

5

Vocation

In June of 1879, Alice Freeman accepted the professorship of history at Wellesley College. [1](#) The previous June Wellesley had offered her a position in mathematics and in December she had received an offer to teach Greek. Both were declined. [2](#) Family needs both economic and emotional still tied her to Saginaw. But after her sister died in June, 1879, and her father's practice was sufficiently established, she could leave Saginaw in good conscience.

1

We do not know precisely why Henry Durant first attempted to recruit Alice Freeman for the Wellesley faculty. President Angell of Michigan believed that it was on his recommendation. After he had watched Freeman's work in the Saginaw school system, he suggested her to Durant, who was always looking for faculty. [3](#) The second and third Wellesley offers do coincide with Alice's successful work in Saginaw which Angell was in a position to judge as he visited Michigan secondary schools to accredit their diploma programs for admission to the university. However, Angell's papers throw little light on the Durant-Angell connection. No letters between them exist before June, 1879, and that letter does not mention Alice Freeman. [4](#) Certainly there is no evidence as one historian suggests that Durant courted Freeman for his faculty at Angell's urging as a way of containing the faculty rebellion that had erupted at Wellesley in 1876 against Durant's autocratic ways. [5](#)

Alice's connection with and knowledge of Wellesley must go back to the late summer of 1877. Her college friend, Mary Marston, joined the Wellesley staff in the fall of 1877 and taught there for two academic years. [6](#) The Michigan-Wellesley network probably was underway before Durant met President Angell and was to include a number of Wellesley College faculty who were trained at Michigan during the last decades of the nineteenth century, when sound undergraduate and graduate education for women was not easily attained. In addition to Marston and Freeman, the Michigan coterie included Angie Chapin, Alice's college housemate and friend, who was professor of Greek until her retirement in 1918; Lucy Andrews, professor of ethics from 1881 to 1887; Eva Chandler, professor of mathematics until 1921; Mary Sophia Case, professor of philosophy until 1924; and Katherine Coman, professor of economics until 1913. Others were added during the years Alice Freeman Palmer was a Wellesley trustee.

Overall the University of Michigan network in the 1870s and 1880s was active and far-reaching. At first I viewed this community of scholars as primarily a women's network. Women who came to Michigan in the early days of coeducation felt a bond that tied them together well beyond undergraduate life and that continued to function in their professional careers much like the eastern old-boy network. When positions were to be filled, appointments made, Michigan graduates looked to college friends. Although the women's network was cohesive and functioned well, the bond was not only among women but transcended sex to include male classmates. Or

perhaps it was the other way around; the male network was enlarged in the 1870s to include women. In any case, Michigan graduates knew who and where they were, kept in touch, shared vacations and holidays, got each other jobs, and even assisted at each other's religious conversions.

There can be no doubt that University of Michigan friends as well as its president were among the influences that brought Freeman to Wellesley. Two of Alice's old friends and classmates had already found their way to Wellesley. And being with her friends was very important to Alice. Mary Marston had spent the two previous years at Wellesley when Alice came in 1879, and Alice's roommate when she joined the faculty was her friend and former housemate, Angie Chapin, Michigan class of '75.

Other personal and family reasons also contributed to Freeman's decision to leave Saginaw for Wellesley. Alice Freeman may well have felt a need to escape her family's encompassing demands, and her sister's death freed her from her most pressing family obligations. But she also had been very close to her sister, and felt obliged to distance herself from her loss. Plus she needed a good income. By the fall of 1879 Wellesley offered her \$1,000 and living expenses, \$200 more in cash than her Saginaw salary. [7](#)

At the same time, Saginaw had much to offer Freeman. She was a well-paid, successful teacher and administrator in the Saginaw public school system. Her sole previous experience at a female boarding facility with a live-in faculty had been far from satisfactory. Still other considerations may have given her pause. In Saginaw she was relatively close to Ann Arbor, where she hoped to continue her graduate study. Nor had Wellesley College yet acquired its later prestige, and many of its students were still in the preparatory department. She must have weighed all these factors.

In the end, Alice took the final initiative to obtain the Wellesley appointment. She wrote in May, when her sister was dying, to her friend Lucy Andrews, then teaching in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, that

I make no plans. I have recently written Mr. Durant about the state of things and have not heard from him. You see it is extremely doubtful whether I go to Wellesley. Nothing is clear before me now. I am very tired. The year has worn upon me in the school and at home, but I think I shall go to the end without getting sick. I wish, how I wish, I could spend a still summer with you, that I could tell my own Lucy how glad I am for her kind thoughts of me. . . . Tell me what your plans are for the summer, and let me live with you in spirit anyway. [8](#)

Alice's sister died, her spirits did not improve much, but she had written to Durant, and when his reply arrived, she accepted. She wrote again to Lucy:

I am not well this week, nothing very serious, only too tired to sleep, and sometimes I must confess, too heartsick to want to rest. . . . I will leave Saginaw as soon as I can get ready, next week, I think, but before going to Wellesley spend

a few days at the old home in Windsor and Osborn Hollow. I have not been back there in three years. [9](#)

She always found the Susquehanna Valley restoring, and sought succor more than once with her extended family amongst the old familiar hills. The Windsor neighborhood provided a measure of rest and peace before the train took her east to New England where she had never been before.

2

The village of Wellesley, fifteen miles due west of Boston, was composed of "a tasteful church, one or two stores of the common country kind," a few scattered dwellings and the station. [10](#) The college itself, a short distance from the village, was not immediately visible unless one knew where to look. Wellesley was rural New England at its best, neat, unobtrusive human habitation surrounded by rolling countryside. In the nineteenth century's clean, clear air Milton's hills were visible in one direction and Mount Monadnock in another.

Alice Freeman unpacked her trunk at a college almost, but not quite, formed. Wellesley had accepted its first candidates for the baccalaureate in September of 1875, and graduated its first class in 1879, the spring before she arrived. Henry Fowle Durant, entrepreneur, evangelist, and former Boston attorney who was its founder, had applied for a charter to create a women's seminary in 1870 and amended his request to authorization for a college in 1873. [11](#) Wellesley's great first building, College Hall, situated on the high ground overlooking Lake Waban, was already complete when the first class matriculated. When Alice Freeman joined its faculty, Durant's ladies' college had already set many patterns for itself, a commitment to evangelical Christianity, insistence on a staff composed almost entirely of women, devotion to the creation of teachers, a charge that "calico girls," the daughters of the working middle class, rather than the wealthy, search for learning and professional training within its walls.

