Shadows of Doubt: Middle-Class Respectability and Working-Class Sexuality Among Lancaster’s Women, 1913-1924

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By the turn of the twentieth century, excitement in every city across the nation was connected to the new and innovative amusement industry that drew people out of their homes and into the public realm. Lancaster was no exception—there were amusement parks, theaters, dance halls, and movie houses sprouting up everywhere in and around the city. One of the more notable places was Rocky Springs Park, which in 1910 ran the following advertisement: “Lancaster’s Miniature Coney Island! With All the Objectionable Features Left Out! Clean, Wholesome Recreations!”¹ The park was located on the outskirts of the city and began as a picnic spot on the Conestoga River in the late 19th century. This arboreal attraction expanded to include more amusements where rides and games became the main draw. The management worked hard to create a respectable and fun image for the park because a large part of their visitors were middle-class women and children concerned with their reputation as new participants in urban entertainment. The managers relied on word-of-mouth and newspaper advertisements that declared the park’s safe and moral reputation. Rocky Springs Park’s goal was to be entertaining and upstanding. Its plan worked, and they attracted numerous women and families who were looking for distractions and wanted to be a part of the new urban environment.

Despite this positive image among Lancastrians, at the edges of places like Rocky Springs Park there lurked a darker and seedier story. Not all of those participating in the new leisure spaces were looking for moral entertainment. There were many young men and women, specifically from the working-class, who sought romantic, even illicit, popular amusements. In fact, right outside Rocky Springs there was a shack that was owned by

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brothel madam Mrs. Carberry, who rented it out on a daily basis. Carberry’s neighbor described the bungalow as

> The first one you come to going to Rock[y] Springs. You can see it on the car. It is about the size of two piano boxes. She rents that for a day for $2—fellow can rent it from her for his girl, and instead they get together and go to the park, pick up some chickens and seduce them in the bungalow—she knows it.²

While this questionable behavior was not taking place within the confines of the park, the environment was a crucial part of how men attracted young women who would go with them to the bungalow. There are clear ways the park both catered to respectable clientele and attracted—probably unwittingly—other young visitors who were more interested in the risqué opportunities the park provided. Rocky Springs, in connection with all other leisure spots, is consequently a place where many different facets of the human character of Lancaster City collided. Even though there were social distinctions between a respectable middle-class woman and a boisterous working-class young woman, they shared many of the same spaces while outside the home. This shaded the border between what was moral and immoral and therefore created great anxiety within the Lancaster community, as well as in all other Progressive Era towns and cities.

During the late 1800s and especially by the early 1900s, there was a far-reaching surge in the public entertainment sector: it crossed gender and class lines and infiltrated nearly

every corner of America. Women became the newest and most important part of the 
entertainment industry that began to depend heavily on their patronage along with young 
adults and families. The previous distinctions between the femininity of the private sector 
and the masculinity of the public sector were beginning to break down. Shifts in 
expectations about gender aroused uncertainties and suspicions among the communities 
affected (see: Peiss 1986; Wood 2005; Deutsch 2000). Lancastrians expressed similar 
anxieties. The fact that places like Rocky Springs went to such trouble to advertise their 
wholesomeness suggests the need within the community to be assured that new amusements 
were not eroding the morals of their citizens. But there was no way to ensure with absolute 
certainty that the unwelcome aspects of the world of public amusement would be totally 
excluded. To combat this, many of Lancaster’s amusements declared respectability, but with 
a “wink.”

This paper compares how middle-class and working-class New Women participated in 
public life—both employment and amusement—in early twentieth century Lancaster. Both 
groups challenged the gender conventions of the time. They experienced many of the same 
sites and activities of the city, including restaurants and the movies. Their overlapping 
presence may have created a confusing moral landscape around the turn of the century. As 
historian Sharon Wood explains, “[W]hat separated pure women from the fallen was less a 
bright line than a broad penumbra.”3 If their worlds sometimes blended together, the middle-
class New Woman of Lancaster still largely escaped the scrutiny of the city’s social 
reformers, who viewed audacious working-class women as mentally defective rebels.

For this paper I have located stories that represent these two types of women who moved about the city. The middle-class, moral woman is represented by Mary Eleanor Hoak, a young, professional schoolteacher who spent much of her free time at different attractions around Lancaster. Diane Hoffman Pringle, the author of the manuscript “Prelude to Professional Life” (2005), found the diaries of her great-aunt Mary Eleanor Hoak who lived in Lancaster during the early 1900s, and she was able to weave together a story about the life of Hoak and all her siblings. Hoak was the only college-educated member of her family and she “exemplified the ideals of a New Woman by rejecting marriage and motherhood and choosing the life of a single, independent, professional woman.” The diary Hoak left behind is a valuable piece of history that offers an overview of the type of work and activities in which a middle-class family engaged in early twentieth century Lancaster life.

Hoak’s experiences overlap and contrast with a group of charity girls, who are usually working-class and much more experimental with their social roles. These young women are the “chickens” that men pick up to take to the bungalow outside Rocky Springs Park. Charity girls were “working-class young women [who] obtained financial help, gifts, and access to entertainment” from the men they met “in exchange for a variety of sexual favors, from flirting to intercourse.” These women were not prostitutes but were young girls who solicited men for a good time out on the town, and in return they would often provide sexual pleasure. They did not have sex directly in order to get money, as in the case of a prostitute. In fact, they would strongly reject any attempt by a man to offer them money after a sexual

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encounter. These women were not as fortunate as Hoak to be accepted by the community as “good girls.” The charity girls in Lancaster were dynamic and independent like Hoak, but they also leapt over the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable behavior, which consequently led to their immoral classification.

My discussion of Lancaster’s charity girls is based on the investigative documentation I found at the Lancaster County Historical Society in the files of the Law and Order Society, which was a religiously based organization that was considered the “moral police” of Lancaster. Its goal was to rid the entire city of any unacceptable and immoral activities, including prostitution, gambling, under-aged drinking, and unacceptable forms of dancing. Along with Pringle’s piece, the primary documents I have gathered will provide a well-rounded picture of what Lancaster life and amusements were like for two different categories of women who were occupying new and uncertain public territory. They may have experienced many of the same sights and activities in the city, but they certainly did not maintain the same reputation. Therefore, my aim is to unravel how the overlapping experiences of these two groups of women could translate into such different moral distinctions.

The Progressive Age: Women, Commercial Amusement, and Social Reform

There is an incredible amount of literature available documenting the lives of women during the Progressive Era. I have utilized some of this material in order to lend greater insight into the understanding and classification of women in Lancaster City. The period of time starting around the 1880s and continuing up to World War I is popularly know as the Progressive Era. In general, this was a time period where social reformers advocated greater
government involvement in the lives of Americans in order to protect them from aggressive business interests. The reformers felt that citizens needed the protection and subsequent guidance of the government. An illustrative legal case, which exhibits the goals of Progressive ideals, was the 1907 Supreme Court decision of Muller v. Oregon, where a laundry owner was found in violation of labor laws limiting working hours for women.

The most notable aspect of this decision was the brief for the state of Oregon put forth by the future Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis. Brandeis, whose main argument was that “the experience of manufacturing countries has illustrated the evil effect of overwork upon the general welfare,” argued for greater government control in the lives of the public. A primary reason he gave in the case of blue-collar female workers was that “the overwork of future mothers…directly attacks the welfare of the nation.” He argued that women were a special class of citizens who needed protection not because they were being exploited as workers, but because the well-being of America’s future generations were at risk if work was not regulated for women. Because of their specific functions as women, they needed special attention; their general rights as workers were not primary.

There was more to Progressivism than the desire to protect citizens through greater government intervention: there was also the belief that reformers knew what was in the best interests of those citizens. Historian Paul Boyer argues that “almost every Progressive cause had its moral dimension; almost every condition Progressives set out to change was seen as contributing to a debilitating social environment that made it easier for people to go wrong

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7 Ibid.
and harder for them to go right.”8 When it came to women, especially women who were becoming more visible in public spaces that had traditionally been defined as male territory, the desire to protect and control could be overwhelming. The efforts of the Law and Order Society reflect this sentiment in that Reverend Clifford Twombly and his followers felt it their duty to monitor the lives of Lancaster’s immoral activity and crack down on what they viewed as the sexual exploitation of women. Outside of wanting local officials to step in and remedy the widespread prostitution problem, Twombly also wanted prostitutes to be “restored to a useful place in society…[to] be released from an atmosphere of drabness, degradation, and disease.”9 The Reverend felt it his duty to rehabilitate the fallen women in Lancaster’s midst.

Within the Progressive movement there was heated debate about whether “coercive moral-control crusades”10 should be considered authentic Progressivism, or if the actions of groups like the Law and Order Society were something more radical because of the degree they intruded into women’s lives. I argue that because Twombly was highly concerned with the degrading working conditions in which Lancaster’s working-class women found themselves, like the long hours they toiled,11 he was classically Progressive. In the model of Brandeis, Twombly felt he was witnessing the unfortunate results of overworking America’s future mothers: they would be pushed into prostitution by necessity. He embodied the Progressive idea that “sexual deviation” was considered not so much to be the result of

10 Boyer, Urban Masses and Moral Order, 196.
“personal failings than as products of an urban environment that needed to be purified.”\(^{12}\)

Therefore, his radical methods of social reform do fit into the Progressive model despite the fact that he may have taken more drastic steps than was typical.

