"Dear Sisters" and "Hated Rivals": Athletics and Gender at Two New South Women's Colleges, 1893-1920

by Pamela Dean
T. Harry Williams Oral History Center
Louisiana State University

"Basketball is the most popular game women play," Senda Berenson declared in 1901, when Spaulding first published her rules for a female version of the game.' Within months of its invention in 1891, women had begun adopting and adapting basketball to their (then widely accepted) special needs and capacities. College women especially took to the new game and poured onto improvised courts on campuses across the country? Despite the popular reputation of southern women's schools as breeding grounds for languid belles, the region's women were as quick to embrace team sports as their northern sisters.

Although Senda Berenson, athletic director at Smith College, is usually credited with the creation of women's basketball, Clara G. Baer, of New Orleans's Sophie Newcomb College, published a somewhat different version nearly Six years before Berenson's came out. However, her modifications of the game were so "radical," she admitted, that when she approached basketball's inventor, James Naismith, for permission to publish them, he suggested she use some other name.[3] Thus, the rules Baer published in 1895 were for "basquette."

Baer and her feminine/diminutive version of basketball represent one point in a range of possibilities for young southern women in a time of complex change, an example of one view of women and of sports in the New South. At another point-not the polar opposite certainly, but nonetheless distinct-we might find North Carolina's Normal and Industrial College. In Baer's rules and in the development of athletics at the Normal, as it was affectionately known, we can see some of the strategies New Women in the New South adopted and some of the tensions and anxieties they faced as they negotiated the contested ground of gender redefinition at the turn of the century.

Neither school was what one might call a typical southern women's college. If such an institution existed, it was more apt to have been a seriously underfunded church-affiliated school that functioned, at best, on a secondary level, or one that more nearly fitted the stereotype of a finishing school. In contrast, Newcomb, a privately endowed coordinate college of Tulane University, would be one of the first southern women's colleges to be accredited and thus deemed to offer a liberal arts curriculum comparable to that available to men. Moreover, it was located in, and drew many of its students from, one of the predominantly rural South's few established cities-a cosmopolitan city shaped in part by its Spanish, French, and Catholic heritage, in contrast to the strong Anglo-Saxon and evangelical Protestant culture of much of the rest of the region. The Normal College, by virtue of being a state school explicitly designed to prepare women for gainful employment in classrooms and offices, also stood out among the plethora of institutions claiming to provide higher education for women in the region.[4]

Although both schools might thus be considered anomalies, they were nonetheless in the vanguard of the movement to create a "New South." Higher education served as midwife to both the New Woman and the New South. It fostered new roles for women and nurtured a generation of reformers that would lead the South into the modern industrial world. Advocates of the New South sought to put the rancor of war and reconstruction behind them and to adopt what they saw as the best of northern values, habits, and institutions. Only by doing so, they argued, could the region grow and prosper. While boosters eagerly touted the benefits of railroads, mills, cities, and other accoutrements of a commercial capitalist economy, others feared that progress and prosperity would come at too high a price if the South abandoned its own cherished values. Greed for the almighty dollar and the impersonal workings of the market would replace southern gentility, honor, and the face-to-face relationships that were the basis of the region's small-town and rural society.[5]

By its very nature the Normal College was at the center of this debate. Its founder, Charles McIver, was a leading advocate of the New South and worked closely with northern businessmen and philanthropists through the Southern Education Board. Education, he preached, was the key to ending the weakness, ignorance, and poverty that beset the region. He was determined that his college would produce thoroughly competent teachers for public schools, professionals who would also be public advocates for better schools. The college's very existence was challenged repeatedly in the state legislature. Among the critics were the heads of the denominational colleges who had already begun to attack public subsidies for the state universities as an immediate threat to their own struggling institutions, as well as to the concept of higher education as moral training for society's leaders and thus the proper responsibility of the churches. With the advent of the Normal College, they also became concerned about what a secular education might do to susceptible young women, women on whom the moral health of the family and the community rested. They might, one predicted, "come back from there a pack of infidels and the whole world will go to the dogs."[6]

Other opponents saw the professionalization of teaching that McIver and

Newcomb College women playing basketball, c. 1894, folly dressed in tightly laced corsets, petticoats, shirtwaists, and long skirts. Photo courtesy of Tulane University Archives.

his allies advocated as an assault on local control of essential community institutions.[7] There is more than a bit of irony in the fact that many who held this position were Populists, a group closely identified with small farmers who were hardest hit by the transition from a subsistence-based agricultural system to a commercial economy. The irony lies in the fact that a plurality of the college's students were the daughters of yeoman farmers, women who had to make their own way in the world, as one applicant's mother wrote McIver.[8] Like him, these young women saw the Normal College as the answer to their problem, not a manifestation of the alienation of power from the individual to distant-usually northern—institutions, but a way for them as individuals to take control of their own lives and to provide for themselves the economic security their fathers could no longer promise.

McIver was as passionately committed to expanding opportunities for women as he was to improving the state's schools. "How galling dependence must be to a sensible woman," he acknowledged to his wife, Lula Martin McIver. Lula, who had wanted to follow in her father's footsteps as a doctor, had continued to work as a teacher and lady principal at a women's college even after marriage to Charles McIver and the birth of their children. Although McIver conceded in the early years of their marriage that he regretted not being able to provide her with a home-the minimal responsibility of husband to wife-he frankly admitted that "the fact is when we do get a home and a competency you will have done at least as much to earn it as I have. It will not be mine to give, but ours to share."[9] Remarkably, McIver found no threat to his manhood in this situation.

