



Helen D. Marston Beardsley, 1941. Courtesy of Wellesley College Archives.

REVELATIONS OF A REFORMER: HELEN D. MARSTON BEARDSLEY AND PROGRESSIVE SOCIAL ACTIVISM¹



By Kyle E. Ciani

In 1920, Helen Marston's article, "Mexican Traits," appeared in the August edition of *Survey* magazine, the premier journal of social work in America. Her article explained the work of Neighborhood House, San Diego's first settlement house, where as a resident worker Marston interacted with Mexican families on a daily basis. She had authored the article as an advocate for the Mexican families who utilized the social resources offered at Neighborhood House, hoping to counter Anglo "preconceptions" that found Mexicans to be lazy thieves and liars. Marston pointed out, "the women of our neighborhood carry the double burden of home with its many babies and of work in the fish canneries, whither they go, day or night, at the sound of the whistles." In regards to Mexican men and boys, she noted their work in the district's industries "when these plants are in operation, and some of them work for desperately long stretches. . . . The idling which we so resent is sometimes merely the result of spurts of night work, followed by a few hours of sleep in the adjacent lumber yards."²

Marston wrote from her position as resident worker and as a native San Diegan born to one of the city's most prestigious couples, George W. and Anna Gunn Marston. She admitted that "I grew up to think all Mexicans lazy people, with a care-free philosophy that put off doing everything until tomorrow." But her resident years in the San Diego settlement from 1917 through 1920 altered her perspective. That change began with her Wellesley College education from 1913 to 1917, described by one historian as transformative, turning a "shy [girl] with no experience at public speaking and little exposure to educated women reformers or to pacifism" into a devoted social activist.³

This essay offers an initial look at the effects of such a transforming bent by tracing Marston's early activist years and analyzing some of her first published thoughts on social reform. An outline of the social geography of San Diego in the 1910s offers a backdrop to understanding why Helen's actions fell within accepted boundaries of her cultural station. Growing poverty in San Diego served as the foundation for her concern and she involved herself in the projects initiated by the city's activist community. Reformers cringed at the rhetoric chanted by civic leaders who touted the city's healthy living and economy. Those in the know understood the reality of ill-constructed, poorly ventilated housing, growing tuberculosis cases, and steady unemployment among unskilled workers. Helen was at the center of knowledgeable reformers who advocated for the city's poor. Most importantly, she understood how to utilize her elite status—as a member of a trusted family among locals, as a graduate of a prestigious college, as a

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friend to the most dynamic reformers of the era—to secure funding and positive publicity for Neighborhood House.

Experience with reforms on the East Coast and in the Midwest prompted Helen to use journalism as a channel for change in San Diego. The *Survey* account signals a time when Marston moved beyond social welfare reform and into peace advocacy. It also represents her first foray into communications beyond the intimate circle of family and friends cushioning her beliefs. Correspondence between Marston and her parents, as well as to her classmates at Wellesley, indicate that even as a twenty-five-year-old woman and still during her thirties, she sought permission to strike out on her own.⁴ Yet during that time, this “shy” and “unassuming” woman chose a very public forum to contemplate the effects of reform. As the major mouthpiece of social action, the *Survey* drew an international audience of reformers throughout the country as the most influential and widely read professional journal of its time in the social welfare field.⁵ Her article was not the first piece on San Diego published in the *Survey* but only a few others appeared in the journal during the 1910s-1930s.⁶

While both local and national scholars have used George White Marston as a touchstone for explaining Progressive politics, his youngest child, Helen, may provide a more provocative account of the effects of reform on a family of privilege.⁷ In an oral history interview, San Diego peace activist Lucia Simmons made the point that Helen’s activism offers an important alternative to understanding life among the city’s elite. Simmons understood the Marston family home life to be the key, commenting that Helen “...grew up in not only an affluent home, but a very loving home. It was just ideal.”⁸ Her marriage in 1935 to American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) attorney John Beardsley secured her place as a liberal-minded woman, an unusual designation for a daughter of an elite businessman in San Diego. In fact, one newspaper’s wedding announcement revealed, “Mr. Beardsley and Miss Marston became acquainted through their mutual interest in liberal activities.”⁹ Helen’s “liberal” convictions, however, were firmly in place by the time she met Beardsley. While a student at Wellesley College, Helen followed the benevolent footsteps of her parents and immersed herself in the social welfare agendas so familiar to students of female activism in the Progressive Era.¹⁰

Wellesley brought Helen in contact with activists who enacted national reforms in compulsory education, labor and immigration law, social welfare, and established an international peace movement. Helen engaged in all of these activities, returning to her hometown eager to implement similar changes.¹¹ In fact, one could easily tire by reading her autobiographical sketch outlining her numerous commitments to social activism. She became a key figure in San Diego’s fledgling reform community as she helped launch programs at its first settlement house, Neighborhood House, organized in 1914. During her summer breaks from Wellesley she helped at the settlement, becoming familiar with the people who used its programs and the local reformers who worked to better serve their needs. Upon graduation she returned to San Diego and entered the settlement as a resident worker, leaving in fall 1920 to reside at the Chicago Commons settlement.

As with college, Marston was surrounded by activist women in Chicago, namely Jane Addams, who within the year recruited her to travel to Vienna and help with war refugees and the organization of a WILPF Congress. These international actions pressed her further into leadership roles with WILPF and tightened her friendships with both Addams and Balch.¹² WILPF work took up much of her time from 1921 to

1924; however, Helen continued to be involved with Neighborhood House, although not as a resident worker. In January 1924 Emily Greene Balch traveled to San Diego to recuperate from exhaustion. In spite of this convalescence, she gave several talks on peace organizing while in the city. Marston connected with Balch during that visit, even hosting one of the talks at her home. 1924 was a pivotal year for Marston in terms of her involvement with the Women's International League: she helped prepare for the International Congress held in Washington, D.C. and attended its WIL International Summer School in Chicago. San Diego and its Mexican barrio, however, continued to pull her home.¹³

Encouraged by Addams and Balch, Marston launched the San Diego WILPF branch in 1924, returning also to her work at Neighborhood House. She dedicated herself to the settlement for another five years, strengthening as well her connections to socialism. Indeed, her activism flowed well beyond the peace movement. In 1933 alone, Marston traveled to West Virginia to provide care for children in mining towns, helped organize Socialist leadership in her hometown, sat on the board of the Los Angeles chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and established an ACLU branch in San Diego.¹⁴ During the 1930s, her advocacy centered on disarmament, securing resources for the unemployed, and affirming civil liberties for those least represented by the courts. She gave birth to her son George in 1937 but still continued her volunteerism, focusing on refugee work during World War II and WILPF efforts into the 1960s.¹⁵ Helen involved herself in San Diego's movement to end the Viet Nam war, and was known to march for peace at the age of eighty-seven.¹⁶

Engagements by middle-class, college-educated women with a community's poor represent a side of Progressivism that scholars have long recognized as a vital component to the era, but one in which those interested in San Diego have not yet fully assessed. Few historians have attempted to retrace the paths taken by Progressive activists such as Helen D. Marston Beardsley and members of the reform community in which she associated, opting instead to narrate the machinations of male-dominated partisan politics.¹⁷ Yet through the lives of these social reformers we see the conflicting views facing Progressives seeking urban change as well as the complexity of their decisions to alter their worldviews.

As president of the settlement's board of directors in 1920, Marston wrote her first-person account for the *Survey* with advocacy in mind. The newly formed Community Welfare Council in San Diego included Neighborhood House among its twenty-three agencies cleared for funding eligibility, and Marston's article helped legitimate the local program.¹⁸ Her article gave readers a glimpse into life at a southwest settlement, and emphasized interactions with the predominantly Spanish-speaking clientele. Established in 1914 by members of the College Woman's Club¹⁹ (a predecessor to the American Association of University Women), Neighborhood House provided services typical of most settlements in the United States: pure milk, instruction in English, clean water for bathing, day care for the children of wage earners, and health screenings for infants and young children. Its location in the center of the tuna-canning district allowed convenience for cannery workers to take advantage of the settlement's day nursery, and it soon became a center of activity for Spanish-speaking families.