Twombly, like so many other Progressive reformers, was concerned with women who fell under the spell of modern amusements, and he wanted to change the social conditions that were conducive to moral decay. Lancaster’s Society was similar to others in that it believed “the lack of acceptable supervision coupled with the inadequate wages of the women was...a dire consequence.”\(^{13}\) This situation was apparent in Lancaster in that many of the charity girls investigators talked to reported earning under ten dollars a week, which made them dependent on others for daily needs. Kathy Peiss explains that reformers were not solely concerned with work conditions because they believed “just as industrialization had forced family members to seek work away from the home, so commercialization split apart the family in its leisure hours.”\(^{14}\) As I will show, investigators were deeply concerned with the idea that once these young women lost the support of their parents, who were kept ignorant of their children’s actions, charity girls would slip into prostitution. There was never any solid proof that this happened, but it was nonetheless a motivating factor for the Law and Order Society to clean-up the city. Peiss describes that many reformers believed strongly in Victorian morals, and they felt that society should work at “affirming the virtues of chastity and decorum among single women and the primacy of motherhood and


domesticity after marriage.” 15 With conceptions like this, their strong judgments of the charity girls are hardly unexpected.

Along with the reformers, another big part of the Progressive Era was the New Woman who was expanding her public and social boundaries and coming into her own. In The Rise of the New Woman (2003), Jean V. Matthews states that “the New Woman was young, well educated, probably a college graduate, independent of spirit, highly competent, and physically strong and fearless.” 16 Along with these attributes, as we will see modeled by Mary Eleanor Hoak, was a lack of desire for a husband and children; they were very much married to their professional occupation. This tendency was revealed in the 1900 census, which showed “a dramatic drop in the birthrate since 1860, particularly among native-born white women.” 17 To go along with their bold rejection of the traditional expectations for women, they also pioneered a world previously dominated by men. New Women were entering white-collar work in hoards. For these accomplished women, their careers provided them “justification for their education, indeed for their existence, and it linked them to the wider exciting world of endeavor and achievement.” 18 As in the case of Hoak, we will see that occupations like teaching became quite popular and eventually female-dominated. While they were relishing their ability to be a larger part of society, these schoolteachers had to deal with the fact that “women earned about 60 percent of the male salary in 1890, less than half by 1910.” 19 So, even though they were gaining new freedoms and becoming

15 Ibid., 163.
17 Ibid., 37-38.
18 Ibid., 39.
19 Ibid., 46.
increasingly independent, there was and would continue to be much inequality in the world of work.

The title “New Woman” was not exclusively reserved for middle-class white women, but also included working-class women. Sarah Deutsch argued that women in blue-collar occupations could also be categorized as New Women despite their “meager wages” because they too had to “negotiate the status shifts that often entailed.” These women were challenging traditional roles alongside their middle-class sisters through their participation in multiple aspects of public life. One of the primary differences was, then, the fact that their class status put them in much closer proximity to the possibility of prostitution.

Even though these women may have “valued independence over protection,” the type of protection they were rejecting was the overbearing and stifling brand pushed on them by reformers who were worried about the moral reputations of New Women challenging their expected roles. In response to the domineering beliefs of parents and reformers, many New Women “felt safest surrounded by her peers” because she was able, through her new social roles, to find “sites that simultaneously manifested and created community ties.”

The cheeky charity girls who were challenging social traditions were young women who would receive “charity” from men in the form of consumer goods and access to public amusements. In return they would engage in sexual activity. This relationship between working-class women and the men with which they contracted is referred to as “treating” by some scholars. Historian Timothy Gilfoyle highlights the fact that girls who accepted “treats” from men “were not truly promiscuous, neither were they models of decorum; they

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20 Deutsch, *Women and the City*, 105.
21 Ibid., 113.
22 Ibid., 114.
moved in and out of the trade quite easily.”

Importantly, these women were not prostitutes in that they refused to accept cash, and while the distinction seems to be somewhat thin, there is a difference nonetheless. In her article “The Purchase of Intimacy” (2000), Viviana A. Zelizer distinguishes between treating and “the much more sexually restricted relationship of middle-class dating, but also from the sexually explicit bargain of prostitution.”

Also, Zelizer points out that charity girls use terms like “gifts” and “presents” instead of “payment” when they refer to the transactions they make with men. Despite the sexual escapades of these women in a time when such activity would destroy their reputations, most were conscientious of their image and would cringe at any suggestion that they were prostitutes.

According to several scholars, charity girls tread a fine line between their activity and that of “‘occasional prostitutes,’ women who slipped in and out of prostitution when unemployed or in need of extra income.”

The fact that most charity girls were working-class lends support to the idea that they relied on men to provide them with a good time. Many of these women spent their incomes on life’s necessities and had little extra money for leisure activities; men provided them with a reprieve from daily struggle for which they yearned. Charity girls heartily embraced their permissive social identity, and they fully understood that in order to be able to participate in the thriving entertainments of the time, they would have to negotiate within a heterosocial world. Although the Law and Order Society would argue that these women were just one small step away from becoming

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25 Ibid.
prostitutes, there are no concrete facts that suggest whether or not these girls “took the ‘downward path’ toward prostitution…or married into respectability.”\textsuperscript{27} The warnings social reformers sounded about the activities of these women, which they felt would lead to their sad demise, were most often popular assumptions with little supporting evidence.

**Lancaster: The Tale of Two Cities**

During the first quarter of the twentieth century, Lancaster was a medium sized city with about fifty thousand residents.\textsuperscript{28} This prosperous city was the local marketplace hub for nearby farmers and surrounding towns in a county that was considered “the wealthiest in the nation in agricultural production.”\textsuperscript{29} Lancaster was also considered the fourth largest manufacturing city in Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{30} It was viewed as old, conservative, and white stock. It was “full of churches, had an academy, a college, and a theological seminary.”\textsuperscript{31} Despite—or maybe because of—the city’s opulence and its general reputation as a conservatively religious and quiet town, Lancaster had a thriving vice district. There was widespread fear among many residents that Lancaster was “only a pitchfork’s length away from devilish activity and where sin lurks everywhere.”\textsuperscript{32} Prostitution, gambling, and drinking were well-documented parts of the city’s economy and even tolerated by local law enforcement and politicians.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 112.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 512
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{32} Loose, “A History of Sin and Vice,” 105.
\textsuperscript{33} Jenkins, “‘A Wide-Open City,’” 509.
By 1913 there were thought to be “44 houses of prostitution within six blocks of Penn Square, 62 churches and synagogues were doing their best to save souls.”\footnote{Loose, “A History of Sin and Vice,” 103.} While the churches were obviously concerned with the growing vice in the city, they did not seem interested in doing much about it as long as they could “maintain an oasis of probity and piety within the congregation.”\footnote{Ibid., 106.} Another important reason why vice thrived in Lancaster during this time was that police action and legal enforcement were practically non-existent. Rather, the police, businessmen, and even the mayor participated in the vice culture that was available to them.

Mrs. Carberry bragged to one of the Law and Order Society investigators that the police never bother her because “too many business men come here for them to touch me.”\footnote{Kinsie Affidavit (November 1913). Folder 66, Box 5, Law and Order Society Collection: 1868-1972, Lancaster County Historical Society, Lancaster, PA.} On another occasion Carberry informs the investigator that Mayor Frank McClain was “crazy over young girls,” and he would flirt with her granddaughter who would turn him down by exclaiming, “because my grandma keeps a house it don’t give you a license to ask me that.”\footnote{Ibid.} As for the police, one brothel owner, Grace Hobbs, thought it comical that the investigator wondered if she ever feared being raided because she retorted, “why no, if you stay here long enough you’ll see him inside eating with us.”\footnote{Ibid.} The police not only tolerated prostitution, but they seemed quite comfortable with it. The reputation Lancaster earned as a “wide open” city (see: Jenkins 1998; Hartman1980) was incredibly accurate.
Reverend Clifford Gray Twombly, who had a “puritanical set of morals and a tenacious character,” started the Law and Order Society in 1911 in an effort to combat his city’s vast immorality. Considered the moral police of Lancaster, the group worked very hard to clean up the city. Members were anxious to eliminate prostitution and, in fact, by 1924, after several years of work, they could take responsibility for the closure of 65 bawdy houses. Its staff had a paid full-time investigator who traveled on daily rounds to visit local theaters, amusement parks, dance halls, and hotels. The Society also occasionally hired out-of-town investigators to perform clandestine operations around the city. These investigators most often came from larger cities like New York, and they were both male and female.

These investigators moved around Lancaster and interacted with people using the cover story that they were “strangers looking for a good time,” or they were out-of-towners “looking for a chance to get into the prostitution business in Lancaster.” As a result of their efforts, these investigators uncovered “fifty-three vice resorts…twenty-seven parlor houses…[and] fifteen furnished room houses.” They also produced numerous affidavits and case studies regarding their conversations with women they labeled as “street walkers” and “charity girls.” The Law and Order Society appeared to have been extremely active in their regulation and investigation of the activities of women. The new freedoms of women and their desires to get out of the house and move around the city streets seemed a major concern within the Society. They were eager to regulate any form of immorality that might taint the image of a respectable woman out on the town.