McIver passed on to his students his zeal for both improving schools and empowering women, telling them that it would be up to them to aggressively

propagate the values and skills that southerners needed if they were to move from the region's impoverished agrarian past to the urban, industrial future of the coming century.[10] They, he told them, must be the vanguard in the battle to create a New South.

As a well-endowed private school, Newcomb never faced the kind of criticism McIver and the Normal endured. President Dixon recalled that in the early years his greatest challenge was to convince parents of prospective students that, for what he envisioned as a first-class college on the northeastern model, seventeen was the minimum age for admission, not the age at which they should expect their daughter to be "finished." Although the liberal arts curriculum Dixon instituted at Newcomb was perhaps more rigorous than some parents anticipated, it was also more broadly focused than that of the Normal College. Drawing on the port city's growing middle class, it also sought to prepare its students for careers and leadership in their New South communities, but it placed greater emphasis on a somewhat less assertive version of ideal womanhood than the one McIver articulated and was best known for its design training and the famous art deco Newcomb pottery.[11]

For both schools, the fulfillment of their mission demanded a new female archetype, one that would sanction women's invasion of the public sphere in a way that the image of the more domestic and dependent antebellum lady never could. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was a critical mass of urban residents in the South who espoused values of thrift, sobriety, self-control, industry, and civic duty and thus began to form a self-conscious urban middle class. New patterns of work, new standards for judging worth, and new mechanisms for maintaining order were required in the fluid, anonymous, urban world.[12] If the timing meant that the South could borrow from the North, it would do so with a southern twist. College women and their teachers would be vital participants in the process of defining values and styles of self-presentation appropriate to this new class and the New South.[13] But like all cultural change, this process was complex and fraught with ambivalence and anxiety, as well as heady delight in new powers and possibilities. And it was played out in all its complexity in the gymnasium and on the basketball courts between teams of young women who were "dear sisters," as well as "hated rivals."

Games and other forms of recreation have been explored by anthropologists and cultural historians alike as rituals that can reveal a society's most deeply rooted values and assumptions. By the turn of the century, sports and physical fitness had become nation passions and central motifs in a heated debate on gender roles and "the woman question." Robust exercise, and especially team sports, came to be seen as quintessentially male activities as definitions of gender began to shift from those based on character—for men, fulfilling duty to God, family, and community; for women, purity and piety-to an emphasis on male physical prowess and female "Gibson Girl" grace and vitality.[14]

Earlier in the century, arbitrators of female norms, such as Sara Josepha Hale, influential editor of *Godey's Lady's Book,* and Catharine Beecher, author and education reformer, had advocated mild physical activity for young women.[15]

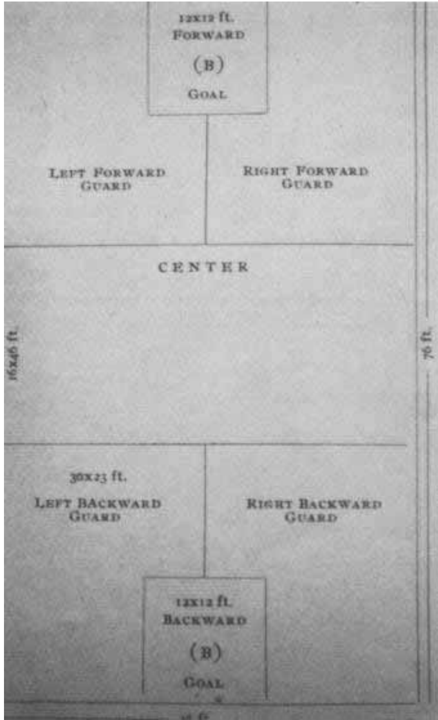
Beecher thought housework the best form of exercise for women, although walking could be substituted for those with domestic help. By the turn of the century, eugenicists, fearing for the vigor and cultural dominance of the Anglo-Saxon race, argued that frail, nervous, sickly women would produce increasingly defective children, and the "better" classes would soon be overtaken by the more robust and fecund immigrants from eastern and southern Europe.

Linked to these concerns was the fear that the brightest daughters of the middle and upper classes were sacrificing their health and endangering their reproductive capacities in the pursuit of higher education. These apprehensions were based on the assumption that the body contained a finite store of energy. Energy drawn to the brain for intellectual activity was energy denied to the reproductive organs-a dangerous proposition, especially during the delicate and formative years of puberty.[16] On the other hand, too much exercise could be just as detrimental as too little. Excessively enthusiastic indulgence in what was, after all, a quintessentially male activity might make a woman hard, even masculine, with "muscles . . . so developed [that they would appear] in lumpy protuberances.""

Women educators had answers for these fevered fantasies. Rather than concluding that women should eschew either education or athletics, they argued that moderate physical activity, carefully supervised to avoid excess, would strengthen young bodies and relieve the strain of studying. Programs based on such principles soon became part of the curriculum at all women's colleges.[18] While that at Newcomb College was under the direction of Clara Baer, a graduate of a training program for physical education teachers, at the Normal it was the school's physician-first Dr. Miriam Bitting and then her successor Dr. Anna Gove-who served as director of physical culture.

