

A PLACE FOR WOMEN: UNIVERSITY GYMNASIUMS, 1867-1969

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On 4 April 1896, seven-hundred women gathered at the Page Street Armory in San Francisco to watch the first women's intercollegiate basketball game ever held.¹ The contest pitted nine Cal Berkeley women against nine Stanford women, a fierce rivalry already firmly in place despite the fact that Stanford had only opened its doors five years earlier.² The baffling final score of two-to-one in favor of Stanford can perhaps only be forgiven when one considers that the baskets were not equipped with backboards, and that the players were forbidden from passing or shooting with both hands.³ San Francisco newspapers eagerly followed all of the events leading up to the game—the initial challenge by the Stanford women, the stipulations of the Berkeley team that “the contest take place indoors and not [contain men in the audience],” the battle between the teams over the fifteen-cent gate receipts, the pledge of the Berkeley players that “what they lack in physical strength and skill they will endeavor to make up in strategy,” and finally the concluding assurance that decorum had been maintained at the game: “No Hair Was Pulled.”⁴ Future athletic classes and competitions for women (or the lack thereof) would be premised on the dilemmas of spectatorship, athleticism, and commercialism evident at this 1896 game.

Such concerns are illuminated in how early-twentieth-century women's gymnasiums were built—with non-regulation courts, pools, and other facilities—and how the construction of these gymnasiums evolved over time. The design choices made in constructing women's university gymnasiums reveal what physical educators, administrators, and American society more broadly thought was appropriate and possible for women athletes at different times. These (sometimes still-standing) buildings act, in fact, as time capsules. This paper focuses on three key eras of construction: the first gymnasiums built at women's colleges in the late 1860s and 1870s, the wave of new and expanded women's gymnasiums at public universities in the 1920s and 1930s, and the few final gymnasiums designed and built strictly for women in the decade before Title IX came into effect. It is certainly true that other non-university women's gymnasiums built in these eras often followed similar strictures and design choices, particularly YWCA clubs, but focusing on university gymnasiums allows us to consider the explicit educational (and often mandatory) nature of physical education as part of a university degree.⁵ It also allows us to consider what types of physical education were part of a systematic construction of elite, well-educated, and almost wholly white American womanhood as it existed and evolved in these eras.

The first American university gymnasium exclusively designed for women was Vassar College's Calisthenium, completed in 1866.⁶ Physical education was considered such a critical aspect of Vassar's mission that its 1865 prospectus listed “physical education” first in its “general scheme of education.”⁷ The prospectus states that “[physical education] is placed first, not as first in intrinsic importance, but as *fundamental* to all the rest . . . good health is essential to the successful . . . development of either the mental or moral powers.”⁸ The Vassar founders then assert that physical education is especially important to “the education of women,” given their belief in “the particular delicacy of [women's] physical organization...[and] the transcendent importance of women's health to the highest domestic and national interests.”⁹ The long shadow of the Civil War likely influenced this emphasis on the importance of women's health to “domestic and national interests,” especially given that the Civil War concluded the same year as the Vassar prospectus was written, and still stands as the deadliest war in American history, with approximately 620,000 men, two percent of the total population, dying.¹⁰ The ability of women to give birth often and safely was and is tied to their physical health, and the birth of healthy children was and is tied to assumptions about the ability of a nation to defend and expand itself.¹¹

Of additional concern at this time was the number of women who died of consumption (otherwise known as tuberculosis). In the 1860 U.S. Census, twenty-nine percent of the women aged fifteen to twenty who died that year, died of “*fever and consumption*,” with the proportion who succumbed only rising for each age group thereafter.¹² Advocates like Catharine Beecher responded to this crisis of health by advertising calisthenic exercise as a means to improve the base health of American women and to allow them to be healthy mothers of healthy children—“When the wife and mother is suffering from the debility and pain of ill health, it not only ends her enjoyment of life, but a cloud of gloom settles over the whole family circle.”¹³ Given this context, the emphasis on physical education at Vassar and other women's colleges seems obvious and prudent.