Henry Fowle Durant [12](#) was born in 1822 in Hanover, New Hampshire, but he grew up in the newly industrialized town of Lowell, Massachusetts. [13](#) He prepared for Harvard at the private school of Samuel Ripley, a Waltham Unitarian minister, where he learned the classics from Ripley's wife, Lois, a self-taught woman educator and scholar. This experience helped to convince him of the active role educated women could play in American society. [14](#) After graduating from Harvard, Durant became a Boston attorney and a strikingly successful trial lawyer. [15](#) He was an aggressive advocate with a style a bit shocking to Boston conservatives, and a hint of disapproval surrounded his mode of practice. Among his clients was the Goodrich company, then a pioneer rubber manufacturer. Durant was astute enough to see that vulcanization had a promising economic future, and he took his fee in company stock. This clever move provided the base from which he expanded the considerable business interests that made his fortune and provided the wherewithal to support the philanthropies of his later years. [16](#)

Durant married his first cousin, Pauline Fowle, when he was thirty-two. She was ten years his junior. [17](#) Her grandfather was a member of the French Huguenot nobility whose ancestors chose exile in Geneva after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Her father was a United States Army

major whose family accompanied him to his posts at Sault Ste. Marie and Fort Dearborn when Pauline was a very young child. He died when she was six, but his family was well provided for, and his surviving child (a son had died earlier) received a superior education, not only the music lessons and European travel usual for upper middle-class young women, but several years of formal training in a French boarding school in New York City. [18](#) Pauline Durant belonged to a family of well-educated women. Her grandmother was a respected Latin scholar, and Durant's appreciation of women's academic abilities was further enhanced by her accomplishments and those of her family.

Pauline Durant influenced her husband in many ways. Like many Huguenots whose backgrounds included deep sacrifice for their faith, she took her religious beliefs seriously. Durant, the casual, somewhat skeptical Unitarian, tolerated his wife's more ardent Christian devotion, but did not share her zeal until they lost their only son to diphtheria in 1863. [19](#) Durant then left Unitarianism for his wife's evangelical Christianity, where both found a measure of succor for their loss. [20](#) Also, Pauline Durant had been deeply involved in philanthropy from the time of her marriage. Like many pious women of her class and time, she affirmed her Christian beliefs through charitable work among prisoners and other unfortunates. She aided the Dedham Asylum, the Bridgewater Workhouse, and the Boston jail. After his conversion, Durant precipitately left the law, believing its practice incompatible with the gospel, and he too turned some of his released energies and talents toward philanthropy. [21](#)

As the Durants combined religious and philanthropic interests expanded, Mount Holyoke Seminary for women caught their attention. Durant became a lay preacher and in this capacity participated in several revivals at Mount Holyoke as part of his new religious enthusiasm. He joined the seminary's board of trustees in 1867, and he and Pauline began to make substantial gifts to Mary Lyon's pioneering venture in women's education, including a \$10,000 contribution toward a new library building completed in 1868.

Henry Durant, however, was not a man who was content to follow in others' footsteps. He may have abandoned the law, but he was still an active business entrepreneur. Business, however, did not fully engage his organizational talents, and he looked for a philanthropic venture that would be wholly his own. Before the death of their son, the Durants had acquired a summer home in Wellesley. This Wellesley estate, planned as their son's inheritance, could no longer be passed to a direct heir, and Durant thought of using it instead as the site for a school. At first the Durants planned two schools, one for boys and another for girls, plus an orphanage, but as early as 1867 Durant changed his will, leaving his country place for an academy. [22](#) In 1870 Wellesley Female Seminary was incorporated, and three years later the name in its charter was changed to Wellesley College.



Henry Fowle Durant, founder of Wellesley College. (Courtesy of Wellesley College Archives.)

Why did the Durants, bent on commemorating the brief life of their only son and motivated by deep religious commitment to aiding the unfortunate, turn to women's education as the primary

vehicle of their philanthropies? No doubt their connection with Mount Holyoke played a part. They had seen firsthand a long-lasting experiment in women's education at work. In fact, Durant chose five members of the Mount Holyoke Board of Trustees for the first board of his own college. Also, as we have seen, the Civil War had propelled women into teaching, and created a shortage of trained women educators to staff the rapidly growing American secondary school systems. Training women to teach met a real need. [23](#)

Furthermore, women's higher education was receiving much attention. Vassar had enrolled its first students in 1865 in a wholly new type of institution, a women's college. Henry Durant could not help but be aware that Matthew Vassar, in founding that college, had created an innovative and permanent memorial to himself. Durant, no doubt, felt he could do as well or better than Vassar and enlist the whole-hearted support of his adored wife in the process. But his would be a less self-serving gift. He stipulated from the beginning that his college was not to be named after its benefactor nor was it to contain any monument to him.

Women's academies or seminaries had flourished in the pre-Civil War period. For example, Emma Willard opened Troy Seminary in 1821, Catharine Beecher the Hartford Seminary in 1827, and Mary Lyons founded Mount Holyoke in 1837. Overall the number of academies and secondary schools doubled in the two decades from 1840 to 1860. Young women attending these academies were frequently expected to (and usually did) teach, at least for a few years, before marriage. [24](#) The seminary movement peaked in the 1850s after which the new normal schools, specifically designed to train teachers and offer pedagogical instruction, emerged as alternatives. The curricula of the better women's seminaries rivaled in scope the course offerings of the last two years at men's colleges, and they provided a substitute for the undergraduate training offered by men's colleges and universities, but they did not award degrees.

Women's colleges appeared in several parts of the country during the 1850s but proved ephemeral. [25](#) However, Vassar (1865) and Wellesley and Smith (1875) successfully and permanently reestablished the pattern of degree-granting institutions for women, modeled in many ways on the best of the ladies' seminaries. But there was a difference. The colleges granted baccalaureate degrees. However, all but Smith (and Smith, when it opened, enrolled only fourteen students) of the new women's colleges had preparatory departments because so few of the young women admitted were adequately trained to do college work. [26](#) Vassar did not abandon its preparatory department until 1880. Nonetheless, from their beginnings, Vassar, Wellesley, and Smith were colleges, not academies or seminaries, and never saw preparatory training as anything but a temporary expedient.

