient man who did all he could to support his afflicted wife, the apparent hopelessness of Carol’s condition led him to get a divorce. Thereafter her sister Jean and J. George visited Carol regularly, but Christine could not endure the violent outbreaks. Nor was she willing to share the details of Carol’s trouble with friends. Four years after her daughter was committed to King’s Park, 

78 Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994.


80 Joyce, Interview, 15 September 1994; Joyce to author, 15 January 1995; Wolkin, telephone conversation. The institutions in which Carol Frederick Herman was treated declined to respond to requests for confirmation of her residence with them, but all informants agreed that she had been committed to two hospitals on Long Island between 1942 and 1955.
Christine wrote to Emilie van Waveren that Carol’s marriage had failed, but apparently she did not mention the reason.81 Years later, she barely spoke of Carol, and in 1962 described her to an interviewer simply as “a nice homemaker who married young.”82 Even when a drug that controlled Carol’s schizophrenic behavior was discovered in the mid-1950s and she was transferred from the psychiatric center to a supervised home facility, Christine found visits too painful. On the rare occasions when she did see her, her discomfort was acute and eventually she ceased to visit at all. It fell to Jean to manage Carol’s affairs for the rest of her long life. Carol died on October 19, 1993, at the age of seventy-six.83

Christine’s second daughter Phyllis, an unusually gifted young woman, was not in good health either. After graduating from Abbott Academy in 1932, she embarked upon a sporadic and troubled college career, attending Cornell University, Traphagen School of Design, and Radcliffe College. She studied landscape design, fine arts, and costuming, but never earned a degree. Phyllis was so ill during her third year at Cornell in 1935, that Christine had taken the Ithaca apartment to be near her. And during a protracted correspondence with Radcliffe about Phyllis’s admission

81Emilie van Waveren to Christine Frederick, 17 September 1946, file folder 6, Frederick Papers.

82Arnold, telephone conversation, interview; “Career Chronology of Mrs. Christine Frederick.”

83Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994; D. Frederick, telephone conversation.
there, Christine had found it necessary to meet with college officials on her
daughter’s behalf. But Phyllis did well in Cambridge, where she founded
the magazine, *Etc.*, and published several articles and poems.84

Phyllis’s health problems were emotional as well as physical. Both
she and Christine had consulted an astrologer who professed to have
healing powers. Phyllis had fallen in love with him and briefly contemplated
suicide when he left the country suddenly. She had suffered an emotional
collapse which required an extended period of bed rest. J. George had
nursed his daughter through much of this ordeal, since Christine was often
on the road.85

After leaving college in 1938, Phyllis found jobs writing and editing
for a variety of publications and eventually became a toy designer. She
moved to southern California with Mattel Toys in 1960, and seventeen

84Joyce, interview, 15 September 1994; Jane Knowles to author, 15
December 1994; David Yeh to author, 11 January 1995; Phyllis Frederick
to Radcliffe College, 1 July 1936; “Application for Admissions to Advanced
Standing,” 14 July 1936; Phyllis Frederick to [Bernice] Cronkhite, 14 July;
16 August; 27 August; 1 October 1936; Phyllis Frederick to [Mildred P.]
Sherman, 8 November 1936; Christine Frederick to Mildred P. Sherman, 2
August 1937; Phyllis Frederick to Radcliffe Appointment Bureau, 24 August
1938, Phyllis Frederick student file; Untitled transcript for [Phyllis
Frederick], 1936-1937, 1937-1938; Phyllis Frederick, “Our Time-
Displacement Curve,” April 1938, 19; “Next Slide on the Right,” June
1938, 19; “The Wolves at Our Door,” March 1940, 12, *Etc.* (Radcliffe
College Archives, photocopies).

85Wolkin, telephone conversation, 22 June 1995; Peter Justin,
interview by author, tape recording, Ojai, CA, 10 September 1995; F.
Frederick, “The Older Woman.”
years later, as a free lance designer, wrote a book on creating and selling toys and games.86

In the early 1940s, Phyllis Frederick became acquainted with disciples of Meher Baba, an Indian mystic and spiritual leader whose followers believed him to be the “manifestation of God in human form.”87 She became a convert immediately and helped establish a center in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, where she first met Meher Baba in 1952. Baba had ceased speaking in 1925 and communicated by pointing to letters on an alphabet board. When he was introduced to Phyllis, he quickly repeated her name on his board as “F-l-L-l-S,” a spelling that she adopted.88 As Baba’s disciple Filis vowed to remain celibate and devote her life to his ministry.89 From 1953 until her death, she edited The Awakener, a journal she conceived and dedicated to the mission of carrying Baba’s “message of

---


88Wolkin, telephone conversation; Filis Frederick, “Memories of ’52,” Awakener, 14, Number 2, 4-5; Stevens, introduction to Discourses, xiv.

89Wolkin, telephone conversation, interview; F. Frederick, “The Older Woman.”
love and truth to the West."90 She continued teaching, writing, and speaking on Baba’s behalf until, greatly esteemed by his followers, she was nursed through her last illness by the Los Angeles faithful. Filis died of breast cancer on March 19, 1987, at the age of seventy-two.91

Perhaps because of the difficulties Filis had had as a young adult, Christine was more protective of her than of her other children. And Filis was very fond of Christine; she had been happy to move to California in 1960, largely because she would be near her mother.92 But she was not so fond of her father. Not only did J. George’s infidelity disturb Filis, but so did his lack of spiritual conviction. Believing that Baba was her real father, she once told him that she wanted no more “karma” with J. George. She spoke disdainfully of a time when the two had met and J. George had “babbled” to the spiritual leader, “playing” a “Grover Whalen role.”93 Filis’s bond with her mother, on the other hand, was strong. Although Christine

90F. Frederick, foreword to Path of Love, iii; Wolkin, interview. The author saw the complete run of The Awakener in Ojai, CA, at the home of Peter Justin.


92Wolkin telephone conversation; Arnold telephone conversation.

was unable to accept Meher Baba as God in human form, she shared Filis’s sensitivity to a world beyond the rational.

Despite a difficult youth, Filis was successful on two very different fronts. Christine’s eldest daughter, Jean, had an even more outstanding, if more orthodox, career. Upon graduating from Cornell in 1932, Jean demonstrated food products for a year and then landed a job with the Rochester, New York, *Times Union* as a food writer. Since Christine’s Hearst column ran in Rochester’s competing newspaper, it was decided that Jean should not use her own name. With her mother’s help, she decided on Jean Joyce as her *nom de plume*. She left Rochester in 1938 and edited the *New York Herald Tribune*’s Sunday magazine for the next six years.\(^9^4\) While there, she collaborated with J. George on *The Long Island Seafood Cookbook*, a volume still in publication.\(^9^5\)

Jean entered into a brief and unhappy marriage in the early 1940s, but she had divorced her husband by the time she was offered a position as speech writer for Chester Bowles, then head of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Office of Price and Rent Control. Jean stayed with Bowles in Washington, D. C., until 1948 when he moved to Connecticut to run for governor. She followed to work on Bowles’s successful campaign and

\(^{9^4}\)Yeh to author; Joyce, interview, 14 September 1994; “Personalities in the Village.”

remained on his staff in Hartford until 1950 when he lost his bid for re-election. In 1951, Bowles was appointed ambassador to India by President Truman and once again invited Jean to join his staff. She worked as an attaché writing speeches and editing the bi-weekly tabloid *The American Reporter* in the New Delhi embassy for the next two years. When Bowles lost his appointment in 1953, Jean stayed in India as a writer for the Ford Foundation until 1961.96 After a decade abroad, she returned to the United States to take a job with the State Department as a script and radio writer in the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs where she remained until her retirement in 1972.97

Like Filis, Jean had learned from her mother to be an independent career woman. Bright and witty, she was also ambitious and a bit impatient with what she considered foolishness. Jean appreciated neither her mother's nor her sister's interest in the supernatural. Filis was distressed that her sister would not contact Meher Baba while in India. "I

---


have no patience," Jean said, "with this kind of stuff." But she was fond of her family. In Christine's later years, Jean provided some of her support with the monthly check. And it was she who took the responsibility for Carol's well-being after she had fallen victim to schizophrenia.