As the name suggests, Vassar students initially used the Calisthenium for the practice of calisthenics,

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particularly the system that Boston-based Dioclesian Lewis had developed for his courses at the Normal Institute for Physical Education as well as his girls' school and movement cure sanitarium in Lexington, Massachusetts.¹⁴ Lewis initially developed the system of exercises after his wife—Helen Cecelia Clarke-Lewis—contracted consumption and “rapidly dropped in weight from 116 to 80 pounds.”¹⁵ Lewis' calisthenics involved routines with instruments like dumbbells, wands, clubs, and rings, the exercises structured around each movement flowing swiftly into the next, maintaining time with the music that was playing.¹⁶ The repetitive nature of these routines prompted Lewis to invoke a telling military metaphor. He urges “accuracy in the performance of the feats . . . those who have studied our infantry drill, have been struck with its simplicity . . . [yet soldiers] return to their task every morning, for twenty years, with fresh and increasing interest.”¹⁷ Lewis also criticized the popular interest in heavy lifting with dumbbells, echoing fears that one's flexibility and muscular health would be damaged by over lifting.¹⁸ Instead, he recommended no one use a dumbbell of more

nastic training accomplish wonders under the inspiration of music.”²¹ To that end, the Calisthenium's broad, open calisthenics hall had at one end a raised stage where a piano would be played accompany the exercises.²² It is also important to note that the Calisthenium initially contained a riding school, with stalls for twenty-three horses and “an indoor riding ring” within the Calisthenium itself.²³ The riding school floundered financially by 1873 and was transformed into “music rooms . . . [an] art gallery . . . and a museum of natural history.”²⁴ Still, the early vision of riding horses and Lewis's calisthenics as the two forms of unimpeachable exercise for young, elite women is important, revealing the class dynamics at play in early university physical education.

By 1876, ten years after the Calisthenium opened, Vassar athletics had expanded to include boating, baseball, and archery, with tennis, basketball, golf, swimming, skating, field hockey, bicycling, and track added by around 1898.²⁵ This surge in outdoor athletics necessitated the construction of the appropriate fields, courts, and equipment for each sport; unfortunately, little information survives about the quality of these facilities. The one detail stated over and over again is how well-sheltered the campus was from public view. One alumna and Vassar professor, Sophia Foster Richardson, remarked that “the public, so far as it knew of our playing, was shocked, but in our retired grounds and protected from observation . . . by sheltering trees, we continued to play in spite of a censorious public.”²⁶ It is also telling that, “in 1889, the college put students in charge of all sports outside [of] physical education classes,” this despite the fact that “students lacked the administrative and financial structures to carry out their new responsibilities.”²⁷ The situation only improved with “the establishment of the Athletic Association in 1894,” though the administration “often forced [the Association] to turn down invitations from other schools to compete.”²⁸ Vassar only competed in an “annual tennis match with Bryn Mawr, and . . . [field] hockey games with the All-English and the Irish teams.”²⁹ In this respect, Vassar was less outgoing than the other Seven Sisters' Schools, who competed in a greater variety of intercollegiate competition, many playing a few basketball or field hockey games each year with other sister colleges or outside clubs.³⁰ [Editors' Note: The term “Seven Sisters” refers to seven private women's universities in New England.]

The key aspect of all of these newly introduced exercises was, of course, the competition built into them, something distinctly missing from calisthenics. Vassar students took to competition readily; Professor Richardson recalled how “seven or eight baseball clubs suddenly came into being . . . ow[ing] their existence to a few quiet suggestions from a resident physician, wise beyond her generation.”³¹ In 1895, Vassar's Athletic Association started the first annual Field Day of any of the Seven Sister women's colleges and organized other intramural games. Field Day “[fell] on [a] certain Saturday in late spring” and was “the focus of many athletic hopes and ambitions,” attended by “throng[s] of chattering college girls brandishing their class colors, dozens of alumnae hardly less excited, and



In the Mount Holyoke gymnasium (circa 1900) women exercise with Indian clubs in a carefully prescribed formation. Note the stall bars on the walls used for Swedish Gymnastics, the basketball hoop, and the lack of space for bleachers. This was not a gym where sport was meant to be watched.

than two pounds so that one could accomplish “a hundred graceful attitudes . . . bringing the muscles into use in every direction” as part of a calisthenic routine.¹⁹