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41 Ibid., “From Wide Open to Tightly Closed,” 33.
42 Ibid.
No part of the city’s entertainment seemed able to escape the watchful eye of the Society: even relatively decent place were criticized for their loose values. The Fulton Opera House, which was generally considered one of the highest-class places to see new theatrical performances, and where Mary Eleanor Hoak would often go to see performances, was scolded by the society. John W. W. Loose writes that the Society was scathing in their report on the Fulton for its “Saturday morning burlesque shows that attracted as many as twelve hundred boys and men” (108). The Fulton was not being singled out in that no place of amusement could escape the scrutiny of the Law and Order Society. The County Fair where many people flocked, especially school-aged children, was also disapproved of by the Society since they viewed both the gambling and the “obscene shows on the midway” as unacceptable.

The Society was not content with simply watching and recording the vice they witnessed around the city; they took action. After documenting who went in and out of the numerous houses of prostitution, which included the mayor and a number of other well-known Lancastrians, they confronted the Lancaster district attorney. Here they were taken seriously, especially when Twombly “threatened to go public in the newspapers.” As a result, the police shut down a few bawdy houses. The Society also succeeded in getting a series of articles published in the Lancaster Intelligencer Journal with eye-catching headlines like “Revolting Social Conditions Are Exposed By Investigation.” As a side note, the mayor responded a couple days after this headline appeared by stating that after reviewing

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carefully the investigations performed by the Society, he felt the “conditions as portrayed in
the vice commissions report are exaggerated and the city of Lancaster is not a modern
Babylon or a counterpart of Sodom and Gomorrah.” Given the activities in which the
Society recorded him taking part, this is a revealing opinion for him to express in the paper.

The Society was ruthless in their desire to rid the city of vice and they would spare no
one’s reputation if it got in the way of their primary priority of eliminating any activity they
deemed unacceptable. Hence, Twombly and his commission played an incredibly important
role in uncovering and documenting the immoral activities of Lancaster.

The “New Woman”: A Look at Lancaster’s Example

While the world of the charity girl or the prostitute may have seemed far away from
that of a middle-class professional woman, they were each part of the new urban
entertainments and employment where social expectations were being reorganized. They
shared many of the same social excursions despite the different implications of their
identities. In a way, they each embody ideas of the New Woman since they were challenging
traditional conceptions of what being a woman meant. In Kathy Peiss’s work, Progressive
Era women, like charity girls and white-collar professionals, could be classified as “New
Women” because through their actions, they were questioning “the ‘natural’ division of
women and men’s lives into separate spheres of social activity.” They were reformulating
one of the key ways social space was organized.

Mary Eleanor Hoak was very much the embodiment of the New Woman because she
was independent and adventurous while at the same time she maintained her respectability.

46 Ibid.
47 Peiss, Cheap Amusement, 163.
Diane Hoffman Pringle’s manuscript details the activities in the life of her great-aunt Mary—from teaching Sunday school to going to the Rocky Springs Theater. From the roughly ten months Hoak’s diary covered, Pringle exposed many interesting personal and public details about Hoak’s life. Outside of going to and teaching school Hoak spent much of her time doing household work as well as “shopping, visiting friends and relatives, stopping at ice cream parlors…[and] attending musical and theater performances.” She was also an active member of the First Presbyterian Church along with the rest of her family. Hoak was the second youngest of three sisters and four brothers, the latter of which all served in the Civil War.

Mary Eleanor Hoak lived with her family in a shaded, picturesque wooden house at 704 South Queen Street. This street location is at the southern most border of Lancaster City and would have been several blocks away from central downtown. This was considered a middle-class part of town. Hoak’s father—like the traditional patriarch—supported their middle-class lifestyle with his work as a foreman. The Hoak family eventually built an addition onto the back of the house in order to “accommodate the growing dressmaking business operated by Mary’s mother.” Hoak had two older sisters who worked with their mother as dressmakers, but they also had worked short stints as mill hands. Hoak’s younger sister had worked as a cigar bander before working with her mother. Hence, the family had a dual-income, which facilitated their middle-class status. All of Hoak’s four

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49 Ibid., 5.
50 Ibid., 6.
51 Ibid., 9.
52 Ibid., 6.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid., 9.
brothers were active in the military and, outside of their efforts in the Spanish-American War, they were locksmiths and cigar makers.\textsuperscript{55} The family seemed to be close knit; especially in the case of Hoak’s sisters and mother who worked together on a daily basis.

Even though she could not be considered a social activist and was a “member of a very conservative family, Mary appeared nevertheless to have embraced the changing social conventions for middle-class women.”\textsuperscript{56} Being the only member of her family to attend college, she started early in her life on the path of a determined New Woman. She attended Millersville State Normal School and graduated in 1904 during a commencement ceremony that was appropriately “the first to be held in the Rocky Springs Theater.”\textsuperscript{57} This fitting new beginning as a professional would foreshadow her important role as a participant in the time period’s blossoming amusement sector. While Millersville during this time was a co-educational institution, the majority of people in her graduating class were women\textsuperscript{58} hoping to find a new and purposeful role in the world.

Pringle highlights during her description of Hoak’s college experience that the college was located in an area conducive to “moral culture” because it was “near enough to Lancaster to enjoy the benefits…yet not so near as to expose its students to the numerous temptations to vice common to cities.”\textsuperscript{59} This fortunate locality did not, however, eliminate all threat for immorality, as the school’s identity as co-ed led to interaction between the sexes. In fact, this did result in anxieties on the part of the administration because “faculty spent a significant

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 10.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 25.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 26.
portion of their time seeing that the two groups did not engage in any immoral interaction.\(^{60}\) Wherever women experienced life outside the traditional realm of the home, they inevitably engaged in a heterosocial world where boundaries would be broken and those troubled by it would try to stop it.

This type of male/female interaction may not have been an issue for Hoak since Pringle admitted she could find no hint that “Mary sought to marry and have children.”\(^{61}\) In this way she was unique because many of her female comrades would decide to marry out of college and would shelve their aspirations in order to concentrate on their family. Hoak, on the other hand, “did not see her normal school experience as an interlude before marriage, but rather as a prelude to a professional life as a New Woman.”\(^{62}\) This tendency was apparent in Hoak, I think, from the time she decided to go to college and break the mould within her own family. She did not desire to be a dressmaker like the other women in her family, but instead had bigger aspirations that would bring her into unfamiliar territory.

There are two key ways Hoak engaged with the world as a New Woman, the first of which was through her work as a teacher, and she was employed at the Strawberry Street School, which was only five blocks from her residence.\(^{63}\) During the Progressive Era, teaching was gaining a reputation as a woman’s job and by 1920 “86% of public school teachers were women and almost 100% of the elementary” teachers as well.\(^{64}\) As for pay, Pringle estimates that Hoak earned $50 every month,\(^{65}\) and while this was lower than what a man would have received, it was still a middle-class income that would have given her

\(^{60}\) Ibid., 27.
\(^{61}\) Ibid., 33.
\(^{62}\) Ibid.
\(^{63}\) Ibid., 40.
\(^{64}\) Ibid., 42.
\(^{65}\) Ibid., 52.
independence and autonomy to make her own decisions. As a teacher she was expected to adhere to strict moral conditions (these were not specifically listed) as stated in Pennsylvania’s new codes of 1912 that worked to establish a public school system. Along with required morality, there was also an unspoken rule: female teachers were to remain single.66 While this expectation did not seem to be a problem for Hoak since she did not reveal any interest in her diary of marrying, it was a problem for other women because they were assumed not to be capable of “juggl[ing] the responsibilities of caring for a home and children with work outside the home.”67 Not only did Hoak’s life and beliefs outside of work establish her as a credible and respectable person, but also her role as a teacher further reinforced her image as a moral citizen. In many aspects of her life she was able to maintain a wholesome identity while at the same time sustaining the ideology of a New Woman.

Mary Eleanor Hoak’s work at the Strawberry Street School did not last forever, as she eventually grew anxious to move onto bigger places. To satisfy this desire, she first moved to Philadelphia where she taught for only a year, and then she went to New York City (54). Here she attended Columbia University and graduated in 1930.68 As a young woman she stepped out of the expectations of her family, and as an adult she confounded anyone’s expectations by leaving Lancaster and traveling on her own to get a second teaching degree at Columbia. She seemed to be a woman who would follow her heart while remaining true to the respectable values her family taught her. Even though she relied on her parents for housing throughout much of her young adult life, she did contribute monetarily to the

66 Ibid., 48.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid., 54.
household and did not seem apprehensive to leave when she was ready for a new stage of life.

Not only was teaching an important way for Hoak to widen her horizons, but so was her participation in leisure time activities, which is the second manifestation of her identity as a New Woman. The fact that the first entry in her diary occurs just twelve days before she left for a trip that toured the northeast—including New York City—is strong evidence of her desire to experience the newest thrills and adventures the world had to offer. On the ninth day of her trip she visited the infamous Coney Island. In her diary for that day she recorded: “Coney Island by boat and back by L [elevated train]. Large time at Coney. Plenty of amusements.”69 While this entry seems a sparse description of what must have been an overdose of stimulation, it is quite typical of her entries. Her entry, which included three separate statements about Coney, was actually longer than her usual entry and expresses the amazement she must have felt in such a place. Coney was known for its risqué environment, yet Hoak did not have to worry about its affect on her reputation because the park also exhibited an aura of selectivity for its middle-class patrons. This made it attractive to people like Hoak since “the single entrance allowed owners not only to control admission but to differentiate the parks, with their claims of ‘clean, wholesome fun,’ from the rowdier areas of Coney Island…respectable woman would want to avoid.”70

While going to a place like Coney Island would have been a special experience for Hoak, her daily life in Lancaster also reveals a wide range of public outings where she participated in the newest amusements. One of her biggest passions was the theater, and she

69 Ibid., appendix B, 3.
would occasionally attend Rocky Springs Theater or the Fulton Opera House. Because the “Rocky Springs Theater offered more upscale musical, theatrical and operatic performances,” Hoak felt comfortable visiting the park. One of her diary entries states that she “went to hear [John Philip] Sousa in the afternoon at Rocky. It was great” (Pringle 56). Apparently, along side the Fulton Opera House, Rocky Springs’ theater was the most acceptable and decent amusement for women and their friends to frequent in their leisure time. Also, Pringle points out that these were the “largest theaters offering the more critically-acclaimed performances.”