The Mexican client base provoked uneasiness among members of San Diego's Anglo community who voiced several concerns stemming from trans-border movements: the spreading invasion of disease, gambling and prostitution from Tijuana

and threats of violent action from Mexico's revolutionaries kept San Diegans wary of the need to police the border.²⁰ San Diego's labor organizers emphasized this disorder as a rallying cry for Mexican workers in the city to join their movement in solidarity against American capitalists who, they argued, encouraged vice and unfair labor practices in Tijuana. As reported by one historian of the San Diego Labor Council, in 1920 the group "sought and received the support of San Diego's Mexican community in its fight against drugs, liquor, and prostitution," and helped stage the celebrations of Mexico's Independence Day in San Diego's Balboa Park rather than in Tijuana.²¹

The presence of Mexican immigrants—especially ones who fit popular stereotypes of the poor, ignorant, unskilled peasant—sparked action throughout the southwest as a cornerstone of the Americanization movement. Led by Progressive reformers, many of them female settlement house workers, Americanization "advocated the creation of a homogenous national culture based on Anglo-American values," and found favor among California's reform community. Governor Hiram Johnson acted on this energy by creating in 1913 the California Immigration and Housing Commission (CIHC). Historian Gayle Gullett explained that, "to supporters of Americanization in California, Mexicans posed the most serious challenge to the state," but that educational programs offered through home teaching and in settlements could meet the challenge head on by teaching Anglo standards of food preparation, hygiene, and familial ethics to Mexicans families.²² Writing for the CIHC in 1915, home teacher Amanda Mathews Chase minced no words in her justification for why Californians benefited from Americanization programs: "Mexicans lack social mobility because they are shiftless and thriftless... These people are *not* a hopeless proposition. But they need education of a peculiar sort—education that shall be a disciplinary tonic—that shall give them standards—that amounts to evolution."²³

Gullett cited Helen Marston's *Survey* article and an equally provocative piece by another San Diego native, Edith Shatto King, as evidence of the intensity of the Americanization movement. Writing as the first head worker of Neighborhood House, King's *Survey* article appeared in 1917 at the height of angst in the city regarding border issues.²⁴ Their words, however, do not carry the zealous nativism shown by Amanda Mathews Chase. Rather, the messages penned by Marston and King seem to advocate for providing better health care and housing to immigrants because such provision represents a humane and just action. They emphasize how learning English can improve job opportunities for Mexican laborers, and in contrast to Chase, note an inherent loyalty and industry among Mexicans. King hoped to counter messages like Chase's explaining "The honesty and trust worthiness of the average working-class Mexican in my experience is based almost entirely on a feeling of personal loyalty rather than on any generally accepted American standard of right living. Such loyalty is perhaps the most hopeful groundwork for future character development in the eyes of their American neighbors. A small grocery man of my acquaintance informed me that he had never lost money when he gave credit to the Mexican working people in San Diego."²⁵ In describing the needs of children, King emphasized "I do not believe anyone on the border can guess what a generation of Mexican children might become were they properly taught not only English and the three Rs, but also skilled hand work, offering a real opportunity to earn a decent living."²⁶

The two reformers were clearly affected by their interactions with families they encountered in their settlement work. Edith Shatto King's account emphasized that American prejudices against Mexican families, especially toward Spanish-speaking

children attending the public schools, caused the greatest harm to Mexican people living in the United States. She chastised teachers who provided special classes for Norwegian immigrants who did not speak English but ignored Mexican children in the same situation. King would lead San Diegans to rethink how they provided resources to those most in need by guiding a study of the city's social needs and helping to establish Neighborhood House. Consequently, English instruction for people of all ages and literacy levels served as a centerpiece of the settlement's programs. Marston's memoir shows signs that Mexican clientele she met at Neighborhood House unconsciously pushed her to come to terms with the false foundations that supported ethnocentric ideology in the early twentieth century. She also struggled with convictions regarding gender norms that emphasized Mexican men as incapable of earning sufficient wages to support their families, thus forcing their wives and daughters to both earn wages and perform all domestic duties.

Both women came to terms with racist ideologies learned during their San Diego childhoods and adopted new ways of thinking about Mexicans. Their settlement house experiences introduced King and Marston to realities rather than perceptions, and in documenting their interactions with these "neighbors" they encouraged other Anglos living in San Diego to look beyond stereotypes.

SAN DIEGO THROUGH REFORMERS' EYES

The Marston name carries historical weight in San Diego. Led by its patriarch, George W., the Marston family contributed vision, energy, wealth and time to establishing San Diego by 1920 as a major player in the tourist and trade industries. Much has been written about George White Marston's philanthropic largesse and political connections. He was, after all, a two-time mayoral contender and driving force behind the Nolen Plan, the establishment of San Diego's YMCA, and the San Diego Historical Society (SDHS).²⁷ His wife, Anna Gunn Marston, led several charitable interests as well, including the city's leading benevolent society, the Woman's Home Association.²⁸ Together they raised five children in San Diego—one son and four daughters—who each carried on the charitable commitment to their hometown²⁹.

Indeed, the city owes its historical conscience to the Marston family. In 1907, George purchased the land on which the Junípero Serra Museum sits, securing a place for the development of San Diego's historical society. Like many families of distinction, the Marstons left behind in varying degrees snippets of their lives for history buffs and professionals alike to peruse. In 1956, Mary Gilman Marston completed a two-volume biography of her father to honor the legacy of his contributions to San Diego.³⁰ She and her siblings also donated papers from the much-beloved family business, Marston's Department Stores, to the SDHS and turned over the family home to the society, used now as a museum to highlight the beauty of Arts and Crafts furnishings and architect-



*Helen D. Marston, Wellesley, Class of 1916.
Courtesy of Wellesley College Archives.*

ture.³¹

Helen's experiences differ from her parents and siblings in that her volunteerism reached beyond the local community and into the international arena. By all accounts, Helen D. Marston Beardsley lived an austere life dedicated to ending armed conflict, providing equitable treatment of laborers, and ensuring the provision of adequate medical services and housing to impoverished families. She is not included in the extensive literature on Progressive-era female reformers, with the exception of an article by peace studies scholar Joan Jensen. Perhaps her private nature would not allow such a spotlight. Upon her death in 1982, an obituary described the eighty-nine-year-old Helen Marston Beardsley as "a self-effacing woman who gave few, and only brief interviews," but during her lifetime she stirred up enough political interest to find herself on Richard M. Nixon's "enemies list," a distinction she found amusing.³²

Born June 26, 1892, Helen attended the best schools San Diego could offer and never wanted for material goods.³³ She came of age during the height of Progressive debate in San Diego.³⁴ The city handed her father his first political defeat in 1913 when his controlled growth mayoral platform lost to one of development.³⁵ That same autumn, Helen headed east to enter Wellesley College in Massachusetts, a move that would dramatically influence the direction of Helen's adult life. Choosing a Wellesley education hardly represents a break from family tradition as she simply followed the path forged by her elder sisters who had all attended the prestigious school.³⁶ But for Helen, the experience catapulted her into Progressive reform.