Lula McIver is credited with insisting that the faculty include a female doctor. Charles McIver solicited recommendations from the leading medical schools that admitted women, and from their responses, it appears that he may have specified a preference for a southerner.[19] In any event, Miriam Bitting, a native Virginian, daughter of a prominent Baptist clergyman and graduate of Woman's Medical College of Philadelphia, was hired. She held this position for the first year, teaching physiology, hygiene, and physical culture in addition to treating student ailments. When she left, Anna M. Gove, one of the original applicants, replaced her, A New Hampshire native trained at Woman's Medical College of New York Infirmary, Gove was the only member of the faculty in the early years without a southern background. Her professional credentials made her a welcome addition to the college's intellectual community, but it was her friendship with her fellow MIT alumna, science teacher Dixie Lee Bryant, in addition to her graciousness and "infallible . . . taste in conduct," that assured this Yankee's acceptance in the social community, which, enlightened as it may have been, was nonetheless profoundly southern.[20]

Bitting and Gove not only tended to fevers, female complaints, and minor injuries, but practiced preventive medicine as well. Fresh air, daily walks, individually designed exercise programs, personal hygiene, and the elimination of tight corsets constituted the prescription. Thus, each afternoon at the Normal,



Clara Baer's division of the basketball court into seven zones. From *Basket Ball Rules for Women and Girls* (Tulane University).

every girl opened the windows and door of her dorm room to give it a good airing and went out for an hour's brisk turn around campus. The walking period, as it was known, was as much a social occasion as an exercise period, providing an opportunity for the girls to make dates with their "best girl (no boys allowed)." As one student described it, "Every afternoon at 4:15 'that Normal bell' rings, dormitories open and girls pour forth . . . We make a regular engagement with our chum... clasp arms, saunter, and listen laddies! We talk love.[21] A staple of antebellum female academy life, the walking period helped defuse anxieties about the impact of academics on women's health without substantially altering assumptions about women's physical capacities or the primacy of marriage as the career of choice.[22]

More structured programs of physical culture or therapeutic gymnastics were designed not only to balance the stresses of intellectual pursuits but also to correct defects the girls brought with them. Along with such common problems as poor posture and bad feet, these might include, according to Baer, "psychic nervous conditions," "defects of the respiratory organs,""disturbances of the pelvic organs with functional irregularities," "derangements of the digestive organs," and "skin troubles." Baer suggested that the latter two were often due "to the general want of understanding of the efficient use of water as a therapeutic agent and of fundamental principles of personal hygiene."[23] Baer's allusion is to the growing concern with cleanliness that cultural historians have noted was a defining feature of the middle class in the nineteenth century. This suggests that, even in the city of New Orleans, many incoming college students had not yet fully assimilated those standards.[24]

Concern for the health of the students was closely linked to concern for their appearance. The stated aim of the physical culture program at the Normal College was "to correct careless physical habits, develop the body symmetrically, and give to the student that erect, strong, reliant, dignified and graceful carriage and deportment that always characterize the cultured woman."[25] The shining hair and clear complexion that proper diet and hygiene ensured and the "erect"

posture and "graceful carriage" of a "symmetrically" developed body were the external indicators of both health and the new standards of femininity. These standards were best realized through calisthenics or gymnastics rather than more vigorous sports, many in the field argued, because they emphasized "the aesthetic element, girls in general desire to appear delicate and graceful." Physical education should not sacrifice "tender femininity" for the sake of "Spartan toughness."[26]

Baer and Bitting and their colleagues walked a fine line when they advocated exercise for southern women. Newcomb College founder Brandt Dixon recalled parental objections to the "supposed tendency" of athletics "to render the young ladies coarse and unfeminine," with one father going so far as to contend that his daughter got enough exercise in the summer and needed none at school.[27] Only so long as they could demonstrate that grace and femininity went hand in hand with exercise could advocates of women's physical culture succeed.

At the Normal College, the popularity of the Indian club, fan, and scarf drills and similar "physical culture entertainments" as part of annual commencement programs illustrates the balance sought. Dressed in gym bloomers and midi blouses with clubs, fans, and scarves in hand, the girls went through carefully choreographed routines that emphasized grace as well as fitness. The inclusion of these performances among the graduation rituals suggests that students and college administrators alike considered them as significant as the sermons and commencement speeches.[28] Their popularity with parents was apparent from the standing-room-only crowd (ladies only) that a two-hour exhibition drew in 1894.[29]

Certainly the Normal College's president had no hesitancy in praising the results of Bitting's program of calisthenics and walking. In the first annual catalog of the college, he reported that, during the past year, "many chests increased in girth, shoulders straightened, arms became stronger, and the general bearing much improved."[30] McIver, seeking to inculcate in his students a sense of mission and assertive self-confidence in their roles as teachers and advocates for the New South, was prepared to go beyond "delicate," "graceful," "tender femininity" to achieve a certain robustness that would be appropriate, even necessary, in their new roles. So, even under Bitting's carefully moderated system, the Normal girls would embody a fresh image of southern women, "strong" and "reliant" as well as "graceful."[31]