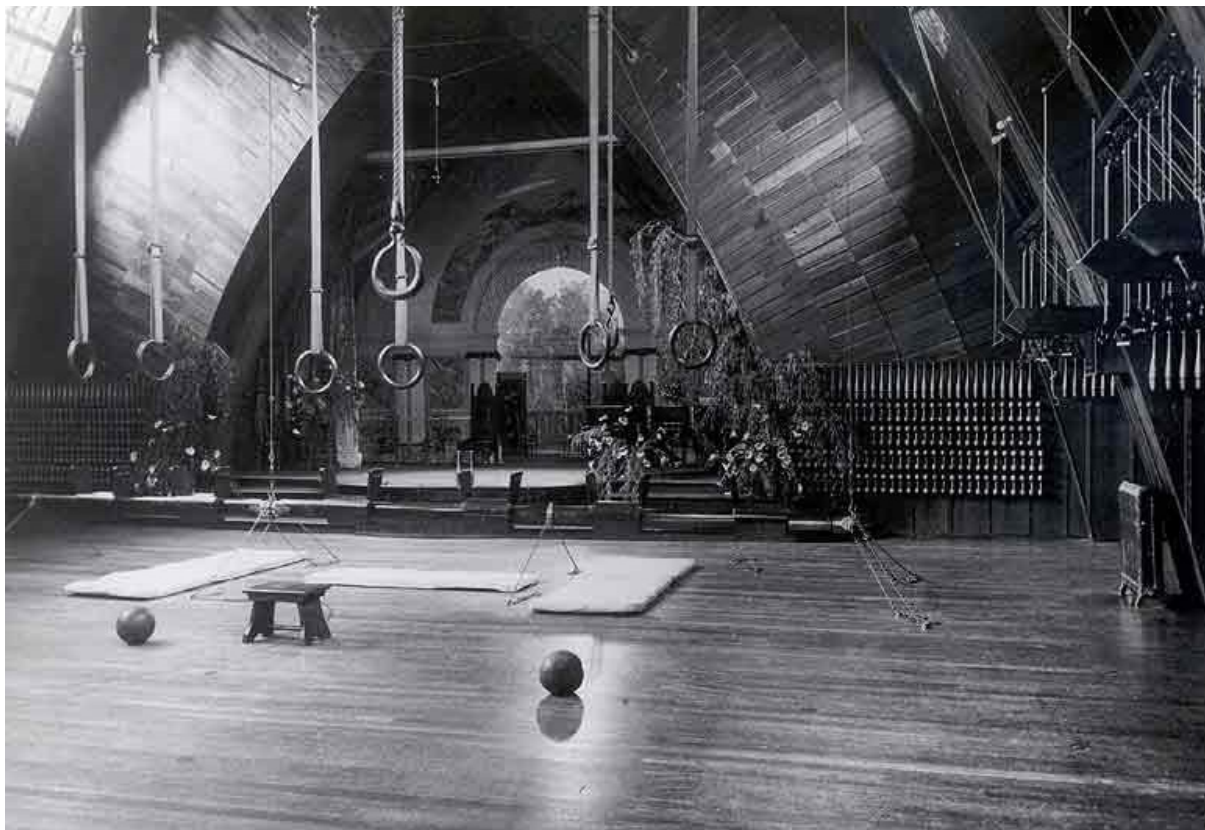
Vassar seems to have wholly subscribed to Lewis's philosophy in the early years of the Calisthenium, down to his advice to paint “a regular pattern of soles of feet in right angled pairs” at “about fifty-five inches apart,” providing a designated starting point for calisthenic routines and prescribing the distance between women performing the exercises.²⁰ Lewis had also recommended that exercises be done to music asserting that, “feeble and apathetic people, who have little courage to undertake gym-

a sprinkling of mothers, little sisters, and other feminine guests.”³² Much like the 1896 Stanford-Berkeley basketball game, competition was allowed only within certain parameters and strictly away from the gaze of male spectators. Field Day events included the “one-hundred-yard dash, 220-yard dash . . . running high jump . . . vault . . . [and the] base-ball throw.”³³ Vassar studiously kept school records and record breakers earned a pink V on their sweater, the pride of their class.³⁴

By 1889, it had become clear to some Vassar alumnae that the lack of new and more sport-minded facilities had put Vassar’s physical education program behind those of the other Seven Sisters. This realization prompted alumnae to contribute the necessary funds to erect a new gymnasium to replace the Calisthenium.³⁵ The ground floor of the new Alumnae Gymnasium housed dressing rooms, a swimming pool, and a new exercise hall with much of the familiar calisthenic and gymnastic equipment from the Calisthenium.³⁶ During the winter, the second floor dramatic hall would be converted into “a tennis court and basket ball ground.”³⁷ The Alumnae Gymnasium put Vassar back at the forefront of women’s university athletics. In addition to accommodations for land-based exercise, the new facility also featured an approximately fourteen-by-seven meter swimming pool, “the largest in any school or college in the country.”³⁸ While one *could* train for swimming competitions in the

pool, it did contain certain features that hinted it was less of a competitive pool than a bathing pool.³⁹ As an example, the pool was not a regulation length, which was unsurprising considering the modern Olympics wouldn’t start until 1896 and women would not be allowed to compete in Olympic swimming events until 1912. Nonetheless, the pool did become a limitation in later years, as did its successor, the 1932 pool at Kenyon Hall, which measured approximately twenty-three by twelve meters, another non-regulation length.⁴⁰ Photos of the original swimming pool reveal it to be both indoors and with high windows which, while not uncommon for university swimming pools even today, creates the effect, even if unintentionally, of hiding the swimming women from view, sheltering them once more from the gaze of not only a disapproving public, but also other women on campus.⁴¹

The baseless and unscientific concerns that exercise was harmful to women’s health and temperament were, even with such design choices, largely kept at bay at women’s colleges.⁴² Professor Richardson succinctly responded to this criticism of “unwomanly” exercise in an article for *Popular Science Monthly* declaring: “The daughters of Sparta were handsomer and more attractive than the more delicately nurtured Athenians.”⁴³ Vassar’s physical educators also stood firm and did not yield to the pressure to discontinue women’s athletics, as much as they may have disapproved of intercollegiate competition.