The shows were such a joy to Hoak that when she went to see Ben Hur at the Fulton, she recorded that she “got home 10 of twelve.” The next day’s entry reveals that she “felt rather tired & sleepy today after last night’s dissipation.” Pringle notes that by “dissipation” Hoak most likely meant either “frivolous amusement” or “indulgence in pleasure to the point of harming oneself.” Despite her escapades and the negative effects she deals with afterwards, within the middle-class community of Lancaster, Rocky Springs and the Fulton were considered the most acceptable places for women to visit and experience the latest entertainments of the time period. These two places attracted people like Mary Eleanor Hoak, as well as other such women, who wanted to go out and have a good time yet required that the entertainment be morally appropriate and also enjoyable.

The Law and Order Society played an active role in monitoring vice within some of the amusements Hoak frequented. Because the Society was clerically supported and it engaged in “prolonged clandestine inquiry [that] ensured that vice would be seen operating in its

71 Pringle, “Prelude to Professional Life,” 56.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid., appendix B, 11.
74 Ibid.
normal form,”75 the following will lend nuance to Diane Hoffman Pringle’s impression of the park’s respectability as presented by her great-aunt. The investigator’s trips to Rocky Springs and other local parks, such as Peoples’ Rink, reveals how Rocky Springs was viewed and how it maintained such a gleaming reputation in comparison to other places of amusement. The places that seemed to be of most interest to the Society investigator John Kline were the dancing pavilion, the Penny Arcade, and the Paddle Wheel.

The agent on-duty reports monitoring dancing show how Rocky Springs made their popular pavilion decent and acceptable to the Society while other venues did not. On September 27, 1913 Kline went to the park and observed the following at the dance Mr. Brubaker, the manager, was holding:

- Found about 250 people there
- I found some are determined, if left go, to dance some of those indecent dances. Saw Mr. Brubaker stop a young man who attempted the Grizzly Bear in a mild form.
- I found I could make no complaint as it was respectable and no one under 16 years were there and it came to a close at 11:15 pm.76

In this entry there are a number of interesting pieces of information that legitimate the morality of the park in Kline’s eyes despite the fact that immoral behavior was occurring. First, he saw the park manager stop a young man who was trying to do the “Grizzly Bear in a mild form” which was viewed as unacceptable. The park displayed to the society that they expressed no leeway, even for small displays of immorality. According to Kathy Peiss, this dance was considered “tough dancing” where there was bodily touching and the “dancers’

75 Jenkins, “‘A Wide-Open City,’” 512.
movements ranged from a slow shimmy, or shaking of the shoulders and hips, to boisterous animal imitations that ridiculed middle-class ideals.”

That Mr. Brubaker stopped such a suggestive dance was important to Kline who was then able to approve of the dancing and the chaperoning in general. Rocky Springs was not void of immoral behavior; it was, though, meticulous in enforcing respectability while the Society was present.

Hoak also occasionally enjoyed seeing movies. There are six occasions where she records doing so in her diary, four of which were at the Hippodrome, which had an elaborate auditorium “seating 1,000 people, and six exits making it one of the safest.” She was not always as pleased with her experiences at the movies (theater was her true passion), but she still frequented them with friends and family because the cost was low and the public stimulation was attractive. The movies were not considered to be as “high brow” as the theater, which would have contributed to her less shining reviews of her experience at the Hippodrome.

Often while going out, Hoak would stop with friends at “drug stores, ice cream parlors, and confectionery shops” as places of “informal social gatherings.” Such popular places catered to a mixed crowd. So, if Hoak could have avoided the more unsavory aspects of public amusements by going to up-scale theater establishments, she could not avoid them when she frequented little shops for goodies. Soda and ice cream were also favorite indulgences among the charity girls who would go to such places to be “treated” by their male acquaintances. Hoak must have encountered these women and would have had the chance to interact with them. Social boundaries in such places, as well as on the streets, were

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77 Peiss, Cheap Amusement, 102.
78 Pringle, “Prelude to Professional Life,” 56.
79 Ibid., 57.
80 Ibid., 59.
not clearly defined or enforced, so social exposure to immorality would have been a part of Hoak’s experience. Importantly, such encounters did not change her classification as a respectable woman.

The purity Hoak displayed was further reinforced by one of her favorite activities: going to church and teaching Sunday school. The church was one of the main activities that took her outside the house, and she would use the time before and after church to experience public amusements like the theater or the ice cream parlor. The church was such a crucial part of the lives of women like Hoak because it “provided the opportunity for many respectable social and service-oriented activities for New Women.”81 Mary Eleanor Hoak was no exception in that she thrived in the church by participating in their service organizations and teaching “the beginners class in Sunday school.”82 She had a well-developed network of friends and family that could confirm her morality and support her as a model Lancaster citizen—she never needed the safety and legitimacy of marriage to maintain her good image.

Charity Girls: The Game and its Consequences

On November 28, 1913 at the railroad station, Paul Kinsie was sitting across from a girl, Clara Bates, who frequently looked up at him and smiled suggestively. After this had been going on for several minutes she eventually invited him over by making room for him on the seat next to her. She asked him if he was looking for a “train or a girl” to which he

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81 Ibid., 60.
82 Ibid., 62.
retorted with the same question, making her laugh. She explained that she had already been to the movies and had been walking downtown when she decided to rest at the station. He responded by saying he was glad she was having a pleasant evening, to which she replied, “some enjoyment. This sporting life is killing.”

Clara went on bantering with Kinsie about how boring Lancaster was, despite the fact that she had just spent an active evening experiencing what the city had to offer. When she failed at getting any information out of the investigator, except that he knew his way around the city, she decided to quiz him. She asked, “Where’s Water Street? Where’s Cherry Street?” He replied, “Why pick out those streets?” because he knew—as well as she did—that those streets were part of the vice district. Her quick response was, “because I know those and a few more are the only ones you salesmen ever get in line on.” This bold conversation revealed that she was as eager for information on Kinsie, the Law and Order Society investigator, as he was for information on her. She was not dumb and she seemed to have plenty of experience with the type of man the investigator was pretending to be. Even though Kinsie was not impressed with this girl’s conversation and believed she was not of “sound mind,” we can clearly see how charity girls like Clara Bates navigated around a discussion to get information as well as to suggest their willing nature to their male acquaintances. Their boldness and sexuality led reformers like Kinsie to believe that this could only have been the result of a defective mind; Kinsie’s narrow perceptions would not allow him to understand her complex motivations.

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84 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
Lancaster may have been known for its large number of churches and its conservative citizenry, but this does not come close to telling the whole story. Lancaster had good and bad parts of town. People generally knew where each side was, and they stuck to the area they fit best. With the approach of the Progressive Era and the revolution in entertainment, the clear line between the good and bad was starting to shade. People were excited to enjoy the new amusements, meaning that they all converged onto the parts of the city in which fun and excitement appeared. This led to the inevitable mixing of moral and immoral people. Rocky Springs Park and the nearby bungalow was one clear way in which such mixing occurred; there was no way to keep this from happening as everyone had an equal craving to occupy public spaces. Social reformers, in turn, responded to this confusing street life.

Charity girls were a large part of the unsavory population that intermingled with respectable people like Mary Eleanor Hoak. Much to the chagrin of the Law and Order Society, these young women were a loud, dynamic, and flirtatious part of Lancaster’s street life. They often traveled in groups or pairs, which added to the degree of their impact on the city environment. They were demanding and forthright, unapologetic for their impudent nature. The charity girls, though, were not stupid: they displayed wit and creative innuendo in their attempts to seduce the Society’s investigator. Surprisingly, I have found that the conversations in which these girls engaged were very explicit, and they were not at all shy about using swear words. Even by today’s standards, I believe that much of what these girls said would be considered highly risqué. They were ahead of their time in that regard.

In the files of the Law and Order Society, the investigative information has been broken down into two different sources: case histories and sworn affidavits of the investigators. I will discuss the case histories in the next section, as I feel they reveal more about the
investigator than they do about the charity girls. What follows, then, is a description and discussion of the affidavits. These reveal the activities of the charity girls—both of what they say and how they act. While we cannot rely completely on what the investigator says his conversations consisted of, we can remember that the Society valued truthfulness in reporting. Also, the affidavits are sworn legal documents, which adds a bit of credibility to the information.

To begin the documentation on charity girls, there is a short definition of who they were, which was recorded by 35-year-old investigator Mrs. Minerva Mullen of New York City. She writes that the “girls walk in pairs; they appear to be school girls and shop and factory girls. They dress modestly…[they] can be found nightly on parade on Queen Street from the Railway Station to W. King Street.” Intriguingly, their outfits did not give away their sexual willingness, but instead seemed to add to the blurred distinction between proper and fallen women. While this is in no way an exhaustive description of these young women, it does give a rough idea of their appearance and habits. From the 20 separate affidavits that deal with charity girls, there are 20 different named young women and two that were unnamed, equaling 22 young women. Eight of the women stated they lived with either parents or a relative (one girl lived with her aunt).

