

# The Modernization of Lindenwood College 1903-1929

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ON MAY 28, 1903, THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES of Lindenwood College, located in St. Charles, Missouri, passed a resolution concerning the goals and purposes of the institution. Citing the wishes of the college's founders, Major and Mrs. George C. Sibley, they expressed a determination to "make the school a college in the highest sense of the word." The Board noted "the manifest tendency of an increasing number of parents to have their daughters educated in schools maintained exclusively for women," and recorded a desire "to enlarge [the college's] equipment, increase its teaching force, and extend its course of study until they are equal to those of any women's college in the United States." The resolution also contained an overt expression of the institution's potential constituency; "the territory the school serve[d]" was the growing midwest.<sup>1</sup>

Between 1903 and 1929, in accordance with these projected goals, Lindenwood Female College rose from an academically marginal institution, emphasizing college preparation, to an accredited, four-year college with a large enrollment, a capable faculty, and an expanded liberal arts curriculum. During those twenty-six years, as Latin and education professor Cora M. Porterfield later observed, the college was

"growing up."<sup>2</sup>

The Board of Trustees passed its resolution only eight days after the resignation of Lindenwood's President Matthew H. Reaser.<sup>3</sup> Nearly two years of haggling over the president's contract arrangements and the college's financial difficulties preceded his departure.<sup>4</sup> The Trustees refused to alter existing administrative policy concerning contract arrangements and fund-raising techniques when they resolved to improve the college's curriculum and physical plant. The new president, George F. Ayres, was appointed in June, 1903, with a contract guaranteeing him a salary of between \$900 and \$2000 annually. Ayres's actual salary level was determined by the financial success of the college from year to year. The contract allowed Ayres to collect "all income from the tuition and board of pupils" and obligated him to "bear all expenses of the institution."<sup>5</sup> Little distinction was drawn between the assets of the institution and those of Ayres. His presidency, therefore, was conducted along the lines of an entrepreneurial business, complete with an incentive plan. In addition to assuming the duties of president, he also became chief fund-raiser, business-manager, recruiter of students and faculty, main-

<sup>1</sup>Lindenwood College, Board of Trustees, "Minutes," May 28, 1903.

<sup>2</sup>Cora M. Porterfield (M.A., University of Chicago, professor of Latin and education at Lindenwood, 1908-1923) to Kate L. Gregg (Ph.D., Washington University, professor of

English from 1925 to 1954), April 6, 1948, Lindenwood College Archives.

<sup>3</sup>Board of Trustees, "Minutes," May 20, 1903.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 1901-1903.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, June 25, 1903.



*St. Charles, Missouri, 1907.*

tenance director, and faculty member, teaching Roman and Parliamentary law and Hebrew poetry.<sup>6</sup>

As a fund-raiser, Ayres had limited success. His difficulties in this aspect of his administration were related to the college's financial base. Lindenwood's funds traditionally came from two major outside sources: donations from local Presbyterian congregations and gifts from wealthy philanthropists. In July, 1904, the Presbytery of Missouri authorized Ayres to visit churches in the area "at his convenience" to solicit funds for needed repairs at the college.<sup>7</sup> This church-associated fund raising emphasized the narrow denominational base of financial support enjoyed by the school, and the Missouri Presbytery's approval of this method implicitly recognized the institution's responsibility to provide a correct, Christian setting for the education of young women.<sup>8</sup>

Local philanthropists provided the other major

source of external financial support. Although the building proposed in 1903 received a \$10,000 challenge grant from Andrew Carnegie, the balance of the construction expenses, \$30,000, was provided by prominent St. Louisans who either had a special interest in the school or in women's education in general.<sup>9</sup> James G. Butler, one of the founders of the American Tobacco Company, was influential among this group. He contributed \$10,000 for the building. Butler also donated \$12,600 for the purchase of property, the maintenance of existing buildings, and the general operating fund between 1911 and 1914. His estate later paid for the erection of two new dormitories and endowed a chair of biblical literature in his wife's name.<sup>10</sup>

Endowment and tuition income provided internal financial support at Lindenwood. Between 1906 and 1914, the college's endowment remained at \$26,000,

<sup>6</sup>Lindenwood College, *Annual Register, 1903-1904*, 4.

<sup>7</sup>Board of Trustees, "Minutes," July 7, 1904; Matthew H. Reaser, Ayres's predecessor, was authorized to canvass local churches for a similar purpose. *Ibid.*, December 21, 1900.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, November 14, 1902. Clergymen were granted "special, liberal rates" on tuition, and students were required to attend daily worship. *Annual Register, 1905-1906*, 40, and 1902-1903, 27.

<sup>9</sup>Carnegie's donation was offered on the condition that "his subscription, when paid, shall leave no debt on the building." James Bertram to Samuel J. Niccolis, April 24, 1906, Lindenwood College Archives.

<sup>10</sup>Board of Trustees, "Minutes," June 7, 1910, December 1, 1911, February 20, April 24, November 12, 1914; general references to Butler's generosity may be found throughout the Board's Minutes between 1910 and 1920.

in spite of persistent pleas in the school's *Catalog* for increases ranging from 300 per cent in 1907 to 900 per cent in 1913.<sup>11</sup> The oft-repeated calls for contributions to the endowment and the stress on needed funds in an official college publication emphasized the Ayres administration's failure to raise enough money to protect the college from financial disaster.

