

The Education of Women at Mount Allison, 1854-1914

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Volume 12, Number 2, Spring 1983

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/acad12_2art01

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Publisher(s)

The Department of History of the University of New Brunswick

ISSN

0044-5851 (print)

1712-7432 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Reid, J. G. (1983). The Education of Women at Mount Allison, 1854-1914. *Acadiensis*, 12(2), 3-33.

JOHN G. REID

The Education of Women at Mount Allison, 1854-1914

“IT WOULD BE SUPERFLUOUS to advocate what must now be considered a settled principle: that the introduction of the abstruser sciences into a course of study for females, is of the highest utility”. This confident assertion of the desirability of a rigorous academic education for female students was contained in the *Mount Allison Academic Gazette* of December 1855, in an editorial almost certainly written by Mary Electa Adams, chief preceptress of the ladies’ academy that had opened at Mount Allison in the previous year. Attacking “the ordinary modes of female education” as tending to produce “that impatience of thought, that tendency to the desultory and the superficial, which are proverbial failings of young ladies”, the editorial promised that Mount Allison would offer a systematic programme of study aimed at producing women of intellectual vigour.¹ Logical as that goal might be, its successful accomplishment was no simple matter in a society where women were commonly expected to live their lives according to closely circumscribed roles as daughters, wives, and mothers.

Just how much knowledge of “the abstruser sciences” was it proper for a woman to have in order to enrich the life of her family? The *Academic Gazette* admitted to no doubts on this score. “The ornamental branches”, it declared, “without being depreciated or displaced, will always be pursued in subserviency to the solid studies”; even in the home, the influence exerted by Mount Allison women, so the argument went, would be all the greater for being characterized by intellectual strength.² This was a debatable point in British North America in the 1850s, however, and the debate became more complex during the later decades of the century as Canadian women began in increasing numbers to undertake professional careers. The development of the ladies’ academy (renamed “ladies’ college” in 1886) was profoundly influenced by that debate. By 1914 the ladies’ college had come to be more dominated by the accomplishments of the drawing-room than would have been approved by Mary Electa Adams. Yet the strong academic bent with which the institution began had not been lost. It had resulted not only in the creation of professional schools of music, fine arts, and home economics, but also in important innovations at the adjoining Mount Allison University: the first woman to receive a bachelor’s degree at any institution in the British Empire was a Mount Allison graduate of 1875, who received the degree of Bachelor of Science and English Literature, and she was followed seven years later by the first woman to receive a Bachelor of

1 *Mount Allison Academic Gazette* (December 1855), pp. 5-6.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

4 *Acadiensis*

Arts degree in Canada. Although the academic emphasis at the ladies' college was in serious jeopardy by 1914, and although profound ambiguities remained as to the ultimate goals of women's education, Mount Allison over the previous 60 years had been responsible for a significant widening of the educational opportunities open to women in Canada's Maritime Provinces.

The opening of educational opportunities to the young of the three Maritime Provinces had been a paramount objective at Mount Allison since the first Wesleyan Academy for boys in Sackville, New Brunswick, had opened in 1843. Charles Frederick Allison, the Sackville merchant whose financial contributions had made the foundation of the institution possible, had insisted that the school be built in Sackville, rather than in a larger urban centre such as Saint John, in order that it should be easily accessible to students from throughout the Maritime region.³ Sackville, situated just a few miles from the border between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and within easy reach of the crossing-points from Prince Edward Island, was obviously an ideal choice to fulfill this requirement. Allison also envisaged the academy as an open institution in other respects. Although it should be, he wrote in 1839, under the control of the Wesleyan Methodist denomination, he did not seek to restrict attendance to Methodists, and other denominations were represented among the students from the beginning. Furthermore, as the newly-appointed principal of the academy, Humphrey Pickard, made clear in his speech at the official opening of the institution in June 1843, the intention was "to extend the benefits of the Institution as widely as possible" in a social sense. Although this did not mean that Mount Allison's clientele, any more than that of other academic educational institutions of the period, would be fully representative of the social classes of the region, Pickard declared that government grants from the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia would be used to keep tuition fees as low as possible.⁴ The age range of the students was also wide, as New Brunswick school inspector James Brown remarked when he visited Sackville in October 1844. Of the 84 students in attendance, Brown reported, "six are under 10 years

3 C.F. Allison to W. Temple, 4 June 1839, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Archives [WMMSA], Box 101, file 11b, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; letter of Enoch Wood to *The Wesleyan* (Halifax), 19 May 1882.

4 "An Inaugural Address, Delivered at the Opening of the Wesleyan Academy, Mount Allison, Sackville, New Brunswick, by the Principal, the Rev. H. Pickard, A.M.," *British North American Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* (August 1843), p. 289. At £25 per annum for the primary department (including both residential and tuition fees) and up to £30 for the higher departments, the fees were approximately equivalent to the total year's wages, over and above board and lodging, of the average New Brunswick agricultural labourer of the time; though it was also possible to attend a single term for £8/15/-, or (as in the case of the Bathurst carpenter James Dawson during the mid-1840s) to pay fees in the form of work. Wesleyan Academy, *Catalogues*, 1843-7; Richard Shepherd to C.F. Allison, 5 October 1843, C.F. Allison Papers, 7946/3, Mount Allison University Archives [MAA]; Graeme Wynn, *Timber Colony: A Historical Geography of Early Nineteenth Century New Brunswick* (Toronto, 1981), pp. 80-2.

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of age, eleven are over 10 and under 12, thirteen over 12 and under 14, twenty-four over 14 and under 16, fifteen over 16 and under 18, seven over 18 and under 20, and eight 20 years old and upwards".⁵ As such an age range dictated, the curriculum was varied: it ranged from a primary course, consisting of basic instruction in areas such as English grammar and arithmetic, to a "collegiate" course introduced in 1846. The collegiate course could, if the student wished, lead to the examinations for the external degree of Bachelor of Arts at King's College, in the provincial capital of Fredericton, although most instruction at the academy continued to be conducted at the non-degree level. Between the primary and the collegiate courses was an "intermediate" course designed to be completed in two years (as opposed to the four years of the collegiate course) and was composed chiefly of non-classical subjects.⁶

The Wesleyan Academy, therefore, strove to make its educational services widely available to the boys and young men of the Maritime Provinces. Yet the institution — despite Inspector Brown's statement in 1844 that it was "perhaps, the very best Educational Establishment in the Province" —⁷ could hardly claim to be serving its constituency without restriction as long as attendance was confined to male students. In the summer of 1847 a joint meeting of the Methodist districts of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia passed a resolution in favour of "the necessity and desirableness of establishing an Institution under the controal [sic] of our Church similar to that we have in the case of the Sackville Academy for the religious education of females". The resolution did not specify that the proposed academy for girls and young women would be located in Sackville, but it did appoint Humphrey Pickard in his capacity as principal to investigate the feasibility of the plan. In the following year, the New Brunswick district heard and accepted a proposal by "the Wesleyans and their friends, in Sackville and its Neighbourhood" to provide a sum of £2,000 — half of which was to be given by Charles Allison — and a lot of land for the new institution.⁸

The way towards the opening of the academy for female students was not smooth. "Whether it will be judged prudent," wrote Pickard to a correspondent in December 1848, "to proceed next spring with the Building for the Academy for Females is now, owing to the business state of the Country, somewhat doubtful".⁹ It was not until late 1851 that fund-raising efforts were resumed; in

5 Report of James Brown, 26 November 1844, *New Brunswick Assembly Journal*, 1845, Appendix, p.ciii.

6 Wesleyan Academy, *Catalogue*, 1846, 1852. The eventual structure of the curriculum became clear in 1851, when the intermediate course was formed out of the elements of previous "classical" and "literary and scientific" courses.

7 Report of James Brown, 26 November 1844, *New Brunswick Assembly Journal*, 1845, Appendix, p.civ.

8 Minutes of New Brunswick District, United Church of Canada, 3 July 1847, pp. 425-6, 18 May 1848, p. 463, United Church of Canada, Maritime Conference Archives.

9 Pickard to Robert Alder, 29 December 1848, WMMSA, Box 32, file 229. On the depression of

6 *Acadiensis*

September 1852, Pickard announced that the plans would proceed, and by early 1853 work had begun on a building to be constructed under the personal supervision of Allison.¹⁰ Even with the completion of what the *Mount Allison Academic Gazette* described as a “commodious and beautiful edifice” — a three-storey wooden building located near the existing male academy — further delays were threatened when the scheduled opening date in August 1854 coincided with a major outbreak of cholera in Saint John. Despite the postponement of the formal opening ceremony, the new institution began its first term on 17 August 1854 with “an unexpectedly large company” of between 80 and 90 students. A week later, the building had reached its planned capacity of 70 boarders, and 29 day-scholars were also enrolled. In the first term, enrolment would reach 118, surpassing by six that of the male academy. It was, as Pickard remarked, “an auspicious beginning of the new epoch”.¹¹

That this was indeed a new epoch at Mount Allison could hardly be questioned. The presence of such a large number of female students and a staff of seven women teachers altered permanently the hitherto male-dominated environment of the institution. This was a cause of some concern. In June 1854 readers of the *Academic Gazette* were assured that “the Family and Class organizations [of the female branch] will be entirely distinct from those of the other Academy, and the Students of the different branches will not be allowed to associate or even meet, either in public or in private, except in presence of some of the officers of the Institution”.¹² The daily walks allowed to the students were carefully planned so as to avoid chance meetings, and even at church separate seating was provided for male and female students. The very need for such regulations showed the magnitude of the change that had taken place. The opening of the female branch also brought about other changes in the academy’s clientele. An early student recalled that “many of the village girls attended the seminary as day pupils myself among the number although quite young in years”.¹³ Analysis of the composition of the student body in the first three years of the female academy confirms her recollection, for there was a heavy concentration of pupils from the local area. In the second year, more than one-third of the students came from Sackville, and almost half were from the county of

1848-51, see W.S. MacNutt, *The Atlantic Provinces: The Emergence of Colonial Society, 1712-1857* (Toronto, 1965), pp. 234-7; MacNutt, *New Brunswick: A History, 1784-1867* (Toronto, 1963), pp. 315-25.