Jean and Filis had been reared and educated to be successful career women despite Christine's public and professional adherence to nineteenth-century ideology. Her son David, on the other hand, succeeded in spite of the fact that his parents had not helped him attend college. After several years of writing for the *Boston Herald* and the *Boston Traveler*, David moved back to New York to edit and then publish the advertising trade journal, *Tide*. In 1934, he married Beatrice Jennings and fathered Christine's first two grandchildren, Deborah and Peter. The marriage lasted only five years, and David moved with the children out to Applecroft in 1939 where he traveled to work in the city on the Long Island Railroad as his father had done. Christine's grandchildren enjoyed playing in the Long Island countryside and dressing up in costumes their grandmother provided. But this interlude occurred only months before Christine left Applecroft, and after David's divorce, Beatrice attempted to make a home for the children in Newbury, Massachusetts. She was not successful, and they were soon

---

98The account of Jean's career is based almost entirely on the author's interviews with her during September 1994. Other family members and acquaintances--Deborah Frederick, Adele Wolkin, and Louise Arnold, for example--have contributed information through interviews too.
returned to their father who married again in 1941 and sent little Deborah and Peter to a boarding school for small children operated in Deerfield, Massachusetts by his new mother-in-law.  

War provided a new opportunity and in 1943, at age thirty-five, David applied for a position with the Treasury Department. He became the coordinator of domestic programs for the Office of War Information and moved his family to Washington, D.C., for the duration of World War II. It was from Washington that he wrote Christine upon her dismissal from *The American Weekly*.  

After the war, David Frederick had trouble finding the right job. He moved to suburban Connecticut and bounced from assistant to the president of *Parents' Magazine* to director of sales and advertising for the Columbia Broadcasting System and finally to a job in market research. This was a difficult period for him financially, and he was forced to move his family, which had increased by another child born to his second wife, into a smaller house. But in 1949, he landed a job with *Harper's Magazine* as business manager, and here he prospered. Editor Frederick Lewis Allen

---


101 “David Frederick of Harper’s Dead”; D. Frederick, telephone conversation.
credited him with "striking gain in the business showing of the magazine" and the foresight that made Harper's 1950 centennial number such a success. He was, wrote Allen, "a wellspring of inventive ideas" and possessed of "energy, good sense, humor, friendly understanding, and vision." \(^{102}\)

Christine was extremely proud of David's success at Harper's, although she characteristically stretched the truth when she told an interviewer in 1951 that her son was "publisher and general manager" of the magazine. \(^{103}\) But David was not to fulfill the promise of his early achievements at Harper's. On January 2, 1952, he collapsed and died of a heart attack. He was forty-two years old. \(^{104}\) Thus within twelve years after leaving Applecroft, Christine had lost two of her children, one to mental illness, the other to death.

Christine knew her grandchildren only slightly. She had not had much contact with them until the summer of David's divorce. Occasionally she would visit them in Connecticut after she moved to New York. Although she annoyed David's wife by interfering in the management of the

\(^{102}\) Harper's Magazine, February 1952, 104; "David Frederick of Harper's Dead."

\(^{103}\) Arnold, interview, 6 September 1995; "Publisher of Harper's Is Laguna Visitor," South Coast News, 10 May 1951, clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.

\(^{104}\) "David Frederick of Harper's Dead"; Joyce, interview, 14 September 1994.
household, she fascinated the children by telling them Sherlock Holmes stories. When Deborah, the older granddaughter, was an adolescent, her grandmother would invite her to visit at the Greenwich Village apartment from time to time. They went to museums and art exhibits, and Christine encouraged the girl's artistic bent by giving her a pair of artist's models to drape with fabric. When Christine moved to California in 1950, however, the bond weakened, and after their father's death, Christine's grandchildren did not see their grandmother.  

9.4

In the fall of 1949 it was clear that Christine's visit to California was permanent. She took an apartment at 424 Glenneyre Street in Laguna Beach and began writing a regular decorating column for the local newspaper. She introduced herself to her new community as a well-known speaker and household expert and soon began lecturing to such groups as the Altrusa and Soroptomist Clubs. But a weekly column in a

\[^{105}\] D. Frederick, telephone conversation.


small community newspaper and a few lectures would not support her, so Christine set about finding a teaching post.

California's credential requirements were far more stringent than New York's, and Christine had not had any formal design training beyond the courses she had taken at Cornell fifteen years earlier. State officials would recognize neither Christine's past work in homemaking and consumerism nor her years at Ballard School as adequate qualifications for a California adult teaching certificate, a fact that was "hard for her to swallow." Nevertheless, Orange Coast Community College, located just eight miles up the coast from Laguna Beach, hired Christine to teach a class in 1949 on the understanding that her credentials would be forthcoming. The college announcement introduced her as a "nationally known interior decorator" and "authority on home management." She continued to teach for Orange Coast College, but by 1951 she had still not convinced California education officials to certify her on the basis of her past experience. Christine then took a course entitled "Procedures and Methods in Teaching Adults" at a University of California extension campus and finally received her teaching credentials for interior decoration and

---

108 Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994.

109 Bill J. Priest to Commission on Credentials, 11 July 1951, file folder 8; Orange Coast Evening College News, January 1950, clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.
home beautification in 1953.\textsuperscript{110} She taught at Orange Coast Adult School from the fall of 1949 until the spring of 1957.\textsuperscript{111} Her employers were very pleased with her work; the Dean of the Evening College commended her after visiting one of her classes in 1950.\textsuperscript{112} But she was an hourly adjunct instructor and the job provided only part of her income. Her September paycheck in 1952, for example, was $67.50.\textsuperscript{113}

She supplemented these meager earnings with extra teaching outside the college and by starting her own decorating business in Laguna Beach. She offered interior decorating courses at the Laguna Beach Woman’s Clubhouse and through the City of Laguna Beach’s summer recreation program.\textsuperscript{114} After becoming certified as a member of the American Institute of Decorators, Christine opened a business from her apartment--or “studio” as she called it--on Glenneyre. Eventually, she was able to rent space in the Professional Building in downtown Laguna Beach, but she did not

\textsuperscript{110}“Credit Certificate” for Christine Frederick, 1951, University Extension, University of California; California State Board of Education Adult Education Credential, 26 May 1953; file folder 14, Frederick Papers.

\textsuperscript{111}Kathleen A. Woodward to the author, 27 April 1994.

\textsuperscript{112}B. J. Priest to Christine Frederick, [summer, 1950], file folder 8, Frederick Papers.

\textsuperscript{113}John Renley, telephone conversation with author, 13 March 1994.

remain there for long. Since she did not drive after she moved to California, she had to rely on friends to take her into Los Angeles, two hours away, for fabric and wallpaper samples. Christine's commissions included a few that earned substantial fees. In 1951, she decorated a living room for $2,131.45. During the last years that Christine operated her decorating business, she was affiliated with a shopping mall in the Pepper Tree Paseo in Laguna Beach.

Christine's various enterprises never completely supported even her simple life in California. And, too, her love of beautiful things induced her to spend extravagantly at times. Jean, sending monthly checks, chafed when her mother spent more than she could afford on luxuries. But Christine did not spend only for herself. She occasionally bought expensive books to give away as gifts. Sometimes she was forced to sell them instead; a cherished, beautifully illustrated book about the famous designer for the Ballets Russe, Leon Bakst, was offered to a friend for $100.00.

---

115 George St. Aubin to Christine Frederick, 8 November 1951, file folder 8, Frederick Papers; Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994; "Christine Frederick, Professional Building, Laguna Beach, 4-1937," letterhead, Alum files, (Northwestern, photocopy); Arnold, interview.

116 Helen Smith to Christine Frederick, 11 April 1951, file folder 18, Frederick Papers.

Eventually, her daughters and California friends hired an accountant to handle Christine's affairs.\textsuperscript{118}

Christine re-created herself in Laguna Beach. As the resident older woman with experience, she attracted a "devoted following" of younger women who took her decorating classes, attended her lectures, and sought her advice on beautifying the new postwar homes that were mushrooming in the southern California coastal towns of the 1950s. Several served as her chauffeurs, driving her to classes, to wholesale shops, and to meetings and social events. In return, Christine acted as surrogate mother and confidante to many of them. Like her children, they all called her "Muzz."\textsuperscript{119} These young women were struck by the multitude of her talents. "There was nothing that Christine did not know how to do," recalled one.\textsuperscript{120} She once entertained wounded Korean War servicemen from nearby Camp Pendleton by telling their fortunes and reading their

\textsuperscript{118}Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994; Arnold, interview; Fred Lang, telephone conversation with the author, 3 June 1994.