Speaking at the college's first commencement, Dr. T.H. Pritchard, the former president of Wake Forest College, seemed to affirm McIver's observations, but one must wonder just what the young women in his audience heard when he spoke. There were three ways to recognize a Normal girl, he reported. "She doesn't flirt with the boys, she walks erect and throws her shoulders back well, and she has a large waist." Not being a flirt was surely a good thing, they may well have agreed. They were, after all, going out to be professional teachers and leaders in their communities, goals quite incompatible with idle flirtation. Good posture was also a desirable characteristic. But a large waist. . . that might have given any girl pause. Pritchard's comment was, no doubt, a tribute to Bitting's lessons on the detrimental effects of tight lacing, which had led two-thirds of the students

to discard their corsets.[32] But it also reflected the ambivalence that a young woman of serious mien and determined stride might encounter in the turn-of-the-century South.

Dress reform, like issues of health and appearance, was closely linked to the changing forms of women's sports. Those defects of the respiratory and digestive organs Baer cited were likely results of those same corsets Bitting railed against, as, in part, was the female frailty that worried eugenicists. Unlike North Carolina farmers' daughters, New Orleans ladies were so attached to their tiny waists that Baer met more initial resistance than Bitting. Until 1894 tightly laced corsets covered with voluminous petticoats, skirts, and shirtwaists were de rigueur in the gymnasium as well as the classroom. When Baer introduced the less restrictive bloomers and midi blouses, she found the girls reluctant to don so immodest an outfit. To suggest they abandon their stays at the same time, Baer feared, would be too much. Thus, she simply let them pant through a few gymnastic workouts in both their tight corsets and voluminous bloomers, until they "sweat[ed] the corsets off."[33]

Bloomers had been the much-ridiculed symbol of the mid-nineteenth-century woman's movement. Pioneer suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Amelia Bloomer, for whom the garment was named, were among the few who recognized the liberative potential of sports for women. Writing in Bloomer's newspaper, *The Lily,* Stanton asserted, "we cannot say what the woman might be physically, if the girl were allowed all the freedom of the boy, in romping, swimming, climbing and playing ball."" Even Stanton gave up bloomers for street wear, acknowledging that the controversy they generated distracted from more significant issues in the feminist agenda; however, they did become the accepted costume for the gymnasium and the playing field.

Fodie Buie, Normal College class of 1896, recalled those all-enveloping black stockings and blue serge bloomers-and-midi-blouse outfits that the girls ran up on the Domestic Science Department's sewing machines. "We were not allowed even so much as to walk out in the halls with a gym suit on," cumbersome and all-concealing though it was, she recalled. "No papas and not even any grandpapas were allowed to be present."[35] No men at the physical culture exhibition, none in the gymnasium. Bloomers, hinting at possibilities of gender equality, might conjure up images too threatening for male eyes to bear.

For more public and potentially coed activities, such as tennis, golf, or bicycling, modifications in dress were less extreme and the subversion of gender conventions more subtle. Skirts and white midi blouses were the preferred attire on the tennis court. Bicycling, which became widely popular among women, necessitated slightly shortened skirts, a seemingly minor alteration. But Fodie Buie and her mother understood the implications when she bought a bicycle to help her get to and from her work as a court reporter, one of the many jobs she took to help pay for her sister's, as well as her own, education. "To be able to ride at all, my skirts had to stop at my shoe tops," she recalled. "And if one's skirts did not touch the ground, one was looked upon with suspicion, if not downright disapproval, and somewhat ostracized by the 'best ladies' in the community. But

This one-handed "jump for the basket" demonstrates the "perfect poise" Clara Baer sought to encourage. From *Basket Ball Rules for Women and Girls (Tulane* University).

I wore my disgracefully abbreviated skirts, and managed to live down the disapproval of the natives."

The bicycle, Buie continued, "was a great help when I was on reporting trips." The railroads did not charge to carry a passenger's bicycle and "the Powers-that-Be didn't have to send for me and send me home, and that was bad too, for ladies did not go places alone. Mother was sensible. She told me to go ahead and always behave myself, and all would be well."[36] The minor modification of fashion Fodie Buie adopted with her mother's approval was more than just a symbolic challenge to the standards of the "best ladies." It meant that Buie, and women like her, could venture alone into heretofore forbidden public territory, from railroad stations to courthouses. More than Stanton's theorizing or Bitting's and Baer's arguments on the health benefits, it was the girls' own experiences with the physical, geographical, and even economic freedom permitted by the new apparel athletics required that drove dress reforms in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Basketball posed a much more difficult challenge to the delicate balance sought by southern advocates of women's athletics than any of the previously discussed activities. Team sports were fundamentally different from walking, calisthenics, or even tennis or bicycle riding. A game invented for men, with a codified structure, one which inherently promoted not only teamwork but competition, smacked of modern sensibilities traditionalists in the region condemned. Southern churchmen charged that team sports even for men tended to glorify the body over the spirit and was another deplorable example of southerners aping Yankee ways.