10 *The Wesleyan*, 14 February 1852; *The Provincial Wesleyan* (Halifax), 9 September 1852, 24 March 1853; see also Raymond Clare Archibald, *Historical Notes on the Education of Women at Mount Allison, 1854-1954* (Sackville, N.B., 1954), p. 1.

11 *Mount Allison Academic Gazette* (December 1853), p. 7; *ibid.*, (December 1854), pp. 2-4; *The Provincial Wesleyan*, 10 August 1854. See also Geoffrey Bilson, “The Cholera Epidemic in Saint John, N.B., 1854”, *Acadiensis*, IV, 1 (Autumn 1974), pp. 85-99.

12 *Mount Allison Academic Gazette* (June 1854), p. 7.

13 Mrs. C. Christie to R.C. Archibald, 22 April 1904, Archibald Papers, 5501/13/9, p. 40, MAA.

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Westmorland in which Sackville was located. As a result, when the total student body from both branches is examined, the proportions of local students were higher than at any time previous to the opening of the female branch, except for the opening year of 1843. Nor, in the case of the female academy, was this a passing trend. In 1856-57, fully 35 per cent of the female students came from Sackville; the proportion among the male students was only 16 per cent, and the combined proportion was 24.4 per cent.¹⁴

The student population of the female academy was also notable for the relatively low proportion of those who came from urban areas, and this had the effect of strengthening a trend already apparent in the male academy. From the beginning the academy had professed to serve the overall population of the Maritime region, and on this basis had been awarded legislative grants. That population was overwhelmingly rural; and yet substantial proportions of the students had come from major cities of the region and especially from Saint John. In 1852, 23.4 per cent came from Saint John, with a further 9.4 per cent each from Halifax and Charlottetown.¹⁵ This, however, was the peak year of urban attendance, and in the male academy in 1856-57 these cities supplied only 19.1 per cent of the students. The year 1852 had been exceptional as a year when the major population centres of the region were experiencing a rapid recovery from the economic depression of 1848-51, but the figures also reflected the growth of alternative educational opportunities in urban areas, and notably the operation of Methodist academic day schools in Halifax and Saint John. The female academy, on the other hand, never had such a high percentage of students from the major cities, and thus its opening accentuated the shift away from urban recruitment. In 1856-57, the proportion of urban students was 18.4 per cent, and the combined proportion for the male and female branches was 18.8 per cent.¹⁶ The composition of the student body was coming more nearly to resemble that of the population it professed to serve, though with a confirmed bias towards those who originated from Sackville or nearby.

The opening of the female branch clearly had a significant effect upon Mount Allison. Did it also affect in an important way the education of women in the region? Certainly, the institution could not claim total originality. Boarding schools for girls were by no means rare either in Great Britain or in the United States. Even college education had been opened to women at Oberlin College in Ohio by 1837 and at other institutions soon afterwards.¹⁷ In British North

14 *Mount Allison Academic Gazette*, 1854-57. Comparative data for the male academy before 1854 are available in the *Catalogues of Wesleyan Academy*, 1843-53.

15 Wesleyan Academy, *Catalogue*, 1853.

16 See *Mount Allison Academic Gazette*, 1854-57; also Judith Fingard, "Attitudes Towards the Education of the Poor in Colonial Halifax", *Acadiensis*, II, 2 (Spring 1973), p. 23; *New Brunswick Assembly Journal*, 1855, pp. 106, 337.

17 Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (New York, 1968), pp.

8 *Acadiensis*

America, initiatives in Methodist women's education had been located chiefly in Canada West, the co-educational Upper Canada Academy opened at Cobourg in 1836 being a major example. In the Maritimes, also in 1836, the Baptist denomination had taken the lead by opening its Fredericton seminary to both male and female students. That the Baptists and Methodists should have led in women's education was not surprising, since both denominations had strong traditions of earnest evangelical zeal that suggested the value of a disciplined education as an antidote to idleness or frivolity in either women or men. Yet the Cobourg and Fredericton experiments were short-lived. The "female department" of the Upper Canada Academy was discontinued in 1842 with the institution's acquisition of college status, smaller schools in Cobourg henceforth taking up the work of women's education, while the Fredericton seminary also allowed its female department to lapse in 1843 in the face of competition from private schools in the city.¹⁸ Private girls' schools in the Maritimes had existed since the late 18th century, and their number grew rapidly during the earlier decades of the 19th. In 1839, for example, a school in Halifax was advertised by "the Misses Tropolet", who offered instruction "in English Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, Ancient and Modern History, Geography, Plain Needle Work, and Fancy Work, Music and Drawing, and the Use of Globes". Eleven years later, a girls' school was opened much closer to Mount Allison, when Mrs. C.E. Ratchford advertised a "Female Seminary" in Amherst.¹⁹ The scale of the female branch of the Sackville academy, however,

311-2. The admission of women to college education at Oberlin and other midwestern coeducational institutions, however, did not imply an equal concern for the intellectual development of male and female students. See Jill K. Conway, "Perspectives on the History of Women's Education in the United States", *History of Education Quarterly*, 14 (1974), pp. 6-7, and Sheila M. Rothman, *Woman's Proper Place: A History of Changing Ideals and Practices, 1870 to the Present* (New York, 1978), p. 27.

18 George Edward Levy, *The Baptists of the Maritime Provinces, 1753-1946* (Saint John, N.B., 1946), pp. 119-22; Edward Manning Saunders, *History of the Baptists of the Maritime Provinces* (Halifax, 1902), p. 234; Allison A. Trites, "The New Brunswick Baptist Seminary, 1833-1895", in Barry M. Moody, ed., *Repent and Believe: The Baptist Experience in Maritime Canada* (Hantsport, N.S., 1980), pp. 106-9. The female department of the Fredericton seminary would be reopened in 1857. Also in the late 1850s, the private girls' schools which would be the forerunners of the Acadia Seminary — the chief rival of the Mount Allison ladies' academy in the later years of the 19th century — were established in Wolfville. See *Memorials of Acadia College and Horton Academy for the Half-Century 1828-1878* (Montreal, 1881), pp. 107-8; and James Doyle Davison, *Alice of Grand Pré: Alice T. Shaw and her Grand Pré Seminary: Female Education in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick* (Wolfville, N.S., 1981), *passim*. On the Cobourg academy and its successors, see Marion Royce, "Methodism and the Education of Women in Nineteenth Century Ontario", *Atlantis*, 3, No. 2 (Spring 1978), pp. 130-43, and C.B. Sissons, *A History of Victoria University* (Toronto, 1952), pp. 23, 30-1, 47, 76. For discussion of the contribution of evangelical Christianity to women's education and to the feminist movement, see Olive Banks, *Faces of Feminism: A Study of Feminism as a Social Movement* (New York, 1981), pp. 13-27, 39-46.

19 *The Wesleyan*, 12 August 1839, 12 January 1850. Early girls' schools in the Maritimes are discussed in Davison, *Alice of Grand Pré*, pp. 33-42.

and the absence of any comparable denominational institution, made it at the time of its founding the major school for girls in the region. In June 1854 the *Mount Allison Academic Gazette* proclaimed that the female academy was “designed to be in every respect, in proportion to its extent, equal to any public Institution devoted to the advancement of Female Education on this continent”.²⁰

The nature of the education offered to female students at Mount Allison was profoundly influenced by the first chief preceptress. This office was the highest in the school held by a woman and carried essentially the duties of a principal, although subject to the nominal authority of Humphrey Pickard as principal of the two branches of the academy. Mary Electa Adams was a native of Lower Canada who had grown up in Upper Canada and had studied there and in the United States. She had finished her education at the Cobourg Ladies' Seminary, one of the successor institutions of the Upper Canada Academy. Subsequently, Adams had been Lady Principal of the Picton Academy, again in Canada West, and had spent four years teaching at the Albion Seminary in Michigan. Still only 30 years old when she arrived in Sackville in 1854, she nonetheless brought considerable experience to her position. Although she stayed only three years before family deaths forced her return to Canada, her influence was soon apparent not only in the devotion which she evidently evoked in her pupils, but also in the nature of the academy and particularly in the curriculum offered to female students.²¹

When the trustees of the academy had petitioned the New Brunswick legislature in early 1854 for an operating grant for the female academy — an annual allocation of £300 was voted beginning in 1855 — the proposed curriculum had stressed training in the social graces rather than a rigorous academic programme “In addition to the Elementary Branches of Education”, the assembly had been informed, “that of the French and other polite Languages, Music, Drawing, Painting, and other ornamental Branches, will be taught”.²² By June 1854, although parents were assured in the *Academic Gazette* that “the cultivation of refined taste and lady-like manners” would receive due attention, academic content was accorded a new prominence: “The Course of Study in Literature and Science, the principles of Classification, and the general routine of

20 *Mount Allison Academic Gazette* (June 1854), p. 7. The phrasing of this declaration, comparing the Sackville institution with others throughout North America, suggests the intention of attracting students who might otherwise have gone from the Maritimes to the United States to further their education. Certainly, a number of Maritime students attended Mount Holyoke Seminary, in Massachusetts, during the 1850s. See Davison, *Alice of Grand Pré*, pp. 26-31; and, on Mount Holyoke and other seminaries in the United States, Phyllis Stock, *Better Than Rubies: A History of Women's Education* (New York, 1978), pp. 185-6.