\textsuperscript{119}Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994; Arnold, telephone conversation, interview; Barbara Baer, telephone conversation with author, 9 April 1994.

\textsuperscript{120}Lang telephone conversation; Arnold interview.
horoscopes.121 Friends remember her as amusing, full of stories and anecdotes, yet always ready to listen to others.122

Although she had created a new life for herself, Christine often spoke of her accomplishments during the busy and exciting years in New York.123 She remembered Russia, too. At Easter she would bake the traditional egg-shaped cake she had first eaten as a little girl in St. Petersburg.124 On at least one occasion, her past association with Russia led to trouble in conservative Orange County during the “Second Red Scare” precipitated by Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy.125 She was fond of dressing in an elaborate Russian wedding costume her mother had brought to the United States so many years before and performing at fairs and festivals as a fortune-teller. An onlooker at one of these events accused her of Communist sympathies. Others she knew had been forced

---

121 "T. F. Baers Entertain Five Patients from Margie Hospital," South Coast News, [1950], clipping, microfilm M-107, Frederick Papers.

122 Arnold, telephone conversation, interview; Lang, telephone conversation.

123 In the speech she gave for the Laguna Library Book Day in 1966, for example, she talked of her work in publishing, radio, and Chautauqua. She also had copies of her books available for the audience to inspect.

124 Arnold, telephone conversation.

to leave Orange County because of rumors of their associations with Communist organizations.\textsuperscript{126}

After she moved to California, Christine took a serious interest in the occult, a pastime she had indulged only occasionally in busier days. The fortune-telling, which included tarot cards, palmistry, numerology, and astrology, was but a part of a larger quest for spiritual understanding.\textsuperscript{127} She sought out people who explored the supernatural and soon after moving to California sent the women in her family drawings that she believed had been channeled through a living human from "Ferdinand, Spirit Artist."	extsuperscript{128} In the autobiographical notes she compiled in 1969, she wrote that "astrological experts" had proven that her birth occurred at exactly "4:13-32 A. M."\textsuperscript{129} The rector of a small chapel just down the street from her second Laguna Beach home soon attracted her attention. Lowell Paul Wadle was a bishop in the American Catholic Church, an offshoot of the Roman Catholic Church founded in Chicago in 1915. He located his headquarters in Laguna Beach and in 1933 oversaw the construction of a

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[126]{Baer telephone conversation; Lang telephone conversation; Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994.}
\footnotetext[127]{Wolkin telephone conversation; Arnold telephone conversation; Lang telephone conversation; Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994.}
\footnotetext[128]{D. Frederick, telephone conversation.}
\footnotetext[129]{[C. Frederick], "Only a Girl," 1.}
\end{footnotes}
tiny chapel on Park Avenue. A Theosophist, Wadle looked to many different traditions and cultures for spiritual truth. Christine was fascinated by his Wednesday night lectures during which he spoke of the secrets of the pyramids, mysticism, and reincarnation. She was drawn to the seances he occasionally held in the homes of parishioners and believed that Bishop Wadle enabled her to receive messages from beyond the grave. In 1954 Christine was baptized in the Chapel of St. Francis-by-the-Sea at the age of seventy-one.

Christine had left New York because she could no longer enjoy the fulfilling work and recognition she had once known there. But she was not forgotten. In 1951, she received a note from a New York architect who

---


132 Arnold, telephone conversation, interview; Bishop Simon Tsalarczyk, interview by author, Laguna Beach, CA, 6 September 1995. Christine's granddaughter reports seeing a letter to Christine from her son David dated after his death in papers now in the possession of a family member. The collection also contains other letters from the dead, one warning Christine to stay away from Carol. The author has not been able to see these papers. D. Frederick, telephone conversation.

told her that he had used her theories for years “in the development of modern housing.” The next year, the Advertising Women of New York, AWNY, voted to name an annual award given to a student of advertising in the interior design field after her. In 1952, she was featured in a newsletter profile as AWNY’s cofounder, and the club’s historian continued to keep track of her whereabouts for its historical records. If Christine visited New York, as she did during the summer of 1957, AWNY would host a luncheon in her honor. In 1962, she was feted in grand fashion at AWNY’s golden anniversary. The group’s anniversary volume included a full-page tribute entitled, “Christine Frederick: Accolade to a First Lady.” She was flown to New York to be honored at an anniversary dinner held at the St. Regis on May 23, 1962. Her dinner companion at the head table was journalist Mike Wallace.

There were times, however, when she felt it necessary to remind people of her past achievements. When Northwestern University

134 Ferdinand Kramer to Christine Frederick, 10 December 1951, file folder 8, Frederick Papers.

135 Nadine Miller to Christine Frederick, 9 June 1952, file folder 8, Frederick Papers.

mistakenly sent a letter intended for her to J. George’s New York apartment, she fired back a response that clearly demonstrated her chagrin. She was “astonished and surprised” to learn that Northwestern had not taken notice of her career since 1915. She wrote:

> It is difficult to see how with all the unusual and worldwide development of certain ideas of which I was the originator and exponent, known in Europe and with books translated into seven languages—that my Alma Mater did not know this—nor had an address which was so widely known, to reach me correctly.137

Northwestern’s alumni association rectified their error that very year by awarding Christine the Golden Reunion Certificate for sustaining “high standards of culture and service.”138

Two years after the Advertising Women of New York had invited Christine to be a guest of honor at their golden anniversary celebration, J. George, her co-honoree, died of a heart attack in the apartment of one of the two women with whom he was then conducting affairs.139 Since Christine’s departure from Applecroft, J. George had continued to live in his Beaux Arts studio apartment in New York. Although he published over a dozen books between 1939 and 1957, fewer and fewer of his articles


139“‘Founding Father’ Passes,” n.d., typescript, carton 2, file folder 4, AWNY Papers; Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994. According to the report in the AWNY Papers, he had also attended the dinner but was dangerously ill at the time.
appeared in periodicals after 1940.\textsuperscript{140} In 1952, however, Edward R. Murrow asked him to contribute a piece for a collection entitled, \textit{This I Believe}, and in that endeavor, J. George joined such luminaries as Pearl Buck, Norman Cousins, Herbert Hoover, Margaret Mead, and Eleanor Roosevelt.\textsuperscript{141} As he grew older, his interest in food came to dominate his social life. He became an expert in Chinese and Hindu cooking and often lectured on cuisine while dressed in the national costume of the featured cookery.\textsuperscript{142} In 1957, he coauthored a travel book that featured restaurants.\textsuperscript{143} Until his death, J. George wrote letters on Business Bourse letterhead which advertised “Practical Marketing Research, Statistics, Counsel, Surveys, Books.”\textsuperscript{144} But there was little work.

When J. George died in Queens “at the home of friends,” as the \textit{New York Times} reported, the woman in whose home he had collapsed called her fellow paramour, who then called the Fredericks’ daughter, Jean. There was a funeral among the Pennsylvania Dutch relatives in Reading, Pennsylvania.

\textsuperscript{140}This information derives from a survey of the \textit{Cumulative Book Index}, 1912-1960 and the \textit{Readers’ Guide to Periodic Literature}, 1912-1964.


\textsuperscript{142}“J. G. Frederick, 82, A Writer, Is Dead.”

\textsuperscript{143}Marilyn Field and J. George Frederick, \textit{1000 Pleasure Spots in Beautiful America} (New York: Business Bourse, 1957).

\textsuperscript{144}J. George Frederick to Jo Foxworth, 3 March 1964, carton 2, file folder 1, AWNY Papers.
Pennsylvania. Christine did not attend.\textsuperscript{145} Nor did she attend the tribute that the Advertising Women of New York paid to J. George three months after his death. But even then she could not bring herself to openly acknowledge the twenty-three-year estrangement. She responded to a sympathy letter from an old friend as if there had been nothing amiss in her marriage.\textsuperscript{146}

Christine survived J. George by six years. In 1968, she was still active enough to throw herself an eighty-fifth birthday party in the little yellow house on Los Olivos Street into which she had moved some years earlier. She asked that only adults attend and promised music, fun, and friends.\textsuperscript{147} But her health was deteriorating; in the late sixties, she developed breast cancer and underwent a mastectomy. During much of 1969, she used a walker or wheelchair.\textsuperscript{148}

As she neared death, Christine efficiently sorted through all of her belongings and kept only those that she would need during her last months: a few books such as the beloved Sherlock Holmes stories, several articles of clothing, and necessary household items. She carefully marked

\textsuperscript{145}Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994.