The Wellesley campus in September of 1879, to which Alice Freeman was driven in one of the college's lorries, was still very much the Durant's country estate, despite the brand-new ornate, betowered, and pinnacled red brick castle that dominated the rise above Lake Waban. A generation earlier its several hundred acres had been an abandoned farm, since transformed by the Durants into a landscape reminiscent of the grounds of an English country house with not a few features traceable to the influence of the great landscape designer Capability Brown and the architect Andrew Jackson Downing. [27](#) The principal roads had been laid and major plantings installed long before its role as a college campus had been envisioned. The Durants loved the natural grasses, trees, and wildflowers and added to, rather than tampered with, the natural

beauty of the land. In the early years, the campus grounds were always called "the Park," and a thousand rhododendrons and seven thousand crocus and snow drops were planted to enhance the landscape the fall Alice Freeman arrived on campus. [28](#)

However, remnants of the campus's original use as a farm remained. In the 1870s and 1880s the college dining room received its milk from Jersey cows kept on campus. Farmhands tended pigs, horses, and chickens and grew the vegetables that appeared on the college's tables. The college's ice was cut in winter from Lake Waban, and a blacksmith shod the farm's horses. [29](#) During Alice Freeman's tenure the Wellesley campus was almost a self-contained rural community, a bucolic, semi-paradise inhabited by eager young women. Lake Waban provided both vista and recreation. Many rooms in College Hall had views of the perfect little lake nestled in the rolling New England countryside. And the lake also furnished Wellesley with its first organized collegiate sport. College sculls crewed by young undergraduates entertained the writer Lyman Abbott on its quiet waters in 1880.

It was a curious experience to sit quietly in the stern and be rowed by a crew of young ladies, while the lake was dotted with the tasteful uniforms of the 14 crews, each in its own colors, and the setting sun painted a picture rare in its beauty. [30](#)

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was also treated to a lake excursion when he visited the college.

College Hall, dominating the south shore of the lake was even grander than Vassar's Old Main. Hammatt Billings, Boston architect who had designed the Mount Holyoke Library, supplied the plans, but Durant, with Mrs. Durant's help, was his own general contractor and supervised every detail of its construction. Both Vassar's Old Main and Wellesley's College Hall encompassed all indoor college activities under one roof. Students, slept, ate, attended classes, and worshipped in a single structure. But Wellesley's College Hall, although its plan was in one sense borrowed from Vassar, was more ambitious, more consciously elegant, than Matthew Vassar had chosen to provide. [31](#) Its pillared center court and five-storied atrium, frescoed chapel, and imposing public spaces provided an almost palatial setting for women's education. Even the students' rooms with views of the lake, the sun, and reflections on the water were quite in contrast to Vassar's more Spartan quarters. Although the growing enrollment and attendant crowding which took place during Freeman's tenure on campus played havoc with the original plan of parlor-bedroom suites where each girl could have some privacy for meditation, the rooms continued to have black walnut furniture and good carpets. Originally the dining room was furnished with Wedgewood china, an early victim, unfortunately, to undergraduate dishwashing carelessness. Young Alice Freeman had never seen nor lived in anything so grand before.



College Hall with Lake Waban in the foreground. (Courtesy of Wellesley College Archives.)

Wellesley was a strange meld of sybaritic luxury and "calico girl" austerity. The same girls who slept in black walnut beds and studied in paneled refectories were required to perform much of the college's routine domestic labor, wash the dishes, sweep the floors, and set the tables. Mr.

Durant had intended Wellesley college "for poor girls." He kept the price of board and tuition relatively low, compared to Harvard, and students' contributions through "domestic work" were designed to make possible the low fees. But no one could buy their way out of their domestic assignments, for he saw these compulsory household tasks as an equalizing force, another form of character building, another lesson to be learned, an "opportunity of doing something for the common good." [32](#) As Durant saw it, the "elevating and refining influences of a happy Christian home shall surround the students." [33](#) And that included a contribution via menial tasks to the "family's" welfare.

Students were not necessarily enthusiastic about Durant's experiment with leveling. One entering freshman wrote to a friend the same September that Alice Freeman joined the faculty:

I have been down to the lake twice. The grounds and buildings are simply lovely, but that don't do me any good. My work is to remove the bread from the table after each meal, brush off the plates, and also carry off and clean the fruit dishes after dinner. You may laugh at first, but just think of it when there are tables for three hundred, and two plates on a table, and to do it three times a day. [34](#)

When the system was finally abandoned, long after Durant's death and after Alice Freeman had left the presidency, but with her approval, the Wellesley student *Annals* jubilantly reported, "Hereafter dishwashing is no longer part of the domestic economy and takes its place with the lost arts." [35](#)

Interestingly, in the letters that have survived, Alice Freeman never mentions the magnificent physical setting in which she found herself in September of 1879. Other than passing reference to finding solace on the lake after ten o'clock when the students retired, or listening to a katydid on a spring evening, she says almost nothing about her physical surroundings at Wellesley. [36](#) She wrote vividly of the Susquehanna Valley, its contours and changing seasons, and she describes in detail a spring ramble with her high school students at Ottawa. When she taught at Lake Geneva the vistas opened up by the water thrilled her. But the Durants' carefully contrived and nourished country estate now turned college campus, her home for eight years, receives almost no notice as a physical environment at all.

Perhaps at the beginning she was too overwhelmed with responsibility and work to experience her surroundings more than passively. Later it was a familiar, if pleasant, time-worn scene that solicited no attention in her letters. She described other places she met with in her excursions around the neighborhood. After all, she had never seen New England before. But nary a word about the splendors of the college building, or the autumn color reflected in Lake Waban's waters. She was much more likely to reminisce about the University of Michigan where her brother was now a medical student or describe an excursion to nearby Lexington.

When Alice Freeman arrived on campus in the fall of 1879, Wellesley had 375 students, 46 of whom were still in the preparatory department soon to be phased out. Another 48 were already practicing teachers, referred to as the "teacher specials," on campus to acquire further training in academic disciplines and pedagogy but not necessarily candidates for degrees, and 6 were postgraduates.

The curriculum these students studied was heavily classical. Barbara Solomon has commented that the new women's colleges "approached curricular decisions cautiously." [37](#) However, as was true at the University of Michigan during Alice Freeman's undergraduate years, the 1870s was a decade of curricular redefinition. The sciences grew in importance, electives in modern languages, history, and English literature appeared. The long emphasis on the classics was crumbling around the edges, and although Vassar and Smith were reluctant to abandon the old ways, science, modern languages, and history received considerable attention at Wellesley. By 1879 the freshmen among the 208 candidates for the baccalaureate studied Greek, Latin, mathematics, history, and English literature and were permitted to elect French or German. Science entered the curriculum in the second year when chemistry was required, as was physics for juniors. However chemistry, botany, and astronomy were available as electives for upperclasswomen. [38](#) Greek, Latin, mathematics, and history were required of all freshmen and sophomores and could be elected by juniors and seniors, and the range of science and modern language electives was broad for the time. And from its beginnings Wellesley had required a one-hour course in history in each of the four years. [39](#)