Internal and external support was sporadic and unreliable, and Lindenwood was forced to rely on enrollment to supply necessary funds. Income from tuition was dependent upon a consistent increase in the number of new students and on the retention of second- and third-year students. Between 1905 and 1913, the number of first-year students ranged from seventy-seven in 1910 to fifty-five in 1911. On the average, this group accounted for 59.9 per cent of the total enrollment. Student retention was extremely low: only one-half of the students listed in the college *Catalog* attended the school for more than one year, and students who enrolled for a third or fourth year represented only one-third of the total number of students throughout the period.<sup>12</sup>

Enrollment growth rates during the Ayres administration were generally unsatisfactory. From 1905 to 1914, the college's enrollment declined by an average of 1.2 per cent annually. Changes in the size of the student body alternated between gains and losses,

from a gain of 15.2 per cent in 1909 to a decrease of 23.1 per cent in 1911. During Ayres's ten-year presidency, the number of students enrolled at the school declined 16.9 per cent from 118 to 98.<sup>13</sup>

Ayres thus failed to counteract Lindenwood's financial instability. By 1912, serious questions concerning his competence were raised by Henry P. Wyman, secretary-treasurer of the Board of Trustees. In September, 1912, Ayres, perhaps anticipating trouble at the next meeting of the Trustees, formally applied to the Presbytery of Ohio and the Board of Trustees of Western College for Women in Oxford, Ohio, for the presidency of that institution.<sup>14</sup>

A movement among the Trustees to persuade Ayres to leave the college arose soon after he decided to seek another position. On June 12, 1913, Henry P. Wyman, on behalf of the Board, wrote angrily to Ayres, claiming he had withdrawn "considerably more than the [Watson] fund [whose interest paid part of the president's salary after 1910] has earned." This dispute was tied to the difficulty of separating the institution's assets from Ayres's income, and the problem originated with the vague contract which he held with the college. Wyman's respect for, and confidence in, Ayres was clearly slipping, and he made it clear that he did not wish to support the renewal of the president's contract in 1913.<sup>15</sup> A week and a half later, Wyman wrote again, his tone

<sup>11</sup>Lindenwood College, *Catalog*, 1906-1914. Data on endowment needs and resources ceased to be printed after the 1913-1914 *Catalog*.

<sup>12</sup>A student roster was published at the end of each annual *Catalog* from 1905-1928. In compiling these statistics, the name of every student in attendance at the college was recorded and checked against lists for subsequent years to determine the length of enrollment. This procedure was complicated by the double-listing of students during the Ayres administration, particularly evident in 1911-1912. To eliminate possible duplications, the home state of each student was noted also, and it was used as an additional identification factor. All enrolled students, whether they were affiliated with the college, preparatory, or seminary programs, were included in the compilation because the

official college designations are inconsistent. For the three years from 1922 to 1925, however, students enrolled for only one course were excluded because their inclusion would have distorted retention figures downward, while inflating the number of new students. While part-time students are included in the series for other years, their presence does not distort the findings significantly because the college offered a special program for part-time students between 1922 and 1925 only.

<sup>13</sup>*Catalog*, 1905-1928.

<sup>14</sup>George F. Ayres to John L. Roemer, August 24, September 6, 1912, John L. Roemer Papers, Lindenwood College Archives.

<sup>15</sup>Henry P. Wyman to George F. Ayres, June 3, 12, 1913, Lindenwood College Archives.

now frustrated and furious:

I hardly expected you to be elated in examining my Statement of your account, for it is *sometimes* unpleasant to be called on to settle one's accounts. . . .

You seem to feel that what belongs to the Board belongs to you; that is a great mistake!<sup>16</sup>

The controversy became muted when Ayres underwent surgery in August and died one month later. By August 13, 1913, Wyman received news of Ayres's critical condition. He then wrote to Samuel J. Niccolls, chairman of the Lindenwood Board and pastor of a local Presbyterian Church, agreeing that Ayres "is not likely to live long," and suggesting that the new Lindenwood president be a clergyman.<sup>17</sup> The Trustees' experience with Reaser and Ayres, who were ordained but had not held pastorates before their appointments, seemed to warrant a search for a leader who was an experienced and active pastor.

**A**T THE PRODDING OF COLLEGE-PATRON James G. Butler, the Trustees looked among themselves for a successor to George F. Ayres. In 1913, the presidency was offered to John L. Roemer, the independently wealthy pastor of the Tyler Place Presbyterian Church in St. Louis. Roemer refused the first offer on the grounds of "personal unsuitness," and when the Board repeated its offer in early 1914, he declined again. Finally, the Trustees elected Roemer president without his knowledge. He then accepted, assuming office in the summer of 1914.

Roemer's reluctance was overcome by a promise of complete financial backing from James G. Butler. On April 21, 1914, four weeks after Roemer's acceptance, Butler announced that he would pay for a new dormitory, offer thirty-five scholarships, and award each enrolled student \$25.00 "for every new

pupil they would bring us." Between 1914 and 1918, Butler donated funds for another dormitory and endowed the Margaret Leggat Butler Chair for Biblical Literature. Both Butler and his wife died before 1919, and most of their fortune was left to the college. In 1920, a portion of their bequest was used to build an administration and classroom building which cost \$500,000.<sup>18</sup> Butler's support relieved Roemer of many of the financial stringencies that had plagued his predecessors. The Butler estate and a salaried contract gave Roemer control over the college's money without subjecting him to the threat of accusations regarding any unethical conduct in the transaction of school business.