In the first two decades of the twentieth century, women students at the University of California at Berkeley trained in beautiful Hearst Hall for Women. Take note in the photo of the soaring wooden arches, the hanging rings and trapeze bars, and the row upon row of wooden Indian clubs and dumbbells hanging on the walls. Sadly, this architectural gem burned in 1921; Hearst Memorial Gym was built in its place.

Soon after baseball was introduced to Vassar, “a student, while running between the bases fell with an injured leg,” potentially signaling the end of all baseball at Vassar. The faculty responded instead with assurances “that if the student had hurt herself while dancing the public would not condemn dancing to extinction,” and sure enough soon after “a student did fall while dancing and broke her leg.”⁴⁴ When baseball petered out in future years, Professor Richardson guessed it was due to “too much pressure against it from disapproving mothers.”⁴⁵ Vassar students instead turned to more “ladylike” sports like tennis, with one account even singling out baseball as too “plebian” to be continued.⁴⁶ This again highlights the class element of sports that gained lasting traction in early women’s university physical education.

The public concern for women’s physical, mental, and moral health under the strains of exercise and competition reached a head in April 1923, when First Lady Lou Hoover called a conference of physical educators to address this issue, among others.⁴⁷ The conference “resulted in the establishment of the Women’s Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation.”⁴⁸ With the emphasis on “amateur,” the Federation prided itself on what distinguished it from the National Collegiate Athletic Association: namely that the Federation would focus on “maki[ng] participation possible for all, and strongly condemn the sacrifice of this object for the intensive training (even though physiologically sound) of the few.”⁴⁹ The determination to emphasize participation for all over individual excellence dovetailed nicely with the overriding concern of the Federation “that [women] be protected from exploitation for the enjoyment of the spectator and for the athletic reputation or commercial advantage of any school or other organization.”⁵⁰ The issue was not that women were incapable of playing or not worth watching, but rather the opposite: that university teams had become good enough that an undemocratic focus had fallen upon excellent women athletes, as had the exploitative and commercial gaze of the spectator and the university. The “undemocratic” angle of these arguments gained particular traction at public universities seeking to serve as many of their students as possible.

Much of this logic was internalized within the next wave of university women’s gymnasium construction in the 1920s and 1930s, which doubled down on creating private spaces for many women to participate rather than for a few to compete. By the 1920s, public universities like the University of California, Berkeley (UC) and the University of Texas at Austin (UT) had not only begun to admit women, but admitted women at rates similar to, or even greater than, men. For the 1923-1924 academic year on UT’s main campus, there were 1,802 women to 2,850 men.⁵¹ For the 1924-1925 academic year (including summer sessions) on UC’s main campus, there were 5,793 men to 8,364 women.⁵² Prior to the construction of Phoebe Apperson Hearst Memorial Gymnasium for Women at UC Berkeley in 1927, and Anna Hiss Gymnasium at UT Austin in 1931, both universities allowed women spare hours in men’s gymnasium spaces, but physical education would

not be a given, as it had been in Vassar’s prospectus.⁵³ At public universities, women had to fight for physical education. In 1892, legendary university donor and UC Regent Phoebe Apperson Hearst took an interest in the lives and health of the Berkeley women.⁵⁴ She started first with an endowment that provided scholarships to as many as twenty women annually, pushing the university towards parity in gender enrollment.⁵⁵ This would be the first of many times Hearst came to the rescue of the students.

When the Berkeley women first approached a university gymnastics instructor in 1891 to ask for use of the men’s gymnasium, the instructor required that they obtain physicals to prove their health, then swiftly claimed that the university did not have the funds to cover such an expense.⁵⁶ Undeterred, the students turned to local physician, Dr. Mary Bennett Ritter, who agreed to perform the physicals free of charge.⁵⁷ Ritter found that many of the women were not in good health, even malnourished, and tracked the problem back to their expensive and inadequate housing—something the Bay Area has never struggled with again.⁵⁸

Because the University of California charter initially specified that the university would not build any dormitories for students, Berkeley students often lived in attics and sheds. Many of these improvised housing units lacked access to running water, and students often did not have enough money left over to afford proper meals, leading to rampant malnutrition among the students.⁵⁹ Women were evidently perceived to be more vulnerable to these hardships, and though male students also tangentially benefited from Hearst’s advocacy for proper housing, women were first and foremost on Hearst’s mind when she skirted her fellow regents and went about purchasing and furnishing two clubhouses for a small number of women students.⁶⁰ The system grew to include at least forty-two such clubhouses.⁶¹ This remedy to the dormitory policy is a direct consequence of the women students seeking out physical education and refusing to take “no” for an answer; it also speaks to the deeper mission of physical education in this era, the pursuit of hygienic and healthful living in all facets of student life.