The number of courses seems excessive by modern standards, but classes were only forty-five minutes long and several classes, especially electives like modern literature and history, met only once or twice a week. Sixteen recitation rooms in College Hall, twenty feet square, serviced all these classes, supplemented by a chemistry lecture room with adjoining laboratory, a natural history exhibit, an art gallery, and lecture and laboratory rooms for physics and natural history. [40](#) The chemistry lab was fitted for ninety-six students, four sections of twenty-four each, and each student had her own drawer and cupboard and worked out her own experiments. [41](#)

In fashioning the curriculum, Henry Fowle Durant had taken great care to provide ample resources for training in the sciences. Wellesley was the second college in the country to provide a laboratory for undergraduate work in physics. [42](#) Only two years after Alice Freeman's arrival, in September of 1881, the general course was split into classical and science courses with quite different requirements. [43](#)

Durant's concern with science and technology was also reflected in Wellesley's physical plant which was state of the art with every modern gadget available. College Hall was heated with steam, every study parlor had its own flue and the degree of moisture in the rooms was carefully regulated. [44](#) The building was lighted by gas, manufactured on the premises, but also every study was equipped with German student lamps "that give the softest and purest light known." [45](#) A steam passenger elevator was available for those who needed it. Hot and cold water was piped throughout the building, and the number of bathrooms was generous, the water supply a pure artesian well. College Hall itself attested to the rising importance of science in the late nineteenth century. As Durant was quick to point out, Wellesley's location was healthy with no malaria, plenty of sunshine, and good drainage. [46](#)

Durant himself was interested in science and technology, but his natural proclivities were nourished by his friendship with Eben Norton Horsford, his closest friend and the college's second-most important early benefactor. Horsford, an eminent chemist and Harvard professor who trained in Germany, had invented Rumsford's baking powder, the source of his fortune. Like Durant, his wealth was the result of mid-nineteenth-century commercial use of chemical processes in the rapidly industrializing American economy. Durant had consulted Horsford as early as 1871 about his plans and relied heavily on his advice with the science curriculum and equipment. Horsford's attachment to the college became almost as deep as Durant's, and his gifts to Wellesley included the electric lighting that replaced the original gas lights, a substantial library endowment, and the furnishing of a faculty parlor. [47](#)

Durant's and Horsford's concern for a healthy environment for Wellesley's students did not necessarily ensure a healthy faculty. Unfortunately Durant did not see overwork as a health hazard. Teachers carried grueling teaching loads as well as dormitory responsibilities. The result was that among the faculty, tuberculosis was rampant, hemorrhages frequent, unexpected leaves for poor health a constant. Alice herself was not to escape and was forced by acute tuberculosis to retire briefly from classroom responsibilities during her second spring on campus.

In the 1870s and 1880s faculty and students participated together in Wellesley College life. They shared the same two-room suites in College Hall and the same simple suppers of bread, butter, cookies, molasses, and milk in the college dining room. [48](#) Students were explicitly forbidden food from home and eating between meals. Henry Durant believed in health through a diet of wholesome, simple food, and he was intent on keeping "his girls" healthy. [49](#) Whether teachers were expected to be equally rigorous in eschewing favorite treats is not clear, but everyone, students and teachers, was free to pick the flowers, berries, and other fruits that grew abundantly on the spacious college acres. During the growing season they were not bereft.



A College Hall suite, in which faculty and students lived.(Courtesy of Wellesley College Archives.)

Already in the 1870s a number of Wellesley traditions, shared by faculty and students, were in place. "Flower Sunday," the first Sunday of the college year when the chapel was decked with flowers and the text was "God is Love," dated from 1876. "Tree Day" was first celebrated in 1877 when two Japanese golden evergreens were planted, and the festival later grew increasingly elaborate with costumes, marches, orations, and odes. "Float Day" celebrated the lake and the rowing crews, simply at first, and then enhanced by fancy uniforms, banners, and original ditties. With the elaboration, hundreds of spectators made their appearance. [50](#)

Alice Freeman mentions some of these occasions in her letters and seems to have enjoyed them, but Henry Fowle Durant was of two minds about festivities. He expedited "Tree Day," providing the first trees to be planted. Such commemoration of "the Park" he had so carefully nurtured fit his own design. "Flower Sunday" pleased Pauline Durant, and she contributed the riches of her garden and greenhouse to its celebration. But when commencement turned into another festival, Durant had second thoughts. In June of 1881 he informed the board of trustees that he felt the

"excitement" attending post commencement ceremonies was "out of harmony with all the plans and purposes of the College in placing God first in all things." Diplomas should be given "as a token of the sealing to the service of God on earth of each graduate who went forth prepared for the work God would give her to do." Durant asked that diplomas henceforth be given at the close of baccalaureate services and commencement exercises dispensed with. [51](#) But Durant was no longer the governing force in the college when the 1882 commencement came round, and Alice Freeman liked ceremony.

4

When Alice Freeman arrived on the Wellesley campus in the fall of 1879, the college was still in many ways Henry Durant's private fiefdom. He had given the land, financed and planned the physical plant, developed the curriculum and hired the teachers. A board of trustees had existed since 1871, but met infrequently, was poorly attended, and exercised what authority it had almost solely on business and legal matters. Even business was controlled by the Durants, as he served as treasurer and she as secretary of the board. The only decisions regarding faculty and curriculum appearing in the trustees' minutes during Henry Durant's lifetime is mention of the appointment of two committees at the third annual meeting in 1873. The two Durants and Rev. Dr. Nathaniel C. Clark were appointed a committee to select teachers and Henry Durant and Edward N. Kirk a committee to prepare a curriculum. [52](#)

At least some of the students seem to have regarded Durant not only as founding father, benefactor, or even autocratic busybody, but as something of a tyrant. One Wellesley historian quotes a student journal of 1875, "Mr. Durant rules the college, from the amount of Latin we shall read to the kind of meat we shall have for dinner." [53](#) Another early student observed that he played favorites and that he had precious little experience in dealing with young people. [54](#) But his paternal benevolence also came through in another journal. The portrait is more benign:

First, comes the father of the College, Mr. Durant, the leading spirit and the motive power; active and vivacious, he seems always flitting along the corridors, bound on some errand, for he is in touch with everything in the life of the place, from the dinner menu and the dish-washing, through examinations, sports, and the decoration of rooms to the students' spiritual welfare; with his keen questioning eyes, sweet smile, and pleasant greeting, he seems the parent of us all. [55](#)