21 Elsie Pomeroy, “Mary Electa Adams: A Pioneer Educator”, *Ontario History*, 41 (1949), pp. 107-10.

22 *New Brunswick Assembly Journal*, 1854, pp. 93, 223; *ibid.*, 1854-5, pp. 108, 189-90, 261.

10 *Acadiensis*

the intellectual training will correspond, as nearly as may be, with the plan which is . . . published for the other Branch, and which has been so successfully tried. There will be here as in the other Branch, three departments — the Primary, the Intermediate, and the Collegiate — each with its own appropriate portion of the course of study suitably modified”.²³

The nature of the suitable modifications was revealed when the detailed curriculum was published in the following year. The Primary Department curriculum was similar to that of the equivalent in the male branch, though with the addition of “occasional Oral Instructions in Physiology, Domestic Economy, and Natural History”. The intermediate course also resembled its counterpart, though with the omission of Latin and certain subjects such as book-keeping and surveying, and their replacement by classes in map-drawing and mythology. The collegiate course for female students was divided into three years, rather than the four years prescribed in the male branch: the difference lay chiefly in the omission of Greek language and literature, and of two out of six Latin authors; also omitted were political economy and mineralogy. Vocal music, along with English composition, was continued throughout the collegiate course, while instrumental music and fine arts were available to all students at added cost.²⁴ Thus, the education offered to female students at the academy was characterized by a lesser concentration on classical subjects and the omission of subjects pertaining to careers and social roles considered inappropriate for women. Yet it was equally clear that the courses of study were not exclusively designed to cultivate good taste and the accomplishments of the drawing-room. As the *Academic Gazette* editorial pointed out in December 1855 in the course of its attack on “the ordinary modes of female education”, literary and scientific subjects were strongly represented. Mary Electa Adams had ensured that the school began with a curriculum that neglected neither the academic nor the “ornamental” emphasis, but gave pre-eminence to the academic. The practical development of those two emphases, and the balance between them, would depend in the future not only upon her successors but also upon the social and economic development of the region from which the students were primarily drawn.

For some 15 years after the departure of Mary Electa Adams in 1857, the fortunes of the female branch of the Wesleyan Academy were dominated by struggles for survival that were not uncommon among new educational institutions of the era. The optimism generated by the school’s successful beginning grew quickly to new heights during the later 1850s, with the arrival of John Allison, a 36-year-old Methodist minister and a cousin of Charles Frederick Allison, who became principal of the newly-renamed “ladies’ academy”. His wife Martha Louisa Allison became preceptress. Both held A.B. and A.M.

23 *Mount Allison Academic Gazette* (June 1854), p. 7.

24 *Ibid.*, (December 1855), p. 7.

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degrees from institutions in New York State (John Allison from Syracuse University, Martha Allison from Genesee College), and Martha Allison became the first woman to hold a professorial position at Mount Allison, with the title of Professor of Natural Sciences, Ancient and Modern Languages, within the ladies' academy.²⁵ Enrolment continued to grow and when the number rose to 189 students during the 1859-60 year the facilities of the school became, as John Allison commented, "uncomfortably crowded"; the result was the addition of a new wing to the academy building by the end of 1860.²⁶ Just as quickly, however, prosperity faded. The new addition to the building had been constructed on borrowed money, and a short-lived expansion of the teaching staff put further strain upon the institution's finances. By 1864, the debt had risen to more than \$16,000 and the Allisons resigned amid rumours of mismanagement. The ill health of Martha Allison had compounded the situation, and there had also been persistent personal rivalry between John Allison and Humphrey Pickard, principal of the male academy. These problems had affected public confidence in the school, and at a time when development of the public school systems of the provinces was opening alternative educational opportunities for girls. By 1864, enrolment at the ladies' academy had fallen to some 20 resident students and 30 local day students.²⁷ The result of the crisis was the reappointment of Pickard as principal, with the day-to-day management of the ladies' academy being entrusted to J.R. Inch (hitherto a teacher in the male academy) as vice-principal. Inch became principal in his own right on Pickard's retirement in 1869, and under his direction the prosperity of the institution, and its student enrolment, was gradually rebuilt. By 1871-72, annual attendance had reached 82, of whom 54 were boarders, and there was further modest expansion during the remaining years of the decade. Though enrolment levels were still short of those of the earliest years, survival had been ensured.²⁸

25. Leonard Allison Morrison, *The History of the Alison or Allison Family In Europe and America* (Boston, 1893), p. 197; Ladies' Academy, *Catalogue*, 1859.

26. Ladies Academy, *Catalogues*, 1859, 1860; *The Provincial Wesleyan*, 4 April 1860; Minutes of Board of Trustees, 1858-1899, pp. 26-7, MAA; John Allison to Leonard Tilley, 26 December 1860, RG4, RS24/861/re/1, Provincial Archives of New Brunswick [PANB].

27. *New Brunswick Assembly Journal*, 1865, Appendix No. 5, p. 52; Thomas Wood to Mr. and Mrs. Trueman, 8 February 1861, Wood Papers, MC218/8/23, PANB; John Allison to John A. Clark, 11 October 1862, John A. Clark Papers, 7412, MAA; Minutes of Board of Trustees, 1858-1899, pp. 40-5, MAA; *The Mount Allison Academic Gazette* (June 1863), p. 8; David Allison to W.G. Watson, 4 March 1921, David Allison Papers, 0126/1, MAA; Archibald, *Historical Notes*, p. 4. For discussion of developments in public school education, and of the 1864 Nova Scotia Free School Act, see William B. Hamilton, "Society and Schools in Nova Scotia", in J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp, and Louis-Philippe Audet, eds., *Canadian Education: A History* (Scarborough, Ont., 1970), pp. 99-102; also Hamilton, "Society and Schools in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island", *ibid.*, pp. 115-7.

28. For enrolment figures, see *Nova Scotia Assembly Journals*, 1871, Appendix 21, p. 40; 1872, Appendix 13, p. u; 1873, Appendix 14, p. 42; 1874, Appendix 15, p. 46; 1875, Appendix 14, p. 52; 1876, Appendix 7, p. 56; 1877, Appendix 5, p. S. See also Archibald, *Historical Notes*, p. 4.

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Inevitably, the travails induced by the financial crisis of the early 1860s had their effects upon the teaching process at the ladies' academy, and to some extent restricted the services that the institution was able to offer to its students. John and Martha Allison, shortly after their arrival in 1857, had instituted a revised curriculum, in which the number of courses offered was reduced to two: a "preparatory course", based on elements of the old primary and intermediate course, and a "graduating course for ladies". The graduating course was a three-year programme based upon the old collegiate course but incorporating some changes: students could now study Greek as well as Latin if they wished, but it was also possible to complete the course without any study of classical languages, by substituting French for Latin and German for Greek. Graduates must also have "some knowledge of Music or Drawing". Those who completed the full three years were promised "a beautiful and appropriate diploma". While this new curriculum represented a move away from the structured academic content favoured by Mary Electa Adams, it retained considerable academic demands. From the early 1860s onwards, the graduating diploma carried the title of "Mistress of Liberal Arts".²⁹ The decline in enrolment, however, severely limited the number of students wishing to take the course. During the three-year period from 1859 to 1861, there were at least 30 graduates; but it took until 1874 for the next 30 to be recorded.³⁰

Another initiative of the Allisons that had limited results was an attempt in 1860 to link the ladies' academy directly to the training of teachers for the New Brunswick parish school system, which was expanding under the terms of the 1858 Parish School Act. In late 1860, John Allison informed Leonard Tilley, the provincial secretary, that "we are now educating a few [students] at reduced rates who expect to become teachers". Allison's suggestion that a special government grant be made in recognition of this service was not accepted. Similarly, an earlier attempt to obtain provincial sanction for an arrangement by which academy students could obtain parish school teaching licenses by examination at the provincial training school without actually having to attend classes there had been given the non-committal response, "each case will be dealt with according to its own merits".³¹ Academy students could apply for examination

29 Ladies Academy, *Catalogues*, 1857-8, 1859. The Mistress of Liberal Arts Diploma was the highest Mount Allison qualification open to a woman until the opening of college-level degrees to women in 1872. Thereafter, the M.L.A. continued to be awarded, normally to students who chose not to pursue their studies at the more demanding B.A. level.

30 Ladies' College, *Catalogue*, 1909-10. This catalogue was the first to publish a list of graduates dating from the beginning of the graduating course. The list may be incomplete for the earliest years.

31 John Allison to Leonard Tilley, 26 December 1860, RG4, RS24/861/re/1, PANB; Board of Education Minutes, 12 April 1860, RG11, RS113/RED/BE/1/2, PANB. On the instruction offered at the training school in Saint John, which had been open to female students from 1849 onwards, see Katherine F.C. MacNaughton, *The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick, 1784-1900* (Fredericton, 1947), pp. 139-43.

Table I: Occupations of Graduates of Mount Allison Ladies' Academy/College 1857-1904

Teacher (Ladies' Academy/College)	Private teacher of music or elocution	Teacher/educator (other)	M.D.	Missionary	Nurse	Musician	Governess	Further study	No known formal occupation	Total
1857-60	6	2							17	25
1861-70	2		1	1					37	41
1871-80	1								33	34
1881-90	4	2	3	5	1				54	70
1891-1900	1	2		1		1			83	93
1901-04	3	8		1	3		1	4	26	49

Source: [Raymond C. Archibald], "Our Graduates, 1854-1904", *Allisonia*, II (1904-05), pp. 139-54.