After all of this, the women were granted time in the men’s gymnasium when the men were off for their lunch hour and “three times a week during drill hour.”⁶² By 1900, physical education had become a requirement for women students, greatly increasing the time and space needed to fulfill this requirement.⁶³ Hearst came to the rescue once more, donating her three-story wooden banquet hall to the cause of women’s physical education. Hearst not only paid for the hall to be moved to the campus, she also bought and donated a new tract of land for it to sit on.⁶⁴ The banquet hall, dubbed Hearst Hall, seems to have been used primarily for calisthenic exercises and gymnastics, but also doubled as a social club seeking to recreate a “home life” for the women of the university.⁶⁵ Hearst additionally donated a basketball court with a twelve-foot fence—presumably to ward off prying eyes—and, in 1914, a swimming pool.⁶⁶ All seemed well until the Berkeley women were struck with two tragedies in a short

span. The first was the loss of their great champion Phoebe Apperson Hearst to the influenza epidemic in 1919.⁶⁷ The second was the 1921 destruction of Hearst Hall in a fire, the cause of the fire still unknown.⁶⁸ On 22 June 1921, the morning after the fire, Phoebe Apperson Hearst's son, William Randolph Hearst, sent a telegram to Chancellor Barrows indicating his interest in rebuilding Hearst Hall: "I would like to rebuild this hall and its accessory buildings in fireproof materials as promptly as possible . . . my mother was so much interested in the welfare of the young women at the University that I am sure she would have wished to have the buildings immediately rebuilt and in a manner to prevent any such destruction in the future."⁶⁹

Soon after, the women's physical education department sent a letter to the architects planning the gymnasium, stipulating that it must be able to serve over 8,000 women.⁷⁰ The department requested that enough showers be constructed to facilitate 700 women showering per hour, with special "attention . . . given to the working out of convenient routes of entry and exit" between "the different exercise centers to the shower rooms and to the administrative offices."⁷¹ As a result of the request, the building is a maze of corridors that all have a way of leading back to the women's locker room, something of particular concern today given that the building is co-ed. Aside from this maze of corridors, the department additionally requested fourteen administrative offices of varying sizes, six gymnasiums, with four accommodating eighty students and two accommodating twenty-five students, two rest rooms with room for ten to twelve cots in each, a lecture hall for seventy-five students, a seminar room for twenty students, and bowling alleys, preferably on the ground floor.⁷² In addition, the department anticipated the need for a fifty-yard archery range, two baseball diamonds, four basketball courts, two bowling greens, a clock golf turf, two cricket fields, croquet greens, a fencing green, four handball courts, two regulation field hockey turfs, and twelve tennis courts.⁷³ And, of course, there would need to be an outdoor swimming pool.⁷⁴

When completed, Hearst Memorial Gymnasium met many of these specifications, though certainly not all. The building itself ended up looking like a squat fortress, with two above-ground stories and a basement constructed out of concrete, in order to make the building resistant to fire and earthquakes.⁷⁵ Outside of the wooden flooring for the exercise rooms, much of the rest of the building is a mix of smooth, concrete floors and slightly rougher, slip-resistant concrete, particularly around the pool and the corridors leading down into the women's locker room. Many of the first-floor windows are frosted glass, even outside of the locker rooms and bathrooms. Frosted glass, of course, allows light in but does not allow people on the outside to see in, consciously and concertedly protecting women from the gaze of any passersby. Frosted glass remains one of the easiest ways to spot a women's gymnasium even today. When I first arrived at UT-Austin, one of the buildings next to my department's home building had some curious frosted glass windows. It didn't take long to determine that this was Anna Hiss Gym, UT's women's



The hall adjoining Phoebe Apperson Hearst's home was renamed Hearst Hall for Women in the early 1900s.



After Hearst Hall was destroyed in a fire, Hearst Memorial Gymnasium was built in its place. This photo shows the newly constructed gymnasium in 1927.

gymnasium, which I will return to later in this paper. The fortress-like quality of Hearst Memorial Gymnasium in particular, and frosted glass in women's gyms more broadly, reveals the instinct of administrators and architects to be especially protective of the women inside.