At Wellesley, Helen connected with a network of professional women, such as economist and future Nobel Peace Laureate Emily Greene Balch, who guided her pacifist leanings into a firm belief.³⁷ Marston never had the opportunity to take class from Balch, but in Helen's memoirs she credited Balch with strengthening her commitment to disarmament.³⁸ Joining her parents on a European tour while it was under siege in 1914, she later recognized in her adult years that this trip would "confirm [her] absorption in problems of peacemaking."³⁹ Helen's views began appearing in letters to her parents, especially those to her father.⁴⁰ In a letter to him in February 1916, Helen argued that federal money should be directed toward "forming good relations with Japan, and in taking care of the women and children in factories and so forth, rather than arming to protect them against an army that we merely assume is coming."⁴¹ Her convictions to save federal funding for domestic programs rather than military expenditures would strengthen throughout her life.

While Helen studied in the East, reformers in San Diego engaged in actions that influenced pivotal change. Members of the College Woman's Club (CWC) had been concerned for several years over the focus on commercial development despite evidence of growing poverty among San Diegans.⁴² CWC members believed that city leaders had long ignored the needs of impoverished families, and proceeded to remedy the situation by using a common progressive tactic: launching a systematic survey of the city's social needs. The club voted to charge its Settlement Committee with "find[ing] a trained worker competent" to survey the city. Recommendations from Paul U. Kellogg, Survey Editor, and Shelby M. Harrison, head of the Department of Surveys and Exhibits for the Russell Sage Foundation, led the group to contract with experienced reformers Edith Shatto King (a San Diego native) and her husband, Frederick King.

The Kings had moved to San Diego in 1909 for Fred's tuberculosis. Another reformer and long-time friend, Mary Hill, persuaded the couple to help her organize

PATHFINDER SOCIAL SURVEY OF SAN DIEGO

Report of Limited Investigations of Social Conditions
in San Diego, California

UNDER DIRECTION OF THE COLLEGE WOMAN'S CLUB

INVESTIGATORS
EDITH SHATTO KING
FREDERICK A. KING

Investigations	Page
Public Health and Sanitation	5
Public Education	19
Recreation	24
Delinquency	28
Industrial Conditions—Foreign Population	31
Betterment Agencies	36
Civic Improvement	40
Taxation and Public Finance	42
List of Charitable and Semi-Charitable Agencies	45

The title page of Edith Shatto King and Frederick A. King's Pathfinder Survey of San Diego (1914). University of California, San Diego.

an Associated Charities. Even though he was sick at the time, Fred King accepted the challenge, and became the first secretary of the San Diego Associated Charities.⁴³ For Edith, the move to San Diego represented a return to her childhood home. One of her first assignments as a social worker came in 1907 when she worked on an investigation of women and child labor in the cotton mills of the South and New England.⁴⁴ She then assisted in collecting data for a national study of the living and working conditions of young department store clerks.⁴⁵ So in selecting the Kings, the CWC chose a highly professional and dedicated couple that had a long track record of social welfare experience.

The CWC membership helped gather evidence and arrange interviews with the social worker community, making it possible for the report research to be conducted within three weeks. Their findings, published in 1914 as *The Pathfinder Social Survey of San Diego*, documented the grimy side of San Diego life, and according to its authors represented the first document produced by the social work community in San

Diego.⁴⁶ The Kings' investigations fell into eight categories: public health and sanitation; public education; recreation; delinquency; industrial conditions—foreign population; betterment agencies; civic improvement; and taxation and public finance. Lack of any coordinated oversight in the city was a central theme that ran through the document; a secondary concern emphasized that some groups, like Mexican families, continued to be overlooked by existing agencies.⁴⁷

Through their research, the Kings found that housing conditions in San Diego did not mirror those of the urban squalor in eastern cities and factory towns; however, they urged civic leaders to pay closer attention to certain districts. Out of five hundred places inspected in 1912-13 by the Department of Public Health, officials ordered two hundred closed to residential living, with the following description typical of neighborhoods containing condemned dwellings:

There are distinctly slum conditions in San Diego in shacks along the waterfront and among the Mexicans, negroes and whites in the tenement houses and cottages of the district south of F Street, and west of Sixteenth Street to the waterfront. One instance was given of a tenement which housed twenty-three persons in four rooms...They were living in such places, not from choice, but from the fact that these places offered cheap rates...It is difficult for poor Mexicans to secure cheap rents in San Diego, consequently they crowd themselves and several families into some old house or unsanitary shack. Some of these latter are presented to the view of the tourist on arriving.⁴⁸

The Kings likely recognized that these kinds of descriptions would fuel the worries among civic leaders, especially those who promoted the community as a healthy alternative to industrial cities in the East and Midwest. Five years earlier in 1909, authorities had launched a clean-up campaign of the notorious "Stingaree District," located from the waterfront through the downtown. Infested with saloons, opium dens, and prostitute cribs, the Stingaree had been an open sore on an otherwise healthy looking city. In preparation for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition, leaders authorized Walter Bellon, the plumbing inspector for the City Health Department, to survey the district. He found dilapidated buildings with open privies, rat colonies, and standing sewage.⁴⁹ Unfortunately, the most destitute of San Diego's poor lived in these dwellings, and demolishing the dwellings only served to push these people onto the streets.

Despite these actions, little had changed by the time the Kings surveyed the area. Businessmen feared that too much talk of "unsanitary shacks" would no longer attract stable investors or health conscious and wealthy tourists. To be sure, by 1916, the Annual Report of the Department of Public Health admitted, "It is now a well established fact that San Diego offers little to the tubercular, in fact such cases frequently do poorly here."⁵⁰

High infant mortality rates also posed special concern for San Diego reformers. While in relation to that of other cities, mortality from childhood diseases remained low, it still posed a problem, especially among families segregated from finding adequate medical attention. This was not a new revelation to reformers. In a report to the Associated Charities on November 18, 1910, City Physician Francis Mead had concluded that infant mortality among "Americans" was low, but "high among Mexicans who are hopelessly ignorant."⁵¹ Mead's report was silent on the status of other minority groups left to fend for themselves such as the Chinese, African

American and Indian populations, but it signaled to the Charities that infant mortality was indeed a serious problem among the city's working poor. The CWC and the religious community, especially Catholic parishes, took interest in helping Mexican families with finding basic services to raise them from poverty; however, their efforts were often met with disdain by the majority of San Diego voters. *The Pathfinder* study was an attempt to counter these sentiments.

The Kings echoed Mead's conclusions, finding that out of 1,191 documented births in 1913, eighty-five babies died before reaching the age of one year. One hundred and thirty-five children under the age of five also died that year.⁵² The Kings explained: "This is perhaps not large compared with the infant death rate in eastern industrial cities, but it is far too large for a city whose natural advantages and size should make ideal conditions for babies." They made two suggestions for curbing infant mortality: first, that the city implement a visiting nurse program whose professionals would train mothers in the proper care of infants and solutions; and second, to establish a free day nursery "where working mothers can leave their babies in the care of trained nurses while away from home."⁵³

Immediately upon release of the survey, the CWC membership began implementing the programs suggested in the *Pathfinder*. The survey team had pinpointed the Logan Heights neighborhood as the community that would benefit most from social welfare programs, thus the CWC established a settlement house program in the area. In 1914, they opened Neighborhood House (NH), located on 14th Street near Market, just one block north of the San Diego Free Industrial School.⁵⁴ Edith Shatto King accepted the job as head resident, a position she would keep for only one year, resigning in December 1915 because of her husband's illness.⁵⁵

Like most other settlement houses across the country, programs at NH included a day nursery for the children whose parents worked in the nearby fish canneries; within two years, CWC members included a kindergarten as partial remedy for the "many neglected-looking children playing in the streets."⁵⁶ To deal with the concern over infant mortality among Mexican families, the group opened an infant welfare station at NH in 1916 and adopted the classic Progressive strategy of using visiting nurses to extend care to the neighborhood. Mary Hart Taylor, RN, a public health nurse in charge of the city's child hygiene division, supervised visiting nurses in providing medical examinations for babies, distributing pure milk to families, and teaching hygiene classes to mothers and daughters.⁵⁷

