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Lucy Maynard Salmon

Pursuing Municipal Reform in Poughkeepsie: From Lucy Salmon to the Women's City and County Club

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Women played a pivotal role in championing many of the reform causes that multiplied in localities across the United States during the first decade of the twentieth century. Groups of citizens organized in pursuit of a variety of specific changes in their communities, reflecting their ideas for civic improvement and their concerns about contemporary social evils. Their campaigns ranged from building playgrounds to railing against corrupt government and blighted tenements. Women reformers frequently expressed their belief that the urban environment should reinforce the values of the home by labeling their aim "municipal housekeeping." Their approach tended to be moralistic and for some, increasingly preoccupied with issues of social justice, but by the 1910's many of the most highly educated had joined in efforts to make municipal reform more systematic, invoking the aims and rhetoric of scientific investigation and planning. By the 1920s, the emerging profession of urban planners had become predominantly male, with a focus on urban problems like traffic and regulation of land use that concerned local businessmen. It was left to women to carry on the moral, aesthetic, and social-justice aims of the pioneering municipal reformers of their sex.

Poughkeepsie, New York, illustrates the national story. One bold woman, Lucy Maynard Salmon, chair of the Vassar College History Department, had begun sharing information on municipal reforms in other towns and cities in her frequent letters to local newspaper editors. By 1906 she had taken the controversial step of lecturing audiences on local evils and their redress. While beginning with "municipal housekeeping," she, as a professional and avowedly "modern" woman, also had a strong interest in urban planning, doing what she could to advance that cause in Vassar College's history department. But when her city

actually commissioned a planner for a city-wide project, she was not a part of the process. Her legacy lived on in Poughkeepsie and Dutchess County, in the wake of the successful drive for women's suffrage, and in the formation in 1919 of the City and County Club. With a membership of more than 400 at its peak, the club initiated a variety of local investigations and improvements during the 1920s and 1930s under the leadership of Salmon's colleague and friend, Laura Wylie.

At the turn of the century, still fashionable Mill Street between Market and Hamilton Streets attracted professional residents. The teachers, doctors, attorneys, and judges residing there were the descendants of mid nineteenth-century immigrants. For Salmon, this thoroughly respectable neighborhood promised relief from the confinement and lack of privacy she felt living so near her students and colleagues in Vassar's Main Building. "I sigh for a quiet corner where I shall not have to get up by a bell, talk by priority of appointment and dress according to other people's standards of propriety."[1] Moving two miles away from campus typified Salmon's independence. She had upset Vassar's president in 1892 when, returning from a European trip, she bicycled around campus in sans culotte. He found that most undignified for a lady.

In 1901, Salmon, then in her early fifties, and her friend, librarian Adelaide Underhill, occupied 263 Mill Street and set about changing it to suit their more modern tastes. Salmon's pioneering investigation of Domestic Service in the 1880s had shown her how much servants were imposed upon by labor-inefficient sections for kitchens and laundries. While rearranging the kitchen into distinct areas for, cooking, baking, and cleaning, the two women added new domestic technology like an instantaneous water heater, a gas range, and an electric fan. Salmon valued rationality. Like other intellectuals, she also was attracted to the Arts and Crafts movement and ordered some Gustav Stickley furniture.

New for both Salmon and Underhill was the daily necessity of running errands, unlike life in Main Building, where the college provided so much, including meals. But they soon thrived on these walks to shops. Salmon realized how much you could discover about a city's past from the objects along its streets, like old signs for trades and professions. In her brilliant little book *On Main Street* (1915), she also showed how much you could learn about contemporary culture from the window advertisements of local stores. She noted of Poughkeepsie, "once known as the 'city of schools,' [that] its educational interests have been supplanted by its commercial interests as indicated by the names 'Bridge City' and 'Queen City'… names like Fairview Heights, Fairlawn Heights, and Oak Dale Park suggest the attractions held out by real estate development companies to induce suburban residence."[2]

As a social historian, Salmon was far ahead of her time in realizing how the physical evidence of people's created environments accumulates, as she illustrated with her own environment in her 1912 booklet, *History in a Backyard*. She could create a richer, more revealing social history. She saw national trends in local objects: "Monopoly lifts up its head in the wagons of the Standard Oil Company, the great packing houses of Armour, Morris, and Swift, and national express companies."[3]

But some of the sights, sounds, smells, and human behavior she encountered in her errands and walks offended Salmon. Characteristically, she soon took action. When would-be advertisers littered her doorstep with circulars, she repeatedly carried them down to the local police station to report this violation of the municipal littering ordinance, to no avail except a good laugh for the cop on duty. Salmon, like other well-educated middle class women, began to challenge local tolerance of conditions of uncleanliness, disorder, and immorality (such as gambling) that they would not tolerate in their own homes.