Clara Baer was sensitive to these concerns and would address them with her revision of basketball. Baer, a native of Algiers, just across the Mississippi from

New Orleans, had been trained in "expression" and oratory in Boston, where she also attended the Posse Normal School of Physical Education.[37] She returned to New Orleans in 1891 to start a physical education program at the recently established Sophie Newcomb College and introduced basketball to her students in 1893. It was, however, a "crude and rough" game, she recalled, and its introduction was "not entirely satisfactory." While Baer offers no other details, accounts of early Smith College matches describe "a mad game" with wild play and riotous cheering, in which players tended to 'grow bitter in feeling and lose self-control," which "makes the girls rough, loud-voiced and bold."[38] Distressed at such wildness and lack of control, Baer felt compelled to abandon the game. Nonetheless, basketball offered many benefits, Baer realized, and the following year she reintroduced it in a much-refined version.[39]

Like Senda Berenson at Smith, Baer sought to create a game that her students would *enjoy* and that would promote healthy exercise and teamwork, but at the same time, one in which physical contact, exertion, and disorderly commotion would be minimized. In common with the modifications Berenson would later promote, Baer divided the court into zones with players assigned to each to reduce the unseemly rushing about that full-court boys' rules encouraged. But Baer called for seven zones to Berenson's three, and on the subject of dribbling and guarding, she went far beyond Berenson, eliminating these features entirely.[40]

Baer argued that her division of the court and team into center (spanning the width of the court), right and left forward guards, right and left backward guards, and a twelve-by-twelve-foot goal zone surrounding the basket allowed players of differing abilities to participate. It also ensured that excessive exertion would be eliminated, and that players would be protected from "personal contact and shock" In addition, she built frequent rest periods into the game, requiring that all other movement stop whenever a girl attempted a basket. There was to be no guarding of any sort, nor "any interference whatever . . . allowed when a player pauses to aim for a basket." No "striking" or "snatching" or "rolling" or "tapping" the ball, or running with it, or talking during the game, or "needlessly rough play," or even falling. All counted as fouls.

Baer's directions did not stop with her extensive list of fouls. She went on to specify, "In throwing for basket . . . the throw is with one hand. This secures a more upright and graceful position of the body, it places the ball in the line of vision and it secures freer respiration . . . In tossing the ball with both hands, there is a constant inclination of the shoulders forward, with consequent flattening of the chest." The result would be, Baer concluded, "a most ungraceful position for girls."[41]

This concern with the compression of the chest was based on the philosophy of Baer's teacher, Baron Nils Posse. Posture and correct breathing were central to his teachings on physiology. Baer had attended Posse's school in Boston, and his emphasis on breathing capacity reinforced her earlier training in elocution and oratory. Baer was not the only physical culture teacher at a southern women's college who had been trained in elocution. Mary Settle Sharp, who, under Gove's direction, taught physical education at the Normal, had a similar background

and would later be responsible for campus debates and staging elaborate May fetes. Posture, graceful gestures, and lung capacity were equally important to college theatrics, debates, and declamations as to gymnastic routines and to Baer's game of basquette. Properly played, basketball "cultivates grace, as well as skill, of movement," Baer insisted." Making a basket was not the point; form, poise, and grace while doing so were. This was indeed a different game than the one Naismith had invented, or even the one many women elsewhere were already playing.

It was not until several years later, in 1898, that the Normal College students in North Carolina took up the game when the junior class invited the other classes to join them in basketball and cricket matches. By 1902, 150 girls—about a quarter of the student body-were involved in the Athletic Association, which sponsored interclass tournaments." If basketball would foster many qualities that would be valuable for these new women, at the Normal, the first, perhaps, was ingenuity. Learning the game was something of a case of the blind leading the blind. "We had no coach or director," recalled Berta Albright (Moon). "Each class had a student coach or referee who studied the rules & [sic] told the others what she thought about it. Never having seen a game-or heard of one before in some instances-it must have been very 'individualistic'!"[48] Numerous photographs from college annuals suggest that it was not Baer's rules the "coach" was so creatively interpreting, since two-handed shots and close guarding abound.

Clara Baer would have judged the form demonstrated by this Normal College player to be "a most ungraceful position for girls." Photo courtesy of University of North Carolina at Greensboro Archives.

In 1900 the Normal College's board of directors put its seal of approval on the idea of games for women by authorizing the creation of an outdoor playing field. However, it added a proviso that made it clear that its endorsement was not unqualified. An evergreen hedge or other screen would enclose the field, protecting the young athletes from public gaze.[45]

This was but one more of the many aspects of female athletics that sought to deny the implicit challenges of which Fodie Buie, on her bicycle, was

so aware. Men's sports were played before stands full of spectators; women's sports were played behind hedges. While men emphasized the competitive aspects of sports, women down-played competition. Neither the Normal College nor Newcomb, as Baer emphasized, "ever entered into contest with other colleges in athletics. While competition may be necessary to life, extremes in competition have never been encouraged at Newcomb College. The south has always been considered conservative but it is a conservatism," she contended, "that has often saved us from making mistakes. Certainly we know that undue excitement is not to the well-being of the girls." "Playday," rather than play-offs, marked the end of basketball season for girls, with games between mixed teams that included players from each of the schools. Undue excitement from spectators was discouraged as well. "Wouldn't it be lovely to be able to cheer like the boys," a coed sighed wistfully in a student's short story. Each class did have a cheer: "Hoopala! Hoopala! Red and Blue. We are the girls of 1902. Hoopala! Hoopala! Ri! Ra! Ru! Hoopala!"[46] But the female partisans, both students and faculty members massed on the sidelines, were much more apt to sing songs such as this, to the tune of "Polly Wolly Doodle":