*Sibley Hall and Jubilee Hall, December, 1909.*

Board members James and Margaret Butler, Henry P. Wyman, and Samuel J. Niccolls all died within five years of Roemer's appointment. The deaths of key members of the Board and Roemer's close association with the members of the Missouri Presbytery, which appointed new Trustees, enabled Roemer to rebuild the Board with men who were likely to concur with him on how to handle issues facing the college.

When Roemer assumed control, the finances of the institution were in shambles. Roemer's answer to the problem was based on two factors: circumstance, or the timely deaths of the Butlers, Wyman and Niccolls; and policy, or the realignment of the college's

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, June 23, 1913.

<sup>17</sup>Henry P. Wyman to Samuel J. Niccolls, August 13, 1913, Lindenwood College Archives.

<sup>18</sup>Lindenwood College, *Bulletin*, CXIII, no. 3 (September, 1940), 5, Board of Trustees, "Minutes," April 21, 1914, June 21, 1920, and 1915-1918.

faculty and administration along the lines of efficient management.

Before 1914, teacher contracts were handwritten and carried by Ayres in a pocket-sized notebook. They provided room and board for instructors at the school. Franklin F. Horn, who taught medieval and modern history and political and social science, signed a typical contract in 1905. Horn received living quarters for five people and piano lessons for his daughter. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, he was designated acting-president in Ayres's absence, supervisor for the "all school room," or study hall, and traveling recruiter for the college. Lodging provisions usually entailed supervisory duties in the dormitories, on the campus, and in the town.<sup>19</sup>

Ayres's personalized administration was also reflected in rampant nepotism among the faculty and administration. From 1903 to 1909, Mrs. Laura Heron, Ayres's mother-in-law, was the lady principal and business manager of the school, and Mrs. Ayres taught piano from 1903 to 1909. Ayres's employment of relatives was not unusual. During Reaser's administration, his wife taught voice, and his brother instructed courses in the Bible and Christian ethics. Mrs. Roemer was the dean of students from 1914 to her death in 1938, and Roemer's niece was the college librarian from 1915 to 1923. In 1925, the brother of the college physician, who was also a member of the Board of Trustees, taught psychology. Under Roemer, however, incompetence or indiscretion could lead to abrupt dismissal. Although the reasons are not clear, Sara M. Findlay, the librarian who was Roemer's niece, was fired in the spring of

1923.<sup>20</sup>

Before Roemer's appointment, all administrative employees taught at least one course a semester, and all teachers had supervisory duties. Instead of continuing the personalized characteristics of the Ayres administration, Roemer increasingly separated faculty and administrative duties. His leadership provided an organizational framework in which each element of the college community had specific responsibilities.

The rationalization of the administration was completed by 1918, and the non-teaching workforce employed by the college expanded spectacularly.<sup>21</sup> In a presidential memorandum, probably written in 1918, Roemer recommended to the Finance Committee of the Board that they "should in conjunction with the accountants work out some permanent plan of financial arrangement."<sup>22</sup> In October, 1917, Roemer hired the first bookkeeper ever employed by the college on a permanent basis to keep the institution's financial records. For the first time, too, itemized financial reports were submitted annually to the Board.<sup>23</sup>

The financial resources provided by the Butler estate, and their rational management by professional accountants, diminished the necessity for extensive fund-raising efforts. Concurrently, Roemer's skillful approach to the problem of enrollment helped to secure a consistent tuition income to supplement the growing endowment. After analyzing the peculiarities of past enrollment, the new president embarked on a campaign of increasing the number of first-year students. Between 1914 and 1919, the number of first-year students increased about 400 per cent,

<sup>19</sup>George F. Ayres, "Teacher Contracts," 1909-1910, Lindenwood College Archives.

<sup>20</sup>Cora M. Porterfield to Kate L. Gregg, April 6, 1948, Lindenwood College Archives; *Catalog, 1904-1910 and 1915-1929*; and interview with Lois Karr (M.A., University of Wisconsin, professor of mathematics and physics, 1922-1958), October 8, 1973, St. Charles, Missouri.

<sup>21</sup>See *Catalog, 1900-1913, Faculty and Staff Lists*.

<sup>22</sup>John L. Roemer, "Memo," undated, but internal evidence indicates fall of 1918, John L. Roemer Papers, Lindenwood College Archives.

<sup>23</sup>Board of Trustees, "Minutes," October 4, 1915, October 1, 1917. It was customary for presidents to submit an annual financial report, but those reports were generalized and non-specific. The only twentieth century president to fail to file a detailed annual report was George F. Ayres in 1913.

while the total enrollment climbed 350 per cent. The number of freshman students during Roemer's first six years averaged 74.1 per cent of the student body, and the college's student population increased 22.8 per cent annually. From 1919 to 1927, enrollment continued to rise, but the rate of increase slowed to about 5.2 per cent per year. The proportion of first-year students fell to a mean of 66.2 per cent during this period, suggesting that the college reached its enrollment capacity by 1919-1920 and that a slower rate of growth, based in part on increased retention, was consistent with the physical capacity of the institution during the 1920s.<sup>24</sup>

A close examination of student names and their geographic origins confirms that the alumnae played an important role in recruiting. Former students often settled close to their original homes, and small towns frequently sent disproportionately large contingents of students. Neosho, Missouri, located more than 250 miles from St. Charles and in the extreme southwestern corner of the state, had a population of

6590 in 1920. It sent five students in 1917-1918, three students in 1922-1923, and three students in 1928-1929.<sup>25</sup> Enrollment records showing diverse family names, and large groups of students from towns like Neosho, suggest that friends and sisters often attended Lindenwood together. In the mid-1920s, for example, the Bates family of Roodhouse, Illinois, sent three daughters to Lindenwood. Between 1918 and 1926, the Achepohl family of St. Charles, Missouri, was represented at the college by five daughters.