\textsuperscript{146}Christine Frederick to Emma Stock, 27 June 1964, carton 2, file folder 4, AWNY Papers.

\textsuperscript{147}"Open House," 11 February [1968], invitation, St. Francis-by-the-Sea Archives.

\textsuperscript{148}Christine Frederick to Valeria Ladd.
the things that were to be given to family members. Lastly, she went through her papers and deliberately destroyed virtually all of her personal correspondence. The only private letters she kept were those David and his wife had written after her dismissal from *The American Weekly*. On the papers she chose to preserve, Christine made notes to guide future readers. She developed categories for her letters: some were marked, “Praise!” some, “Souvenir,” and others, “Career women.” Into the “praise” file went any correspondence that commended Christine on her work, including that from pleased advertisers. On a memo about a speech she had given, she might write, “So many heard me[,] the emergence of the consumer.” She typed lists of complimentary comments from clients on statements and bills from her decorating business.

Early in 1970, she suffered a series of small strokes and had to be placed in the Park Lido Convalescent Home in nearby Newport Beach. Organized and efficient to the end, Christine had already arranged for her own cremation. When she died of a heart attack on April 6, 1970, at age

---

149 Joyce to author, 4 May 1994; Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994.

150 See, for example, Emma Dot Partridge Christine Frederick, 4 March [1935], 6 March 1936, file folder 3; Ray Fowler to Richard S. Shapiro, 29 July 1942, file folder 4, Frederick Papers.

eighty-seven, she was given a memorial service at the little chapel she loved, St. Francis-by-the-Sea, and inurned at the beautiful and famous Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, just north of Los Angeles.\textsuperscript{152} There were obituaries in the \textit{New York Times}, the \textit{Los Angeles Times}, and the \textit{Laguna News-Post}. All mentioned Christine’s distinguished career, noting her early writing and speaking campaigns to make homemaking more efficient. The two California papers reported erroneously that Christine had marched for the suffrage movement and the \textit{Los Angeles Times} called her an “ardent feminist.”\textsuperscript{153} Despite the financial problems she had had after leaving Applecroft, the accountant her daughters had hired in her later years had helped her to invest small sums from time to time, and she was able to leave $4000 to each of her daughters and $500 to the Advertising Women of New York.\textsuperscript{154}


\textsuperscript{154} Joyce, interview, 16 September 1994; Paul A. Hanna to Advertising Women of New York, 9 June 1972, carton 2, file folder 4, AWNY Papers.
The world from which Christine Frederick departed was vastly different from the one in which she had first become famous. She had adjusted with characteristic aplomb by changing not only her career, but also her life. Her sense of her own worth never diminished despite the vicissitudes that weakened the demand for her services. Her daughter described this remarkable adaptability well:

My own mother . . . who lived to be eighty-seven years was a good role model in presenting an interesting, alert and creative person in her older years. She actually took up a completely new profession at seventy years of age and became successful at it.155

When she moved to California at the age of sixty-six, Christine expressed her own confidence in another way:

Let anyone drop in on me before my third cup of breakfast coffee, and he will mistake my lined sallow face for that of a character actress doing a 'bit part' in a waterfront cafe. But give me time to apply a cold cream base, pat my cheeks with rouge, add a smart smear of lipstick, and I may be mistaken for the glamour star herself.156

She expected others to accept her on her own terms. Just as she had shaved ten years from her age in a 1947 job application, she misrepresented her birth date on health histories required by the California State Department of Education.157 She told Northwestern's alumni

155F. Frederick, "The Older Woman."

156C. Frederick, "You and Your Home."

association that "for a considerable period, [she was] always list[ed] as one of the ten top women in professional life in America." In a 1966 speech, she told an audience that Mussolini had "pirated" her books and that she performed for Chautauqua "along with Wm. J. Bryan and gentlemen of his type. . . ." \(^{158}\)

The boasts, though exaggerated, were based on solid achievement. When she claimed that she foresaw "the automatic washer-dryer and ironer," or that she saved the housewife's back by raising the kitchen sink, she was reminding her audiences that she had played an important role in promoting the technological changes that transformed household labor. \(^{159}\)

If Christine claimed greater influence than she really exerted, as she did when she wrote that she had "pushed the whole Radio Idea so far over," she was trying to preserve the recognition that she had honestly earned in an earlier time. \(^{160}\) She had hopes of publishing the autobiography she

\[\textit{Frederick Papers.}\]

\(^{158}\)C. Frederick to Editor, Northwestern Alumni Bulletin; C. Frederick, Laguna Library Book Day Speech.

\(^{159}\)"Career Chronology of Mrs. Christine Frederick."

\(^{160}\)Handwritten note on clipping, "Mrs. Christine Frederick, Household Efficiency Expert, Will Took Up Radio Telephone to Thousands of Kitchens," carton 2, file folder 4, AWNY Papers.
began at age eighty-six and confidently typed notes to the publisher throughout.\textsuperscript{161}

Christine Frederick demonstrated remarkable courage and resolve when she struck out on an entirely new and hazardous enterprise at the age of sixty-six. She had endured the attrition of a brilliant career, the final collapse of a thirty-two-year marriage, and the shocks of watching a beautiful young daughter sink into a psychological abyss and of losing a son in the prime of his life. Yet she succeeded in creating a new life for herself and enjoyed a measure of success by dint of her belief in her own abilities. As a young woman in the full flush of her success as a household expert, Christine had written:

No matter how hard things were . . . I had that inward feeling that they would, and should, come right in the end. I felt that in spite of any difficulty or trying conditions, that I could master my house problems--that there were solutions, and that there was no such word as "fail" in the whole language of scientific management. I cannot express how much poise and determination came from this efficiency attitude--the attitude of being superior to conditions, of having faith in myself and in my work. . . .\textsuperscript{162}

She had, in the end, done what she had always advised others to do. Through a positive attitude about her circumstances, she had overcome unhappiness.

\textsuperscript{161}One such note, in reference to her grandparents' wedding on the wharf at St. Louis, reads: "Note to Publisher: Very dramatic shot to be photographed for center spread in the book," Another: "Possible Publisher: Simon & Schuster," [C. Frederick], "Only a Girl," 3, [40].

\textsuperscript{162}C. Frederick, \textit{Household Engineering}, 15.
Christine Frederick's career as an adviser to American housewives began at a time when women's opportunities had expanded dramatically and crested during the decade when reaction to the consequences of that expansion caused a decline in the first wave of twentieth-century feminism. When Christine wrote the first installment of "The New Housekeeping" series, feminists were questioning the view that all women were suited to the role of homemaker. Christine was not only aware of this new thinking, she profited from it by getting an education and entering the public sphere. Yet she sensed that the vast majority of middle-class Americans would not respond favorably to radical changes in either women's role or the home. She herself was conflicted, yearning for public recognition while adhering to the nineteenth-century belief that women should be homemakers. She participated in the reaction to feminism during the 1920s by advising white middle-class Americans to maintain the status quo through the modernization of the home. She assured the women and men for whom she wrote that most women could be happier in the home than in the office, factory, or clubhouse.

Although the society into which Christine had been born was changing rapidly, it still embraced Catharine Beecher's prescription for women. In practical terms, the nineteenth-century doctrine of two spheres—the belief that women's place was in the home while men's was in the
public arena--was an ideal that only affluent, middle-class white families had ever achieved; but most Americans accepted it as the model for proper gender roles. Christine grew to adulthood believing that women's highest duty was making the home "beautiful and sacred for husband and children," a sentiment that echoed perfectly Beecher's assertion that the home was "the place woman is appointed to fill by the dispensations of heaven." 163

At the same time, Catharine Beecher's career as an educator had helped to give the women who followed her greater access to education. By the turn of the century, when Christine MacGaffey entered Northwestern University, a woman of her station could easily attain a college degree. Charlotte Perkins Gilman and others argued that women, like men, should pursue their individual talents in occupations to which they were best suited. The heady public discourse regarding women's suffrage, cooperative housekeeping, and women's entry into public occupations caused alarm in some quarters. As many Americans began to fear for the survival of the home itself, Christine faced a choice: she could use her education to enter the public sphere as the feminists were suggesting, or she could follow the more acceptable course dictated by her nineteenth-century upbringing. Her solution to the quandary was to do both, an

approach that reflected her conflict. Christine married and bore four
children. From the position of homemaker, then, she encouraged other
women to embrace Beecher’s ideology. But in doing so, she constructed a
public career for herself.