> Oh! The Junior team may be a good team,
> But the Sophomore team is too,
> And the Junior team may play a good game
> But so does the White and Blue.
> Persevere! Persevere!
> Our slogan through the fray
> Oh! The Sophomore team will win the game
> For Blue and White today.[47]

Why the concern with concealing fences, confining hemlines, and modified rules? Like male sports, these games were cultural performances, rituals that played out some of a society's most deeply held assumptions. On the football field, for example, men manifested belief in the rewards of hard work and self-discipline, equality, luck, loyalty, teamwork, and aggressive competition. Promoters of basketball for women, including Senda Berenson, considered the game particularly useful in teaching women similar qualities of self-control, physical and moral courage, and teamwork. If women were to succeed in previously male fields, contemporary advocates of physical education contended they would need both physical stamina and the type of teamwork and loyalty that, it was assumed, came naturally to men.[48] And that, of course, was just the problem. For women who might be competing with men in the workplace, it was doubly necessary that they not appear to be challenging men athletically. Thus, on their playing fields they manifested ambivalence as clearly as other, more empowering attributes. The fields were carefully screened and "no papas or even grandpapas" ever saw those bloomers. They played different games-football for boys, field hockey for girls-and when they did play the same games, such as basketball, there were

different rules and conventions, differences that both denied and concealed the reality that games might teach both sexes similar lessons.[49]

Young women might feel every bit as strongly about the victory of their class colors as men did. Berta Albright certainly did when she recalled the sophomore class's attempt to beat its "hated rivals," the juniors. "The Duke-Carolina games can hardly stir up as much feeling," she asserted.[50] But the quotation marks around "hated rivals" are hers, for such sentiments could be expressed only in jest. She and her schoolmates moderated their competitiveness with an overlay of sorority, as another song illustrates.

> Seniors, dear, we want to tell you,
> Though the Blue may fight the Red,
> Oh, Sophomores love the Seniors,
> Whate'er is done or said.
> Whoe'er may win the victory,
> What's the difference in the end?
> Don't you see, dear sisters,
> 'Tis in the family just the same.[51]

Regardless of who won or lost, it was all in the family, a loving family of sisters.

No matter how enthusiastic the cheers, no matter how hard-fought the game—Albright maintained that her class lost the tournament to those "hated rivals" only when its two best players were sidelined with a turned ankle and an injured collarbone-at heart, the song suggests, they were ladies, graceful and gracious. Whether this was truly the heart of the matter or a thin veneer, they probably could not have said.

Nonetheless, the game was hard-fought at the Normal in marked contrast to the restricted scope of movement Baer's version allowed. The progression from walking to calisthenics to team sports reflected an expanding vision of what was possible and acceptable for southern women. McIver's praise for straight shoulders and strong arms, contrasted with Baer's assertion that "undue excitement" and "extremes in competition" was "not to the well-being of the girls," suggests that the new images of the New Woman were accepted in varying degrees at different places but never without some anxiety and ambivalence. The concealing screens of fences, modest bloomers, and sisterly song moderated anxieties about social and cultural change. They allowed the women and their society to deny the emerging reality that southern college women were in fact learning to be strong, self-reliant, and competitive, as well as graceful, loyal, and cooperative. Young women of the New South would learn to challenge men, in the shops and offices of the New South, in the schoolrooms and on the school boards, and in the courtrooms as well as on the basketball courts.

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1. Senda Berenson, "Editorial," *Basket Ball for Women: Spaulding's Athletic Library,* October 1901, 5-7, quoted in Roberta J. Park, "Sport, Gender, and Society in a Transatlantic

Victorian Perspective," in *From 'Fair Sex' to Feminism: Sport and Socialization of Women in the Industrial and Post-Industrial Eras,* J.A. Mangan and Roberta J. Park, eds. (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1987), 58-93. Quote, p. 86. Park's article provides an excellent overview of the relevant issues for middle-class women at the turn of the century. However, she emphasizes the commonalties across British and American culture, denying not only national but also regional differences.

2. On the early history of women's basketball, see Janice Ann Beran, "The Story of Six-player Girls' Basketball in Iowa," in Reet Howell, *Her Story in Sport: A Historical Anthology of Women in Sports* (West Point, N.Y.: Leisure Press, 1982), 552-61; Lynne Emery, "The First Intercollegiate Contest of Women: Basketball, April 4, 1896," in Howell, *Her Story in Sport,* 417-23; Paula Welch, "Interscholastic Basketball: Bane of Collegiate Physical Educators," in Howell, *Her Story in Sport.*

3. Clara G. Baer, *Basket Ball Rules for Women and Girls* (New Orleans: Tulane University, n.d.), 5.

4. Elizabeth Avery Colton, a professor at Meredith College in Raleigh, N.C., surveyed women's schools in the South in 1910 and found more than 140 that either called themselves colleges or gave degrees of some sort. Only four were accredited-Agnes Scott in Georgia, Goucher in Maryland, Randolph-Macon in Virginia, and Sophie Newcomb in Louisiana. The financial security these institutions enjoyed from endowments and other sources of support, she contended, was what separated them from a much larger group she characterized as approximate colleges-schools that, while not fully meeting the accreditation requirements of the Southern Association of Colleges, nonetheless produced some students capable of doing graduate-level work. However, even many of these were like Colton's own institution, where more than four-fifths of the student body were doing secondary-level work. Elizabeth Avery Colton, "Southern Colleges for Women," Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Southern States, (Nashville, 1911): 48-68. On Newcomb, see Brandt V.D. Dixon, *A Brief History of H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College, 1887-1919: A Personal Reminiscence* (New Orleans: Hauger Printing Co., 1928).