Note: Based upon a survey carried out by R. C. Archibald, teacher of music and mathematics in the ladies' college, in 1903-4, this table includes occupations known to have been followed by graduates at any time during their post-graduation career. The data gathered by Archibald were as complete as he could obtain, chiefly by mail enquiries, but it is possible that there were some (particularly among the earliest graduates) who had undertaken occupations that were not recorded in the survey.

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without attendance, as Mary and Alice Gallagher of Sackville successfully did in July 1860, but it would remain a privilege rather than a right; and the large majority of those ladies' academy students who took up teaching after graduation would continue for the time being to do so at the academy itself.³²

Interest in the "ornamental branches" was at a high level during the late 1850s, with many students studying music and art despite the substantial fees charged for those subjects over and above the regular academic tuition fees. Of the 153 students listed in the 1859 catalogue, 120 were studying instrumental music and 105 vocal music; of all the subjects taught these totals were exceeded only by composition (140) and penmanship (130). Even arithmetic (97), reading (86) and English grammar (78) were well behind. The fine arts enrolments were divided into ten separate classes, but were substantial also, with the highest enrolments — in drawing and in "coloured crayon" — reaching 36, and five others ranging between 21 and 27.³³ Despite the popularity of the "ornamental branches", they were often plagued by financial constraints. The succession of music professors was continuous from 1855 onwards, although few stayed for long. Theodore Martens, for example, who arrived from the Leipzig Conservatory as professor of music in 1869, was the sixth individual to hold the position and himself stayed only three years.³⁴ Yet if Martens became another music professor who was unwilling for long to put up with limited facilities and low pay, his counterpart in fine arts — the landscape artist John Warren Gray — was even less fortunate. Gray became in 1869 the first professor to be appointed in the field of art. Trained in England and later to have a distinguished career as a practising artist in Montreal, he was nonetheless invited to leave Mount Allison in 1873 on the recommendation of Inch "that he considered it undesirable to continue the services of Mr. Gray as Teacher of Painting, his salary being greater than the profits yielded to the Institution financially".³⁵ It would be 20 years before Mount Allison again had a professor of art, and in the meantime teaching was carried on by an assistant teacher. Under Inch's careful financial management the "ornamental branches" were expected to pay their own way.

32. Board of Education Minutes, 13 July 1860, RG11, RS113/RED/BE/1/2, PANB; see also Table I. On the increasing entry of women into the teaching profession, see Alison Prentice, "The Feminization of Teaching in British North America and Canada, 1845-1875", in Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Prentice, eds., *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History* (Toronto, 1977), pp. 49-65.

33. Ladies' Academy, *Catalogue*, 1859, p. 12. The basic charge for elementary tuition and board at the ladies' academy in 1859 was £9/3/4 per term, or £27/10/- per academic year. Additional fees for music and fine arts ranged up to £2/13/4 per term for instrumental music, and £2 per term for oil painting.

34. See [R.C. Archibald], "An Historical Note: Music at Mt. Allison", *The Argosy* (May 1895), p. 8; also Mount Allison *Catalogue*, 1869-70.

35. Minutes of Board of Trustees, 1858-1899, p. 120, MAA; see also Virgil Hammock, "Art at Mount Allison", *Arts Atlantic*, I, 3 (Summer/Fall 1978), p. 17; and Obituary of John Warren

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At the same time as subjects taught for “ornamental” purposes were experiencing these constraints, the academic education of women at Mount Allison was making significant advances, and the balance between the two traditions was once again being altered. In 1862 the degree-granting Mount Allison Wesleyan College had opened on a site adjoining the two academies. Enrolment at the college was small at first and by 1870-71 it stood at only 17 in Arts and seven in Theology.³⁶ Up to that time, only male students had been admitted to the degree programmes of the college, but on 26 May 1872 a radical change was proposed by Inch to the college board, with the support of the theological professor Charles Stewart. The minutes of the meeting recorded the occasion tersely: “Moved by Prof. Inch seconded by Dr. Stewart that: Ladies having regularly matriculated and completed the course of study prescribed by this board shall be entitled to receive the degrees in the arts and faculties upon the same terms and conditions as are now or may hereafter be imposed upon male students of the college”.³⁷ If there was any opposition to this crucial change, it was not apparent. David Allison, the president of the college, was known to hold rather different views from those of Inch on the matter of women’s social role. Several years later, when they shared the platform at the ladies’ academy closing exercises of 1880, Inch declared that “years of experience had taught him that young ladies can compete with the sterner sex in either intellectual acuteness or the power of acquisition”. Allison’s view was that “any woman’s best and highest sphere [was in] . . . aiding some good, honest, faithful man in discharging the duties of life”. Yet even Allison acknowledged that “any Education that differentiates between the sexes is wrong”, and although he believed that relatively few women would ever desire to go to college he did not create barriers for those who did.³⁸

It is likely that the decision to admit women was hastened by the financial crisis that arose at Mount Allison in early 1872, when the New Brunswick provincial subsidy was cut off in the wake of the 1871 Common Schools Act. One historian of higher education in the United States has remarked that by increasing enrolment in the late 19th century “coeducation helped to save many one-time men’s colleges of the small denominational type from being put out of business”.³⁹ While there was no immediate influx of women students to Mount Allison, the college was certainly widening its constituency by permitting their attendance. Indeed, the decision was often cited in appeals for endowment

Gray, clipping from *Saint John Globe*, 2 March 1921, Archibald Papers, 5501/13/13, p. 100, MAA.

36 See Table II.

37 Minutes of College Board, 1863-1941, pp. 44-5, MAA.

38 *The Chignecto Post and Borderer* (Sackville), 3 June 1880.

39 Rudolph, *The American College and University*, p. 323; see also Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres: Intellectual Roots of Modern Feminism* (New Haven, 1982), pp. 30-1.

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funds. Inch declared publicly on 28 May 1872 that in "this liberal policy" Mount Allison now "led all Seminaries in these Provinces"; while the editor of the *Saint John Globe* shortly afterwards praised it as an action "in keeping with the spirit of the times" and called upon wealthy individuals to contribute to the endowment fund "on patriotic grounds".⁴⁰ Nevertheless, although the admission of women students undoubtedly had its practical advantages, the origins of the decision taken in 1872 went back much further than the immediate crisis of that year.

The roots of the change lay in two previous decisions. The first was the determination of Mary Electa Adams in 1854 that the new female branch of the Wesleyan Academy should impose rigorous intellectual standards upon its pupils and should emphasize systematic study. This decision established the foundations for the collegiate programme which provided the indisputable evidence that female students were as capable as males. The second was the decision shortly after the opening of the Mount Allison College to allow senior ladies' academy students to attend college classes as part of their own collegiate course. Exactly how and when this was arranged was never recorded, and was not publicized, no doubt to avoid the denunciation of those who believed that male and female students had no business in the same classroom together. Nonetheless, the results obviously impressed the anonymous correspondent who described the Mount Allison examinations of November 1871 in the *Provincial Wesleyan*, and wrote of "one fact [which], in view of the various 'new departures' in modern education, deserves to be noted in respect to the lady students. It is their marked success in the college classes with which they have been associated. This success they have striven to make the rule and they have done it. No comment is needed".⁴¹ Similarly, a *Provincial Wesleyan* editorial pointed out in June 1872 that "we have seen ladies in those college classes years ago maintaining their ground in the most spirited scholastic contests", and the *Saint John Globe* recalled that the custom went back to the very beginning of the college's existence.⁴²

The *Provincial Wesleyan* drew the conclusion that the change made in 1872 was "not a new decision", and claimed that if the women students of past years had not taken degrees "it was not owing to any restrictions in the rules of the college".⁴³ This assertion, designed to allay any lingering opposition to coeducation, was not as ingenuous as it seemed. It was quite true that there was nothing either in the college charter or in the catalogue to say that women could not matriculate and graduate; but neither was there anything to say that they could, and the very action of the college board in 1872 showed that a deliberate

40 *The Provincial Wesleyan*, 5, 12 June 1872.

41 *Ibid.*, 22 November 1871.

42 *Ibid.*, 5, 12 June 1872.

43 *Ibid.*, 5 June 1872.

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Figure 1: *Top*: Mount Allison College graduating class, 1875, including Grace Annie Lockhart; *Bottom*: Students and staff in the Mount Allison ladies' academy park, c. 1885 (Mount Allison University Archives).

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measure was required in order to remedy the omission. From 1872 onward, the catalogue provided explicitly that students were “admitted irrespective of sex”.⁴⁴ Mount Allison’s action may also have been influenced to some extent by external factors. Less than a year previously, in the summer of 1871, the board of trustees of Wesleyan University in Connecticut had similarly resolved that there was “nothing in the charter to prevent ladies from being admitted to the privileges of the University”. In view of the close ties existing between that Methodist institution and Mount Allison it was certain that this precedent would not go unnoticed. There were also concurrent discussions of coeducation at Cornell University — which decided favourably in 1872 — and other United States institutions.⁴⁵

Admission of women to Mount Allison College as regular students, therefore, was a genuine and far-reaching change, although it had antecedents both in the previous arrangements at Mount Allison, and in American precedents which had been known and discussed in the Maritimes. Elsewhere in Canada, and throughout the British Empire, women’s struggle to gain access to higher education was more protracted.⁴⁶ Thus it was a Mount Allison student, Grace Annie Lockhart, who in 1875 attained the distinction of being the first woman to be awarded a bachelor’s degree at any institution in the British Empire. A native of Saint John, Lockhart enrolled in the ladies’ academy in 1871 at the age of 16. Most of her courses were in fact taken while she remained a ladies’ academy student, and it was only in her final year, after obtaining her M.L.A. diploma in 1874, that she was officially registered as a student of the college. Her graduation on 25 May 1875 with the degree of Bachelor of Science and English Literature — no woman had as yet enrolled in the full Bachelor of Arts programme — passed with little comment. The Halifax *Herald* noted that “this was the first occasion on which the College had conferred a degree on a member of the female sex”, while the newly-inaugurated Mount Allison student magazine, the *Argosy*, was only a little bolder in asserting that “Miss Grace A. Lockhart is, we

44 Mount Allison *Catalogue*, 1872.

45 Carl F. Price, *Wesleyan’s First Century: With an Account of the Centennial Celebration* (Middletown, Conn., 1932), p. 172; Rudolph, *The American College and University*, pp. 316-23.