Despite his despotic benevolence, Durant's educational ideas represented the very best the 1870s had to offer. He opposed the then current methodology of rote memorization from textbooks with the inevitable cribs and feeble understanding. He believed academics should be studied by close systematic observation, that mathematics was a tool for developing reasoning and original thinking in which merely memorizing propositions and equations was inappropriate, and he believed languages should be taught to be used and understood. [56](#) What is more, he was committed to a faculty of women, not an easy proposition to implement at a time when few academically trained women were available. But he did not compromise. As Lucy Stone commented on a visit to Wellesley in 1879, at this college "the cooks are men, the professors are

women." [57](#) Possibly Durant's strong commitment to an all-woman faculty was only another evidence of patriarchy, that he wished the role of the dominant male at his college exclusively for himself. But his early death ensured that he did create a nineteenth-century college for women, taught by women, and administered by women. Durant found his faculty in high schools, seminaries or academies, and at home. Some had been trained at midwestern colleges and the University of Michigan. Others were essentially self-educated or sent out to acquire training after their selection. Ada Howard, whom he chose as president of the faculty, was a graduate of Mount Holyoke Seminary and had been on the staff of Western College for Women and Knox College, both in the Midwest, and was proprietor of a private school in New Jersey when she was offered her Wellesley post. [58](#) Only Frances Lord, with seven years at Vassar behind her, had real experience with college teaching. Jenny Nelson, a friend of the Durants, had been a tutor, Mary Horton was self-trained and lived across the street from the campus. Few of the faculty had baccalaureate degrees when Wellesley opened its doors in 1875. [59](#) But this changed as the Michigan contingent joined the college, Mary Sheldon in 1876, Mary Marston in 1877, and a bit later the famous "Michigan Six."

Durant expected a high degree of subservience from the teachers he so carefully selected. Ada Howard's authority was little more than that of a house mother. Florence Kingsley, an early student, describes her as "Miss Howard, of the stately black silk gown and crown of silver puffs" with frail health who sometimes for days "would be invisible to students." [60](#) Durant's word was law. Three of the faculty were arbitrarily fired by Durant at the end of the first year for supporting student opposition to performing as model scholars in a staged exhibition before official visitors. [61](#) As one college historian puts it, "It is clearly inconceivable that anyone could have been president in the true sense of the word in Mr. Durant's lifetime." [62](#)

However, Durant's will could be restrained if met with equal strength. Alice Freeman was his loyal admirer, but was also intent on maintaining her own integrity. George Palmer described an incident when Durant asked Freeman to talk with a senior "who was not a Christian" about her soul. [63](#) She refused. Although Freeman earlier was eager to personally intervene with her friends for religious ends, she now saw such faculty interference as an assault upon personality that she could neither countenance nor join and quite contrary to her method of interacting with students. Durant resisted her refusal but eventually accepted it. Durant admired strong people and could tolerate disagreement from Freeman as did his wife later. No doubt this mutual respect played a role in his desire to see her someday elevated to the presidency.

Alice Freeman could oppose Durant, but she also was admiring of his great gifts. She wrote to her mother:

Mr. Durant preached to-day! If you only could have heard it, all of you! But it seems as if some great strange thing had happened, and we must speak and walk softly, as when someone has died. There was an atmosphere of sacredness about it all. . . . I never heard and never shall hear again anything quite like it for clear logic and tender appealing. This is the second time I have heard him preach. [64](#)

Later, as president, she commemorated Durant's life on the occasion of his death with an annual chapel service designed to help new students know and understand him. In the fall of 1883 she

spoke for three-quarters of an hour on his relationship to the cause of higher education for women, reviewing his life story and showing how its course had inexorably moved toward the founding of Wellesley. However, there may well have been more Freeman than Durant in her assertion that Durant believed that women's influence was essential to solve pressing social questions if they were to be well solved. [65](#)

5

Alice and Angie Chapin shared quarters in College Hall, probably a two-room suite much like those inhabited by the students who lived around them. Despite having the companionship of her old Michigan friend and housemate, her letters to her family and friends during her teaching years at Wellesley displayed less than boundless enthusiasm for her new position. She repeatedly complained how hard it was to find time to write letters, of the constant interruptions by students, of the time taken by supervision of "domestic work."

She was grossly overextended in the classroom. She taught fifteen hours of history classes per week plus a daily Bible class, gave a weekly public lecture, served as advisor to the senior class, and, of course, oversaw her share of household tasks. And a residential facility like Wellesley's ensured that the faculty was always at the mercy of perfectly legitimate student needs for advice, counsel, and just plain companionship. In a notebook she kept at the time, which no longer exists but was quoted by her husband, she described a hectic day spent in a faculty meeting, examining new books, grading examinations, and taking a short walk to the village, "It is so hard to do neglected work!" [66](#) And a letter to her family said: "I don't feel at all satisfied with what I am doing or with the distribution of my time. What with domestic work, corridor care, section meetings, and all the unexpected breaks that will come, I seem to accomplish very little, and there is so much of everything to be done here before things are as they ought to be." [67](#) In another quote from the missing notebooks she complained: "Everything has gone wrong today. My Roman history did not do well this morning. Worked at the library on references. Could not get exercise, but had a little sleep this afternoon. Must improve at once in health and work." [68](#) She was harried and overextended.

Sharing meals and living quarters with almost the whole faculty and student body compounded the demands on faculty time. On one occasion Freeman wrote: "I have just sent the girls out of my room, telling them they must give me a chance to write a birthday letter to my father. The truth is, an individual girl is a lively and bewitching creature, but five hundred come to be a trifle, just a trifle, tiresome once in a long time." [69](#) And less than a week later she tells of "a beautiful day but full of disappointments and downright badness. When shall I conquer my besetting sins. Wasted the evening with Emily, Marion, Helen, and Jane." [70](#) Durant's close knit community of scholars engaged in a single common task sometimes proved a prison to the participants who could not escape the demands of collegial life for even an hour.

The frantic pace never let up. Alice wrote her mother in the spring of 1880 as her first year at Wellesley drew to a close:

Tomorrow I go into Boston to the library, and to do the spring shopping which cannot be neglected until I get home. Tuesday is "Tree Day" with out of door exercises. Thursday, Mary Marston and her mother come for a week's visit, and a week from next Thursday I expect Electa [her cousin] and her friend Miss Allen for several days. May 27th is our great day, when Mrs. Hayes of the White House is to be here with over seven hundred other distinguished people. [71](#)

Along with the festivities were field trips, a party of fifty-six students escorted to Waltham, "where the famous watches are made," then on to Lexington, where they lunched on the old battleground. Visiting professors spoke at chapel and required personal attention. A colleague's father died and her classes must be taught. "I don't know how I ever shall get through this week and next!" [72](#) And a month later, as her first year at Wellesley drew to a close, she had examinations to give, papers to correct, courses of reading to arrange, and

tomorrow I take my section on a little excursion over the lake to the point for a strawberry supper (the strawberries furnished by the college). Wednesday night three meetings to attend. Thursday Mr. McDivitt [a University of Michigan friend] expects to be in Boston in the morning and comes out in the afternoon. The next day is Class Day and I hope he can stay for at least part of the exercises. I have to give a lecture to the whole History Department Saturday morning on "Historical Books: How to select and read them." It isn't begun yet, and I am getting a little anxious about it. [73](#)