But the first few years of operation proved troubling for NH residents and their clients as prejudice and disease infested the community. Suspicious Anglos worried about the presence of so many families who did not speak English, especially in light of the ongoing revolution in Mexico. Some believed that certainly these families included a communist subversive. Members of the Advisory Council for San Diego's Associated Charities discussed these suspicions in their meetings, realizing the need for stepping up assistance to Mexican families. In March 1916, the Council noted, "The police have recently been arresting a number of Mexican men. Three of the families have had to come to us for assistance. The Advisory Committee felt that just as far as it was possible to do so, these families should be turned to the county for help."⁵⁸ Anglo San Diegans also worried about the dangers of sickness as measles and pneumonia leapt from the soldiers stationed at Camp Kearney and raged through the barrio. The influenza epidemic of 1917 hit the Mexican community particularly hard, but nervous Anglos saw only that these life-threatening illnesses would harm their families.⁵⁹

In an effort to prevent further outbreaks of measles, diphtheria and influenza, settlement residents took advantage of newly available federal grant money offered through the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917.⁶⁰ Neighborhood House personnel used Smith-Hughes funds for maternal education, arguing that the population they served consisted primarily of farm laboring families. Smith-Hughes granted states the funds to promote education in agricultural-related industries and among agricultural workers.⁶¹ As such, Mary Hart Taylor established in 1918 a Little Mothers Club to train young girls in the care of pre- and post-natal women and their babies. She also implemented a program to test Mexican children for “subnormal mental and physical development.”⁶²

Despite opportunities for federal funding, settlement house residents and volunteers knew that confronting prejudices toward the primarily Mexican population formed a key piece of their activism. Helen Marston and Edith Shatto King used the *Survey* to attract national attention and highlight the progress made through Neighborhood House. While they focused on describing the prejudices they witnessed within the San Diego community, their stories also reveal their personal struggles with overcoming long-held stereotypes of lazy, ignorant, and uncivilized immigrants.

A PUBLIC PERSONA AWAKENED

Like so many other college-educated women of the Progressive-era, Helen Marston’s college experience intensified her desire to reform the country.⁶³ Throughout her years at Wellesley, Marston worked intermittently at settlement houses—in Boston’s Denison House, Henry Street Settlement in New York’s Lower East Side, and at San Diego’s Neighborhood House during her summer breaks—but upon her graduation in 1917, Helen returned to San Diego and entered Neighborhood House as a full-time social worker and educator.⁶⁴

Progressive reformer Daisy Lee Worthington Worchester described Helen Marston as the leader of “a group of young college women” who recruited her in 1917 as the head worker for Neighborhood House. According to Worchester, after only three years in operation, the settlement needed “reviving,” having suffered from the “blight of war, [and] the disorganization of every form of social work which dealt with foreigners.” Worchester remembers her year in residence at Neighborhood House as one of “increasing horror” as the effects of measles, pneumonia, and influenza epidemics took their toll on area residents. Worchester blamed a “corrupt” Board of Supervisors for the lack of concern toward the needy and charged that they made “certain that every dollar which was spent would do a dollar’s worth of good for them and their political aspirations.”⁶⁵

As a middle-class Anglo, Marston had been raised believing Mexicans a “lazy people,” yet she admitted observing a very different persona among the families using NH programs.⁶⁶ Over cups of coffee with Mexican mothers and young daughters waiting their turn at the settlement’s Municipal Milk Station, Marston entered a world of female companionship very different than connections made in Wellesley dorm rooms. She developed a deep respect for these women who carried “the double burden” of cannery work and domestic responsibilities.

Settlement house workers were long familiar with cultural barriers between themselves and their largely immigrant neighbors. Marston’s memoir publicized that problem by underscoring an important realization: that the ethnocentrism informing her childhood could not be legitimated by her adult interactions with Mexican families. After working with youth at Neighborhood House, Marston decided that

Mexican girls worked harder than their brothers. Yet she also began to understand that her earlier perceptions of an innate laziness among Mexican males had little to do with initiative and everything to do with opportunity. She struggled with this realization, claiming, "the imputation of laziness to men and boys has more foundation," but also admitting that, "the issue is a harder one to decide."⁶⁷

Such a change in perspective did not come immediately, even to someone as devoted to social justice as Helen Marston. In the 1920 *Survey* article, Marston revealed her ethnocentric self by explaining that Mexican fathers needed more ambition to adequately support their families. She admitted, however, not knowing the Mexican father well, thereby opening the door to understanding how race, gender and ethnicity defined opportunity. Marston recognized the "distinct effort" made by some Mexican fathers to attend English classes offered at Neighborhood House but also admonished those fathers not in attendance for not trying hard enough to learn technical skills and English. She understood that the problem for Mexican fathers and their sons lay in their "lack of ideas rather than an unwillingness to work," yet she struggled with these realizations.⁶⁸

Marston was not alone in her revelations. Edith Shatto King preceded Marston in using the *Survey* to emphasize how her San Diego childhood had prejudiced her outlook of non-white families. Recalling that her father blamed Mexicans if anything was missing about the garden, King admitted to the *Survey* audience in 1917, "as a child, I was never taught to fear or hate the 'dirty' Mexicans, only to despise them." Mexican and Anglo children did not play together and it was that segregation that eventually shook King's thoughts on Mexicans. She recounted an incident from childhood in which a group of Mexican children had grown angry at not being able to play in the favorite spot of Anglo children. Their anger confused her as a child but set King on a path that eventually led her to work toward social justice through settlement work. The memory of Mexican children unjustly persecuted served as the foundation for King's implementing English classes at Neighborhood House so that the children could perform better in the public schools. She also organized dances and playgroups so that Mexican youngsters had their own safe places to play.⁶⁹

King's actions had little to do with Americanizing or control as some scholars of settlement workers have charged. Rather, she wanted to remedy some of the hurt her family and friends had inflicted on their Mexican neighbors in the past. Yet she, as well as Marston, fell to using stereotyped descriptions of families as a way to highlight likeable characteristics: festive costumes rather than threadbare rags, wafts of perfectly spiced foods rather than the meager rations put before children, and families gathered in gay circles of music rather than parents dead tired from long hours of physical labor. Marston and King used the notions of a primitive culture to shine a positive light on their Mexican clients. King romanticized the poverty of Mexican migrants, offering her readers a sanitized vision of crude conditions:

They lived, for the most part, in shacks decorated with long strings of red peppers drying in the sun...On moonlight nights one rarely passed by without hearing the soft tones of La Paloma from a guitar or a violin, and sometimes laughter and gay Spanish words, coming from the shadows under the pepper trees. Other families of Mexicans liked the open starlight better than shack or garden. They traveled in groups and camped about the country wherever work was to be found . . . Men, women and children worked together. And how vivid in my memory are the women at work in the peanut

fields, clad in gay colors of red and yellow with a black shawl . . . their fat brown babies close by, naked in the sun.⁷⁰

So much of California's history depended on those romantic notions. Civic leaders had long been using the romance of Hispanic culture to entice newcomers to their communities. The Panama-California Exposition exploited the beauty of a Spanish past,⁷¹ popular fiction embraced the stereotypes, and advertisers painted portraits of festive Latin scenes on fruit boxes to entice buyers.⁷²

The reality of life for those who came to Neighborhood House looking for purer milk and free health checks was far different. King failed to explain that Mexican migrants had no other choice than to keep their babies in the field while they labored from 4 a.m. to 6 p.m., often in the hot sun. Likewise, living under the open sky was their only option, not one of choice. Surely King as Neighborhood House's head worker understood these realities, so her decision to paint a romantic picture was one taken from an activist stance.