Christine’s talents led her into the traditionally male pursuits of
technology, industry, business, advertising, and ultimately, consumerism.
Counseling other women to apply the precepts of industrial efficiency to
housekeeping, to purchase the labor-saving devices technology had
produced, and to trade home production for purchased consumer goods,
Christine took an active role in the public sphere while seeming to stay
within the domestic. In fact, her advice to other women to enter the
marketplace as consumers took them into the public sphere, too, but only
as managers of homes. Like Beecher who had led a very public life
speaking about women’s role as moral keeper of the home, Christine
fashioned a public career by advising women to turn their homes into
efficient, modern agents of consumption. Her advice exchanged the role of
moral guardian for that of purchasing agent and manager, but it still
assumed that the home was woman’s sphere. Like the home economists,
whose profession she sometimes claimed as her own, she instructed others
in managing private homes even as she worked outside hers. This position
allowed her to claim, as the home economists did, that her advice would
help preserve the American single-family home.
Christine chose to ignore this contradiction; in fact, she often unwittingly exposed it as she did by her 1914 remark to the home economists that the career woman was their enemy. Later, as a consultant to advertisers, she not only argued that women should be homemakers, but she worked to counteract their leaving the home for other occupations. Her campaign for the People's Gas, Light and Coke Company to bring "housewives back to more home cooking" was one example. Selling Mrs. Consumer, the manual that taught advertisers how to entice American housewives to buy consumer goods, was another.

Christine's life and work revealed other contradictions, too. The class-conscious, sexist deprecation of the "average" American housewife in Selling Mrs. Consumer exposed her contempt for a large portion of the audience for which she wrote. By contrast, she often credited the woman consumer with great wisdom and good sense. While her own marriage suffered from J. George's infidelity and her own inattention, she wrote articles in which she blamed women for failed marriages because they did not support their husbands' professional development. Although her failure to sue for divorce was, in part, a reaction to unpleasant memories of her parents' ordeal, it was also a traditional response to the stigma of divorce. Yet she imbued her own daughters with the determination to become economically independent and although two of them married, none ever managed a traditional home such as Christine espoused in her work.
Talented and driven though she was, Christine Frederick never openly considered the radical change in fundamental beliefs about gender that was suggested by the feminists of her day. Nor did she ever entertain the possibility that men might share in the management of the home. Like Beecher, she preached that men should not be expected to assume housekeeping duties. Christine realized that most Americans, women and men alike, did not wish to make the radical changes necessary to achieve full gender equality. Her strong resistance to the cooperative housekeeping proposals of feminist reformers reflected this realization. She was successful because she offered modernization without radically modifying the separation of the spheres.

Had Christine Frederick not been born female, she might have been an efficiency engineer, an advertising executive, or a manufacturer. She was thrilled by the progress she saw in technology, increased production, and consumerism. Her zeal kept pace with the changes themselves. When the popularity of home efficiency waned, she turned to advertising and consumerism. This shift not only followed naturally from her advice to make use of modern kitchen appliances and household products, it also reflected her enthusiasm for the expansion of American manufacturing and business. Christine chose to apply modernization to the home because she knew that it was only from the domestic sphere that a woman’s voice would be heeded. Because she was the product of a society in which
Catharine Beecher’s ideology had prevailed, the application of her talents was circumscribed by her gender. Though the fruits of the nineteenth-century women's movement enabled her to attend a university, discuss industrial technology with men, and speak in public before male audiences, Christine encouraged her peers to remain largely within the private sphere. Believing that she was reforming women’s lives by showing them how to ease their housework, she rejected substantial change in the female role of homemaker. Thus when reaction to the first wave of feminism took hold in the 1920s, Christine was among those who reaffirmed the doctrine that women’s proper place was in the home. She had spent the most effective years of her professional life promoting the idea that homemaking was the preferred occupation for most American women and thus helped to lessen the impact of twentieth-century feminism's first wave. At the end of her life, a new generation of women was beginning to question the assumption that Christine had so energetically defended, and when she died, a second wave of feminism was beginning to swell.
CHAPTER 10: EPILOGUE

Man is not permitted to shirk his financial obligations. . . . Neither is it fair, then, for women to pursue an unremunerative career at the expense of the home.¹

Christine Frederick, 1924

[Di]vision of labor allows us to think still of the private sphere as the main arena of women’s activity and the public sphere as that of men’s, and to give authority in both spheres to men.²

Constance H. Buchanan, 1996

As the twentieth century draws to a close, American women have entered the public sphere to an unprecedented degree. Whether, in fact, there are still two clearly separate spheres represented by women in the home and men in the work place is doubtful; in 1992, sixty-eight percent of all married women with children were in the labor force, and two years later the Labor Department reported that forty-seven percent of all American workers were women.³ Nearly half of all law degrees earned in this country are earned by women, and in 1993, for the first time in history, women outnumbered men in the first-year classes at eighteen of the

¹C. Frederick, “Shall the Housekeeper Have an Understudy?”


nation's medical schools. Women now hold over forty percent of all management positions in American business. The list goes on and on.

Yet despite the advances, women workers have not reached parity with men. In 1994 employed American women, across the board, made seventy-one cents to every dollar earned by men. Although feminist writers early in the century had optimistically celebrated their belief that all occupations were opening to women, by 1979 half of all working women were employed in only thirty of the 419 occupations listed by the United States Census Bureau, and they were concentrated in the “low-wage sectors of the economy,” mostly clerical and service jobs. Employers have resisted women’s progress. To evade the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and justify lower wages, for example, many changed job titles for women without changing the work they did. Court decisions making this practice illegal have not been enforced consistently. Women who have led the way into management positions have met with another kind of resistance. In the 1980s, employers gave women public relations jobs, a way to both comply with affirmative action policies and to place women in visible

---


executive positions from which there was no path to general corporate
management.\textsuperscript{7}

Twentieth-century women have also entered the equally public,
equally male arena of politics, and recent studies show that women
candidates are elected to office as readily as men. Yet three-quarters of a
century after winning the franchise, women are markedly underrepresented
in the United States Congress and in every statehouse in the land. Women
comprised roughly ten percent of Congress and twenty percent of state
legislatures in 1994.\textsuperscript{8}

The reasons that women have failed to achieve complete equality in
traditionally male enclaves are complex. But among them is the still-
common notion that women, not men, are responsible for the care of home
and children. Childbirth tends to interrupt a mother’s career, but rarely a
father’s. When the first baby is born to a two-income, heterosexual
couple, the mother often leaves full-time employment, at least temporarily.
Because these child-bearing women are “in and out of the job market,”
they do not earn the ever-increasing salaries of their male counterparts.\textsuperscript{9}
Historian Elizabeth Fox-Genovese pointed out in 1991 that the “acceptance

\textsuperscript{7}Berch, \textit{Endless Day}, 71, 76, 122, 124, 147.

\textsuperscript{8}Jody Newman, interview by Lynn Neary, \textit{Morning Edition}, National

\textsuperscript{9}Teegardin, “You’ve Come a Long Way,” A18.
of conventional gender roles” was still widespread.10 “Culture encourages
women and men . . . to internalize [the] prescriptions and practices” of
those gender roles as “gender identity.”11 Many who hold conservative
views, Fox-Genovese argued, “persist in the illusion that traditional
motherhood can be restored by fiat--primarily by eliminating supports for
working women.” But she, too, accepted the “prescription” that working
mothers are the ones who need changes in our institutions. Working
women, Fox-Genovese wrote, need community support so that they can
both work and care for their families. The unspoken assumption is that the
burden for child care rests not on the couple, but on the mother.12

American society is still influenced by the nineteenth-century
ideology of separate spheres, because the road from Catharine Beecher’s
prescription for woman’s role to the measure of equality enjoyed by late
twentieth-century women has been a circuitous one. Early feminists who
had sought to change women’s role evoked a reactionary response that
discouraged women from abandoning their traditional place as
homemakers, a response in which Christine Frederick participated. After
the retreat of feminist forces during the 1920s, there were few advocates
for radically changing the American home or woman’s place within it.