46 Girton College, Cambridge, for example, was incorporated in 1874, but its students could not qualify for degrees, despite the strong arguments advanced by the Mistress of the college, Emily Davies. Even London University, well known for its liberal admission policies, had refused to allow women to matriculate, as Davies and her colleague Elizabeth Garrett had found out when they had attempted to gain admission in 1862. In Canada, McGill University came close to admitting women in 1870, but a favourable resolution of the institution’s board of governors in that year was not implemented. See Mary Cathcart Borer, *Willingly to School: A History of Women’s Education* (London, 1976), pp. 273-6, 288-90; M.C. Bradbrook, ‘That Infidel Place’: *A Short History of Girton College, 1869-1969* (London, 1969), chs. i, ii; Stanley Brice Frost, *McGill University: For the Advancement of Learning, Vol. I, 1801-1895* (Montreal, 1980), pp. 251-6; Margaret Gillett, *We Walked Very Warily: A History of Women at McGill* (Montreal, 1981), pp. 51-8; Stock, *Better Than Rubies*, pp. 179-83.

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believe, the first lady in these provinces to receive a college degree".⁴⁷ Lockhart herself made little mention of her academic achievement in later years, and it is doubtful whether either she or J.R. Inch was aware at the time that her graduation had been so great an innovation throughout the British Empire. For all that, Inch was proud of the achievement that the ladies' academy had made possible. "While other institutions were halting and hesitating and putting the door ajar", he recalled in 1880, Mount Allison "boldly opened its doors to all irrespective of sex".⁴⁸

The opening of degree programmes to women, and the conferral of the first degree upon a candidate who had carried out most of her studies in the ladies' academy, was an undeniable tribute to the academic standing of that institution. Yet it was a tribute that had unpredictable implications for the future, especially in view of the age range of the students. The ladies' academy had begun as an institution for girls of all ages, and during the earlier years a substantial proportion of the students had been under 15 years of age.⁴⁹ After the enrolment crisis of the mid-1860s, however, and increasingly as the public schools continued their expansion, the ladies' academy tended to cater to older pupils. Between 1870 and 1872, the average age reached as high as 19, though by the mid-1870s it dropped to 17. The age-group under 15 had not been abandoned entirely, but a large majority of the students were aged 15 or more.⁵⁰ Now that the degree courses of the college were open to women students, there was an obvious possibility that the ladies' academy would soon be left with a dangerously narrow clientele of students, or that it would become in effect a finishing school, offering instruction in the "ornamental" tradition to students who did not aspire to a full college education. When J.R. Inch resigned as principal in 1878 to become president of the college, the finances and the enrolment of the ladies' academy were healthy. Yet the institution had serious questions to face as to its educational mission. Furthermore, it would face competition not only from public schools but also from such direct competitors as the Wesleyan Academy in Charlottetown, and the Acadia Seminary in Wolfville.⁵¹

47 *Morning Herald* (Halifax), 26 May 1875; *The Eurhetorian Argosy* (June 1875), p. 60.

48 *The Chignecto Post and Borderer*, 3 June 1880. On the later career of Grace Annie Lockhart, see "G.A. Lockhart", Biographical Files, MAA.

49 In December 1858, for example, John Allison reported to the government of Nova Scotia that of the 157 pupils in his care, 5 were aged between 8 and 10 years, 20 were between 10 and 12, 45 were between 12 and 15, 50 were between 15 and 18, and 37 over 18: *Returns of Mount Allison Wesleyan Academies*, December 1858, MG17, Vol. 17, No. 90, Public Archives of Nova Scotia.

50 *Nova Scotia Assembly Journals*, 1871, Appendix 21, p. 40; 1872, Appendix 13, p. u; 1873, Appendix 14, p. 42; 1874, Appendix 15, p. 46; 1875, Appendix 14, p. 52; 1876, Appendix 7, p. 56; 1877, Appendix 5, p. S.

51 On the Acadia Seminary, see *Memorials of Acadia College*, pp. 107-08; enrolment figures for the Wesleyan Academy in Charlottetown are found in *First Annual Report of the Educational Society of the Methodist Church of Canada* (Toronto, 1875), p. 10.

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The 1880s proved to be an expansionist decade for the ladies' academy, and for reasons that were linked in part to social and economic changes in the Maritime Provinces. By now, the days of shipbuilding, and of the large merchant fleets which had operated from Maritime ports in the middle decades of the century, were numbered. From 1879, however, with the adoption of the National Policy by the federal government, Maritime industries enjoyed the protection of a large tariff barrier against foreign imports, and benefited too from the favourable freight rate structure of the Intercolonial Railway. The prosperity thus attained by such centres as Moncton and Amherst was not evenly distributed throughout the region, and time would reveal that the industrialization of the 1880s and 1890s was not as securely based as it seemed at first. Yet there were enough prosperous Methodist merchants and industrialists to see Mount Allison through a brief but acute financial crisis in 1881, associated with the termination of grants to denominational institutions by the province of Nova Scotia. Thereafter a growing demand for higher education, along with the ability of more families than ever before to afford to educate their children, launched the college on a period of expansion that was symbolized by the adoption of the title "university" in 1886.⁵² The ladies' academy also shared in this growth: in 1886 the title of the institution was changed to "ladies' college", to complement the university's change of name, and throughout the decade enrolment grew: the student attendance of 174 in 1890-91 was more than double that of ten years before.⁵³

One result of growth, however, was to sharpen the already-existing tensions within the ladies' college over the primary purpose of the education it offered, and to bring out once again the conflict between academic and "ornamental" traditions. "The attendance during the past year of 140 students", declared the ladies' college catalogue for 1887-88, "a number not equalled in the previous history of the Institution, — many of whom came exclusively for Music and the Fine Arts — is evidence of the unrivalled excellence of these departments". Commented a correspondent of the *Wesleyan* in 1889, "it doesn't seem to make any difference what other seminaries or colleges arise, lady students continue to flock to Mt. Allison".⁵⁴ Not all were convinced that this kind of expansion was

52 On the effects of the National Policy on Maritime industry, see T.W. Acheson, "The National Policy and the Industrialization of the Maritimes, 1880-1910", *Acadiensis*, I, 2 (Spring 1972), pp. 3-12. See also Acheson, "The Maritimes and 'Empire Canada'", in David Jay Bercuson, ed., *Canada and the Burden of Unity* (Toronto, 1977), pp. 87-114; Ernest R. Forbes, "Misguided Symmetry: The Destruction of Regional Transportation Policy for the Maritimes," *ibid.*, pp. 60-86; and S.A. Saunders, *The Economic History of the Maritime Provinces: A Study Prepared for the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations* (Ottawa, 1939), pp. 1-22. The effects of the expansionist period on the Mount Allison College, as distinct from the ladies' academy, are sketched in John G. Reid, "Mount Allison College: The Reluctant University", *Acadiensis*, X, 1 (Autumn 1980), pp. 43-6.

53 See Table II.

54 Ladies' College, *Catalogue, 1887-88; The Wesleyan*, 24 January 1889.

Table II: Enrolment at Mount Allison Institutions,
Selected Years, 1870-1911

	1870-71	1880-81	1890-91	1900-01	1910-11
College/University ¹	17	25	62	73	155
Theology	7	10	17	18	43
Post-Graduate	-	2	2	3	2
Ladies' Academy/College	78	76	174	168	303
Male Academy and Commercial College	78	66	73	103	154
Special Students and Others	10	2	13	12	21
Total	190	181	341	377	678

Source: Mount Allison, *Catalogues and Calendars, 1870-1911*.

¹ This category comprises only those enrolled in the regular undergraduate degree courses. 'Special Students', who would be enrolled to take only a few university-level courses, are not included; nor are theological students, unless also registered in Arts.

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desirable. Thomas Hart, for example, Methodist minister in Berwick, Nova Scotia, wrote to B.C. Borden, also a minister, and principal of the ladies' college since 1885, to express concern that the daughter of a family on his circuit had "in some way formed the opinion that some of the Lady Students care more for a little finish than for a good Education".⁵⁵ Such a perception certainly contradicted the stated intentions of the institution, for each year the catalogue carried the statement that "the ornamental branches . . . [are] regarded only as the accessories and embellishments of learning — not its substitute . . .".⁵⁶ A related perception was that the institution was catering more and more to the rich. The suspicion that the traditional clientele was being replaced by students from wealthier families was given public voice during the summer of 1884 by a correspondent of the *Wesleyan* using the pseudonym "A Lover of Mount Allison". While praising Mount Allison's achievements, the letter complained that the dresses worn by the ladies' academy students at the recent closing exercises had been too elaborate. "Apart from the love of display engendered", it continued, "we object on account of the heavy expense to parents. If allowed to continue it must end in excluding from the academy all but the daughters of the richest".⁵⁷ The same concern was raised in a different context two years later by E.E. Rice of Bear River, Nova Scotia, in a letter to Borden. He was debating, he wrote, whether to send his daughter back for another year at Mount Allison, as he had heard that she would have a new room-mate, and feared that she might have a similar experience to that of his son at Acadia, who had been led astray by the bad company he had fallen in with there. "I expected Sackville was stricter in carrying out disciplin [sic] but have great fears in regard to it as there is to many rich folks children goes and they must have their way as at home or leave and the School cannot spare them".⁵⁸

Rice was apparently satisfied by Borden's reply, for his daughter was once again registered in the year 1886-87; but he had raised an important question. If the ladies' college were to be, or even to seem to be, an institution that was inaccessible to the ordinary Methodist people of the region, or one where their children would be alienated from them, great damage would be done to the standing of Mount Allison in its constituency. Yet as Rice implied, there could be no question of discouraging wealthy families from enrolling their daughters, without destroying the competitive position of Mount Allison in regard to other institutions in the region. Despite repeated admonitions in the ladies' college catalogue that "it is especially desired that the dress of students shall be simple

55 Thomas D. Hart to B.C. Borden, 14 January 1887, Borden Papers, 7508, 1886-1910, p. 15, MAA.

56 Ladies' College, *Catalogue*, 1886-87.

57 *The Wesleyan*, 13 June 1884. An editorial note added that comments in the same vein had been made to the editor by others.