Marston also romanticized living conditions, writing that the Mexicans' "primitive ways of living help," their situation because "cracks let in air, sunshine is sought for its heat, and there is little furniture to make cleaning hard."⁷³ Her rationalization of their poverty is perhaps annoying to the modern reader, but no more so than Marston's rationale of an inherent dishonesty among Mexican people, especially men. She wrote, "Everyone knows that the Mexican does not have the same standards of honesty tha[n] the American," claiming nationalism and gender had much to do with the trait:

Certainly to tell the truth is not so important a thing among our neighbors as it is among us. In small matters it is more important to please. Yet I think one can generally get into a sincere relation with Mexicans just as one can with Americans. Our Mexican boys, while they lie freely to hide evil done, yet have, I think, been as frank with us, when questioned directly, as American boys have been. I have twice had boys say, on top of a lot of lies, "Well, I will tell you the truth," then tell it straight out. A woman, speaking of a nurse who had been kind to her, said, "I tell her no lies." Some of my friends, I think, would tell me no very big lies (emphasis Marston's).⁷⁴

What exactly can we make of this woman who turned her back on society's coming out parties but held tightly to ethnocentrism in the face of the grit and grime of poverty? After all, she authored the *Survey* article as a form of advocacy for the Neighborhood House community. The article shows her intellectual understanding of the intercultural environment in which she worked, and the power of communicating that setting in an international journal. In 1920, Marston enjoyed the professional connections of her Wellesley degree as well as her experience in eastern settlements; publishing in the *Survey* proved the strength of these connections. Her article illuminates the discrimination and prejudice endured by Mexicans in San Diego but it also reveals a good deal more about white reformers operating in the area. Marston allows the reader to see the personal tension experienced in her re-evaluation of a worldview that posited white superiority.

The Mexican mothers who visited Neighborhood House perhaps tried to assert their power over retaining their cultural ideals. However, poverty often served as a barrier to succeeding in their goals.⁷⁵ But Marston unwittingly reveals that, in some areas, she clung to irrational stereotypes of her Mexican "friends" and believed that women using the milk station needed to understand and adopt American ways in order to better preserve the health of their children. We see Marston's humanness in

this contradiction: reformers did not always set out to control those in their care but in their attempts to improve lives they, in fact, did issue a fair amount of control over people's lives.⁷⁶

It is these sentiments that are perhaps most troubling in studying Helen Marston Beardsley, for they detract from her efforts to elevate the standing of Mexicans in San Diego. Contradictory and conflicted in the way she expressed her respect for Mexicans, Marston struggled to rethink Anglo prejudices that characterized Mexicans as a dishonest and primitive people. Yet at the same time, she championed their rights to earn wages, live in clean affordable housing, and have access to medical care, proper nutrition, and day care for their children. In explaining why Mexicans lived primitively, Marston noted, "Is it not possible that these descendants of the Mayas are a backward people today, because for centuries they were deprived in their own country of the proper soil in which to develop?"⁷⁷ Land reform in Mexico had long been a plea of the masses, harkening back to Mexico's independence from Spain in 1821 and continuing into the twentieth century. Marston's comment was simply acknowledging her engagement with the larger social issues at work in the lives of Mexican immigrants, although few in San Diego's elite sympathized with the plight of landless peasants. In fact, many San Diegans became angered with the jump in immigration that resulted from the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution in 1910. Marston opened herself to criticism from her contemporaries by acknowledging that Mexicans had been unjustly denied property for this was truly libelous thinking for a "Southwestern Anglo" in 1920, and especially for a woman.

Her position as a college-educated "New Woman" did little to legitimate her ideas among the majority of conservative-minded Anglos in San Diego. The Social Gospel – the responsibility of the wealthy (and thus most capable) to provide for those less fortunate – had informed her parents' philanthropy and certainly played a role in forming Marston's ideas about her role in elevating the status of Mexican families.⁷⁸ The steadfast philanthropy of her parents nurtured her social activism from the time she was a young girl. Her Wellesley education and subsequent training as a settlement worker may have intensified her convictions to help the poor but George and Anna Gunn Marston gave her their blessing to throw herself into San Diego's underworld. In fact, when Neighborhood House fell short of operating funds in the summer of 1925, George Marston stepped in with a seven hundred dollar donation to get them through the year.⁷⁹ However, their beliefs also coincided with ideas popular among the majority of Southwestern Anglo citizens in the early twentieth century.⁸⁰ The Marstons understood that their whiteness and wealth gave them a responsibility to help those less fortunate, believing this assistance critical to the "civilization" of certain cultural groups in the city, primarily Mexican Americans and Chinese immigrants. Their daughter's attitudes and actions represent movement away from such engrained notions of racial superiority and toward an awakening of cultural sensitivity.

Can we say that Marston hid her ethnocentrism under the cloak of reform? Perhaps those living in the barrio would have rather dealt with blatant displays of racism stripped of any hidden messages. Or did her experiences with the poor transform her worldview? Certainly by the onslaught of the Great Depression she had awakened to the injustice served up by a white power structure that employed darker skin at a lower wage. As a member of the ACLU, in 1934 Marston made six trips to the Imperial Valley to support Latino migrant farm workers striking against the lettuce, melon, and pea farmers. These acts demonstrate Marston's final coming of age, since

the strike ultimately hurt her father's department store business when lettuce growers threatened a boycott of the Marston Department Stores.⁸¹

Marston's association with the ACLU introduced her to John Beardsley, a deputy city attorney in Los Angeles and key ACLU member. She married Beardsley in 1935 at the age of 43, later than most of her contemporaries but a characteristic common among early twentieth-century female peace activists.⁸² A widower, Beardsley found in Marston a partner as equally devoted to social justice as himself. Before moving to California in 1905, Beardsley had served as secretary of the Associated Charities in Des Moines, Iowa. Once in California his specialty in Constitutional law guided his efforts toward securing free speech. In 1923 he organized the Southern California Branch of the ACLU, and would later become a Superior Court Judge.⁸³

Marriage and subsequent motherhood fixed Helen's activism as quiet yet steady throughout the 1940s and '50s. Helen and John's son, George M. was born in 1937. The Beardsleys called Los Angeles their home, and Helen remained there even after John's death in 1946, eventually returning to San Diego in 1960. Anti-war protests during the late 1960s introduced a new generation to Helen D. Marston Beardsley, many of whom reminisce fondly about the group of gray-haired matronly protestors.⁸⁴ In her seventies during the Viet Nam protests, Helen had a long and steady commitment to disarmament, embracing the idea as a teen and deciding in college to dedicate her life to pacifism and socialism. Having experienced little of oppression in her own life, she ventured back to San Diego ready to enlighten the city's authority to the need for reform and to uplift the poor with access to vital services.

Years later in an interview regarding the history of San Diego's Neighborhood House, Marston "spoke with disdain" of those volunteers and staff dedicated to the Americanization of Mexicans, and vehemently separated herself from their company. Instead, Marston proudly recounted the time settlement workers cared for the Mexican twin babies brought to the settlement by their father after their mother had abandoned them. That racial ethnic integration and acceptance was the kind of incident Marston hoped her friends *and* critics would remember.⁸⁵

Reformers like Helen D. Marston Beardsley questioned their parent's ideologies in an era of incredible racism and class conflict. They made career choices that led them into impoverished neighborhoods as social workers and educators, and they communicated their changing perceptions about their place in American society through such public instruments as the *Survey*. For the historian, especially the historian of women in the United States, these female reformers have helped us better our own careers as we have used their stories to engage in debates about conflicted influences of reform during the Progressive Era. Helen D. Marston Beardsley embodied the characteristics of the New Woman—young, white, middle class, college-educated, enthusiastic, and energized by the possibilities of change—and she found like-minded women at college and upon her return to San Diego.