"Prestige" factors, which Roemer actively cultivated when he built an attractive and stately campus and enrolled young women from influential families, also affected student recruiting.<sup>26</sup> During the first ten years of Roemer's administration, three dormitories and an administration building were constructed.<sup>27</sup> The increased number of buildings required a large force of maintenance workers and contributed to the growth in the number of non-academic employees at the college.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup>See footnote twelve. Lindenwood's record during this period is far out of line with modern retention rates at the college. During the late 1960s, Lindenwood's class composition was about forty per cent freshman, twenty-five per cent sophomore, twenty per cent junior, and fifteen per cent senior. Interview with Earl L. Davis (director of admissions, 1968-1970), March 11, 1975, by telephone to Trenton, New Jersey.

<sup>25</sup>Geographic data were assembled from the student rosters in the *Catalog*, 1917-1918, 1922-1923, and 1928-1929. An alumnae list was assembled from the 1915 *Catalog*. Lindenwood's geographic base during the Roemer administration did not change significantly. In 1917, approximately seventy per cent of students came from towns within 250 miles of the college. Nearly ninety per cent lived within 400 miles. Five years later, only sixty per cent had homes less than 250 miles from campus, but seventy-five per cent lived within 400 miles. Instead of widening further, the college's regional base stabilized by the late 1920s, when about eighty per cent of the students lived within 400 miles of Lindenwood. Lindenwood's student body continued to be regionally concentrated, with its largest contingents from Missouri, southern Illinois, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. The location of alumnae in 1915 closely corresponded to the geographic origin of students throughout the period after

1915.

<sup>26</sup>Laura Hinkle, daughter of New Mexico's Governor James F. Hinkle (1923-1925), attended Lindenwood from 1923-1925. Prior to her enrollment, the number of students from New Mexico was very low. Two others from the state came with Hinkle, and in 1924-1925, four Lindenwood students had homes in New Mexico. When Hinkle left, the other New Mexico students also departed.

<sup>27</sup>The buildings include Nicolls Hall (1917), Butler Hall (1919), Roemer Hall (1921), and Irwin Hall (1924). The construction of these additions to the college's physical plant corresponded to years of large enrollment increases.

<sup>28</sup>In 1913, the final year of Ayres's administration, there were only three non-teaching employees. There were sixteen teachers. Under Roemer, the number of non-teaching employees grew to twenty-five in 1926 and 1927. The teaching staff reached a high of forty-four in 1924. Data derived from the annual *Catalog*, 1906-1929. The percentage of non-teaching personnel employed at the college followed a growth rate disproportionate to the expansion rates of the faculty or student body. The rationalization of business practices at Lindenwood was the reason. In 1920, for example, when non-academic personnel made up 41.9 per cent of the college's work-force, the college was undergoing

**F**ACED WITH PRESSURES FROM DONORS and benefactors, many midwestern women's colleges extended their attention only to areas within the accepted behavior patterns of feminine activity – culture, religion, social training, and home and family care.<sup>29</sup> Such concerns were reflected fully in Lindenwood's curriculum throughout the years between 1903 and 1929.

Three major elements were present in the curriculum at the college before 1914: classical study, including fine arts; religious education; and social and cultural training. Classicism, in a period of educational innovation during the early twentieth century when the social sciences began to emerge as a major component of university curricula, appealed to the conservative instincts of Lindenwood's supporters. In 1902, the *Annual Register* proclaimed, "Believing that there is a demand in the west for a Ladies' College which shall afford advantages not inferior to those in the far east, we have outlined a full course of classical study."<sup>30</sup>

The college's emphasis on fine arts, particularly in elocution and rhetoric, music, and art, had a similar purpose. The fine arts departments carefully fit their offerings to the conventional notions of the refined, cultured, and religious woman. The elocution department, for example, declared that "the fundamental aim of this department is to enable pupils to discover the true and natural method of vocal expression, to develop the originality and personality of each student, and to inculcate a taste for the refined in literature."<sup>31</sup>

Religious education and biblical study formed another major element in the Lindenwood curriculum before 1914. Religious education undoubtedly owed its importance to the college's long-standing, Presbyterian affiliation. The Bible was "taught throughout" and "valued as a subject of the last importance."<sup>32</sup> Religion pervaded the entire spectrum of life at the school. Upon enrollment, each student registered her religious preference. On each Sunday thereafter, teachers escorted groups of students to churches in St. Charles representing the appropriate denominations.<sup>33</sup> Sanctioned by "the high design of the founders," the religious program sought to "impart religious knowledge, to quicken conscience, to inspire with a sense of duty, and to awaken a love of true excellence."<sup>34</sup>

Social training, which accompanied religious activity, was given through formal lectures and close faculty supervision. Correspondence lists, approved by each student's parents, were required before a student could receive mail. Callers were received on weekends only. Saturday afternoons were reserved for "lady friends or relatives ONLY;" Sunday afternoons for "immediate members of the family ONLY;" and Friday evenings between seven and ten o'clock for "gentlemen callers," provided all visits were "made in the parlor" and that each young man either was known personally to the president of the college or could "present letters of introduction from the [girl's] parents."<sup>35</sup>

Violators of the social code were penalized by expulsion, suspension, or grounding, which meant

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accreditation investigation by the Missouri College Union and the North Central Association. A substantial portion of those employed may have been clerks and accountants hired temporarily to put the college's financial records in order. Whatever the reason, the percentage of non-teaching employees fell off sharply in 1921.