The eight women who were employed or gave their occupation earned about $5 to $6 a week with one earning $10 a week as a bookkeeper. This latter woman was unique in that she had a white-collar job similar to Hoak’s work, yet still enjoyed going out and being “treated” by men. This shows that sexual interaction was not always done out of requirement, but that many of the young women looked forward to it. Nevertheless, the

88 Ibid., 49.
majority of them can be classified as working-class, since Hoak was middle-class and earning $50 a month. Peiss estimates that a “living wage” for around the year 1910 would be “nine or ten dollars a week.”89 Many of the charity girls worked in the tobacco factory as strippers where they removed the thick stems from leaves used to role the cigars.90 “As one of the industry’s least desirable job,”91 stripping was almost exclusively done by women and was considered to be “dirty, dead-end, low-wage work.”92

Working in the factory would have been tiring and grueling, but once they finished a day of work, they had the rest of the time for themselves. Their desire for public amusement was born out of the difficult lives they led; as day laborers earning little money, there were only a few ways for them to seek pleasure. Kathy Peiss points to the logical conclusion that “low wages and little spending money would seem to have limited women’s access to leisure, thus undercutting the heterosocial, pleasure-oriented culture of the workplace.”93 The opposite was true for the charity girls, whose working-class status is what facilitated their desire to interact with men in public that were willing to treat them. Despite the fact that such a relationship with men might have seemed more beneficial to the man, Peiss argues that “these working women sought a way to negotiate dependency and claim some choice, autonomy, and pleasure in otherwise dreary lives.”94 Their “charity” status afforded them a creative way to approach men on the streets and declare confidently what they wanted from them and what they were willing to give in return.

89 Peiss, Cheap Amusement, 52.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
93 Peiss, Cheap Amusement, 51-52.
94 Ibid.
The majority of the affidavits documenting the charity girls of Lancaster come from Paul M. Kinsie. This man was 24-years-old, which is around the age of many of the charity girls, and he is also from New York City. He and Mullen were part of a group of out-of-town investigators the Law and Order Society hired in an effort to gather information as professionally as possible. Most of their undercover work took place during November. He conversed with a large number of charity girls and prostitutes and seemed to be fairly popular with both groups. He most likely appealed to them as both a young interested man and also as an outsider who would not spread stories about them around the city. Therefore, it is fair to say that these women did not know his real identity or his real mission.

The most obvious characteristic all the charity girls displayed was their sexual boldness, which they used as a tool to attract men and hold their interest while they were treating them to different amusements. Their willingness to engage in suggestive conversations was a clear signal that they were “charity” and therefore sexually curious about their male partners. Their schemes to get male attention included using eye contact with strangers and openly greeting them while out on the street. To be so bold with an unknown man would have been a clear signal that these young ladies were different from traditional women. After the charity girls made contact they would start conversations with subtle flirtations and sometimes apologies for being so bold. They did not immediately engage in explicit conversations, but would work up to it in an effort to determine the type of man they had lured. Once they decided the man was one who was willing to treat them to a night on the town and who showed interest in them beyond a few hours out in public, the charity girls would use their skills at innuendo to seduce him to stay longer or take them out again.
The first incident that displays the different methods charity girls used to engage with men and hold their interest is Kinsie’s meeting with 21-year-old Anna Hartman, who was employed as a clerk at the Lancaster Candy Company. On November 17, 1913 at 7:00pm, the investigator was on North Queen Street where he passed Anna who greeted him with a “howdy do.” She did not stop to talk to him, but Kinsie felt that since she greeted him, which was not a normative behavior for a woman, he would catch up to her and try to engage her. Upon noticing that he was following her she asked if they were headed in the same direction. Kinsie replied, “that depends wholly upon which way that is.” Laughing, she responded, “the straight and narrow path.” At this point she tried to excuse her earlier forwardness by saying, “you look so much like a friend of mine I never in God’s world would have greeted you unless I knew you.” This innocent act would not last long, and, most likely, she seemed to be teasing the investigator.

Her coy remarks worked because Kinsie decided to offer her dinner at the Crystal Restaurant. Like so many other girls, she explained over dinner how she was sick of Lancaster. She lamented:

A girl can’t make a decent living here. I work in a candy store and get $5 a week. Just see what I can do with that big $5. If I didn’t have people what could I do on that $5.

But what’s the use of worrying, my folks look after me so I keep the money all for myself.

This girl shows that she embodied much of what a charity girl was; she was young, working-class, lived with her parents, and she depended on the men she met to provide to her a good

95 Ibid., 83-84.
96 Ibid.
time. After this revelation the conversation becomes more suggestive. Anna expressed how much she wanted to be out, and Kinsie wondered, “well aren’t you and I out now?” She replied, “of course, we’re not in, but I wish we was.” After skirt ing around the issue for a while, Anna suggests that they try to find an isolated hotel. After squeezing his hand she said, “I don’t want to be seen you know, this aint New York.” Kinsie was able to avoid taking her to a hotel by promising to take her out another night. He left her that evening at 9:00pm. The investigator sums up his experience by stating, “it needs but one person to give her money for her services and I am most certain she will deviate from her ‘straight and narrow path.’” While this belief is purely conjecture, it does show that he perceives a fine line between prostitution and “charity.”

On the very next day, November 18th, Kinsie met with Kitty Frailey and Irene Stroble. These girls were quite adept at the sexual banter men seem to enjoy so much, and they were not shy about displaying their skills. Kinsie and a man named Jules Simon were standing in front of the Wheatland Hotel when these two girls passed them and waved. After watching them walk down the street and stop at the corner to turn around, the two men approached them and were pleased to find that these girls were eager to speak with them. After discovering the girls were on their lunch break, they made plans to meet at 7:00pm at Penn Square, a popular gathering place for many men and women.

That evening Kinsie went to meet the girls, but without Simon, and the following conversation ensued. Kinsie asked the girls what they intended to do and Irene responded slyly, “oh, what didn’t we intend to do.” His answer was, “well, I guess I can take care of both of you.” At this point he explained that the comment was made to determine if the girls

97 Ibid.
98 Ibid., 53-54.
were “charity” because he felt the question involved “nothing of a suggestive nature…unless girls of an evil mind wish to understand only its suggestiveness.” Of course, these young ladies fell right into his obvious trap when Irene responded, “well, then you surely must be some boy.” They took the opportunity to stroke his masculinity, as experience told them that was a sure way to hold a man’s attention. With such a comment, Kinsie confirmed their charity status and determined they “seemed to be the worst” of their kind. Along with their brashness, they also were bold in asking for the goods they wanted. They asked four times for Kinsie to “buy them toilet articles.”

Also occurring on the 18th of November was his encounter with Ida Pickil at the post office. Like many other charity girls, her main luring tool was her smile and eye contact, which worked to get Kinsie to introduce himself. This charity girl, though, was more forward than most. Upon his approach Ida admits that she had seen him wandering around and had assumed he was a pimp. In response, Kinsie told her after learning she was 19 years old, “I could not imagine how a girl as young as you seemed to know so much about things which other girls don’t.” She exclaimed, “do you know where Stanberry Street is? Well I lived there all my life. Right around the corner on Howard Avenue is a bunch of houses. Even when I was a kid I knew what they were.”

The conversation went on like this for a short time until the investigator said he had to leave, at which point Ida invited him to take her out again. Upon telling him her name and address, she comments, “some name I’ve got, but it’s good,—I like pickles. You know, the
kind that look like white cigars.” This very bold phrase is full of sexual innuendo.

Considering that today many people would be shocked to hear this from a 19-year-old, in the early 20th century this would have been even more dumbfounding. Ida proves that charity girls were neither shy nor felt shame for their behavior. They embraced their lifestyle and even seem to enjoy trying to get a rise out of their male companions. Ida does not seem to be foolish or impaired, as many social reformers would have argued, but she instead seems totally aware of her behavior and comfortable with it.

Next, on November 25th, Kinsie encountered two Stevens High School girls, Lou Helm and Kit Cassell, leaving the Crystal Restaurant on North Queen Street after their lunch break. While they were in a hurry to get back to school, they did agree to meet him at 4:00pm once they were dismissed. Immediately at their second meeting, the girls revealed their clever yet explicit nature. They were at first surprised to see him show up, but they quickly recovered when Kit questions, “say not getting inquisitive, but what’s your line? You surely have banking hours when you can meet two girls at 4 o’clock in the afternoon.” Kinsie did not skip a beat when he told them he was a traveling salesman and had flexible hours.

The girls immediately took this point to display their experience with men by relating to Kinsie that one time Lou was taken out by a married salesman. The investigator seemed to be surprised by this occurrence and wondered if they were serious. Kit assured him they were when she said, “anybody that don’t live in Lancaster we’ll go out with. Married men, why they are the best ever. Just as long as their wives are at a safe distance away.” These young charity girls not only hit on married men, but they were also conscious of the fact that

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101 Ibid.
such men, especially if they were from out-of-town, were unlikely to reveal the types of behaviors in which they engaged. These girls unabashedly admitted to their immoral behaviors and were encouraged by the attention the investigator was giving them.103

The next clear characteristic charity girls exhibited was their desire for independence, which is a reflection of their New Woman persona and also Mary Eleanor Hoak’s personality. As was hinted at above in the case of Anna Hartman, these girls had a strong desire for freedom and they often felt stifled in Lancaster. Their desire to get out of what they felt was a stuffy and overly conservative city was reflected in their admiration of the excitement and anonymity available in New York City. Many girls expressed interest in visiting and eventually escaping to New York City. Some even had plans of how they would trick their parents into letting them go. These charity girls show that they are similar to middle-class New Women of the time period in their desires to escape conventions and live life in a way they image would be fulfilling. Remember, Hoak also had dreams of bigger and better places, and she was able chase her desires by leaving Lancaster for New York City. The moral implications for their desires to be in the Big City were different, but the motivating factors and sense of exploration were similar.