Marston took a different path than most women of her social position but she first had to come to terms with long-held stereotypes informing her attitudes about why certain men and women remained oppressed. Female reformers in San Diego, like Helen Marston Beardsley and Edith Shatto King, were not naïve to the conservative political and social agendas of their hometown that pushed aside welfare supports; rather they used their positions as members of the white establishment to voice their discomfort with the status quo at the national and international levels, making their revelations a very public affair.

NOTES



1. I first presented this research at the 2002 meeting of the Western Association of Women Historians at the Huntington Library, and thank Professor Kathleen A. Brown for her commentary and the Department of History at Illinois State University for providing travel funds. In developing the ideas into this essay, Jason Kaplan, graduate assistant extraordinaire, tracked down obscure citations and Douglas Cutter helped me clarify my thoughts. I discovered Helen's *Survey* article one dreary, winter morning in the library at Michigan State University when I longed for the ocean breezes of San Diego. Her activism awakened my ideas about Progressive reform, and charted my research path back to the beloved Casa del Prado in Balboa Park. There, friend and Marston expert Gregg R. Hennessey encouraged me to explore Helen's influence. He read very early versions of this essay, improving its analysis each time, for which I am very thankful.
2. Helen D. Marston, "Mexican Traits," *Survey* 44 (August 2, 1920), 562.
3. Joan M. Jensen, "Helen Marston and the California Peace Movement, 1915-1945," *California History* 67 (1988), 120. A little studied organization a decade ago, the WILPF has since enjoyed considerable attention from historians who have produced invigorating analyses. These include the works of Leila Rupp, *Worlds of Women: the Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Linda K. Schott, *Reconstructing Women's Thoughts: The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Before World War II* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1997); Carrie A. Foster, *The Women and the Warriors: the U.S. Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915-1946* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995); Harriet Hyman Alonso, *Peace as a Women's Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women's Rights* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993); Jo Vellacott, "A Place for Pacifism and Transnationalism in Feminist Theory: the Early Work of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom," *Women's History Review*, 2, no. 1 (1993): 23-56; and Anne Marie Pois, "The U.S. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and American Neutrality, 1935-1939," *Peace & Change* 14, no. 3 (1989): 263-284.
4. A bit of Helen Marston Beardsley's personal correspondence can be found in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Collection (SDWILPF) at the San Diego Historical Society Research Archives (SDHS) but I relied on the sources cited throughout Jensen's article to affirm this point.
5. To understand how the *Survey* promoted Progressive agendas see Daniel T. Rogers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); and Clarke A. Chambers, *Paul U. Kellogg and the Survey: Voice for Social Welfare and Social Justice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971).
6. An index search of volumes 30 (1911) through 47 (1922) of the *Survey* indicate only a handful of articles devoted to topics in San Diego, including the presence of Japanese in the city and the importance of building the structures in Balboa Park for the 1915 Exposition. Special thanks to Jason Kaplan for his research assistance in validating this point.
7. In addition to connections with San Diego's commercial development, the Marston name has surfaced in the intriguing tale of murder, prostitution, and social reform in antebellum New York City. See Patricia Cline Cohen, *The Murder of Helen Jewett: The Life and Death of a Prostitute in Nineteenth Century New York* (New York: Vintage, 1998) for how George White Marston's father, George P., became entwined in the infamous murder trial.
8. Page 8 of the Lucia Simmons Interview by Craig Carter, 5 December 1986, San Diego Historical Society Oral History Program, transcript in SDHS.
9. "Helen Marston to Wed John Beardsley at Home Rites," *San Diego Sun*, 22 June 1935. The

San Diego Union announcement described Beardsley as a “nationally known liberal”; the *Sun* story elaborated on the reasons for his professional reputation by explaining how in 1931 he had carried an appeal to the United States Supreme Court to reverse the conviction of Yetta Stromberg in the California Red Flag law. The *Sun* noted that the reversal represented the “first time the high court declared a law unconstitutional on the ground that it violated the freedom of speech guaranteed by the First Amendment.”

10. A sampling of this extensive literature includes, Victoria Getis, *The Juvenile Court and the Progressives* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000); Sonya Michel, *Children's Interests/Mothers' Rights: The Shaping of America's Child Care Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Elizabeth R. Rose, *A Mother's Job: The History of Day Care, 1890-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Elizabeth J. Clapp, *Mothers of All Children: Women Reformers and the Rise of Juvenile Court in Progressive Era America* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State Press, 1998); Joanne L. Goodwin, *Gender and the Politics of Welfare Reform: Mothers' Pensions in Chicago, 1911-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Kriste Lindenmeyer, “A Right to Childhood.” *The U.S. Children's Bureau and Child Welfare, 1912-46* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Florence Kelley and the Nation's Work: The Rise of Women's Political Culture, 1830-1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Ellen Fitzpatrick, *Endless Crusade: Women Social Scientists and Progressive Reform* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Linda Gordon, *Pitied but not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare* (New York: The Free Press, 1994) and Gordon, eds. *Women, the State and Welfare* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).
11. Joyce Antler made an in-depth study of several notable women who graduated from prestigious schools in the late nineteenth century—Jane Addams, Marion Talbot, M. Carey Thomas, Rheta Dorr, Margaret Anderson, Vida Scudder, and Hilda Worthington Smith—and Wellesley graduates from the class of 1897 to assess the “formative place of familial relationships in the after-college lives of educated women.” Antler’s assessments focused on the women comprising alumnae from an earlier generation than Helen Marston but her findings are relevant for understanding Marston’s return to San Diego. Antler found among the Wellesley class “women with professional callings still identified themselves as daughters,” and “often the desire to return home influenced the kind and location of work women chose. Several women exchanged better jobs for less satisfying ones in their home towns so they could live with their families.” Perhaps more telling is the filial relationship between Helen’s elder sister, Mary Gilman Marston, and her parents. Mary graduated from Wellesley in 1903, never married and remained devoted to her parents, the family home, and her siblings’ families. Indeed, “status as a daughter...seemed as important among this social circle as professional achievement.” See Antler, “‘After College, What?': New Graduates and the Family Claim,” *American Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (Autumn 1980), 425-426.
12. For an interesting comparison of how the country received these female activists, see Harriet Hyman Alonso, “Nobel Peace Laureates, Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch: Two Women of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom,” *Journal of Women's History* 7, no. 2 (1995): 6-26.
13. See Jensen, “Helen Marston and the California Peace Movement, 1915-1945,” 121; and SDWILPF for details of each activity.
14. Helen D. Marston Beardsley Autobiographical sketch (HMB Sketch), Box 2, file 27 (HMB correspondence), SDWILPF
15. HMB sketch.