Life was not less hectic when college opened the next fall:

The American Scientific Association has been in session [in Boston] for the past week, and we have seen distinguished people here "too numerous to mention." I have really enjoyed entertaining those who came in twos or threes, especially the Princeton professors. But tonight there is a most welcome silence over the whole building. [74](#)

Two vivid descriptions of Alice Freeman as a Wellesley teacher supplement the harried, burdened woman she described in her letters to family and friends. She does not comment on teaching per se in her letters, only the frantic search for preparation time. Her students, however, vividly describe her teaching. One girl who was among the first to be enrolled in 1879 in her history classes describes "her wonderful sympathy with each student, amounting almost to power of divination, and her rare tact in dealing with each mind before her." She said that Freeman always treated her students with "warm personal interest," expecting each to think for herself and do original and vigorous work, appealed to the best and also took the best for granted. "All history lived and glowed, as we sat entranced for the briefest hour in all the day, as with her we traced the finger of God through all the records of men and nations." [75](#)

Alice Freeman's history lectures to the freshman class were so popular that upperclassmen attended as well. Martha Conant, one of her students, wrote to her family that "in hearing her speak you seem to have the whole scene before you and be one of those Grecian soldiers

eighteen or twenty centuries ago, ready to charge the Persians in defense of home and country."
[76](#)

Another student described an all-day excursion on which Freeman escorted her history students to Concord and Lexington in three carriages with forty-nine students in all. They visited the Mason house, Lexington common with its monument, the Harrington house, and relived Paul Revere's ride. They passed by the houses of Emerson and Louisa May Alcott and toured the battlefield at Concord. [77](#) This excursion to investigate the artifacts firsthand must have impressed the whole campus, because Carrie Park, another freshman, wrote her father about the trip. She was not Freeman's student and not part of the group, but complained, "I wish I had a membership in the class!" [78](#) Freeman's fellow teachers were impressed with her success as a teacher. Mary Caswell who taught with Freeman reported that "she won all because she understood and sympathized with all." [79](#) She was closest to those students who were "least blessed in regard to the goods of this world." [80](#) She remembered, no doubt, her own struggles as a student.

One of the seniors remembered Freeman when she arrived on campus as the new professor of history. She was "youthful as the youngest of us, bright, alert, charming, her fine, soft, brown hair combed back from her brow to a dainty coil behind, . . . escaping in waves, making merry here and there, her round, full face shining with delight to be counted one of us." [81](#) Mary Caswell described her as

not in the strict sense of the word beautiful in appearance. Her charm was rather in her whole expression. Her hair was brown and very pretty. It was hair of the kind that always looked fresh and well cared for without much attention. Her eyes were brown and fine. Her features were not especially well moulded or strong, but when she spoke, the light that played upon her face was something rare. Her whole being, figure, and voice and gesture, pose, joined in the magical effect. [82](#)

She may have been harried, overworked, and uncertain, but her students and colleagues at Wellesley saw her as a radiant, vibrant, assured woman.

In February of 1881 Alice Freeman suffered a severe hemorrhage in the upper lobe of her right lung. [83](#) She was hospitalized, her doctors predicted she would not live six months and advised her to seek a cure in southern France. Instead she retired once more to the ancestral farm in the Susquehanna Valley where she stayed with her Aunt Sarah until the first week in April after the Easter recess, when she resumed her full load of Wellesley tasks. Although later in her Wellesley career her health was again threatened by extreme fatigue and overwork, the lesion of 1881 had completely disappeared when Alice Freeman was examined nine years later and it never reappeared. [84](#)

Alice Freeman's health was mended, but the crisis placed a severe, if temporary, strain not only on her health, but on her relationship with both her family and Lucy Andrews. Soon after she had retreated to Aunt Sarah's she wrote to reassure Lucy that she was sleeping late, breakfasting at ten, and remaining indoors during inclement weather, but she chided Lucy for alarming Alice's

parents who threatened to come East in response to the panicky letter Lucy sent them. Alice was more than annoyed:

I have kept them constantly posted as to the exact condition I was in, sent my father a report of Dr. Parker's examination. Dr. Jones wrote them his opinion. . . . [but] the fact that you had recently seen me, made it possible for your alarming letters to throw the whole family into an agony of suspense and fear, in which they suffer for me in anticipation the sorrow we have endured over our Stella. Ah, Lucy, Lucy! I know your love for me prompted this action, but if you had known me as well as I thought, and if you had known my father and brother at all, you would never have taken this step. . . . Be assured, hereafter, dear Lucy, that I fully comprehend my case, that I shall always be under the best practical medical advice, and that my father and I are in the most perfect understanding, and as long as he and my brother live, I shall never want anything which my health requires.

[85](#)

Lucy was concerned, but Alice insisted on handling her problems without assistance.

Although she returned to Wellesley after the Easter break, her health continued to be precarious. Her illness also created financial problems. She wrote her mother:

I never was in quite such a fix before. Last year when a teacher was sick either in the hospital or away from college--if even for a limited time--salary went on. Last summer the trustees passed a law that when a teacher was away, her salary was stopped. There are four of us who have been overworked and had to leave, and none of us think it is a very generous policy, considering the way teachers are worked here, but there is nothing to be done now. And I am out of a month's salary, beside all the expenses of medicine, doctors, and travelling. [86](#)

Her loss of salary meant she could not meet all her obligations to Fred, who was then in medical school, and that she needed repayment of loans she had made to her sister's husband. Her illness had taken a fifth of her year's salary and family needs would have to give a little.