The architects of Hearst Memorial Gymnasium again took particular pains to shield women from the gaze of others when they planned the entire building around the second-floor, open-air North Pool. The choice to make the pool outdoors—taking advantage of the feasibility of swimming year-round in California—while also preserving the ability to shield women from the gaze of others, led to a strange set-up. It is, as one may guess, extremely inconvenient to put a pool on the second-floor of a building. It seems that the entire space under the pool on the first floor is reserved for storage and pool maintenance equipment, taking a huge chunk out of the useful square footage of the building.⁷⁶ At the time of the gymnasium's construction, no building in the vicinity would have been of a height to render the pool deck visible, save for the Campanile, which is some distance away and whose bell tower might not have been accessible to the public.⁷⁷ Still more

curious is the concrete partition built along three sides of the pool, obscuring it even from the view of women passing by on their way to the locker room or participating in a class on the second floor of the building. While in the pool, the only one who can see the women is the lifeguard, and the only direction the women can look is north, towards the Campanile. When one looks up at the pool deck from the ground today, all that is visible is the lifeguard tower, which may not have been a part of the original construction, but serves as a functional embodiment of the protective gaze baked into the building.

The North Pool, aside from being on the second-floor, also bears another baffling distinction from most other pools: it is thirty-three and one-third meters long. Even more deliberately than the Vassar pools and the previous Berkeley pool, the North Pool in its very construction discourages swimming the traditional meter distances used in competition, fifty or one-hundred meters for example, and utterly destroys the ability to record twenty-five-meter splits. The inability to compare oneself to records others set in regulation pools is entirely intentional, at once discouraging women from the perceived corruption of competition and potentially warding off any men from the new pool, assuming they would want to record their times. The only sort of competition the pool allows is limited to the women actively in the pool at any given time, women often under the supervision of watchful instructors who would likely have discouraged too much competition. Similarly, the basketball courts at Hearst Memorial Gymnasium are non-regulation lengths, discourag-

ing competition as they disregard the standardized rules and regulations of play that makes competition possible.⁷⁸ The lines of court also often cut close to the wall, leaving no room for bleachers or, in some cases, even standing room for spectators. This absence is particularly striking when one considers that the new men's Harmon Gymnasium, completed in 1933, had a 7,000-seat auditorium for precisely the sort of athletic competitions that women had, at the level of the building itself, been "protected" from.⁷⁹

As for the class elements evident in the building, it was designed by two of the most prominent California architects of their age, Julia Morgan of Hearst Castle fame and Bernard Maybeck of Palace of Fine Arts fame. Both were trained at the Beaux Arts Academy in Paris and built the gymnasium following the Beaux Arts principles, evident in the elevated entry to the main floor and the numerous balustrades, columns, and balconies.⁸⁰ The dedication to Beaux Arts principles throughout the campus aligned with the university's mission to style itself as the "Athens of the West," an elitist construction if ever there was one.⁸¹

On a related note, I want to turn to an especially troubling aspect of the gymnasium's history. In addition to her generosity towards the university and especially the women of the university, Phoebe Apperson Hearst funded an anthropological museum as well as the anthropological work of Professor Alfred L. Kroeber.⁸² When the university built and dedicated an anthropology building to Kroeber in 1959, they built it next to Hearst Memorial Gymnasium.⁸³ What was not on display at the Kroeber Hall museum, renamed the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropol-



This photo, taken from the University of Texas Tower, provides an aerial view of Anna Hiss Gym as it was first constructed. The gym opened in April 1931 and was originally named The Women's Gym before it was renamed in honor of Anna Hiss, the university's beloved director of Women's Physical Training.

ogy in 1991, was stored in the basement of the women's gymnasium next door.⁸⁴ As of 2008, there were the human "remains of about 12,000 American Indians in drawers and cabinets in the gym's basement . . . many of them were dug up by university archaeologists and have been stored under the pool since the early 1960s."⁸⁵ The university has resisted and continues to resist the repatriation of these remains and of artifacts within the collections.⁸⁶ As of 2020, "only 20% of some 500,000 artifacts" have been returned, "the lowest percentage of the audited campuses . . . UCLA has returned almost all of its artifacts."⁸⁷ In the last year, UC Berkeley has decided to rename three buildings on its campus due to the racist legacies of their namesakes: Boalt Hall, LeConte Hall, and Barrows Hall.⁸⁸ Discussion remains underway about the renaming of Kroeber Hall.⁸⁹ One source suggests that the human remains kept at Hearst Gymnasium were rehoused in more suitable storage under Kroeber Hall in 2016.⁹⁰ Even if that is the case, these remains spent decades under the pool at Hearst Gymnasium, a pool that under normal circumstances is used daily by the campus community. There is scarcely a better metaphor one could think of when considering the consequences of how university communities think of themselves and their bodies and how they think of the bodies of those they deem scientifically interesting.