The first clue to this desire for more exciting places came on November 18th when Kinsie came across Barbara Foreman in front of a moving picture theater where she was admiring the billboard. She expressed to Kinsie her desire to move to New York City to become an actress because actresses “get big money and have good times.” Later in the conversation Barbara confessed that she likes “to be in a place where there is plenty of fun, all the time.” She told Kinsie that when she visited New York City she went to the Eldorado,

103 Ibid.
and to this Kinsie responded by saying that such a place was not for “good girls.” She retorted, “just because a lot of w---- come there. I like to be where they are. There’s always plenty of fun where a fast woman is and you know it.” At this point the investigator proceeded to warn her that her associations put her at risk for prostitution. Barbara brushed off the comment by saying she was not that way. In the end, she gave him her address, 43 Washington Street, so they could get together again despite the fact that Kinsie was openly disapproving of her activities.\(^{104}\)

At 8:00 in the evening on November 22nd, Kinsie was out on the town prowling for charity girls when two young women, Esther Carpenter and Pauline Follmer, confronted him. Both were 19 years old. These young women began a conversation by jokingly offering Kinsie their powder make-up for his use. After the teasing between the three ended, Pauline remarked that she knew he was not from Lancaster, which was why they decided to approach him. Kinsie inquired about their reasons for wanting to meet strangers. Esther told him that “it’s just because the fellows here are such boobs. A Lancaster fellow meets a girl, he starts to talk about Sunday school and after walking her up and down Queen Street for about 10 hours he takes her home and won’t go any further than the door step.” The investigator acts quizzical and wonders out loud why a girl wouldn’t like a date like that. Esther retorts, “Excuse me, where did you say you came from—New York? Well I’ll bet you wouldn’t take a girl out for nothing, would you?”\(^{105}\) These girls wanted men who were daring and not so proper, and also men who would not spread information about them around Lancaster. Their disdain for church boys reveals their rejection of the traditional expectations of female desires and also their wish to maintain their independence. If they went out with Lancaster

\(^{104}\) Ibid., 58-60.

\(^{105}\) Ibid., 77-79.
boys their charity status would become well known and then their parents would probably regulate their behavior more severely.

Pauline eventually jumped into the conversation and said, “take us to the Colonial [theater] so we can pass a few hours, this place gets me going. All you can do here is walk and walk.” Kinsie agreed to take them, and at the theater the girls spent the whole time discussing how much they hated Lancaster and how they wanted to move to New York City. They planned on tricking their parents into letting them visit the city and then they would never come home. When the three left the theater, the girls asked Kinsie to take them out again, specifically to Harrisburg, and they wanted him to bring a friend. After Esther said, “if you show us as good a time as our other friends we’ll go to Harrisburg,” the group decided that they would make the trip to the capital, but no specific date was set. I found no further evidence about if they did eventually go to Harrisburg, but Kinsie did comment at the end of this affidavit that “both girls are ‘charity’ and there can be no doubt but that once they are out of the reach of their parents they will resort to the ‘easiest way.’”106 The main goal for these girls was to have a good time and to take advantage of any opportunity a man would give them to enjoy local amusements. They understood that this way of experiencing entertainment would require them to give pleasure in return, but they were not at all bothered by this inevitability. In fact, they seemed to embrace it as a ticket to greater independence.

The large amount of personal liberty the above charity girls espoused was tempered by a final characteristic: a degree of dependence. Because they were working-class girls earning low wages, they obviously relied on others to provided them with the goods and entertainment they needed and wanted. There is a common fear among many of the young

106 Ibid.
women that their parents would discover their activities. At the same time the charity girls were articulating their desires to run away to New York City, they were also showing their vulnerability. At any moment their freedom could be taken away by disapproving parents, who could disown them or sequester them in the home. Another aspect of their dependence is the obvious fact that they rely on male acquaintances for a good time. While these women retain a large degree of control over their encounters with men, and would usually seek male company, they are nonetheless dependent on a man’s money for access to amusements. Anna Hartman, who I described earlier in this section, is an excellent example of a girl with an independent spirit who is still confined by her inability to support herself. She admitted that her meager salary was not nearly enough to support her daily existence, but she brushed of that reality by saying her parents supported her. Imagine how quickly her autonomy would disappear if her parents discovered her activities and decided to control her behavior.

A final illustration of this dependence happens on November 19th, when Kinsie decided to follow up on his earlier meeting with Barbara Foreman by going to the address she gave him. At 43 Washington Street he found that the location was a bawdy house. He saw Barbara inside and she was surprised to see him because she though she gave him a different address (536 First Street), but she recovered quickly and told him that she was meeting her friend Marie who worked there. She explained that she understood she was in a house of prostitution, but she did not care what that implied about her reputation because her friendship was more important. She also expressed her frustration that her job as a cigar wrapper, where she earned $6-$8 dollars a week, did not pay well enough. She revealed she had to work a week for what Marie made in a few hours.107

107 Ibid., 58-60.
When the investigator told her the temptation would be too strong for her to resist prostitution, she said, “if anything ever happened to me, my oldman he’s a fireman, and believe me he’d fire me out.” Still, Kinsie insisted that before she knew it, she would “be in Marie’s class.” Barbara disagreed again by saying, “I might say a lot, and I might lie a lot. I like to brag and shoot the bull. Not as long as my folks are near, will I ever go on like Marie.” Still, Kinsie believed she was “foolish” and would inevitably become a prostitute.\(^\text{108}\)

While there are other passages documenting that Barbara was in the company of prostitutes, particularly Marie and her Madam,\(^\text{109}\) I found no evidence in the rest of the file to suggest whether or not Barbara became a prostitute. She remained open with Kinsie despite his obvious contempt for her lifestyle.

As can be seen from the numerous affidavits above, Lancaster had a thriving group of charity girls, as well as a willing investigator to document their activity. These charity girls, while not prostitutes, were very comfortable with their sexuality. The Progressive Era might have been more permissive than the Victorian age, but it was also characterized by widespread concern with the morality of women, especially in a place like Lancaster. The charity girls I have had the opportunity to research did not engage in sexual activity out of a need for economic survival—like in the case of a prostitute—but out of desire and curiosity.

Even though they agreed to a sexual arrangement with the men who took them out, they remained comfortable with it and even eager for it. I have reached the conclusion that the “treating” aspect of the relationship legitimized the sexual impropriety in the eyes of the girls. Their refusal of money reflected their wish to avoid the label of “needy

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\(^{108}\) Ibid.

\(^{109}\) Ibid., 61-63.
prostitutes.” They wanted to be seen as adventurous young women. In this way, they were the sexual pioneers of their generation and had found a clever way to make their bad behavior slightly more acceptable. Their “charity” status was a clear signal to both their willingness and their required form of transaction. Nonetheless, they were playing a dangerous game that dirtied their reputation. This, though, turned out to be more a result of the popular perceptions of the time, which were partly created by social reformers like the Society and Paul Kinsie, than the personal perceptions of the girls about themselves.

How Do Lancaster’s Women Compare?

On the surface there seem to be few similarities between the respectable life of middle-class Mary Eleanor Hoak and the multitude of immoral charity girls. A closer look reveals that there are several important parallels in the lives of both these “types.” The similarities help to explain why the differences are so important in the labels each type of woman receives. When we see how many similarities these Progressive Era women have, the reasons why society clung to the variations in order to make distinctions becomes clear. Without the differences and despite their artificial and inflexible nature, society would have to accept many diverse types of women for who they are. The sexual adventures of the charity girls made Hoak seem angelic, while the more wholesome behavior of Hoak made the charity girls more deplorable. The social conceptions and perceived differences of each type of woman works to define and solidify the other. The community clung to the disparities while the similarities were ignored.

Foremost among these congruencies is the fact that both types women are challenging the traditional social expectations of the time period. Up to this point in history there had
been only a few occasions of women who seriously challenged the hegemony of Victorian womanhood; most women accepted that they were to get married, have children, and take care of the household—all while their husbands worked outside the home to support them. This system did not appeal to Hoak. She formatted a life for herself that would allow her to be self-sufficient without a man. Her high degree of education and her desire to obtain a professional, white-collar teaching job at a local school allowed her to live her life absent of male support or control. Hoak’s lifestyle was exciting and different because it allowed her to experience the public sphere and popular entertainments independently of men. We should not be fooled by her high degree of morality and think her lifestyle was totally acceptable to all observers. While her proper behavior and participation in wholesome activities may have shielded her from the scorn of the community, she was not following the beaten path and would have known she was breaking tradition. The path she took would inevitably lead her past parts of public life that were not respectable.