<sup>29</sup>Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago, 1965), 40-50, 180-251; Thomas Woody, *A History of Woman's Education in the United States* (New

York, 1929) 11.

<sup>30</sup>*Annual Register*, 1902-1903, 15.

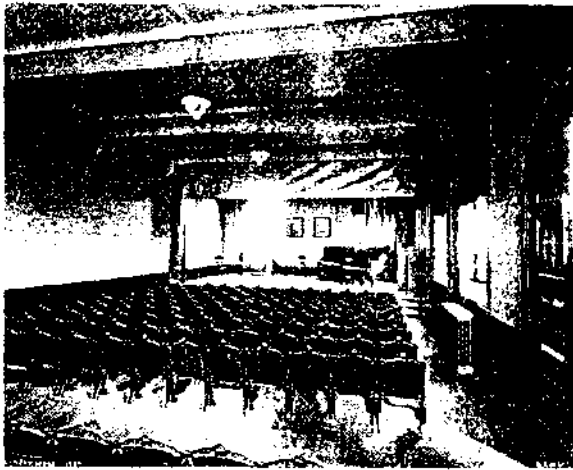
<sup>31</sup>*Catalog*, 1906-1907, 24.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>33</sup>Cora M. Porterfield to Kate L. Gregg, April 6, 1948, Lindenwood College Archives.

<sup>34</sup>*Annual Register*, 1905-1906, 32-33.

<sup>35</sup>*Catalog*, 1907-1908, 26-27.



*The Chapel, 1907.*

confinement in a dormitory room for a weekend. Discipline imposed on students did not always meet with parental approval, and when school officials were confronted by enraged parents, their attitude was often self-righteous and arbitrary. In 1906, Ayres reprimanded the daughter of one J.M. Hawks. In retaliation, Hawks withdrew his daughter from the school, demanding a refund. Henry P. Wyman, in his capacity as secretary-treasurer of the Trustees, insisted on an explanation from Ayres. When Ayres replied to his inquiry, Wyman responded with an endorsement:

Mr. Hawks engaged and payed [*sic.*] for a service which it is his right to demand and which we are required to give. He placed his child with us subject to our rules, regulations, and discipline; he has voluntarily withdrawn her on his motion and without any just reason (in our view) in contrariety [*sic.*] to the best

interest of the child and himself: he seems to have done it at the whim and behest of the child herself, whose conduct has been such as to need the good discipline of the school rather than a course to augment (instead of lessen) a most objectionable attribute in her character.<sup>36</sup>

In the view of Lindenwood's leaders, the college's purpose was to mold the behavior of young women, producing refined, cultured and religious ladies. The standards of behavior imposed upon the students were accepted by the school as a right of contract which parents could break if they wished, as Wyman put it, to "suffer the consequences."

The major shift in the college's curriculum after 1914 involved the partial abandonment of classicism as an all-encompassing course of study and the growth of the "liberal culture" program. Liberal culture at Lindenwood meant "a combination of Liberal Arts as a strong background and a technic [*sic.*] in a special field."<sup>37</sup> This brought about the first flowering of the modern liberal arts ideal at Lindenwood.

John L. Roemer combined cultural and social educational objectives to "refine" a woman while preparing her for the vocational or professional opportunities which were opening up for women, particularly in the arts and teaching. Between 1870 and 1920, the number of females in the United States labor force rose steadily. By 1920, over twenty per cent of the American labor force was female, and among college and university teachers, females comprised over twenty-five per cent.<sup>38</sup> Program additions to Lindenwood's curriculum during the early part of Roemer's administration reflected an effort to adapt to the newer professional aspirations of women

<sup>36</sup>Henry P. Wyman to George F. Ayres, February 14, 1906, Lindenwood College Archives; Miss Hawks's transgression and the penalty imposed for it are not recorded. Her father did not return her to school, but he also did not receive a refund. Wyman's stand on the Hawks matter became part of the institution's official policy when portions of his letter were included in the 1906-1907 *Catalog*, 18.

<sup>37</sup>*Catalog*, 1914-1915, 30; 1923-1924, 15; 1927-1928, 34-98. See Guy C. Motley, "In Memoriam," *Bulletin*, CXIII, no. 3 (September 1940), 10.

<sup>38</sup>United States Census Bureau, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington, D.C., 1960) 72, 210-11.



within the traditional confines of cultural, religious, and social training which dominated women's education before 1920.

In response to these trends, the college began to offer a choice of a junior college degree, a B.A. and three B.S. degrees, three different diplomas, and six forms of certificates to its students after 1914. Roemer also discarded the old departmental arrangement and re-organized the college into three major areas: the College of Arts and Sciences, which included the humanities and social sciences; the School of Vocational Training, which encompassed education, home economics, physical education, and a secretarial course; and the School of Fine Arts, which embraced music, art, and oratory.