While Anna Hiss Gymnasium does not bear this dark legacy, it certainly resonates with Hearst Memorial Gymnasium in many design elements, including frosted glass as far as the eye can see, non-regulation sized courts and pools, and a sheltered interior courtyard.⁹¹ Perhaps most importantly, just as there was a before-Phoebe and after-Phoebe for the Berkeley women's physical education program, there was a before-Anna and after-Anna for UT. Anna Hiss graduated from the Sargent School, today Boston University, in 1917 and joined the faculty at UT in 1918.⁹² She made an immediate impact on campus, was "promoted to director" of the women's physical education program by 1921, and spent her first decade at UT "found[ing] nearly a dozen sports clubs" for swimming, interpretive dance, archery, hiking and camping, tennis, horseback riding, golf, and fencing, among others.⁹³ When the university administration agreed to fund a new men's gymnasium, Gregory Gymnasium, in the late 1920s, Hiss made the case for a new women's gymnasium as well, pointing to the dismal "frame structure" they had been resigned to using since 1918.⁹⁴ Hiss "traveled the nation at her own expense to visit other top-rated women's gymnasiums," then secured \$400,000 in alumni funding to build the Women's Gymnasium, renamed Anna Hiss Gymnasium in 1974.⁹⁵ Throughout her thirty-six-year career at UT, Hiss was resistant to competition and focused on the participation-model also in vogue at UC Berkeley.⁹⁶ She kept mirrors around the gymnasium and took before and after photos of students, urging them to be aware of their posture and the changes in their body after a semester of exercise.⁹⁷ Her earnest hope was that every woman would leave UT Austin with the tools and self-confidence they needed to live a healthful life.⁹⁸

Due to the Great Depression, World War II, the

post-war effort to expand university education for returning GIs, and the push for women to return back to the home and away from universities and serious athletic activity, construction of new university women's gymnasiums stalled for decades.⁹⁹ The declining enrollment of women as a percentage of undergraduates, as well as the declining power of women academics, who had made up "a record 32.5 percent of college presidents, professors, and instructors" in 1930, cemented the lack of co-ed university interest in building new athletic facilities for women.¹⁰⁰ It was only as women's enrollment began to rebound in the 1960s that some universities looked at their inadequate and/or outdated infrastructure and built a few final gymnasiums constructed solely with women in mind.¹⁰¹ One example is Gerlinger Annex at the University of Oregon, completed in 1969.¹⁰² The annex sits next to Gerlinger Hall, the original women's gymnasium from 1921, and served as a practice and competition space for some of the university's women's teams, including gymnastics and volleyball.¹⁰³ The annex appears to be equipped with bleachers that fold out of the walls, easy to put away when the space is being used for practice or physical education classes, a marked change from the lack of bleachers in many earlier women's gymnasiums.

The passage of Title IX in 1972 transformed women's athletics in fundamental ways, not least of which was the gradual gender integration of most men's and women's physical education facilities and competitive arenas. In the time since Title IX, gymnasiums formerly reserved for women have increasingly been reserved for intramural clubs and physical education classes, as they often lack the regulation sizing to be useful for varsity athletic teams. Hiss Gymnasium lost its pool to another building deemed more important and its remaining gymnasium has been converted into a robotics lab.¹⁰⁴ Sadly, many of these gymnasiums have been allowed to fall into disrepair or been selected for demolition to make room for new campus constructions that more accurately reflect the needs of the student body. It is important, with the women's university gymnasiums we have remaining, to record their histories and with them the history of how women's physical education has evolved to reflect new understandings of the capability of women and the goals of a university degree.

NOTES:

1. "Stanford Wins at Basket-Ball," *San Francisco Call*, 5 April 1896. See also: Leslie Mitchell, "The World's First Women's College Basketball Team," 10 August 2020, viewed at: calbearshistory.com.
2. Mitchell, "World's First Women's College Basketball Team."
3. Ibid. The lack of backboard, the penalty for shooting or passing with two hands, and the restriction of players to zones of the court originated from Clara Gregory Baer's "Basquette" rulebook, first published in 1893, and swiftly popularized as a means to transform basketball into a "safer" sport for women. As practiced at the Stanford-Berkeley game, Baer's rules also segmented the court into different zones that each team would assign a player to, incurring a penalty if they left their designated zones. This supposedly "lessen[ed] the danger of collision . . . [and] prevent[ed] the rush of many players after the ball." "Re-