58 E.E. Rice to B.C. Borden, 28 July 1886, Borden Papers, 7508, 1886-1910, p. 19, MAA.

and inexpensive", the matter of dress continued to arouse controversy.⁵⁹ In June 1895, the local *Chignecto Post* reported comments made by a farmer attending a recent ladies' college reception that the extravagant dresses worn by the students were enough to exclude those from families of limited means. The *Post* commented, with due caution, that "it is just possible that those who govern Mount Allison might in this respect hold the reins a little tighter", and drew an immediate rejoinder from "a resident of Sackville", who denied that dress at Mount Allison was luxurious by comparison with standards elsewhere. A father "in moderate circumstances", the writer suggested, need have no hesitation on that ground in sending his daughter to Mount Allison, where scholarship and Christian morality were the prime concerns. Yet this letter also emphasized the social advantages of a Mount Allison education: "If we speak of the matter of style, let us not forget that the beautiful and suitable in dress have an educative effect and it is one of the acknowledged advantages of a ladies' school, that there girls from quiet country homes may gain a knowledge of what is customary in dress and deportment in the great world outside".⁶⁰

It remained true that many of the students of the ladies' college continued to come from rural homes. Analysis of the home backgrounds of those students who originated in the Maritime Provinces in census years between 1870 and 1911 — when Maritimers comprised more than 90 per cent of the overall student body — shows that although the proportion of those coming from small communities (unincorporated areas, or incorporated places with a population of 1,000 or less) declined significantly during the period, there were still 32.8 per cent of such students in the 1910-11 year. With 37.8 per cent coming from Sackville in that year, and 5.0 per cent from other small towns with a population within the 1001-2500 range, the ladies' college continued to cater for a largely rural and small-town clientele.⁶¹ How far the institution was maintaining its aspiration of openness to those "in moderate circumstances" is more difficult to gauge, owing to the lack of available data for most of the period. For the six consecutive academic years beginning in 1903, however, a college register has survived which includes the fathers' names of all students listed. By use of provincial directories, occupations can be identified and an indication obtained of the social background of the students. Of the 414 students whose background was identified, 109 were the daughters of retail or wholesale merchants, the majority

59 Ladies' College, *Catalogue*, 1886-87.

60 *Chignecto Post*, 27 June, 11 July 1895. The writer of the letter was identified by R.C. Archibald, a teacher of mathematics at the ladies college at this time, as Nellie Greenwood Andrews, the first woman graduate of Victoria University and now the wife of a Mount Allison college professor; see Archibald Papers, 5501/13/2, p. 7, MAA.

61 Mount Allison, *Catalogues and Calendars*, 1870-1911; Canada, *Census of Canada*, 1931, Vol. 2, Table 8, pp. 8-14. For background analysis of population movements affecting the Maritimes during this period, see Alan A. Brookes, "Out-Migration from the Maritime Provinces, 1860-1900: Some Preliminary Considerations," *Acadiensis*, V, 2 (Spring 1976), pp. 26-55.

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of whom were rural or small-town (population 2500 or less) general or provision merchants: 58 fell into that sub-category.⁶² Another 70 were farmers' daughters, while the next-largest group included the 63 who were daughters of industrial and commercial proprietors and managers. Forty of the students were daughters of clergymen, while other substantial minorities included daughters of non-manual workers such as railway clerks and office employees (30) and of manual workers such as fishermen, miners, carpenters, and railway running crew (37). The professions, including doctors, lawyers, teachers, and others, were represented by the fathers of 28 students, while government officials, sea captains, and commercial travellers comprised lesser numbers. The clientele of the ladies' college thus was not restricted to any one group within regional society, although there was a bias towards the daughters of retail and wholesale merchants and, to a lesser extent, of farmers and of those participating as proprietors and managers in the industrial and commercial economy of the region.

To some extent, therefore, the ladies' college could be defended convincingly against the allegation that it was becoming a finishing school for the children of wealthy families. Yet the perception of it as such was not easy to combat. As numbers had risen between 1880 and 1911, so too had the proportion of students from towns and cities with populations in excess of 2,500: from 14 in 1880-81 (18.7 per cent of the Maritime students) to 64 in 1910-11 (24.4 per cent). Urban students were not necessarily wealthy students, but of those social groups represented in the years 1903-09, 21 of the 28 students whose fathers' occupations were classed as "professional" were from towns and cities with populations of more than 2,500, as were 39 of the 63 industrial and commercial proprietors and managers.⁶³ An anonymous correspondent of the *Wesleyan* described his visit to a ladies' college reception in 1894 by observing with approval that "it was evident at a glance that the Sackville Institutions must have the patronage of the first families of the provinces"; his comment would be mirrored by that of the disgruntled farmer who felt a year later that this was not a matter for congratulation.⁶⁴ Principal Borden, in his report at the college graduation exer-

62 See Table III. The sub-category of rural or small-town general or provisions merchants is obtained by cross-referencing places of origin with Canada, *Census of Canada, 1931*, Vol. 2, Table 8, pp. 8-14. Some general cautions are in order regarding the use of Table III. Substantial numbers of students could not be included for reasons discussed in the notes to the table, and the results are subject to error for this reason. Also, the classification of occupations is subject to the precision or imprecision of the directory entry for each father of a student. The category of "farmer", for example, could include a variety of circumstances ranging from large landowner to smallholder; also, the category of "industrial and commercial proprietors and managers" cannot always be sharply distinguished in directory entries from that of "retail and wholesale merchants". For these reasons, the data in Table III should be regarded as comprising an indication of social background rather than a precise portrayal.

63 See Table III; also Mount Allison *Calendars and Catalogues, 1880-1911*; and Canada, *Census of Canada, 1931*, Vol. 2, Table 8, pp. 8-14.

64 *The Wesleyan*, 8 February 1894; *Chignecto Post*, 27 June 1895.

Table III: Occupations of the Fathers of Maritime Provinces Female Students at Mount Allison Ladies' College and University, 1903-1909

	University students	Ladies' College' students	Total	University graduates, 1904-12	Ladies' College' graduates, 1904-10
Professional	6	28	34	6	6
Clergy	15	40	55	11	11
Government officials	2	15	17	2	4
Industrial & commercial proprietors & managers	6	63	69	3	17
General merchants & provision merchants	3	74	77	2	6
Other retail & wholesale merchants	6	35	41	5	5
Commercial travellers/salesmen	2	10	12	-	5
Sea captains	-	12	12	-	3
Farmers	12	70	82	10	11
Non-manual workers	1	30	31	-	4
Manual workers	-	37	37	-	4
Total	53	414	467	39	76
Not included: non-Maritime father deceased cannot identify³ no data¹	9	76	85	6	11
	8	52	60	5	8
	4	56	60	4	13
	15	249	264	11	9

Source: Ladies' College Register, 1903-09, MAA; *McAlpine's Nova Scotia, Magdalen Islands, and St. Pierre Directory, With a Business Directory of Newfoundland, 1902* (Halifax, n.d.); *McAlpine's Nova Scotia Directory, 1907-08* (Halifax, n.d.); *McAlpine's New Brunswick Directory for 1903* (Saint John, n.d.); *McAlpine's Prince Edward Island Directory, 1900* (Saint John, 1899).

1 Included in this category are those ladies' college students who did not attend the university as undergraduates; those ladies' college students who were also undergraduates are classified as university students.
 2 Not included in this category are the eight students who graduated from both university and ladies' college.
 3 Those in the "cannot identify" category are the students included in the college register whose fathers could not be traced in directories; those listed as "no data" are those who were not included in the register even though their names appeared in the annual student lists in the college catalogue. It is likely that those in this latter category were students whose connection with the college was tenuous, such as students attending for weekly music lessons only, but this cannot be verified conclusively from existing data.

cises of May 1895, recalled that, over a period of years, the ladies' college had surrendered the lower grades of education almost entirely to the public schools: "while we are prepared to take pupils in all grades", he went on, "this college is especially strong (I will not say as a 'finishing school' as I do not like the expression) but as a school where advanced pupils in literary courses, as well as in music and the fine arts, may enjoy exceptional advantages".⁶⁵ That he should have felt the need to go out of his way publicly to express his disapproval of the term "finishing school" indicated that the term was being used more often than he liked.