10 Fox-Genovese, Feminism without Illusions, 138.
11 Ibid., 120.
12 Ibid., 27, 244.
During the 1940s a virulent anti-feminism, based largely on Freudian
teaching, was fueled by the recurring fear that the home was in peril when
large numbers of women entered the work force during the Second World
War.

In 1947 psychologists Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia Farnham
published *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex*, a fierce indictment of feminism
that resurrected the nineteenth-century view that women have “an infinitely
complex psychology revolving around the reproductive function.”

Contemporary women, they argued, were “psychologically disordered” “in
large numbers.” This was due to the misguided teachings of feminism, a
movement they compared to communism, racism, and Nazism as organized
“around the principle of hatred, hostility and violence. . . .” They argued
that women and men were not equal but complementary. What the
“psychically ill” feminists wanted was masculinity: “It was out of the
disturbed libidinal organization of women that the ideology of feminism
arose.” (Italics theirs.) Most women’s organizations had been infected and
were “thoroughly imbued with penis-envy. . . .” Feminism, they claimed,
had “bade women commit suicide as women” because it encouraged them

13Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia F. Farnham, *Modern Woman: The

14Ibid., v, 25, 143-145.

15Ibid., 162, 173, 371.
to get educations, enter the work force, and have fewer children.  

Lured into business, women were forced to compete in cutthroat office politics, an occupation for which they were not fit. As a result they had become fearful and anxious, the perpetrators of a nationwide neurosis, "the true epidemic of our time."  

It was because female defense workers were neurotic, they argued, that employers replaced them with men at the end of World War II.  

Military units such as the Women's Army Corps had not really been needed but were the "masculinity complex institutionalized, pure and simple."  

"The principal instrument in the causation of neurosis in the child," Lundberg and Farnham believed, was "the highly disturbed psychobiological organism: the mother."  

They urged women to confine themselves to their biological function of bearing children, preferably in the single-family home, the representation of the womb. They suggested that mass, government-sponsored psychotherapy dispense "propaganda" that would restore "women's sense of prestige and self-esteem as women, actual or potential mothers." Condemning to the margins of society as unfit all who did not or

---

16 Ibid., 163-166.
17 Ibid., 10-11, 18, 48.
18 Ibid., 357.
19 Ibid., 215.
20 Ibid., 67.
could not choose to raise families within a heterosexual union, they argued that "bachelor and spinster both represent examples of impaired masculinity and femininity," for only those who mated and reproduced had reached the full realization of their sex. Spinsters, they wrote, should "be barred by law from having anything to do with the teaching of children on the ground of theoretical (usually real) emotional incompetence," yet government-sponsored propaganda should discourage women from pursuing male professions such as law, math, and business. Bachelors older than thirty years of age "should be encouraged to undergo psychotherapy," they advised.

After the war other commentators agreed with Lundberg and Farnham that women's place was in the home. Some blamed the psychological problems of returning soldiers on the independence their mothers had learned from the feminists of earlier decades. The historian of mechanization Siegfried Giedion wrote in 1948, "Woman shall rule in the household. She shall be educated for this, and to this she shall educate her children." Many women themselves embraced the role of homemaker

---

21Ibid., 114, 120-121, 359, 360, 382.
22Ibid., 364-365, 370.
24Giedion, Mechanization, 513.
enthusiastically as new suburbs that featured modern homes filled with household conveniences sprang up across the country. Thus, the postwar fifties, like Christine Frederick’s postwar twenties, saw a return to the traditional nineteenth-century ideology that placed women in the home and men in the work place. In 1962, Margaret Mead observed, “Woman has gone back, each to her separate cave . . . almost totally unaware of any life outside her door. . . . In this retreat into fecundity, it is not the individual woman who is to blame. It is the climate of opinion that has developed in this country.”

Even highly educated women who grew to adulthood during the fifties often chose homemaking over careers. Six of the first eight women to graduate from the Harvard Business School in 1965, “faced with the conflict between a traditional woman’s role and a career, chose the former.” Most of them, in fact, did not receive any offers from America’s still male-dominated corporations. A married member of the class was rejected by prospective employers while her husband was still unemployed because it was assumed that wives followed husbands in moves precipitated by jobs. Interviewed in 1994, three of these pioneering women reported that they had made the right decision by choosing

---


26 Margaret Mead, “Return of the Cave Woman,” *Saturday Evening Post*, 3 March 1962, 6, 8.

27 Linden, “Class of ‘65,” 92.
marriage and children over careers, clearly revealing their belief that they
had to choose. Christine Frederick’s admonitions still resonated for these
women who believed that they could not have both careers and families.
Married women, they implied, were wholly responsible for the home.

Just two years before the Harvard Business School graduates made
their choices, Betty Friedan electrified comfortable, suburban, middle-class
America by identifying the female “problem that has no name” in the best­
selling book that heralded the “second wave” of feminism, The Feminine
Mystique. Friedan found a malaise that bordered on desperation among
educated friends and interviewees who had foregone careers and become
homemakers. Like Mead, she saw women isolated in their homes. “The
feminine mystique has succeeded in burying millions of American women
alive. There is no way for these women to break out of their comfortable
concentration camps except by finally putting forth an effort . . . beyond
the narrow walls of the home.” Friedan identified consumerism and the
advertisers who promoted it—the legacies of Christine Frederick and her
fellow “apostles of modernity”—as major builders of these “concentration
camps.”

The housewife’s role as consumer that Christine worked so hard to
promote in the 1920s was even more important by mid-century. A vast

\[28\]Ibid., 93-95.

\[29\]Friedan, Feminine Mystique, 11, 15-16, 24-27, 325.
array of consumer goods became available after World War II.\textsuperscript{30} Like Christine, who had seen the housewife’s self-esteem as critical to her happiness, advertising consultants tried to elevate the status of homemakers in order to sell their products. The Institute for Motivational Research, Croton-on-Hudson, New York, issued reports to assist advertisers from 1945 through the 1950s. One such report observed:

[Professionalization [of homemaking] is a psychological defense of the housewife against being a general ‘cleaner-upper’ and menial servant for her family in a day and age of general work emancipation.\textsuperscript{31}

As Christine Frederick had done in \textit{Selling Mrs. Consumer}, the Institute categorized female consumers into groups: the “True Housewife,” the “Career Woman,” and the “Balanced Homemaker.” The ideal type, they advised, was the balanced homemaker because she accepted technology readily but did not expect it to change her life.\textsuperscript{32} Other issues that Christine had addressed in the 1920s reappeared in the Institute’s reports, too. But Christine had always emphasized a sense of self-worth that came from doing a job well. Now the “apostles” believed that consumerism alone had accomplished the goal of making women want to stay home. If “properly manipulated,” housewives could be “given a sense of identity, purpose,

\textsuperscript{30}Ehrenreich and English, \textit{For Her Own Good}, 163-164.

\textsuperscript{31}Quoted in Friedan, \textit{Feminine Mystique}, 205.

\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., 199-200.
creativity . . . even the sexual joy they lack--by buying things,” one report noted.\textsuperscript{33} Another confidently observed:

The modern bride seeks as a conscious goal that which in many cases her grandmother saw as a blind fate and her mother as slavery: to belong to a man, to have a home and children of her own, to choose among all possible careers the career of wife-mother-homemaker.\textsuperscript{34}

Like Christine, the reports recognized the housewife’s isolation. She had suggested that radio could alleviate the loneliness; modern consultants suggested that department stores exploit it. The suburban housewife, they wrote in 1957, had a “psychological compulsion to visit” the stores. Upon entering, she “suddenly” enjoyed the “feeling she knows what is going on in the world.” They also recognized, as had Christine, the important role consumerism played in the expression of social status. “We symbolize our social position by the objects with which we surround ourselves,” the Institute reminded sellers.\textsuperscript{35} Friedan blamed women’s magazines for creating and promoting this image of the happy housewife as consumer. As they had done in the 1920s, editors courted the advertisers who urged women to go “back home” after the war. Magazines, Friedan believed,

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{33}Quoted in Friedan, \textit{Feminine Mystique}, 199.
  \item \textsuperscript{34}Quoted in Friedan, \textit{Feminine Mystique}, 210.
  \item \textsuperscript{35}Quoted in Friedan, \textit{Feminine Mystique}, 214.
\end{itemize}
manipulated "the emotions of American women to serve the needs of business."\(^{36}\)

Very few feminist voices were raised during the 1950s. Although French writer Simone de Beauvoir's important work, *The Second Sex*--in which she argued that the secondary position of women was culturally imposed--was published in the United States in 1953, most American women took little notice at the time.\(^{37}\) *Ladies' Home Journal* writer Dorothy Thompson complained that the earlier feminist movement had "never really faced up to" the fact that "the woman who is talented is torn between two functions."\(^{38}\) The prevailing view from World War II until Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique* was the view held by Catharine Beecher and Christine Frederick: woman's place was in the home.