5. For example, see Paul Gaston, *The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1976).

6. Fodie Buie Kenyon, "Little Pictures of Old Times, Part II" (North Carolina Women's College) *Alumnae News* 30:3 (February 1942): 6.

7. For an excellent discussion of the ideology and tactics of the college's opponents, see James Leloudis, *Schooling the New South: Pedagogy, Self, and Society in North Carolina, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: UNC Press, 1996), ch. 4.

8. Mary D. Moulton to Charles D. McIver, 30 June 1892, McIver Papers, Jackson Library, UNC-Greensboro.

9. Charles McIver to Lula McIver, 3 March 1890, McIver Papers, Jackson Library, UNC-Greensboro.

10. Charles McIver, "Educational Statesmanship," *State Normal Magazine* 5 (February 1902): 187-98. For a broader discussion of McIver and his students, see Pamela Dean, "Covert Curriculum: Class and Gender at a New South Women's College, 1892-1910," unpublished dissertation, UNC-Chapel Hill, 1995. On McIver and school reform in North Carolina, see James Leloudis, *Schooling the New South.*

11. Dixon, *A Brief History of H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College,* 25.

12. On the development of the middle class, see Stuart Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle* C/ass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); and Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1984). Burton Bledstein, in *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in*

America (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1976) explores the links between higher education and the middle class. John F. Kasson, in *Rudeness & Civility: Manners in* Nineteenth-Century Urban *America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990) stresses the importance of manners and styles of self-presentation in defining the middle class. On the development of southern cities and a southern middle class, see Don H. Doyle, New *Men, New Cities, New South: Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston, Mobile, 1860-1910* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990). See also William Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill and London, University of North Carolina Press, 1992); and Edward Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) for other perspectives on the New South.

13. For a brief discussion of this process, see Pamela Dean, "Learning to Be New Women: Campus Culture at the North Carolina Normal and Industrial College," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 68:3 (July 1991): 286-306.

14. For example, see Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," in *Myth, Symbol, and Culture,* Clifford Geertz, ed. New York: Norton, 1971, p. 1-37; and Ted Ownby, *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1990). On changing definitions of masculinity, see E. Anthony Rotundo, "Body and Soul: Changing Ideals of American Middle Class Manhood, 1770-1920, *Journal of Social History* XVI (Summer 1983): 28-37; Michael S. Kimmel, "The Contemporary 'Crisis' of Masculinity in Historical Perspective," in Harry Brod, ed., *The Making of Masculinities* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1986); and Ownby, *Subduing Satan.*

15. Sara Josepha Hale, *Godey's Lady's Book* XXIII (July 1841): 41-2; Catharine E. Beecher, *Physiology and Calisthenics for Schools and Families* (New York, 1856), 11. Both are cited in Park, 'Sport, Gender, and Society," 64-65.

16. Physician Edward Clarke's *Sex in Education: or a Fair Chance for the Girls,* published in 1873, was one of the best known explications of this position. Dio Lewis, a leading proponent of physical training in schools and colleges, noted other dangers in his 1866 prospectus for his Family School for Young Ladies. "American girls, especially of the higher classes, are too often pale, nervous and fragile, with stooping shoulders, weak spines and narrow chests. In studying under the ordinary systems of education, such girls imperil their chances of health, compromise their enjoyment of life, and often break down in the midst of their labours." Quoted in Thomas Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States* (New York, 1926), 115.

17. Paul Atkinson, "The Feminist Physique: Physical Education and the Medicalization of Women's Education," in *From Fair Sex to Feminism,* 38-57. See also Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Charles Rosenberg, "The Female Animal: Medical and Biological Views of Women and Their Role in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of American History* LX (September 1973): 332-56. Quote, Winnifred Ayers, quoted in Karen Kenney, "The Realm of Sports and the Athletic Woman 1850-1900," *Her Story in Sports,* 109.

18. Allen Guttman, *Women's Sports: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

19. Bowles, *A Good Beginning,* 39-40; W.D. Booker to Charles McIver, May 12, 1892, McIver Papers. Booker recommended two candidates, noting that they had "no appearance of being in the advanced women's movement." McIver might well have supported women's suffrage, as his wife and students would, had he not died in 1906. However, in the early, embattled years of the college's existence, he was adamant about keeping the school out of what he saw as peripheral issues, such as racial equality and women's suffrage.

20. *Some Pioneer Women Teachers* (Delta Kappa Gamma Society, 1955), 90-93; Bowles, *A Good Beginning,* 39-40; Anna M. Gove to Charles McIver, 13 May 1892, McIver Papers. Gove's letters of recommendation included one from Dr. Emily Blackwell, niece of Elizabeth Blackwell, the first American woman physician.