Along with the unwelcome perception that the ladies' college had responded to social change by serving a wealthier clientele and giving more attention to the "ornamental" aspects of education, the academic quality of the institution was also under threat, for serious doubts could be raised as to whether it was meeting the real needs of women in the late 19th century. The "Ladies' College Notes" in the *Argosy* in May 1894 declared that "politically, intellectually, socially, the position of women today is a commanding one", and that "'Home is Woman's Sphere' is a wrong principle if it must shut her out from all other avenues of usefulness".⁶⁶ The small numbers of women who in fact broke through the barriers of the more prestigious male-dominated professions would later show the writer's comments to have been over-optimistic. Yet the ladies' college, at the close of the 1880s, could look back on a decade when a number of M.L.A. and music graduates had found career opportunities. Of the 70 graduates of the period 1881-90, seven had become teachers: four at the ladies' college itself, two as private teachers of music, and one as musical director at a seminary in Massachusetts. Three had become medical doctors, after further study in the United States; one of the three, Jane Heartz, subsequently moved to Halifax to take over the practice of Maria Angwin, a ladies' college graduate of 1869 who had been the first such graduate to take a medical degree.⁶⁷ A further five graduates had become missionaries, and one had become a nurse. Thus, although there was still a substantial majority of those who did not enter the work force, the ladies' college in the 1880s was providing training for a significant number who wished to enter professions.⁶⁸ The question was, however, whether the ladies' college could continue to function in this way during the 1890s, as women of

65 *Daily Times* (Moncton), 28 May 1895.

66 *The Argosy* (May 1894), pp. 9-10.

67 See Table I; also the details in [Raymond C. Archibald], "Our Graduates, 1854-1904", *Allisonia*, II (1904-05), pp. 139-54. According to Archibald, Maria Angwin had been the first woman doctor to practise in Halifax.

68 For discussion of the effects of industrialization in altering the career patterns of women, and of the entry of women into certain specific professions, see Linda Kealey, "Introduction", in Kealey, ed., *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s* (Toronto, 1979), pp. 1-14; Wendy Mitchinson, "Canadian Women and Church Missionary Societies in the Nineteenth Century", *Atlantis*, 2, Part 2 (Spring 1977), pp. 57-75; Prentice,

ability were increasingly attracted to the degree programmes of universities.

At Mount Allison, the attendance of women at the university increased markedly during the 1890s. Following the graduation of Grace Annie Lockhart in 1875, seven years had gone by before Harriet Starr Stewart became the next woman graduate, the second woman graduate in Canada and the first to receive the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Only three others emulated her accomplishment during the 1880s, and in 1884 J.R. Inch publicly expressed regret "that more young ladies had not availed themselves of the opportunities offered".⁶⁹ The 1890s, however, saw a different pattern, for during the period from 1891 to 1900 there were 31 women graduates, the majority of whom took up some form of employment after graduation. Although 15 of these were listed in a 1903 survey as having no formal employment, 11 had become teachers, one a missionary, one a doctor, one a stenographer, and one a governess. Three had entered journalism, although by 1903 only one was active in that field. In other words, more than half of the women graduates had attained at least for the time being a position of independence in society based upon the education they had received at Mount Allison.⁷⁰ Furthermore, the proportion of women enrolled in degree programmes at Mount Allison was still well in advance of the average at Canadian universities, and was growing apace. In the 1900-01 year, the university women at Mount Allison numbered 11 out of a total enrolment of 73: 16.4 per cent, compared with a national proportion of 11 per cent. By 1910-11, there were 41 university women at Mount Allison, well over one-quarter of the total enrolment of 155.⁷¹ Like the students of the ladies' college, the university women came from families of varied background, though there were especially large contingents whose fathers were clergymen or farmers, and almost none from the homes of lower-paid manual or non-manual employees. While most of the students of the ladies' college would not receive (nor, presumably, seek)

"The Feminization of Teaching", pp. 49-65; Wayne Roberts, "'Rocking the Cradle for the World': The New Woman and Maternal Feminism, Toronto, 1877-1914", in Kealey, *A Not Unreasonable Claim*, esp. pp. 31-40; Veronica Strong-Boag, "Canada's Women Doctors: Feminism Constrained", in Kealey, *A Not Unreasonable Claim*, pp. 109-29.

69 *Chignecto Post*, 5 June 1884.

70 [Raymond C. Archibald], "A list of the names of those persons on whom degrees have been conferred by the University of Mount Allison College", 1 May 1903, Archibald Papers, 5501/14, MAA; *The Argosy*, March 1899, April, November 1901, January, February, March, May 1902. See also Roberta Frankfort, *Collegiate Women: Domesticity and Career in Turn-of-the-Century America* (New York, 1977), pp. 56, 60, 112, for data regarding career patterns of women graduates at certain institutions in the United States. Significant comparison with Mount Allison is hindered, however, not only by the differences in traditions of women's education between Canada and the U.S., but also by the small size of Mount Allison at this time and the consequently low number of graduates.

71 University of Mount Allison College, *Calendars*, 1901, 1911; see also Ramsay Cook and Wendy Mitchinson, eds. *The Proper Sphere: Women's Place in Canadian Society* (Toronto, 1976), p. 120.

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diplomas at the end of their studies, most of the university women could expect to graduate: of the 89 who attended the university between 1903 and 1909, 65 obtained degrees by 1912.⁷² Unlike their colleagues at certain other Canadian universities — notably McGill and the University of Toronto — the university women were not faced with stern battles over the merits of coeducation.⁷³ At Mount Allison, that issue had been settled decisively in 1872. Every year, by the early 20th century, the university calendar remarked proudly that women received their education at Mount Allison on a basis of “perfect equality with men”. Perfection, in reality, was too high a claim, for no women had yet enrolled in engineering, nor in the regular programmes in theology. Yet in the arts and science programmes, women undoubtedly comprised a substantial and growing proportion of the student population.⁷⁴

Given the increased presence of women at the university, what was the future for the ladies’ college, if not to serve only as an outpost of the “ornamental” tradition? The academic character of the ladies’ college was powerfully defended during the late 19th century not only by Borden as principal, but also by the vice-principal, Mary Mellish Archibald. How far they could hope to be successful was always a matter for doubt, but their efforts nonetheless created new opportunities in several fields for the women students of the region. When Borden had been appointed principal in 1885, he had been selected from among seven male nominees. The notion of a woman principal had not yet been seriously considered, although Mary Electa Adams and Louisa Allison had both exercised considerable influence despite being nominally subject to higher (male) authority. During the principalships of Inch and his immediate successor David Kennedy, the position of chief preceptress had been held by a series of younger teachers for periods of only a year or two, and none had attained the stature of either Adams or Allison. In 1885, however, the situation changed. Among the teachers at the ladies’ academy during Inch’s regime, Mary Mellish had taught mathematics and natural science between 1869 and 1873, and had been chief preceptress during the last two of those years. In 1873 she had left to be married, but returned in 1885 after the death of her husband, to become once again chief preceptress. Just a year older than Borden, Mary Mellish Archibald had both the experience and the determination to put her imprint upon the ladies’ college, and her successful partnership with Borden lasted until her early death of pneumonia in 1901.⁷⁵ She was succeeded by Emma Baker, an experienced administrator of women’s colleges in Ontario and Pennsylvania, who had

72 See Table III.

73 See Gillett, *We Walked Very Warily*, ch. iv; and Roberts, “New Woman and Maternal Feminism”, p. 32.

74 University of Mount Allison College, *Calendar*, 1910-11. The *Calendar* was correct in a technical sense, however, in that there was no formal barrier to the enrolment of women in any degree programme. A few women did study as “special students” in theology, in preparation for missionary work.

75 See Ladies’ Academy, *Catalogues*, 1869-73; Archibald, *Historical Notes*, pp. 9-10. Mary Mellish Archibald’s title was changed from “chief preceptress” to “vice-principal” in 1897.

attained the distinction in 1903 of receiving the first Ph.D. degree in philosophy granted by the University of Toronto, and one of the first two doctoral degrees in any discipline granted by that university to women. Baker's graduation brought to two the number of ladies' college faculty members who held the Ph.D. degree, at a time when the university, by comparison, had none.⁷⁶ That a candidate as strong as Baker should become vice-principal showed clearly that after Mary Mellish Archibald there could be no question of a return to the previous custom of relying upon an inexperienced teacher as the chief female administrative officer of the ladies' college.

The strategy adopted by Borden and Archibald in their efforts to preserve the academic quality of the ladies' college was a simple one, involving the frank recognition that many students of the institution attended not in order to study the literary and scientific disciplines that were also taught at the university, but to study music and fine arts. This did not imply, however, that these must necessarily be taught as purely ornamental subjects. On the contrary, if the high intellectual standards of the literary departments (the primary, matriculation, and M.L.A. courses) could be matched by the highest of artistic standards in the other departments, then the entire institution would be strengthened. Accordingly the late 1880s and the 1890s saw a series of measures directed at the development of systematic and demanding courses of study in what had hitherto been regarded as the "ornamental branches". In the fall of 1887, a new four-year diploma course was introduced which provided for the first time a coherent and graduated programme of art study, with the final two years devoted largely to oil painting.⁷⁷ Five years later negotiations began for the acquisition by the ladies' college of the extensive teaching collection which had been built up in Saint John by the Owens Art Gallery, and in particular by its curator John Hammond. When the Owens collection was transferred to Mount Allison in 1893 (and accommodated two years later in a new gallery building) Hammond became the first professor of fine arts since the departure of John Warren Gray some 20 years before. Hammond became a full member of the Royal Canadian Academy in the same year, and it was by virtue of acquiring the services of an artist of his quality, even more than by securing the Owens collection, that Mount Allison established itself as an important regional and national centre of the fine arts.⁷⁸

Parallel developments were also taking place in the field of music with the construction of a new conservatory, opened in 1891. Initiated in a proposal made by Archibald in 1888 to the alumnae society of the ladies' college, which

76 *Allisonia* (November 1903), pp. 3-4, May 1905, p. 183. The other holder of the Ph.D. degree on the ladies' college faculty was R.C. Archibald, son of Mary Mellish Archibald, who taught mathematics and music.