16. Simmons Interview, 4.
17. Rosanne M. Barker makes a similar case in her study of educational reformer Pearl Chase in "Small Town Progressivism: Pearl Chase and Female Activism in Santa Barbara, California, 1911-1918," *Southern California Quarterly* 79 (1997): 47-100.
18. The Community Welfare Council organized in 1920 as a way to coordinate fund raising efforts among charitable agencies in the city. Helen Marston attended the first meetings as the Neighborhood House representative; her father presided over the meetings represented the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). Details of meetings can be found in the San Diego Community Chest Records, 1920-1925, Volume 1, (SDCC/UW), United Way of San Diego Archives, located at the San Diego chapter headquarters. My thanks to Larry Johnson for giving me full access to these records and offering a warm environment at the headquarters in which to conduct my research.
19. Reformers Charlotte Baker, M.D. and Mary Anderson Hill launched the College Woman's Club in 1911 when the College Graduate's Club (organized in 1896 and changed to the University Club) no longer welcomed women. The sexual discrimination derives from a complex of change occurring at the state and city level, including women's newfound suffrage rights and their engagements in developing reform initiatives. See Alma Kathryn Robens, "Charlotte Baker: First Woman Physician and Community Leader in Turn of Nineteenth Century San Diego," (M.A. thesis, San Diego State University, 1992); and Sylvia K. Flanigan, "Social and Intellectual Affiliation: Formation and Growth of San Diego's University Club," *The Journal of San Diego History (JSDH)* 31, no. 1 (Winter 1985): 40-50.
20. Lawrence D. Taylor, "The Wild Frontier Moves South: U.S. Entrepreneurs and the Growth of Tijuana's Vice Industry, 1908-1935," *JSDH* 48, no. 3 (Summer 2002): 204-229; Vincent Cabeza de Baca and Juan Cabeza de Baca, "The 'Shame Suicides' and Tijuana," *Journal of the Southwest* 43, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 603-635; Eric Michael Schantz, "All Night at the Owl: The Social and Political Relations of Mexicali's Red-Light District, 1913-1925," *Journal of the Southwest* 43, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 549-602; James R. Curtis and Daniel D. Arreola, "Zonas de Tolerancia on the Northern Mexican Border," *Geographical Review* 81, no. 3 (July 1991): 333-346; and James A. Sandos, "Prostitution and Drugs: The United States Army on the Mexican-American Border, 1916-1917," *Pacific Historical Review* XLIX, no. 4 (November 1980): 621-645.
21. Mary Catherine Miller, "Attitudes of the San Diego Labor Movement Toward Mexicans, 1917-1936," (master's thesis, San Diego State University, 1974), 18.
22. Gayle Gullet, "Women Progressives and the Politics of Americanization in California, 1915-1920," *Pacific Historical Review* (1995), 78; and Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream: California through the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).
23. Amanda Mathews Chase, *Second Annual Report of the CIHC*, 139-146, as cited in Gullet, "Women Progressives," 83.
24. Edith Shatto King, "My Mexican Neighbors," *The Survey* 37 (March 3, 1917): 624-626.
25. King, "My Mexican Neighbors," 626.
26. King, "My Mexican Neighbors," 624.
27. Gregg R. Hennessey is the recognized authority on the family with the following *JSDH* articles among his essays tracking their accomplishments: "Creating a Monument, Re-creating History: Junipero Serra Museum and Presidio Park," *JSDH*, 43, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 136-163; "George White and Anna Gunn Marston: A Sketch," *JSDH*, 36, no. 2-3 (Spring/Summer 1990): 96-105; and "George White Marston and Conservative Reform in San Diego," *JSDH* 32, no. 4 (Fall 1986): 230-253. The 1913 and 1917 mayoral campaigns are assessed by Uldis Ports, "Geraniums and Smokestacks: San Diego's Mayoralty Campaign of 1917," *JSDH* 21, no. 3 (Summer 1975): 50-56.
28. For detailed analysis of efforts by this benevolent association see Kyle E. Ciani, "The Power

- of Maternal Love: Negotiating a Child's Care in Progressive-Era San Diego," *Journal of the West* 41 (Fall 2002): 71-79; and Richard D. Sexton, "The San Diego Woman's Home Association: A Volunteer Charity Organization," *JSDH* 29, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 41-53.
29. Three children lived into their second century: Mary Gilman Marston and Elizabeth Bade both died in 1987 at the ages of 107 and 102, and Harriet Headley died ten years later at the age of 108. Their brother, Arthur Marston, was 91 and Helen Marston Beardsley died at age 89. All were active members in their communities, involving themselves in the local chapters of the YMCA, YWCA, and Neighborhood House. The sisters were members of the American Association of University Women, the League of Women Voters and various women's clubs in their respective communities, such as San Diego's Wednesday Club. An overview of the family's involvements can be discerned from Gregg R. Hennessey's articles and Mary Gilman Marston's chronicle cited above; remembrances and obituaries in the Marston Family Biographical Files, SDHS; and Raymond Starr, "Philanthropy in San Diego, 1900-1929," *Southern California Quarterly* 71, no. 2-3 (1989): 227-273.
 30. Mary Gilman Marston, Comp. *George White Marston: A Family Chronicle* (Los Angeles: Ward Ritchie Press, 1956).
 31. See the articles in *JSDH*, 34, no. 2 & 3 (Spring/Summer 1990), a special issue commemorating the George White and Anna Gunn Marston House.
 32. "Helen Marston Beardsley, Activist for Peace, Rights Is Dead at 89," *San Diego Union*, February 23, 1982.
 33. San Diego's elite families sent their daughters to the Bishop's School for Girls located at that time on First Avenue in downtown San Diego. Founded in 1909 by Joseph Horsfall Johnson, the first Bishop of the Los Angeles Diocese of the Episcopal Church, the school prepared well-heeled daughters for continued educations in prestigious East Coast schools such as Vassar, Wellesley, Mt. Holyoke and Smith College. Helen graduated from Bishop's in the spring of 1913.
 34. In addition to debates over the direction the city should take in building or controlling industrial growth, citizens also voted on the makeup of governing bodies during this time. In 1915, voters decided to shift from a commission government to a mayor-council system. On how these shifts fit into the larger political agenda of southwest cities, see Amy Bridges, *Morning Glories: Municipal Reform in the Southwest* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).
 35. Hennessey, "Creating a Monument, Re-creating History," 146; Ports, "Geraniums and Smokestacks."
 36. Marston Biographical Files, SDHS.
 37. Patricia Ann Palmieri, *In Adamless Eden: The Community of Women Faculty at Wellesley* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).
 38. HMB sketch.
 39. HMB sketch.
 40. Helen's correspondence with her father was a trait shared among Wellesley students. See Antler, "'After College What?'" 425.
 41. Jensen, "Helen Marston and the California Peace Movement, 1915-1945," 120.
 42. Historians of urban politics have noted similar sentiments among reform-minded women in cities across the country. See Maureen A. Flanagan, *Seeing With Their Hearts: Chicago Women and the Vision of the Good City, 1871-1933* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); and Sarah Deutsch, *Women and the City: Gender, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
 43. When King became too ill to continue his responsibilities, Alice Adams Robertson recommended Wood Worchester as his replacement. In her memoir, *Grim the Battles*, Daisy Lee