The altered academic program made it necessary to set higher standards in the recruitment and retention of teachers. In 1914, the faculty and administration consisted of only nineteen individuals.<sup>39</sup> Within five years, the faculty doubled in number and the level of the degrees held by the teaching staff also was raised. During 1913, the last year of Ayres's administration, eight of Lindenwood's instructors, exactly half of the total, possessed no college degree. Five teachers held bachelor's degrees, and only three had master's and doctoral degrees. Great changes took place under Roemer's administration and in 1924 twenty-eight, or 63.6 per cent of the teaching force, had degrees on the postgraduate level. The number of faculty members without college degrees remained constant during Roemer's first fifteen years, but most of them taught in the

large School of Fine Arts where private instruction often was considered sufficient.<sup>40</sup>

In raising the quality of the college's faculty, at least in terms of its academic credentials, Roemer benefitted from a general increase in the number of female American college graduates. In 1870, only 14.7 per cent of all college degrees, including both baccalaureate and graduate, were awarded to women. By 1920, conversely, one-third of all collegiate degrees were earned by women. Although the number of women who obtained doctoral degrees was far smaller than that of recipients of bachelor's or master's degrees, two-thirds more women received doctorates in 1920 than had done so in 1910.<sup>41</sup>

Roemer also increased the rate of retention of faculty members from a mean of 73.1 per cent during Ayres's administration to 81.6 per cent in the late 1920s. Faculty retention during the first decade of Roemer's presidency was poorer than it had been under his predecessor. The retention levels after 1914, however, did not exhibit the drastic annual fluctuations that were in evidence under Ayres. An initial dip in faculty retention percentages, followed by a steadily increasing proportion of returning faculty in the years after 1914, indicate an organized effort to form a new faculty by weeding out older members and retaining better qualified recruits.<sup>42</sup>

Most of Lindenwood's instructors were unmarried women who received their undergraduate training at colleges for women.<sup>43</sup> Generally unable to find suitable positions at established co-educational institutions, these women came to view Lindenwood as a

<sup>39</sup>See footnote twenty-eight.

<sup>40</sup>Data on the Lindenwood faculty and staff were developed from personnel lists contained in the annual *Catalogs*. Faculty names, like student names, were frequently double listed to give a more positive impression of the college's academic program. The limited size of the faculty, however, allowed the easy identification of individuals. Because faculty names did not appear on course listings, differentiation between part-time and full-time faculty was not possible.

<sup>41</sup>*Historical Statistics of the United States*, 211-12.

<sup>42</sup>The reasons for the increase in faculty retention are not clear. There is no record of tenure being instituted in the 1920s, and faculty salary records after 1914 are not contained in the college's archives.

<sup>43</sup>*Catalog*, 1915-1929. During the Ayres administration 76.4 per cent of all employees were female, and 92.3 per cent of those women were single or widowed. The marital status of only 5.1 per cent is unknown. These figures did not change substantially under Roemer: from 1914 to 1929,



*On the Lane Leading to Lindenwood, 1910.*

rising star in female education.<sup>44</sup> A strong sense of innovative excitement pervaded the college. To those involved in the process of growth, Lindenwood offered an academically rigorous program which updated the traditional components of women's education. The college remained in some sense a "finishing school" but its leadership attempted to make it one which provided an opportunity for intellectual development. Accreditation was obtained from the Missouri College Union in 1920, and, a year later, Lindenwood's four-year course became the first program exclusively for women to be accredited by the North Central Association.<sup>45</sup>

The college's achievements under the first fifteen years of John Roemer's administration were spectacular: the institution attained financial security, managerial sanity, a large and well-trained faculty, a growing enrollment, new facilities and equipment, and academic accreditation.

The changes introduced by Roemer, however, were primarily organizational. Factors which pre-

dated Roemer's presidency continued to influence the education offered by the college. The strong emphasis on religious and cultural education persisted, as did the almost fanatical insistence on social regulation and control. With a Presbyterian minister at the helm, the institution maintained its strong denominational ties. Students still attended daily chapel and Sunday vespers.<sup>46</sup> "Membership in evangelical churches" was required of all faculty members.<sup>47</sup> Robert S. Calder, holder of the Butler Chair of Biblical Literature and chairman of the department of religion, noted the religious aims of the college in his departmental report for 1919:

The constant endeavor and effort, direct and indirect, to make and keep the atmosphere of the college helpful and Christian are not, of course, and should not be the peculiar task of this or any other department. . . . Rather it is the general aim, the common purpose and desire of all to make the whole influence of the college life Christian in character and to broaden the spiritual life of all of our students.<sup>48</sup>

female employees accounted for 73.5 per cent of the faculty, and 94.7 per cent of these women were unmarried, with the marital status of only 2.6 per cent being unavailable. Conversely, from 1900 to 1928, all men employed at the college, whose marital status is available, were married.

<sup>44</sup>Interview with Lois Karr, October 8, 1973, St. Charles, Missouri.

<sup>45</sup>*Catalog*, 1923-1924, 14.

<sup>46</sup>Lindenwood College, *Student Handbook*, 1918-1919, 16-18.

<sup>47</sup>Board of Trustees, "Minutes," October 10, 1924.

<sup>48</sup>Robert S. Calder, "Report of the Department of Religious Education," contained in *ibid.*, June 23, 1919.