Thus the second wave of feminism raised the same questions that were current when Christine Frederick repudiated Charlotte Perkins Gilman's ideas. "Many of the issues of the contemporary women's liberation movement--from job discrimination, to sex-role conditioning, to marriage contracts, to birth control--were raised in the 1920s," wrote

---


\(^{38}\)Quoted in Sochen, *Movers and Shakers*, 188.
English professor Elaine Showalter in 1979. Politically, the modern movement was symbolized by a new campaign to adopt an Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, a measure passed by both houses of Congress in the early 1970s. After a bitter struggle, the amendment fell short of ratification in 1982. Fear about the consequences of a fundamental and far-reaching change in woman’s traditional role was to blame.

Like the earlier feminists, proponents of the “women’s liberation movement,” as the second wave was called, attacked the middle-class, single-family house. A spate of critics in the 1980s pointed out that the suburban house responded to a nineteenth-century ideal, not to twentieth-century life. The single family house, they argued, reflected the belief that the nuclear family with a full-time, homemaking mother was the best arrangement. Suburban houses, especially, support a division of labor by gender. “The home is so intimately tied to the definition of men’s and women’s roles,” one commentator wrote, “that one might even say it

---


40 Jane J. Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), ix, 11-12. Early feminist suffragist Alice Paul headed the first effort to add an equal rights amendment to the Constitution in 1920. It and subsequent attempts failed, partly because women’s groups opposed it. See Mansbridge, 8-10.
exists as a cultural symbol primarily through these roles.”⁴¹ Architectural and social historian Dolores Hayden charged that the feminists of the second wave erred in accepting without question the “spatial design of the isolated home.” She argued that it is the “least suitable housing imaginable for employed wives.”⁴²

These critics proposed housing that echoed the ideas of Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Henrietta Rodman who, in 1914, had planned a hotel with central services for working mothers. “Think about those dormitories with linen services and dining halls,” wrote one. Another developed a proposal for “congregate housing” with collective services and a third suggested multi-family housing especially designed for single parents who could share household management.⁴³ Occasional references to collective housing have appeared in the 1990s, too. “Cohousing,” clustered homes built around a community center where residents share cooking, dining, and


⁴²Hayden, *Grand Domestic Revolution*, 294; *Redesigning the American Dream*, 50.

childcare, is a modern interpretation of early cooperative housekeeping schemes. Over one hundred cohousing communities were under construction in 1993.44 A recent commentary in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* urged Americans to rethink the 1950s ideal that spawned suburban developments of large single family homes. Like the early feminists and the critics of the 1980s, this writer suggested clustered homes and community centers where cooks and childcare providers could be hired to serve the entire community.45 Still, as Christine Frederick pointed out in 1919, most Americans are fiercely individualistic in their attitudes about their homes. Cohousing advocates admit that few people are able to commit themselves to the communal style of living. And loyalty to the single-family home carries with it an acceptance of the traditional nuclear family with mother as homemaker. Women and men alike cherish this image.46


At the height of the women’s liberation movement, historian Kathryn Sklar wrote, “Much of the ideology of domesticity is still with us.”47 In 1974 historian Linda Fritschner observed that marriage remained “women’s principle mechanism of achievement. . . .” For a vast majority of women, she wrote, marriage was still “the equivalent of an occupation.”48 As late as 1982, many Americans accepted the myth that women in the work force were atypical and impermanent. Yet beginning in 1947, notwithstanding the campaign to send women back to the kitchen when service men came home from World War II, the percentage of women in the work force had been steadily rising and had reached fifty-one percent by 1980. Because the old nineteenth-century ideology prevailed, these employed women were also responsible for the work of managing their homes.49 And despite the fact that the next fifteen years saw the presence of women in the public sphere increase by over fifteen percentage points, the ideology still obtains in the mid-1990s.50

47Sklar, Catharine Beecher, xiv.


Journalist Cokie Roberts noted in the spring of 1995 that married female political candidates are invariably asked who is minding their children. If they are single, they are often asked why they are not married. Such questions are rarely, if ever, asked of men.51 The domestic sphere, it is assumed, is women’s responsibility. Nineteenth-century ideology has been tenacious.

Harvard Divinity School’s Constance H. Buchanan, author of Choosing to Lead: Women and the Crisis of American Values, argues that “traditional cultural beliefs continue to drive public debate about the way society is . . . organized.” Because of these beliefs, women who work at an outside job while managing a family lack society’s “support for [their] unpaid work” in the home. Society has continued to “treat this crucial work as women’s work rather than as a priority that also should be integral to the lives of men and social institutions beyond ‘the’ family,” she writes.52

Christine Frederick valued housework, but neither she nor her predecessor Catharine Beecher believed that men should share it or that women should be paid salaries to do it. Several historians have argued that American society has never understood the value of housework because it

——


52Buchanan, “The Crisis of Values.”
has not been separated from the domestic sphere. In the mid-1990s, Americans are still ambivalent about housework, but most behave as though it is primarily women’s responsibility, an assumption that Christine Frederick helped perpetuate.

At a time when the first wave of feminism raised the possibility that women and men might share equally in conducting the business of the world, Christine Frederick embraced Catharine Beecher’s ideology instead. She perpetuated the nineteenth-century doctrine that bade women assume responsibility for the domestic sphere. Although the early feminists’ hopes that women would enter all areas within the public sphere have been realized, equal representation in those areas has been curtailed by the division of labor by gender that Christine promoted; women cannot fully share the work of the public sphere until men fully share the work of the private. Christine Frederick did not single-handedly turn Americans away from the possibilities that the feminists glimpsed. But her voice was among those who have made the feminist ideal more difficult to attain.

---

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Printed Works

Many of the articles and speeches by Christine Frederick that are cited in this dissertation are located in the Christine Isobel MacGaffey Frederick Papers at the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Radcliffe College. They are not listed separately in this bibliography.


________. “The Highway to Woman’s Happiness.” *Current History,* October 1927, 26-29.


______. "What's In a Name: The Limits of 'Social Feminism'; or Expanding the Vocabulary of Women's History." Journal of American History 76 (December 1989): 809-829.


Drexel University Year Book, 1940, 83. Photocopy.


"Equipping an Orchard as a Living Room." New Country Life, March 1917, 108.

"The 'Professional Grandma.'" Ladies' Home Journal, April 1917, 102-103.


"How I Learned Food Values as Told by a Farmer's Wife." Ladies' Home Journal, November 1917, 56.


"Will the Eight-Hour Home-Assistant Plan Work Out?" Ladies' Home Journal, September 1919, 47.


______. “A Real Use for the Radio.” *Good Housekeeping*, July 1922, 77, 144-146.


______. “Making a Tennis Court.” *New Country Life*, May 1927, 66.

______. “Man’s Business and the Woman’s.” *Outlook*, 1 February 1928, 168.
“Is Suburban Living a Delusion?” *Outlook*, 22 February 1928, 290.


“Reminiscences of the City of Lost Angels.” Photocopy.


“Memories of ‘52.” *The Awakener* 14, Number 2, 4-5.


"Standardization--Bane or Blessing?" Outlook, 12 January 1927, 50-51.

"I'm Glad I'm Not a College Man." Outlook, 4 January 1928, 20-21.

"Is Progressive Obsolescence the Path Toward Increased Consumption?" Advertising and Selling, 5 September 1928, 19-20, 44-46.


Cooking As Men Like It. With a foreword by Christine Frederick. New York: Business Bourse, 1930.


How to Understand a Man, Emotionally and Temperamentally and How to Understand a Woman, Emotionally and Temperamentally. New York: Business Bourse, 1941.

"The Law of the Heart." In This I Believe: The Living Philosophies of One Hundred Thoughtful Men and Women in All


_______. "Is Feminism Really So Dreadful?" Delineator, August, 1914, 6.
_______. "Woman’s Achievements Since the Franchise." Current History, October 1927, 7-14.