- Worthington Worchester reflected that her doctor's orders to "rest at sea level" solidified the couple's choice to move to San Diego and join the growing reform community. Wood served as its secretary, but the day-to-day grind of operating an Associated Charities fell to Mary Hill. See Worchester, *Grim the Battles: A Semi-Autobiographical Account of the War Against Want in the United States During the First Half of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Exposition Press, 1954), 149-151; Shelton, "Neighborhood House of San Diego," 32; Cyrus Wayne Stephens, "The History of Social Welfare Agencies in San Diego County, 1872-1914," (master's thesis, San Diego State College, 1966), 44.
44. The investigation emerged from the advocacy of the National Child Labor Committee who lobbied Theodore Roosevelt to pass legislature that forbid employers to hire children under the age of fourteen and to improve working conditions in textile mills, mines, and factories known to depend on female and child labor. The NCLC was established in 1904 out of the growing concern over child laborers. High accident rates, missed school, poor health and vulnerability to adult abuse heightened the attentions of NCLC members, five thousand strong by 1909. See Walter Trattner, *Crusade for Children: A History of the National Child Labor Committee* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); and Marjorie Sarbaugh-Thompson and Mayer N. Zald, "Child Labor Laws: A Historical Case of Public Policy Implementation," *Administration & Society* 27, no. 1 (May 1995): 25-53.
 45. Worchester, *Grim the Battles*, 150.
 46. Edith Shatto King and Frederick A. King, *The Pathfinder Social Survey of San Diego* (San Diego: Labor Temple Press, March 1914).
 47. Shatto King and King, *Pathfinder Social Survey*, 3-4.
 48. Shatto King and King, *Pathfinder Social Survey*, 11-12.
 49. Walter Bellon Manuscript, 1956, SDHS.
 50. "Annual Report of the Departments of Public Health for the year 1916," p. 7 in Box 40, San Diego County Department of Public Health Collection (SDPH), Special Collections, Malcolm A. Love Library, San Diego State University (MLL).
 51. "Minutes of the Advisory Council, 18 November 1910," in Box 1A, folder (Minutes of Advisory Council Meetings, 1909-1912), Family Services Association of San Diego Collection (FSASD), MLL.
 52. Total birth figures taken from page 6 of "Annual Report of the Department of Public Health for the year 1916," SDPH.
 53. Shatto King and King, *Pathfinder Social Survey*, 17.
 54. San Diego's Free Industrial School (FIS) became one of the first vocational schools in the state. Established in 1894, members of the Woman's Home Association, especially Mrs. J. F. Carey, championed the building of FIS. Coming on the heels of the 1893 Depression, the motivation behind FIS is easy to understand. Articles of Incorporation note that organizers hoped to provide a structured environment for girls and boys living along the waterfront and viewed as leading idle lives. Located near the wharf and in a neighborhood dominated by newly immigrated families—primarily Italian, Portuguese, and Mexican who earned their living by fishing—the FIS provided recreational play to occupy children's time. Its main goal, however, was to train these boys and girls for productive wage earning. Boys learned how to use tools for a variety of trades and girls learned domestic skills, especially cooking and sewing. See Endorsement files, FSASD; and Lucien C. Atherton, "Vocational Side Lights," *Parent-Teacher Courier*, February 1943, 12.
 55. Scott Dittmyer and Kathryn Grant, "Historical Study of Neighborhood House," (master's thesis, San Diego State University, 1978), 33.
 56. "Neighborhood House, 1916," Box 1A, folder (Endorsement Files), FSASD.
 57. "Annual Report of the Department of Public Health for the year 1921," SDPH; and Dittmyer

- and Grant," *Historical Study of Neighborhood House*," 34.
58. "Minutes of the Advisory Council, 24 March 1916," Box 1A, folder (Minutes of the Advisory Council Meetings, November 1911-April 1916), FSASD.
 59. Dittmyer and Grant, "Historical Study of Neighborhood House," 39-40; Cynthia Jane Shelton, "The Neighborhood House of San Diego: Settlement Work in the Mexican Community, 1914-1940," (master's thesis, San Diego State University, 1975), 39, 44.
 60. The impetus for Smith-Hughes derived from the "rural crisis" troubling the nation in the early twentieth century. Politicians, government officials, reformers, and academics became increasingly concerned over the conditions that made "country life" far more difficult than urban living. These same authorities worked to develop programs that focused on vocational education to improve "family farmers' productivity and physical health, as well as to remedy inequities perpetuated by racism and ethnic prejudice." Sponsored by Senator Hoke Smith of Georgia and signed into law by President Woodrow Wilson in February 1917, the Act "mandated the establishment of a Federal Board of Vocational Education to provide national oversight to burgeoning federal and state involvement in various kinds of 'practical' vocationally oriented education aimed at adults as well as children and including a wide variety of subjects beyond scientific agriculture."

Smith-Hughes represented the second of two federal acts designed to assist rural communities. The first, Smith-Lever Act, passed into law May 1914 and expanded farm demonstration work that had been initiated by the General Education Board eight years earlier. The Smith-Lever Act committed the federal government to supplying four million dollars a year to extension work, and mandated that state governments would match the figure each received from the federal source. See Judith Sealander, *Private Wealth and Public Life: Foundation Philanthropy and the Reshaping of American Social Policy from the Progressive Era to the New Deal* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 35-36, 52, and 94-98. Sealander's discussion of the debates concerning the nation's increased dependency on federal monies emphasizes the growing savvy of state officials to take advantage of federal resources, especially in funding parent education classes in California public schools.
 61. Sandra Schackel's analysis of agricultural extension work in New Mexico explains the importance of federal grants to maternal education. See Sandra Schackel, *Social Housekeepers: Women Shaping Public Policy in New Mexico, 1920-1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 111-139.
 62. Shelton, "Neighborhood House of San Diego," 41.
 63. In *Creating a Female Dominion*, Robyn Muncy points out that college life during the Progressive Era directed young women toward careers and vocations that helped women and children, such as teaching, social work, and public health nursing.
 64. HMB sketch; and Shelton, "Neighborhood House of San Diego," 37-38.
 65. Worchester, *Grim the Battles*, 154, 150.
 66. Marston, "Mexican Traits," 562.
 67. Marston, "Mexican Traits," 562.
 68. Marston, "Mexican Traits," 562.
 69. Shatto King, "My Mexican Neighbors," 624.
 70. Shatto King, "My Mexican Neighbors," 624.
 71. City fathers worked feverously to compete on the international market, winning two choice World Exposition contests as well as luring the U.S. Navy to its port. On the influence of the Expositions, see Matthew Bokovoy, "Humanist Sentiment, Modern Spanish, Heritage, and California Mission Commemoration, 1769-1915," *JSDH* 48:2 (Summer 2002): 177-203, and "San Diego's Expositions as 'Island on the Land,' 1915, 1935: Race and Class in

- Southern California," Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1999. The military, especially the Navy, has played a major role in the city's economy since 1911. For an overview of this impact, see Gregg R. Hennessey, "San Diego, the U.S. Navy, and Urban Development: West Coast City Building, 1912-1929," *California History* 62 (Summer 1993): 129-149; and Roger Lotchin, *Fortress California 1910-1961: From Warfare to Welfare* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
72. Haas, *Conquest and Historical Identities*; Iris H. W. Engstrand, "In Search of the Sun," in *California Light, 1900-1930*, Patricia Trenton and William H. Gerdtz, eds. (Laguna, CA: Laguna Art Museum, 1990), 53-59; Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream: California Through the Progressive Era* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).
 73. Marston, "Mexican Traits," 563.
 74. Marston, "Mexican Traits," 563.
 75. Scholars have found that families receiving aid from reformers during the Progressive Era worked to retain their cultural identities in the face of controlling actions and policies. See Sherri Broder, *Tramps, Unfit Mothers, and Neglected Children: Negotiating the Family in Late Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988); Sarah Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on an Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880-1940* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).
 76. For example, Mina Carson, *Settlement Folk: Social Thought and the American Settlement Movement, 1885-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) and Ruth Hutchinson Crocker, *Social Work and Social Order: The Settlement Movement in Two Industrial Cities, 1889-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1992).
 77. Marston, "Mexican Traits," 564.
 78. Hennessey, "Creating a Monument, Re-creating History," 139.
 79. "Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors Community Welfare Council," July 28, 1925, SDCC/UW.
 80. For an excellent discussion of ideological constructs in the West that allows one to place California's policies and movements in its historical context, see Eliot West, "Reconstructing Race," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 34:2 (Spring 2003): 7-28. Book length overviews of Anglo American racist ideology and domination in California include, Lisbeth Haas, *Conquests and Historical Identities in California, 1769-1936* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Douglas Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Albert L. Hurtado, *Indian Survival on the California Frontier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); and James J. Rawls, *Indians of California: The Changing Image* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984).
 81. HMB sketch.
 82. Schott, *Reconstructing Women's Thoughts*, 7.
 83. San Diego Sun, June 22, 1935. Beardsley's marriage to Helen was his second, having first been married in 1900 to Anna M. Lyman of Des Moines, Iowa, who died in 1934.
 84. In personal conversations with me, various San Diego locals who engaged in peace activism during the 1960s and 1970s have echoed the sentiment expressed by Joan Jensen regarding Helen Marston Beardsley's presence at anti-war rallies.
 85. Shelton, "The Neighborhood House of San Diego," 55, 60.