Charity girls, on the other hand, were not able to escape the disdain of the community since the sexual behaviors in which they engaged were too radical to be acceptable in the Progressive Era. Consequently, they were the targets of social reformers who felt it their duty to remedy the social pathologies they encountered on the city streets. In an unconventional way the charity girls of Lancaster could be considered New Women as well. Though not professional in the way that Hoak was, they were still very much independent and daring. Kathy Peiss explains that the working-class version of the New Woman reveals that “opposing views of leisure, linked to differing models of what constituted appropriate female behavior, arose along class lines as well as within them.”¹¹⁰ The way that charity girls

¹¹⁰ Peiss, Cheap Amusement, 164.
pushed the boundaries of feminine decorum along with their willingness to try new activities allowed them to be labeled as New Woman.

As women who chose to push boundaries, the charity girls’ unique relationships with men were not primarily centered around dependence so much as they were new ways of soliciting male company and engagement on more equal terms. Saying these girls who traded sexual pleasure for material goods had an equality with the men they met may seem strange, but the affidavits show that the girls knew clearly what they were doing and seemed to enjoy every minute of it. Their aversion to being called “prostitutes” reveals that they believed they were different in a very important way. Charity girls were not totally dependent on men in the sexual economy for their livelihood; they were capable of working in a legitimate job and chose to go out and pick up any man they were attracted to in order to engage in amusements—public and otherwise. Like Hoak, they had the clear option of staying home and living a traditional life, but they felt stifled in such circumstances and craved the vivacity of the city streets.

While these women were not homebodies, both Hoak and the majority of the charity girls did live at home. This is an important point because it helps to explain how these girls were able to move about the city so freely. In a world where women did not receive equality of pay—and still don’t, for that matter—they needed a way to both maintain their daily needs and also satisfy their want for public stimulation. Living at home was an easy way to do this. Hoak made more money than the charity girls, so she probably could have lived on her own if she wanted, but this would have had two unwelcome consequences. First, she would not have been able to afford the type of middle-class housing she lived in with her family and would have had to settle for an apartment closer to center city. Because her stature as a
middle-class woman helped her public persona, living alone in Lancaster would have been undesirable. Second, the fact that Hoak lived with her parents added to her reputation as a moral woman who, though she did not have a family of her own, clearly maintained her family values. Also, the conservative nature of her family would have been good for Hoak’s image in the eyes of the community.

Nearly all of the charity girls lived at home, which was clear because they either admitted it or they were hesitant to give men their home addresses since they did not want their parents to catch on to their activities. Because the pay most of these girls received at work would not have supported them living on their own, they did not have the same degree of freedom to move out as Hoak might have. With the exception of one charity girl, they were only earning between $5 and $8 dollars a week. This contrasts to the $50 a month that Hoak earned as a teacher. Also, Hoak could have expected a raise after a certain amount of experience on the job. This would have been very rare for the charity girls since their jobs were basically dead-end. Lack of funds was not a huge issue because their parents supplied the housing, and they were able to spend their money on themselves. Another probability is that living at home may have kept them out of poverty and even prostitution.

The Law and Order Society usually predicted that as soon as the money and support went away the charity girls would fall into prostitution. While the link is not as clear-cut as the Society expresses, there were a few girls that might have gone in this direction as they did not seem very troubled by the culture of prostitution. Overall though, I think their general dislike of the label “prostitute” shows that they would have attempted to avoid such an end. Despite the complaints these girls had about their parents, they still attempted to protect the
locations of their homes because they did not want to get caught. They knew on some level that the support of their parents enabled them to enjoy public life.

Hoak and the charity girls expressed great interest in moving out of Lancaster and into a bigger city, usually New York. Hoak was able to realize this desire when she moved to New York in order to advance her education. This move must have confirmed her self-sufficiency and allowed her to rely completely on her own abilities. The reasons that she left Lancaster are not entirely clear, but her desire to be on her own and control the course of her life separate from any paternal or masculine control had to have been a big deciding factor. Also, her wish to improve her professional skills and move up in her teaching career would have been very motivating. Once again, she was embodying the characteristics of the New Woman in that leaving Lancaster revealed the degree of her independence and adventurousness.

Intriguingly enough, many of the charity girls also wanted to move to New York City. They said they felt stifled in Lancaster and were not always satisfied with the entertainment available. Their comments additionally implied a wish for more anonymity and independence from social censure. The fact that they avoided dating Lancaster boys shows two aspects of their desires. First, they wanted to be with men who were mysterious and risqué. This is nothing they felt a church-going Lancaster boy could offer, but was what Kinsie, a stranger from a big city, appeared to have. Second, the charity girls feared Lancaster boys would spread unsavory stories about them. This made them more likely to approach strangers, and they usually expressed that they wanted to go to private locations where their sexual activities would not be publicized. Both of these issues lend credence to their attraction to a bigger city where they imagined they would be able to engage in any
activities they wanted without experiencing the scorn of the community. This may or may not have been true, but it nevertheless stoked their desires to escape Lancaster.

Clearly, Mary Eleanor Hoak and the charity girls are not the polar opposites they may first appear to be. They have many of the same life circumstances that help to support their identities in a new generation of women. Hoak may have experienced few of the negative definitions the charity girls did, but she was no less challenging of the social mores of the Progressive and Victorian eras. Intriguingly, I encountered a revealing affidavit about schoolteachers in Lancaster. On November 13, 1913 Lancaster was hosting “Institute Week” for local teachers. These teachers registered at hotels and then went out on the streets to enjoy the sights. Their behavior was surprising given the moral requirements of their professional positions. Mrs. Minerva Mullen, an investigator for the Society, observed the teachers “parade in the streets and flirt.”111 Mullen had the opportunity to interview one of the schoolteachers named Amanda Ryerson, who was from Columbia. Ryerson, who was 22-years-old, introduced herself to the investigator:

I was born in Harrisburg, Pa…I was sent to Columbia to teach. I am nearly crazy away from all friends and sweethearts, no decent fellows in Columbia. I would love to meet a real nice chap. I wish I knew where to take a fellow when I do pick them up, do you know of any place?112

I did not find any evidence in Hoak’s diary that she partook in the above activity because there is a two-week gap during the time the conference took place. Pringle suggests the gap is due to Hoak being “sick with a toothache and tonsillitis.” Regardless of whether or not Hoak was sick, the fact that this event involved teachers from around the area meant that Hoak probably participated to some extent. Or if she did not, she probably would have if she was not sick. She may not have been involved to the degree that Amanda Ryerson was, but this shows that distinctions between women are not as clear cut as, say, social reformers would have us believe.

Charity girls and schoolteachers were considered by society to be different because of the opposition of their perceived moral values, but this snippet reveals that the boundaries were much more fluid. Morality and women is a slippery subject when definitions are based on ideal types that have little foundation in the real world. The boundaries often blur in actual experience. There are no neat compartments that women fit into, and groups like the Law and Order Society are not very helpful when they classify women based on preconceived notions of whom they think such women should be. During the Progressive Era women in Lancaster had very rich experiences that challenged social expectations. The reports of the Society revealed much about the wide range of female activities, and Twombly must have been dumbfounded when he could not fit female activity into his Society’s conceptions of who women were. In the end, they resorted to stereotypes and insults of women who confounded their beliefs.

113 Pringle, “Prelude to Professional Life,” appendix B, 12.
The Investigator: What His Perspective Reveals

In almost all the affidavits Paul Kinsie and the other investigators gave, they included their own opinions of the girls as well as a description of their appearance. There are also a few case studies that deal specifically with charity girls where he includes many of his own opinions. I have included this information here because he has a preconception that colors the comments he writes about the women with which he speaks. Kinsie embodied the attitudes of reformers that Kathy Peiss documents: he believed “cheap amusements” were much too “appealing to the ‘low’ instincts of the masses, debasing womanly virtues, segregating youth from the family, and fostering a dangerously expressive culture.”\textsuperscript{114} The aspects of the interactions that he focuses on most, like the way they acted and the sexually explicit comments made, reveals his fretful outlook on working-class women’s activities.

Peiss writes about reformers through a Gilded Age viewpoint, but what she highlights is also relevant to Kinsie as a Progressive Era reformer. Kinsie displays “a complex set of Victorian ideals and assumptions”\textsuperscript{115} in regard to the women with which he interacts. By judging Lancaster’s charity girls, Kinsie’s “gender and class position served as lenses through which [he] alternatively perceived working women as unwilling female victims and as enthusiastic members of the promiscuous lower orders.”\textsuperscript{116} Depending on the circumstances of a particular interaction Kinsie would view women as helpless waifs who had been taken advantage of by more experienced men, or he viewed them as sexual animals whose promiscuousness made them unstable. The former would elicit his sympathy while the latter he responded to with disgust. In either instance, Kinsie was generally unsettled by

\textsuperscript{114} Peiss, \textit{Cheap Amusement}, 163.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 165.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
women’s independence. The following information gives a unique look at specifically how the representatives of the Law and Order Society viewed women they investigated; we will be able to see their personal opinions along with their motives.