In many ways Alice's family was a burden she could not escape. She loved them deeply. Along with her Michigan friends they provided her with emotional support during these years. But they asked much of her in return for their affection and support. And during this period of her life, money and gifts seem to have flowed only one way, from her to them. Alice probably regarded all funds received from her family during her college years as a loan she was to repay either directly or by supporting her brother Fred during his medical school training. She also seemed to consider her father's debts as her obligation. By 1879 she had already provided her sister Ella's seminary education and assumed major financial responsibility for the whole family when they moved to Saginaw. Despite Dr. Freeman's growing practice and prosperity, Alice continued to assist the family financially during her years at Wellesley, not just Fred but her parents and sister Ella and her husband. [87](#) The burden was sufficiently onerous that she felt the need on occasion to distance herself from her family. The summer of 1881 was such a time. She did not go to

Saginaw that summer as planned but in August returned again to Osborn Hollow, exhausted and much in need of further rest before taking up her academic duties in September. [88](#)

The spring and summer of 1881 were stressful in another way. Henry Durant's health was failing rapidly. The college physician's diagnosis the previous fall was Bright's disease, and although Durant continued to be active, he found it increasingly difficult to keep his usual close control on his business interests and the college. A winter vacation in Mexico had not helped much. [89](#) Alice Freeman's worry over Durant's health and what this would mean to the future of Wellesley was complicated by the fact that her old friend Lucy Andrews was eager to join the Wellesley faculty. Alice wanted to help her. But just where control lay and who made decisions was somewhat ambiguous and very troubling. Alice wrote Lucy:

Gertrude Woodcock [a student] is here wandering around the table like an uneasy ghost, and getting her arms around me frequently. So don't expect a letter. And yet I must send her to bed, close my ears to that whip-poor-will, singing in the moonlight across the lake, and tell you two things at least before I go to sleep. And first, Mr. Durant is very ill today. . . . As soon as he is better, I shall see him again [about Lucy's position]. [90](#)

Meanwhile Alice had arranged for one of the trustees to interview Lucy in New York. All went well with Lucy's appointment, and she took her place as instructor in classics in September of 1881.

Mr. Durant continued to fail. Alice had written her mother in June of 1881, "There are to be radical changes, some overtwinings, and it is a question of how some things will end. But I do not propose to worry." [91](#) Of course she did worry and one wonders if she had any notion of how things would come out. About the time of President Garfield's death in late September, when Durant was no longer able to leave his home, he presumably left final instructions about the college. [92](#) But whether those instructions specifically named Alice Freeman as Wellesley's next president, we do not know. As she wrote to her parents, her "own prospects have never looked so bright," but she saw only dark days ahead for the college. [93](#)

Alice Freeman's two years as a Wellesley teacher resulted in her being well-informed about the college and fully cognizant of its strengths and weaknesses. She knew the faculty and student body and, probably most important of all, had earned Pauline Durant's respect and affection. She was still a very young woman, only twenty-six, but she had acquired administrative skills as a Saginaw principal and had demonstrated her gifts as a teacher at Wellesley. Unlike Ada Howard, who was not particularly well liked by either faculty or students, the whole Wellesley community loved Alice Freeman. What is more they had had enough of Durant's benevolent patriarchy and were ready for a different kind of governance.

Chapter Five Notes

[1](#) *Diary*, July 1879, 22.

[2](#) *Diary*, June 1878, December 1878, 18, 22.

[3](#) Angell's memorial address in Palmer, *A Service*, 39.

[4](#) H. F. Durant to J. B. Angell, June 12, 1879. James B. Angell Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. Much has been made on very slim evidence of the Angell-Durant connection. For example, see Palmieri, "Adamless Eden," chap. 1. I am convinced that the Michigan- Wellesley connection was less an Angell-Durant liaison and much more the result of the Michigan women's network.

[5](#) Palmieri, "Adamless Eden," chap. 1.

[6](#) No correspondence between Freeman and Mary Marston survives, but undoubtedly letters between the two University of Michigan friends were exchanged.

[7](#) Trustees Ledgers, 1879-80. Wellesley College Archives.

[8](#) Alice Freeman to Lucy Andrews, May 24, 1879.

[9](#) Alice Freeman to Lucy Andrews, July 1, 1879.

[10](#) Edward Abbott, "Wellesley College," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 53 (August 1876): 322-23.

[11](#) Several biographical accounts of Durant exist. The most complete is Florence Morse Kingsley, *The Life of Henry Fowle Durant: Founder of Wellesley College* (New York: Century Co., 1924). Although eulogistic and sentimental, it is useful for its detail. The best brief account of Durant is in Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 42-55; see also Elizabeth Donnan's article in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, 3: 541-42; Glasscock, *Wellesley*, 3-10; and Palmieri, "Adamless Eden," chap. 1.

[12](#) Durant was born Henry Welles Smith. He changed his name in 1847 to avoid confusion with other Boston lawyers named Smith. Both Durant and Fowle were family names. See Kingsley, *Durant*, 77-78.

[13](#) *Ibid.*, 23-28.

[14](#) *Ibid.*, 37-45.

[15](#) *Ibid.*, 67-71.

[16](#) *Ibid.*, 138.

[17](#) *Ibid.*, 94-98.

[18](#) *Ibid.*, 56-65, 71-75.

[19](#) *Ibid.*, 125-26.

[20](#) The Durants were members of the Wellesley Congregational Church, but also had close ties to Methodism through evangelist Dwight Moody.

[21](#) Thomas Wentworth Higginson, one of Durant's Harvard classmates, recounted an incident that occurred before Durant ceased practicing law in which he expressed utter contempt for the legal profession, " `Law', said Durant, `is the most degrading of all professions. All human law is a system of fossilized injustice, and the habitual study of it only demoralizes' " (*Woman's Journal*, October 15, 1881, 1).

[22](#) Kingsley, *Durant*, 157-70; Glasscock, *Wellesley*, 9-10; Palmieri, "Adamless Eden," chap. 1.

[23](#) The academies saw themselves first and foremost as preparing women to be better wives and mothers and therefore enhancing their ability to perform well in their allotted sphere, but in fact they trained many teachers.

[24](#) See Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in Domesticity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), chap. 12; Solomon, *Educated Women*, chap. 2; and Anne Firor Scott, "The Ever-Widening Circle: The Diffusion of Feminist Values from the Troy Seminary 1822-1872," *History of Education Quarterly* 19 (Spring 1979): 3-25, for a discussion of women's secondary education in the nineteenth century.

[25](#) Solomon, *Educated Women*, 47.

[26](#) *Ibid.*, 20-21.

[27](#) Glasscock, *Wellesley*, 265ff; Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 50ff; and Abbott, "Wellesley College," contain vivid descriptions of the early Wellesley campus, as does Montgomery Schuyler, "Architecture of American Colleges: Three Women's Colleges, Vassar, Wellesley, and Smith," *Architectural Record* 31 (1912): 512-37.

[28](#) Lyman Abbott in the *Christian Union*, June 9, 1880, as quoted in Glasscock, *Wellesley*, 285.

[29](#) Glasscock, *Wellesley*, 467-68.

[30](#) Lyman Abbott in the *Christian Union*, June 9, 1880, as quoted in Glasscock, *Wellesley*, 241.

[31](#) See Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, chap. 3, for a thoughtful description of College Hall and its effect on educational practice. College Hall, which burned March 17, 1914, is also described in Kingsley, *Durant*, 197-204; and Glasscock, *Wellesley*, 14-16.

[32](#) Kingsley, *Durant*, 216.