21. Berta Albright Moon to J.I. Foust, March 1935, Foust Papers; quote from *State Normal Magazine* (February 1898), cited by Richard Bardolph, "Physical Culture," *Alumni News* (Spring 1992), 18.
22. For examples of walking periods at antebellum schools, see *History of Meredith College,* 67; Frances Griffin, *Less Time for Meddling: A History of Salem Academy and College, 1772-1866* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: John E Blair, 1979), 85; Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater Design and Experience in the Women's Colleges from their Nineteenth-century Beginnings to the 1930s* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984, 1986), 25; Christie Anne Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1994), 124, 126.
23. Clara G. Baer, "Therapeutic Gymnastics as an Aid in College Work With Some Observations of Specific Cases," *American Physical Education Review* (December 1916).
24. For example, see Richard L. Bushman and Claudia L. Bushman, "The Early History of Cleanliness in America," *The Journal of American History* 74:4 (March 1988): 1213-1238.
25. *First Annual Catalogue of the Normal and Industrial School,* 33, cited in O'Neil, "A History of the Physical Education Department."
26. Moritz Loss, leading proponent of the German system of gymnastics, quoted in Guttman, *Women's Sports,* 94.
27. Dixon, *A Brief History of Sophie Newcomb Memorial College,* 75-76.
28. *State Normal Magazine* 1:6 (June 1898): 308; Richard Bardolph, "Potted Palms, 'The Forgotten Man,' and Glistening Pomposities: Commencement Exercises of 1897 and 1898," *Alumni News* 70:4 (Summer 1982): 10-13.
29. *Greensboro Record,* May 24, 1897, cited in Bowles, *A Good Beginning,* 114.
30. *First Annual Catalogue of the Normal and Industrial College,* 1893, 30.
31. For a discussion of the efficacy of stretching sanctioned words and images to include unsanctioned actions, see Anne Firor Scott, "The Ever Widening Circle: The Diffusion of Feminist Values from the Troy Female Seminary, 1822-1872," *History of Educution Quarterly* 19 (Spring 1979). She argues that, by attaching traditional language to potentially revolutionary actions, Emma Willard was able to achieve far more than a head-on assault on Victorian gender norms would have accomplished.
32. (New Bern, N.C.) *Journal,* 22 June 1893.
33. "Newcomb Athletics," clipping, c. 1922, in the Sophie Newcomb Scrapbook II, Tulane University Archives, quoted in Joan Paul, 'Clara Gregory Baer: An Early Role Model for Southern Women in Physical Education," paper presented at the NAPSE History Academy, 1983.
34. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Improper Education of Women," *The Lily* VII (April 1, 1855): 5, quoted in Park, "Sport, Gender, and Society," 66.
35. Fodie Buie Kenyon, "Little Pictures of Old Times, Part II" (North Carolina Women's *College) Alumnae News* 30:3 (February 1942): 5.
36. Kenyon, "Little Pictures of Old Times," Part II, 6-7.
37. Joan Paul, "Clara Gregory Baer: An Early Role Model for Southern Women in Physical Education."
38. Cited in Susan K. Cahn, *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Women's Sports* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 85.
39. Clara G. Baer, "The History of the Development of Physical Education at Newcomb *College," National Education Association* (1914): 701-704. Recent studies affirm the role of competitive sports in developing self-confidence in young women.
40. Berenson divided the floor into front-, center-, and backcourt, with players designated as forwards, centers, or guards confined to their section of the court. One dribble (later three) was allowed, and no physical contact or effort to hinder the shooter was allowed.

Cahn, *Coming on Strong,* 86. Baer's emphasis on inclusiveness presaged national themes in women's athletics.

41. Clara G. Baer, *Basket Ball Rules for Women and Girls* (New Orleans: H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College for Women, c. 1908), 11; and "Newcomb College Basketball," 1911. *On* Baron Nils Posse, see his *Special Kinesiology of Educational Gymnastics* (Boston, 1896), cited in Joan Paul, "Clara Gregory Baer: An Early Role Model for Southern Women in Physical Education." Paul also notes that Baer's use of the one-handed shot preceded the introduction of this now common technique in men's basketball.
42. Baer, "Newcomb College Basket Ball for Women: Collegiate Rules," 1914, 37.
43. Bowles, *A Goad Beginning,* 141; *State Normal Magazine* 4:3 (October 1902): 70.
44. Berta Albright Moon to J.I. Foust, March 1935, Foust Papers.
45. Normal College Board of Directors, Proceedings II (December 20, 1900): 162-63, cited in Bowles, *A Good Beginning,* 73.
46. State Normal College *Decennial,* 32.
47. Normal College Songbook, 1915-1919, 4.
48. Senda Berenson, "Editorial," *Basket Ball for Women: Spaulding's Athletic Library,* October 1901, 5-7, cited in Park, "Sport, Gender, and Society," 86.
49. Jennifer A. Hargreaves, 'Playing Like Gentlemen While Behaving Like Ladies: Contradictory Features of the Formative Years of women's Sport," *British Journal of Sports* History II (May 1985): 50, quoted in Park, "Sport, Gender, and Society," 87.
50. Berta Albright Moon to J.I. Foust, March 1935, Foust Papers. Moon was of course referring to the two universities' male teams.
51. Normal College Songbook, 1915-1919, 6.