- marks and Comments," *Mind and Body* 3, no. 25 (March 1896): 22; See also: Clara Gregory Baer, *Newcomb College Basket Ball Guide For Women: Collegiate Rules* (New Orleans, LA: The Tulane University of Louisiana, 1895).
4. "Co-Ed Basketball Players," *San Francisco Call*, 7 March 1896; "Sport Girls Play At," *San Francisco Examiner*, 11 March 1896; "Basket-Ball Maids," *San Francisco Call*, 4 April 1896; "Stanford Wins at Basket-Ball."
 5. Julia Morgan, one of the architects behind the Hearst Memorial Gymnasium, discussed later in this paper, designed YWCA buildings up and down California, as well as one in Honolulu. Her work between the university gymnasium and the YWCA buildings is consistent, sharing certain assumptions and design choices. See: Ginger Wadsworth, *Julia Morgan: Architect of Dreams* (Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publishing, 1990), 58, 69, 108; Sara Holmes Boutelle and Julia Morgan, *Julia Morgan, Architect* (New York, NY: Abbeville Press, 2010), 101-105.
 6. John A. Wood, "Calisthenium and Riding Academy (Avery Hall)," *Vassar Encyclopedia*, 2005, viewed at: vcencyclopedia.vassar.edu.
 7. *Prospectus of the Vassar Female College, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.* (New York, NY: C.A. Alvord, 1865), 3.
 8. *Ibid.*, 3-4.
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 10. "Civil War Casualties," *American Battlefield Trust*, n.d., viewed at: battlefields.org.
 11. "Improving Maternal Health Outcomes with a Focus on Physical Activity," *Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion*, 12 May 2020, viewed at: health.gov; See also: Richard H. Steckel, "Health and Mortality of Women and Children, 1850-1860," *Journal of Economic History* 48, no. 2 (June 1988): 333-345. As for the contention that children are held up as a nation's future power and potential, the examples are almost too numerous; the way that Theodore Roosevelt talks about sending his sons to war and the American people as "the sons of the men of the Civil War, the sons of the men who had iron in their blood" is particularly instructive. See: Theodore Roosevelt, "Second State of the Union," (Washington, D.C., 2 December 1902) viewed at: <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/state-of-the-union-address-98/>; Theodore Roosevelt, "Letters to Henry Bordeaux," 27 May 1918 and 27 June 1918.
 12. U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistics of the United States in 1860: The Eighth Census* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1866), 263.
 13. Catharine E. Beecher, *Physiology and Calisthenics for Schools and Families* (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1858), 164; See also: Jan Todd, *Physical Culture and the Body Beautiful: Purposive Exercise in the Lives of American Women, 1800-1875* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), 137-162.
 14. *Ibid.*, 214, 263; See also: Allen Guttman, *Women's Sports: A History* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1991), 113.
 15. Todd, *Physical Culture and the Body Beautiful*, 214, 263.
 16. Dio Lewis, *The New Gymnastics for Men, Women, and Children* (Boston, MA: Ticknor and Fields, 1862), 13-14, 18, 28, 42, 59, 87.
 17. *Ibid.*, 64-65.
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 19. *Ibid.*, 61.
 20. *Ibid.*, 14; For first half of quote, see: Dorothy S. Ainsworth, *The History of Physical Education in Colleges for Women* (New York, NY: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1930), 36-38.
 21. Lewis, *The New Gymnastics*, 14; Ainsworth, *The History of Physical Education*, 26-38.
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 23. Ainsworth, *The History of Physical Education*, 36; See also: Wood, "Calisthenium and Riding Academy (Avery Hall)."
 24. Wood, "Calisthenium and Riding Academy (Avery Hall)."
 25. Ainsworth, *The History of Physical Education*, 30; Guttman, *Women's Sports*, 113; Sophia Foster Richardson, "Tendencies in Athletics for Women In Colleges and Universities," *Appletons' Popular Science Monthly* (February 1897): 518. A Vassar scrapbook has two photos of a field hockey team and an image of two women on ice with hockey sticks on page 6, so perhaps Vassar students played both. See: Elizabeth Bristol Greenleaf, "Scrapbook (1917)," *Vassar Encyclopedia*, 2005, viewed at: vcencyclopedia.vassar.edu; The exact date that many of these sports were added is unclear. The *Vassar Encyclopedia* puts them even earlier than Ainsworth or Guttman, including croquet, archery, rowing, skating, tobogganing, and riding by 1866, with baseball perhaps as early as 1866, and bicycling also from this source. "Athletics, 1865-1945," *Vassar Encyclopedia*, 2005, viewed at: vcencyclopedia.vassar.edu.
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