77 Ladies' College, *Catalogue*, 1886-87.

78 See J. Russell Harper, *Painting in Canada: A History* (2nd ed.; Toronto, 1977), pp. 198, 226-8.

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undertook to raise half of the cost of construction, the new building was intended "to make it unnecessary for persons wishing to obtain a thorough and complete musical education, or to prepare themselves to teach music, to go outside of the Maritime Provinces".⁷⁹ The curriculum was strengthened not only by the addition to the existing diploma course in piano of equivalent courses in violin, pipe organ, and vocal culture, but also by the requirement that all students should study musical history and theory.⁸⁰ As the 1890s went on, increasing stress was placed upon theoretical work. Writing in the *Argosy* in 1897, music professor John J. Wootton argued strongly that the prejudice that music was of no intellectual value was held by all too many individuals who "musically considered, cannot tell a harp from a handsaw".⁸¹ For Wootton, music was a demanding discipline and an important professional occupation, and this view was reflected in the diploma courses of the conservatory, which led either to a "teacher's diploma" or an "artist's diploma". "The performer who does not understand these sciences", admonished the college catalogue with reference to the study of harmony and theory, "is much like a person reciting a poem in a foreign language, while not understanding a word of what he is speaking".⁸² While some students continued to attend the Mount Allison ladies' college to study music and fine arts as "ornamental" subjects, the reforms of the late 1880s and early 1890s ensured that every student had the opportunity to study these subjects in a more systematic way.

Also implied by these reforms, and particularly by the introduction of the teacher's diploma in music, was the recognition that the ladies' college must also cater directly for women who wished to be trained for a professional career. Another development in that direction was the introduction in the 1889-90 year of "courses in shorthand and typing . . . designed to meet the needs of those who wish to fit themselves for employment in business offices".⁸³ Although overshadowed by the more extensive commercial training offered to both male and female students by the male academy, this programme continued in the ladies' college until 1905. Meanwhile, domestic science had been introduced as a field of study in 1904. The inauguration of a programme of "domestic chemistry" had been proposed in 1891 by W.W. Andrews, the professor of science at the university.⁸⁴ The notion was enthusiastically supported by the alumnae society,

79 Ladies' College, *Catalogue*, 1890-91. See also Minutes of Alumnae Society, 27 May 1888, MAA.

80 Ladies' College, *Catalogue*, 1890-91.

81 *The Argosy* (April 1897), pp. 3-5.

82 Ladies' College, *Catalogue*, 1890-91. Some 17 years earlier, the anonymous author of a series of "Confidences" of "A Girl of the Period", published in the *Canadian Monthly*, had complained of her feelings of being "utterly helpless and dependent"; as a pianist, she went on, "I am a brilliant success, and yet a humbug as regards the science of music". Quoted in Cook and Mitchinson, *The Proper Sphere*, p. 65.

83 Ladies' College, *Catalogue*, 1888-89.

84 *The Wesleyan*, 7 May 1891; see also Gillett, *We Walked Very Warily*, p. 347.

on a resolution proposed by Mary Mellish Archibald, but financial constraints prevented its implementation until 1904, when Andrews's related proposal for a school of engineering at the university was also put into effect.⁸⁵ By that time, Mount Allison was following other institutions in introducing instruction in household science, and financial assistance obtained from Lillian Massey-Treble, a wealthy member of the National Council of Women of Canada — ensured that the Mount Allison school would have close links with the Toronto school of household science that already bore her name.⁸⁶ The Massey-Treble school at Mount Allison opened in the spring of 1904 with the expectation, expressed by the local *Tribune* that “girls will go out from this school fully equipped to grapple with domestic difficulties and as veritable household angels, to comfort and bless”. More prosaic, but just as welcome, was the verdict of the New Brunswick department of education: J.R. Inch, who had been provincial superintendent of education since resigning as president of the university in 1891, informed Borden that the ladies' college diploma would henceforth be accepted as a sufficient qualification in domestic science for teachers in the public schools.⁸⁷ That the schoolteacher was indeed a more typical product of the Massey-Treble school than the “household angel” is suggested by consideration of the later careers of the early graduates. Despite incomplete data — information for this period must be gleaned from the alumnae columns of the ladies' college magazine, *Allisonia* — 14 of the 25 household science graduates of the years from 1904 to 1910 are known to have taken employment after graduation: six taught in the schools of New Brunswick and six at schools in other provinces or in the United States, while one returned to teach at the ladies' college and one became a dietician in New Jersey.⁸⁸

Through new curriculum developments, therefore, the ladies' college had been equipped to serve new demands and to offer new career opportunities considered appropriate for women students. Yet by the beginning of the second decade of the 20th century, a new principal of the ladies' college, G.M. Campbell, appointed in 1911, seemed ready to accept a more limited role for the ladies' college. “Women for Homes”, declared Campbell at the year-end ceremonies

85 Minutes of Alumnae Society, 1 June 1891, MAA.

86 *Allisonia* (January 1904), pp. 34-6; see also Roberts, “New Woman and Maternal Feminism”, p. 22.

87 *The Tribune* (Sackville), 19 May 1904; p. 50, Inch to Borden, 10 May 1904, Archibald Papers, 5501/13/9, p. 50, MAA.

88 *Allisonia*, Vols. 3-10 (1905-13); for graduation lists, see Ladies' College, *Catalogue*, 1910-11. The career patterns of graduates of other diploma programmes are more difficult to assess. Graduates in oratory, literature, and art were fewer in numbers (19, 13, and 9 respectively) and most were not mentioned in the *Allisonia* columns. Of the 68 music graduates of the academic years from 1904 to 1910, 35 are known to have taught, but in the majority of cases it is unclear whether this was an occupation from which they derived a livelihood, or whether they only took a few pupils on a limited and perhaps temporary basis.

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of 1912, "is the consistent and the peculiar motto of Mount Allison . . ." ⁸⁹ Campbell's assertion represented an apparent departure from the principles of his predecessors in office, but it conveyed a certain realism nonetheless. First of all, the large majority of those who enrolled at the ladies' college were not availing themselves of the diploma programmes offered: of the 847 women who attended the institution between 1903 and 1909, only 117 (or 13.8 per cent) would obtain a diploma by 1910. ⁹⁰ Even those who did pursue a full course to graduation did not necessarily have the intention of subsequently taking employment; certainly the majority of those graduating between 1901 and 1904 are not known to have done so. Of those who did take employment, moreover, the great majority did so in fields, such as teaching and nursing, which had come to be part of the accepted "woman's sphere", appropriate for the maternal or nurturing qualities of women. Thus, in this sense the initiatives launched by the ladies' college had had limited results. ⁹¹ Furthermore, there were signs that the new departments so carefully developed at the ladies' college during the late 19th and early 20th centuries might soon be absorbed by the university. The introduction of a bachelor of music degree programme in 1912 was one indication of this possibility. ⁹² Just as the opening of university degree courses to women in 1872 had been a tribute to the academic standing of the ladies' college, but had also raised serious questions as to the institution's future clientele, so the further encroachment of the university upon ladies' college programmes might again raise such doubts. If the ladies' college were, as Campbell's comment implied, to be an institution avowedly offering instruction in the "ornamental" tradition, this goal might well seem dangerously limited if the economic health of the Maritime Provinces were ever to decline to the point where enrolment was affected. Already by the eve of the First World War the signs of such a decline were beginning to appear. ⁹³

By 1914, therefore, the Mount Allison ladies' college faced a future that was less assured than could be apparent from the institution's customary large enrolments. Over its 60-year history, however, the institution had contributed significantly to the development of educational opportunities for women. The insistence of Mary Electa Adams in 1854 that academic disciplines should take priority over "the ornamental branches" in the curriculum of the ladies'

89 *The Tribune*, 30 May 1912.

90 See Table III.

91 See Table I. See also Conway, "Perspectives on the History of Women's Education", pp. 8-9; Kealey, "Introduction", pp. 7-8; Roberts, "New Woman and Maternal Feminism", pp. 29-31; Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres*, pp. 48-50.

92 University of Mount Allison College, *Calendar*, 1912.

93 See Acheson, "The Maritimes and 'Empire Canada'", p. 95; also Ernest R. Forbes, *The Maritime Rights Movement, 1919-1927: A Study in Canadian Regionalism* (Montreal, 1979), pp. 17-22.

academy was fully in accordance with the principles already established at the male academy. Yet, since limiting definitions of the appropriate social role of women were so deeply entrenched in society at large, that early decision involved Mount Allison in debate over the purposes of women's education that ultimately had significance far beyond the confines of the institution. A direct result of the academic emphasis at the ladies' college was the opening of university degree programmes to women in 1872, a decision unprecedented in Canada. With the beginning of co-education at the university level, however, came new difficulties for the ladies' college, intensified by the social and economic changes which created an increased demand for a "finishing school" education for the daughters of well-to-do families, while at the same time opening up careers in certain professions to women who would now require systematic instruction as a preparation for taking employment. Survival for the ladies' college required that an attempt be made to meet both of these demands, and the curriculum innovations in such fields as music, fine arts, and household science represented efforts to accomplish this task. These new developments, together with the increasing enrolment of women in the degree programmes of the university, prompted J.R. Inch to declare in 1904 that Mount Allison provided "courses to meet the demands of the most exacting advocate of the educational needs of women".⁹⁴ Women's needs would be redefined by succeeding generations, and even by 1914 there were signs that Mount Allison's role in women's education would require redefinition also. Yet strenuous efforts had been made over a 60-year period to resolve the dilemmas that came from the tension between the academic and the "ornamental" traditions in women's education and from the deeper uncertainties as to the role in society of the educated woman. All ambiguities had not been resolved, but the result of the attempt had been significant change in the nature of the education available to women in the Maritime Provinces and in Canada as a whole.

⁹⁴ *Allisonia* (November 1904), p. 59.