The religious emphasis of the college continued to be entwined with a stressing of social training and control. Roemer helped to insure the perpetuation of social regulation by enforcing its ideals through a newly created student government. In 1915, the Student Government Association was founded on an experimental basis at the recommendation of the faculty.<sup>49</sup> The following year that body was made permanent. The student government possessed the authority to prosecute violators of an elaborate code of behavior. Its rulings, however, were subject to administrative approval, and punishment invariably was imposed by the faculty at Roemer's request.<sup>50</sup>

A complex code of rules and regulations accompanied the formation of the Student Government Association. A different set of privileges was devised for each class level. Procedures for leaving campus were created, and chaperonage continued to be required.<sup>51</sup> The Roemer administration, significantly, retained an admonition to students in the college's annual *Catalog and Student Handbook*:

The President may dismiss at any time any student who may be exerting a harmful influence, or who may be found to be entirely out of sympathy with the tone and standard of the school, *even though she has not committed any special act of insubordination.*<sup>52</sup>

Before 1914, Lindenwood's leaders proved unable to take full advantage of demographic changes in the college's constituency which would normally be expected to foster rapid growth. The lack of institutional growth reflected the administration's failure to stimulate the interest of prospective donors or potential students. Financial instability, aggravated by the lack of a clear sense of purpose, retarded Lindenwood's growth in the decade following the Board's

resolution in 1903.

Lindenwood's development, when it finally occurred, came in the wake of demographic changes which enlarged the college's regional constituency. The number of prospective students available to the college increased with the growth of the population of the Great Plains, the elevation of the general educational level of American women, and the expansion of the female portion of the American labor force. The increasingly sophisticated transportation and communication webs that spread across the West Central states enabled Lindenwood to attract students from an ever larger geographic area. Economic growth served to enlarge the number of families who were able to send their daughters to college, and the development of vocational-professional careers for women encouraged young women to seek a college education.

Those forces undoubtedly contributed to the growth of existing women's colleges in the mid-west and proved beneficial to Webster College in Webster Groves, Missouri; Stephens College of Columbia, Missouri; and William Woods College at Fulton, Missouri; as well as Lindenwood.<sup>53</sup> Lindenwood's growth, however, was spectacular, and it emanated from changes which enabled the college's leaders to effectively appeal to prospective students. Traditional concepts of women's education were used to justify changes in the college's curriculum, and emphasis was placed on efforts to produce cultured and refined, as well as academically competent, young ladies.

The notion of the college as a "home" was at the core of the ideal of women's education at Lindenwood. In 1926, Lillie P. Roemer, Roemer's wife and dean of students, greeted new students with the declaration, "Lindenwood College endeavors to make

<sup>49</sup>Lindenwood College, "Minutes of the Faculty," September 20, 1915.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, November 9, 1915, June 11, 1916.

<sup>51</sup>*Student Handbook*, 1917-1929.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, 1929-1930, 39.

<sup>53</sup>For a brief survey of the history of women's colleges across the United States, see Christopher Jencks and David Riesman, *The Academic Revolution* (New York, 1969), 302-11.

a home for all the girls who enter its portals."<sup>54</sup> Mrs. Roemer established herself as a surrogate mother with whom the students could "share their lives."<sup>55</sup> John Roemer similarly assumed a rhetorical tone that was almost explicitly fatherly. The students, he reported in 1919,

were well-behaved and loyal. In manners, refined, in dress, modest. In spirit, most democratic. Like all young people they caused the faculty some worries; they gave the President subjects for public and private lectures; but on the average it was a fine student body.<sup>56</sup>

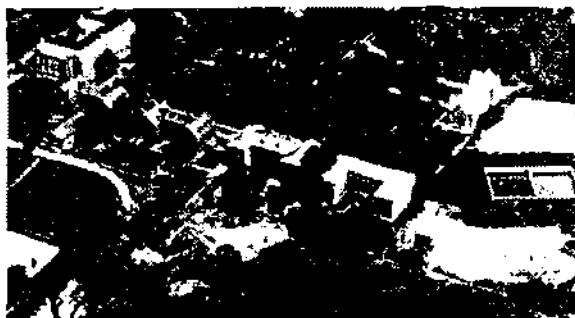
Such attitudes probably were rooted in the desires and expectations of Lindenwood's supporters, but they also closely conformed to Roemer's own concept of the ideal woman. Although Roemer's "worth-while" woman possessed "domestic virtues," she was never confined to the kitchen.<sup>57</sup> In 1913, he asked,

*What should a woman know? . . . A woman ought to know the conduct of household affairs. . . . But she ought to know more. The times demand it. . . . The more a woman interests herself in the world's history, literature, and art, the more valuable she is to the home in its training, and to society. . . .*

*The woman who is worth-while will use her advantages of culture in the home, in the voting booth, in the courtroom, on the platform for the betterment of mankind. The knowledge will be for service, not for selfish purposes.*<sup>58</sup>

The life of such an ideal woman clearly was centered in the home. "Education begins in the home," Roemer declared in 1899, and a woman's

place was there, either as wife and mother or as keeper of the college "home."<sup>59</sup> Since home-training was grounded in religious faith, and since women were uniquely suited to religious life and inspiration, they had the particular duty of "turning the mind and heart of man to God." They therefore required a Christian education, teaching the "whole . . . woman - body, spirit, and mind."<sup>60</sup> The college that "endeavors to give each girl an opportunity to develop herself in a spiritual and cultural way; to receive a liberal education and to gain through it both social



*Lindenwood College, 1927.*

and intellectual poise; to develop any love for knowledge for its own sake which she may have; . . . and to recognize the right of a girl to choose a vocation and receive training for it, in addition to her education along more liberal lines" would enrich the nation - culturally, spiritually, and professionally.<sup>61</sup>

Lindenwood always had those goals, but John L. Roemer's administrative and curricular innovations

<sup>54</sup>*Student Handbook*, 1926-1927, 9.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, 1920-1921, 7.