Gregg, Mrs. Abel J. "What Women Are Thinking: The Y. M. C. A. Talks It Over." Survey, June 1, 1929, 300-303.


Guernsey, John B. "Scientific Management in the Home." Outlook, 13 April 1912, 821-825.


“Home Efficiency.” *Outlook,* 2 December 1911, 807.


McMenamin, Hugh L. “Evils of Woman’s Revolt Against the Old Standards.” *Current History*, October 1927, 30-32.


“Mrs. Christine Frederick.” *Mon Chez Moi* (Paris), May 1927.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


The Old Gold and Blue. Yearbook, Peddie School, 1924. Peddie School Archives, Hightstown, NJ. Photocopy.


“Revelations About the ‘Vice Trust.’” *Current Opinion*, January 1913, 5.


*The Syllabus.* Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 1905-1907.


Manuscript Sources


Alumni Biographical Files. Northwestern University Archives, Evanston, IL.

Atlanta Woman's Club Papers. Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, GA.


Beecher-Stowe Collection. Schlesinger Library.


Bureau of Vocational Information of New York City. Papers. Schlesinger Library. Microfilm, Strozier Library, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL.

Calbreath Family Collection. Special Collections. Knight Library, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR.

Campbell, Christine Isobel, In the Matter of. No. 78051. Archives Department, Circuit Court, City of St. Louis, MO.


Frederick, Christine. Collection. Huntington Historical Society, Huntington, NY.

Frederick, Christine (Isobel) MacGaffey. Papers. Schlesinger Library.

Frederick Collection. Greenlawn-Centerport Historical Association, Greenlawn, NY.

Frederick, David. Grade cards. Peddie School Archives, Hightstown, NJ.


Frederick, Phyllis. Student file. Radcliffe College Archives, Cambridge, MA.


Suffolk County Deed Liber Books. Suffolk County Clerk’s Office, Riverhead, NY.

Suffolk County Superior Court, Department for Civil Business. Record Book, Divorces, 1890. Boston, MA.


Women’s Educational and Industrial Union. Papers. Schlesinger Library.


Interviews


______. Interview by author. Laguna Beach, CA, 6 September 1995. Tape recording. Atlanta, GA.

Frederick, Deborah. Telephone conversation with author, 20 February 1996.


Justin, Peter. Interview by author. Ojai, CA, 10 September 1995. Tape recording. Atlanta, GA.


Lang, Fred. Telephone conversation with author, 3 June 1994. Tape recording. Atlanta, GA.


_______. Interview by author. Redondo Beach, CA, 6 September 1995.
APPENDIX: CHRONOLOGY OF CHRISTINE FREDERICK’S LIFE

1883 Christine Isobel Campbell was born, Boston Massachusetts.

1885 Christine’s mother, Mimie Scott Campbell left her husband and took Christine to Russia.

1888 Christine and her mother returned to the United States when her father, William R. Campbell, filed for divorce and custody of the child.

Mimie Campbell was given custody of Christine by a Missouri court.

1889 A Massachusetts court granted custody of Christine to her father.

1888-1894 Christine and her mother lived with her grandparents in St. Louis, Missouri.

1894 Christine moved to Chicago with her mother and new stepfather, Wyatt MacGaffey.

1902 Christine MacGaffey graduated from Northwestern Division High School, Chicago.

1902-1906 Christine attended Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, and graduated Phi Beta Kappa.

1906-1907 Christine taught biology in Ishpeming, Michigan.

1907 Christine MacGaffey married Justus George Frederick in Irving Park, Chicago and moved with him to an apartment at 1008 Simpson Street in the Bronx, New York.

1908 Christine’s first child, David Mansfield, was born.

1910 J. George Frederick established the Business Bourse at 347 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

The Fredericks’ second child, Jean Olive, was born.

The family move to a second apartment in the Bronx at 830 Manida Street.
Christine wrote a series of articles on trademarked goods in department stores for *Printers’ Ink*.

1911  
J. George and Christine bought Applecroft at Greenlawn, Long Island, New York and moved the family to Port Washington while the house at Applecroft was remodeled.

1912  
Christine, J. George, and their two children moved to Applecroft where she established the Applecroft Experiment Station.

J. George and Christine held the organizing meeting of the New York League of Advertising Women.

Christine published a series of four articles on scientific management in the *Ladies’ Home Journal* and became the magazine’s correspondent for housekeeping problems.

1913?  
Christine gave birth to a still-born baby boy.

1913  

1914  
Christine began to write advertising pamphlets.

She testified on price maintenance for the first time before the House Judiciary Committee.

1915  
Christine gave birth to second daughter, Phyllis Campbell.

She published the short, 109-page *Household Engineering*.

1916  
Christine lectured on household economics to the New York Bureau of Vocational Research.

Christine made a household efficiency movie at Applecroft.

1917  
Christine testified on price maintenance before the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee and the Federal Trade Commission.

She began writing a syndicated column for *The American Weekly* in the Hearst papers.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Her fourth and last child, Carol Hope, was born.

1918 Christine spoke on the Redpath Chautauqua circuit.

1919 The expanded *Household Engineering: Scientific Management in the Home* was published.

1922 Christine planned an advertising campaign for People's Gas, Light and Coke Company, Chicago.

Christine became interested in radio and developed a household program which was broadcast from Applecroft.

1923 David was sent to Peddie School in Hightstown, New Jersey.

1924 Christine published “New Wealth, New Standards of Living and Changed Family Budgets” in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*.

1925 Christine wrote “Advertising and the So-Called Average Woman” for J. George's *Masters of Advertising Copy: Principles and Practice of Writing Copy by its Leading Practitioners*.

Jean was sent to Abbot Academy, Andover, Massachusetts.

1927 Christine toured Europe twice as a speaker on housekeeping.

1928 Jean began college at Cornell.

1929 Christine took her third speaking tour of Europe accompanied by daughter Jean and J. George.

She bought beach property on Northport Bay.

*Selling Mrs. Consumer* was published.

1929? Applecroft Experiment Station was remodeled with Monel metal.

1930 Phyllis was sent to Abbott Academy.

1932 Christine testified on price maintenance before the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce.
Phyllis began college at Cornell.

1935 Christine was named one of thirty most successful career women in Greater New York.

She took an apartment in Ithaca to be near Phyllis and enrolled in classes at Cornell.

1936 Carol began college at Drexel University.

1939 Christine moved from Applecroft to an apartment at 6 Grove Court in Greenwich Village, New York City.

1942 Carol was committed to King’s Park Psychiatric Center.

Christine moved to the apartment at 55 West 11th Street.

1943 Applecroft household goods were sold at auction.

1944 Hearst terminated Christine’s employment. Christine took a job as interior decorating instructor at Ballard School, Y. W. C. A., New York City and began a career as decorating consultant.

Applecroft was sold.

1949 Christine moved to Laguna Beach, California.

1949-1957 Christine taught interior decorating courses at Orange Coast College.

1952 David died of a heart attack at age 42.

1954 Christine was baptized in the St. Francis-by-the-Sea Chapel, Laguna Beach.

1962 Christine was honored as founder at the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Advertising Women of New York.

1964 J. George died of a heart attack.

1968 Christine underwent a mastectomy.

1970 Christine died of a heart attack after a series of strokes.
VITA

Janice Williams Rutherford graduated from the University of Oregon in 1963 with a bachelor’s degree in education. She taught in Middletown, Connecticut, and for the United States Army in Europe. After rearing her family in McMinnville, Oregon, she returned to school to earn a master’s degree in history at Portland State University in 1981. For the next seven years, she headed historic preservation programs in Spokane and Clark Counties, Washington, where she also taught courses in historic preservation. Rutherford moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1987 where she served as the director of two museum associations. In 1990, she matriculated at Louisiana State University to earn a doctorate in American history. In 1995, she was awarded a dissertation grant from the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America. Her degree will be conferred in August, 1996.

Rutherford currently lives in Atlanta with her husband, chemical engineer Franklin John Steffes, Ph.D. She is the mother of a son and daughter.
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Janice Williams Rutherford

Major Field: History

Title of Dissertation: "Only a Girl": Christine Frederick, Efficiency, Consumerism, and Woman's Sphere

Approved:

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Amy M. Foster

Emily Foster

Robert G. Baker

Date of Examination:

June 26, 1996