The first case history was recorded on November 2nd and analyzed an 18-year-old tobacco stripper named Susan Young. This girl lived with her parents and was characterized as “charity.” The person who wrote this and the following case studies is not clear, but I think it is quite possible that Kinsie would have written them since he seemed to have the most contact with the girls. The history of Susan says “she committed her first sexual offense when she was 15 years of age with a sweetheart.” At the time the history was taken she had interest in a man she met “on the street,” and they had been meeting regularly until he noticed her “condition.” When he found out she was pregnant she said:

he told me he is married and he cannot help me. He is trying to get a doctor but I won’t do it, I am afraid; still if my mother ever finds out, I am disowned. I am going to the hospital, 11th and Cherry Streets, in Philadelphia to have it, then I ain’t coming back.117

This girl obviously felt the stigma of her situation and she was expressing her fear and sadness about her situation—she did not want an abortion, yet she knew that having a child out of wedlock would ruin her life. Despite the fact that she engaged in “immoral” activities, the writer of the history is surprisingly forgiving. The last sentence of the report says “this girl is rather good looking, neatly dressed, and not really bad.” Because Susan, in the eyes of the writer, appeared to have been duped by the man who got her pregnant and she seemed

truly regretful for the situation she was in, the writer had sympathy for her. He did not seem willing to judge her harshly and insisted that she was “not really bad.”\textsuperscript{118}

The next case was recorded on November 4, 1913, and it outlines the life of Annie Hager, a 26-year-old domestic. The history revealed that she “committed her first sexual offense when she was 21 years of age, with a friend.” Also reported was what Annie said to an investigator:

I get lonely at the house and I like to go out. I have a friend in the Express office (Adams) I meet twice a week, sometimes I go with other fellows, not often…Once I went to Philadelphia with him and we went to 11\textsuperscript{th} and Filbert Streets Hotel on the corner.\textsuperscript{119}

This girl, while she did not have sex until she was 21, gives the impression that she has much experience with men. She thrives in public and probably feels stifled at home. Therefore, she conveys that she has a high comfort level with going out and being with men. In response to her self-assuredness the writer comments that “this girl is ignorant and easily led. She admits she practices perversion.”\textsuperscript{120} Clearly, the writer did not consider Annie as favorably as the previous girl. He appears repelled by this girl and especially with her practice of “perversion,” which I assume is oral sex. Annie is not as apologetic for her behavior as Susan, and this is a possible explanation for the investigator’s negative judgment of her. She seemed comfortable with her situation and therefore would have been totally revolting to the Society.

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 50.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
The comments Kinsie makes at the end of the affidavits also reveal clues to the beliefs of the investigators. The affidavit that chronicles Kinsie’s meeting with Barbara Foreman also includes some rather harsh judgments of her. Kinsie articulates the following in reflection:

The general make up of the girl indicates her as being an ill-bred stubborn girl. I am of the opinion that this type of girl properly shows the connection between the “charity” and the prostitute. There is no doubt in my mind that this girl, upon reaching another city, will take the place of some prostitute, who has just passed away. In summing up the mentality of this girl, I am convinced that she is not of sound mind.121

While Kinsie does make a distinction between a charity girl and a prostitute, he revealed his disdain for this separation. He made it seem that if it was up to him there would be no difference. This is characteristic of many of his opinions and it reveals little sympathy, especially in the case of a girl who does not act regretful for her actions. He was blunt with his opinions and clearly condemned Barbara for her actions.

His views about the next girl, Lizzie Dale, follow the same pattern. The writing gives away his contemptuous feelings. Like many Progressives, he felt her current life habits would lead her directly into the world of prostitution. He wrote the following:

121 Ibid., 56-57.
She is foolish and oftimes utters incoherent statements.

She is a girl that places confidence in everybody she meets

and one has little trouble doing with her as one pleases.\(^\text{122}\)

Again, there is no attempt to explain Lizzie’s actions in relation to her social circumstances. The only time he does this is when he is using the social conditions to justify the path a particular girl is likely to take—not to gain any insight into the girl’s actual experiences and perceptions. He never tried to understand the woman’s viewpoint. His moral beliefs appear to be black and white, and he was consequently not shy about condemning women that fell outside his definition of respectability.

The strong belief in the ruin of charity girls gives important insight into why the Society was so concerned with the activities of Lancaster’s young women. Twombly and his followers wanted hard evidence that would prove the destructive nature of sexual impropriety to the lives of young women. Because Kinsie’s reports state that these charity girls appear to develop “mental deficiencies” and the fact that they were “easily lead,” proves to the Society that they needed to step in and gain control of the situation. Like the classic Progressive reformers, they felt it was their job to enforce social morality and to make sure environments that would suck people into vice and decay were targeted and eliminated. Kinsie provided them with the required ammunition.

Despite Kinsie’s apparent strong distaste for the girls he met, he may have enjoyed his sexual banter with them. He was a very young man—only 24 years of age—and he spent many hours and days amongst numerous young, attractive girls that were both flirtatious and willing to engage sexually with him. While I found no written evidence (of course) that he

\(^{122}\) Ibid., 65.
gave in to the temptation, I remain suspicious of his actions. Paul Boyer states that many researchers like Kinsie “achieved a fragile but authentic intimacy with the objects of their study…budding young sociologists danced and talked for hours with prostitutes and girls of the street.” Kinsie was indeed involved in a complex relationship where he had to balance his objective observations with the boisterous young women and exciting experiences he encountered. How easy it would have been for him to slip off with one of the girls that struck his fancy and take her to a private hotel. While he is careful to say in his affidavits that his sexually suggestive comments were made to determine the “evil nature” of the girls he met, it must have been difficult for him to engage in such clever sexual commentary without getting interested.

Even though he was quick to judge these girls on paper, when he was out in public—whether going to dinner, the movies, or on a walk down Queen Street—his actions were very different. The girls he met genuinely enjoyed his company and the conversations he recorded in the affidavits reveal a caring, interested, and playful young man. The fact that many of Lancaster’s charity girls were attracted to him is not surprising. Therefore, questioning the validity of his insistence that he never took advantage of the girls seems only fair since he was under pressure to condemn this pleasurable world. Regardless of what he writes at the end of his reports in judgment of the girls, his experiences on Lancaster’s street reveal many tiny details about the public lives of charity girls. Boyer observes that people like Kinsie “often evoked the complexity of the urban sexual scene in ways that contradicted the simplistic certitude of the antivice leadership.” The personal opinions at the end of most of the affidavits not only were attempts to condemn the girls to lives of never-ending

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124 Ibid.
immorality, but they also helped the Law and Order Society ignore the complex nuances of life Kinsie was able to reveal. This was done in order to endorse narrow and unsympathetic suggestions of how to “clean-up” the city.

Conclusion: What Became of the Players

Issues of vice and women were a tremendous part of life in Lancaster during the early 1900s. They were so salient that the Lancaster Intelligencer Journal ran an article called “The Pressure” in 1913 that depicted a woman being pushed down by want into the tangled “morass of vice.” The journalist, Dorothy Dix, wrote that for many women it is that “their need presses them down and down, farther and farther, until it presses so many of them over the brink into the pit.” Social reformers saw prostitution as a force that more than a few women had succumbed to due to their inability to resist the pressure inherent in their desperate economic situations. This is the exact belief of the Law and Order Society that made it upset about the path charity girls were taking. But this is not the only explanation available for how and why women fell into prostitution. Historian Mary E. Odem explains that many Progressive women “reject[ed] the conventional images of female victimization and depravity, [and] they constructed a model of delinquency that both acknowledged the sexual agency of teenage girls and emphasized their…need for guidance.”

Despite their quick judgments and unforgiving moral expectations of the women of Lancaster, the Law and Order Society reformers were quite successful in their crusade to extinguish vice from the city. In the eyes of the public, the Society was so successful that

Twombly was asked to speak about his work and the methods he used to combat vice in many parts of the country. In fact, the Society remained active in Lancaster’s community as the “watchdog” until Twombly “retired to New England in May of 1939.” While the Society did work to eliminate the presence of the mob and the re-growth of prostitution during World War II (Loose 1992; Cobey 1991), their goals had largely been accomplished by the time Twombly retired. The Society officially dissolved on July 20, 1972 when it turned over the money in its treasury to Lancaster’s churches and gave all its files to the Lancaster County Historical Society. In 1950 the FBI acknowledged the Law and Order Society’s success when it stated that Lancaster was “‘one of the cleanest cities in the United States, judged by its freedom from vice and organized crime.’” Finally, the Society could claim that the morality preached about in Lancaster’s churches matched the situation of Lancaster’s streets.

As the Society was living up to its goal of eliminating vice, so did Mary Eleanor Hoak live up to her lifelong philosophy of respectability and independence. As we saw earlier, her move to New York City was a big step toward her desire to become a well-educated and competent teacher, and therefore, a completely self-sufficient woman. To the end of her life she embraced the ideals of the New Woman—especially the notion that marriage was not compatible with her aspirations and desires. Pringle reveals in her parting words about her great-aunt that “Mary enjoyed telling her nieces that she had never met a man for whom she was willing to give up her independence.” She was able to see through the social

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127 Hartman, “From Wide Open to Tightly Closed,” 36.
128 Ibid.
130 Hartman, “From Wide Open to Tightly Closed,” 37.
131 Pringle, “Prelude to Professional Life,” 66.
expectations for women as wives and mothers and realize that if she rejected these
requirements she would be able to reach for her dreams without feeling she was neglecting
her duties. This would have been a difficult decision, yet, once she made it, she was free to
live the life she imagined for herself.

The detailed records available about the Law and Order Society and Mary Eleanor
Hoak have been incredibly useful, but it is more difficult to trace the lives of the charity girls.
The Society documents their aspirations and compromises in one brief moment, but I have
not discovered any of their memoirs or diaries. They could have followed their dreams to
New York and indulged in the fun and excitement there, or they could have sufficiently
satisfied their desires in Lancaster and then settled down to a life as wives and mothers.
They survive in history as they were seen by others—reformers who often viewed them
harshly—while Hoak preserved part of her own life in her private diary, away from prying
public eyes. These imbalances, present in 1913, continue to cast a shadow on women’s
history.
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