<sup>56</sup>John L. Roemer, "Annual Report of the President of Lindenwood College to the Board of Trustees," contained in Board of Trustees, "Minutes," July 23, 1919.

<sup>57</sup>John L. Roemer, loose sermon notes, undated, John L. Roemer Papers, Lindenwood College Archives.

<sup>58</sup>John L. Roemer, "The Woman Who is Worth-While," Address delivered to the Minerva Club, Little Rock, Arkan-

sas, February, 1913, John L. Roemer Papers, Lindenwood College Archives.

<sup>59</sup>John L. Roemer, "Sermon No. 326," Address delivered to the First Presbyterian Church, Chillicothe, Ohio, January 22, 1899, John L. Roemer Papers, Lindenwood College Archives.

<sup>60</sup>John L. Roemer, "Christian Education," undated address, probably delivered in the 1920s, John L. Roemer Papers, Lindenwood College Archives.

<sup>61</sup>*Catalog*, 1927-1928, 16.

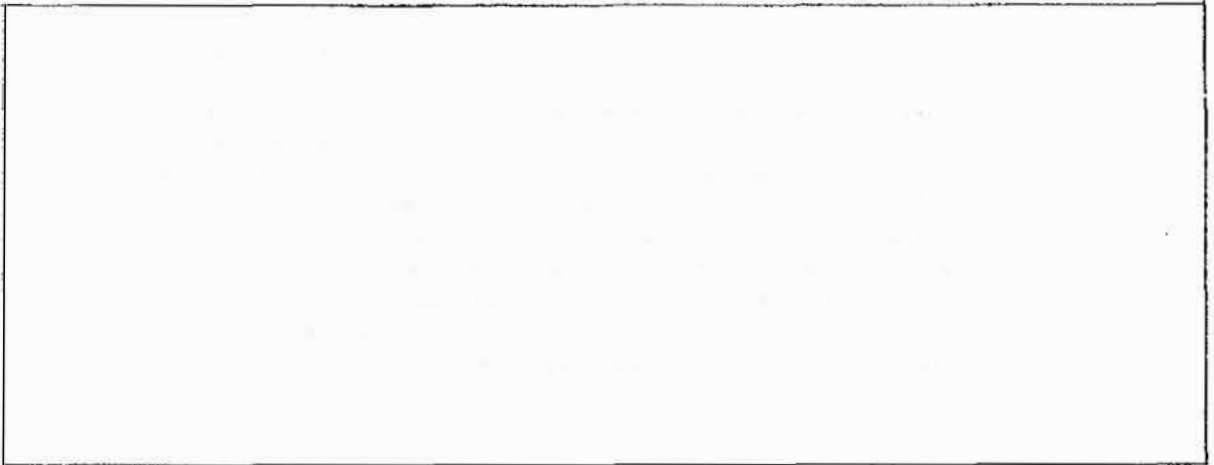
made success more attainable and insured the college's survival. A different type of graduate emerged from the college in the 1920s because the institution under Roemer's leadership was better able to attain its goals than it had been during the administrations before 1914. Lindenwood, as Cora Porterfield noted, had "grown up." John L. Roemer, whose ideas mirrored long-held aspirations for the college and who was able to command the financial resources to make those aspirations realistic, directed Lindenwood to institutional maturity.

By 1927, when the college celebrated its centennial, the criteria by which Lindenwood could be labeled a success – religious education, social training and control, and training for professions which were

open to women – formed the central characteristics of collegiate education for females in America. Portions of the Lindenwood program emphasized the extent to which the college remained a finishing school, a place where parents sent their daughters to be refined into correct and capable young ladies. The genius of Lindenwood's growth, however, arose from the successful adaptation of emerging standards of academic excellence to the traditional roles designated for women. The resolution of May 28, 1903, finally was fulfilled, and Lucinda Templin, dean of the college in the mid-1920s, proudly observed in 1924, "We shall be even more able to uphold [the founders'] ideals and standards."<sup>62</sup>

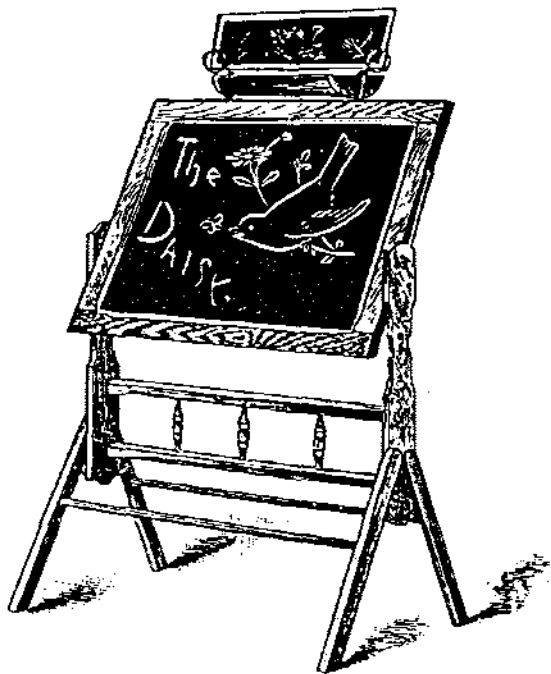
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<sup>62</sup>Lindenwood College, *Linden Bark*, May 8, 1924.



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