[33](#) *Wellesley College Catalog*, 1879-80, 78.

[34](#) Carrie Rose Park Huntington to Ella and Angie [ca. September 30, 1879]. Carrie Huntington Papers, Wellesley College Archives.

[35](#) *Wellesley Annals*, 1888-89. Wellesley College Archives. Hereafter cited as *Wellesley Annals*.

[36](#) Alice Freeman to "Dear Ones at Home," September 3, 1880. Carla Wenckebach, the young German educator hired by Alice Freeman as head teacher of German, responded quite differently to Wellesley's opulent quarters. She "could hardly recognize its being merely a school." She thought the Royal Palace in Berlin small in comparison to College Hall "which in length and stateliness of appearance surpasses even the great Winter Palace in St. Petersburg." [Margarethe Mueller, *Carla Wenckebach: Pioneer* (Boston: Merrymount Press, 1908), 218.]

[37](#) Solomon, *Educated Women*, 80. See also Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres*, 52, who contends that the women's colleges tried to emulate the classical curricula of the men's colleges just as those colleges were discarding the classical emphasis for the sciences.

[38](#) *Wellesley College Catalog*, 1879-80, 12-18.

[39](#) This represents innovation. In the 1870s Vassar had no courses in history or economics (Campbell, *Liberated Woman*, 38).

[40](#) Abbott, "Wellesley College," 328.

[41](#) *Ibid.*, 330.

[42](#) Glasscock, *Wellesley*, 126.

[43](#) *Ibid.*, 124.

[44](#) Kingsley, *Durant*, 226.

[45](#) *Wellesley College Catalog*, 1878-80, 79.

[46](#) *Ibid.*, 1879-80, 78-79.

[47](#) Glasscock, *Wellesley*, 18-19; Kingsley, *Durant*, 117-19.

[48](#) Alice Payne Hackett, *Wellesley: Part of the American Story* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1949), 55.

[49](#) *Ibid.*, 56. For an analysis of Durant's beliefs about health see Martha H. Verbrugge, *Able-Bodied Womanhood: Personal Health and Social Change in Nineteenth Century Boston* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), chap. 6. Breakfast was baked beans and brown bread, oatmeal, milk, fruit, and coffee only twice a week. Lunch was again heavy on the carbohydrates, bread, cake and cookies, cold meat, fruit, milk, and sometimes soup (Martha Pike Conant, *A Girl of the Eighties* [Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1931], 99).

[50](#) Glasscock, *Wellesley*, 236-40.

[51](#) Minutes of the Board of Trustees, June 21, 1881, Wellesley College Archives.

[52](#) Minutes of the Board of Trustees, June 17, 1873, Wellesley College Archives.

[53](#) Glasscock, *Wellesley*, 16.

[54](#) Kingsley, *Durant*, 229.

[55](#) Elizabeth Stillwell student letter, 1875, as quoted in Florence Converse, *Wellesley College: A Chronicle of the Years 1875-1938* (Wellesley, Mass.: Hathaway House Bookshop, 1939), 27.

[56](#) Kingsley, *Durant*, 191-92.

[57](#) As quoted in Glasscock, *Wellesley*, 164.

[58](#) Glasscock, 11-12, 87.

[59](#) *Ibid.*, 87-88. The most comprehensive analysis of the early Wellesley faculty is to be found in Palmieri, "Adamless Eden." chap. 4.

[60](#) Kingsley, *Durant*, 227.

[61](#) Palmieri, "Adamless Eden," 63-69. Palmieri suggests that Durant brought Freeman to Wellesley in 1879 to help contain student rebellion. The rebellion was earlier, and there is no evidence of any such motive by Durant.

[62](#) Glasscock, *Wellesley*, 22.

[63](#) Palmer, *Life*, 98.

[64](#) Alice Freeman to Elizabeth Freeman, November 14, 1880.

[65](#) Unidentified clipping in Catherine McCamant scrapbook, Class of 1887 Papers, Wellesley College Archives.

[66](#) Palmer, *Life*, 96.

[67](#) As quoted in Palmer, *Life*, 112-13. The letter is no longer in her papers.

[68](#) Palmer, *Life*, 96. Very few of the letters that George Palmer reproduced in his memoir are now in her papers. I suspect that the letters as published by him were heavily edited, because their tone and style are different from the original letters that still exist. Both samples of letters, however, show a harried, overworked, fatigued woman whose zest for life is limited by too many demands on her time and energies.

[69](#) *Ibid.*, 104.

[70](#) Ibid., 96.

[71](#) Alice Freeman to Elizabeth Freeman, May 16, 1880.

[72](#) Ibid.

[73](#) Alice Freeman to Elizabeth Freeman, June, 14, 1880.

[74](#) Alice Freeman to "Dear Ones at Home," September 3, 1880.

[75](#) Lila S. McKee to Miss Perkins, February 5, 1903. Alice Freeman Palmer Papers, Wellesley College Archives. McKee was president of the Western College for Women at the time she wrote this letter soon after Alice Freeman Palmer's death.

[76](#) Conant, *Girl of the Eighties*, 110-11.

[77](#) Notebook of Helen B. Hart, 1880, Records of the Class of 1883. Wellesley College Archives.

[78](#) C. P. Huntington to Papa, May 10, 1880. Carrie Huntington Papers, Wellesley College Archives.

[79](#) Mary Caswell to David MacKenzie, undated [ca. 1903]. Alice Freeman Palmer Papers, Wellesley College Archives.

[80](#) Ibid.

[81](#) Adeline Emerson Thompson's remarks at the Alice Freeman Palmer Memorial Service, University of Chicago, 1903.

[82](#) Mary Caswell to David MacKenzie, undated [ca. 1903]. Alice Freeman Palmer Papers, Wellesley College Archives.

[83](#) In the retrospective joint diary, Alice Freeman mistakenly dates this event 1880 as does George Palmer in his *Life*.

[84](#) *Diary*, February 1880; Palmer, *Life*, 99-100.

[85](#) Alice Freeman to Lucy Andrews, March 19, 1881.

[86](#) Alice Freeman to Elizabeth Freeman, May 6, 1881.

[87](#) See especially Alice Freeman to family, May 16, 1880, Alice Freeman to Ella Freeman, November 14, 1880, and Alice Freeman to parents, June 5, July 5, 1881.

[88](#) Alice Freeman to family, August 15, 1881.

[89](#) Kingsley, *Durant*, chap. 27.

[90](#) Alice Freeman to Lucy Andrews, May 10, 1881.

[91](#) Palmer, *Life*, 112.

[92](#) *Ibid.*, 114; Kingsley, *Durant*, 347.

[93](#) Alice Freeman to Elizabeth and Fred Freeman, July 5, 1881.