An energetic member of that generation of college graduates who founded settlement houses, promoted children's courts, and urged drives to clean up cities, Lucy Salmon was very much a woman of and for her time as a would-be reformer. Probably she remained closer to a genteel middle-class outlook than Jane Addams because she never lived or worked among the immigrant poor. An avid student of newspapers as the best means of learning about communities, Salmon kept scrapbooks of clippings describing innovations in other cities, such as civic beautification campaigns, school gardens cultivated by children, and playgrounds.

Salmon turned to Lillian Wald at the Henry St. settlement house in New York for advice about getting a district nurse for Poughkeepsie, and she assisted many causes, like special courts for children and campaigns against tuberculosis, by arranging lectures and public discussions. Looking back at past charitable institutions, Salmon saw them as largely "palliative…for the wreckage of life." She praised instead the growing sense of responsibility on the part of the community toward all of its citizens and their preference for "preventing social, civic, and industrial ills rather than curing them after they have arisen."[4]

Arousing the Public

Salmon frequently sought to inform her fellow citizens and urge them to take action by writing letters to local newspaper editors, usually doing so under pseudonyms like "Concerned Citizen," "Housekeeper," or "Public Opinion."[5] Writing anonymously in 1906, she praised the organization of a club in nearby Newburgh

"to study municipal conditions in the most progressive cities here and in Europe."[6] She decried the complacency of another local newspaper, the *Eagle*, deriding its view that Poughkeepsie was "the most beautiful city in America."[7] Because of that kind of misplaced local patriotism, "we shall continue to have dirty, ill-paved streets, rear tenements, and the saloons running on Sundays." Salmon was quick to dismiss the puff pieces written by businessmen eager to attract new customers and industries. According to these civic boosters, Poughkeepsie was a delightful place for a residence or business, where poverty was nonexistent and labor conflict infrequent.

In 1908 Salmon protested the presence of foodstuffs sitting outside grocery stores on Main Street, exposed to dirt from traffic. As "Housekeeper" she pleaded for more watering of streets to keep the dust down. In 1912 she complained about men puffing cigars under a "No smoking sign" and young men sitting with their feet up on trolley seats."[8] Writing as "Poughkeepsian" she asked "why the great natural beauties of the city are allowed to become eyesores and plague spots." The Fallkill Creek had "become the dumping ground of those who live on its banks." She also wished "to know why a public meeting is called to consider the inducements to be offered a new manufacturing company to locate here while the smoke and dirt of those already established make the air vile and the buildings inside and outside grimy and unpleasing to the eye."[9]

Generally, Salmon believed in cooperation between the Poughkeepsie Chamber of Commerce, representing businessmen, and citizens seeking civic improvements. But she did not appreciate the chamber's effort to raise $6,000 as part of an ultimately successful campaign to induce the Seneca Button Company to relocate its manufacturing to Poughkeepsie. The chamber, for its part, valued Salmon's concern with the city's appearance by making it cleaner and otherwise more attractive to visitors and potential new customers and businesses. Salmon had no objection to growth per se, but wanted attention given to other civic purposes.

Measures to create civic consciousness that were being promoted in cities like Boston and New York appear among her reform interests. In 1906 she had wondered in a letter to the editor of *The Enterprise* why Poughkeepsie was so far behind, compared to other American cities and towns, in forming organizations for civic improvement. Residents talk about its fraternal societies, whist, social, and political clubs, she noted, but have not created the "municipal leagues, civic clubs, city improvement societies, art leagues, city music commissions, civic art guilds, playground associations, tree-planting societies … street cleaning leagues, societies for checking the abuse of public advertising, pleasant-Sunday-afternoon

associations and scores of other organizations that make city improvements." [10]

Pursuing the same concern in 1916 she wrote in support of a community services series being held Sunday afternoons in Poughkeepsie's Cohen Theatre. She claimed that the series had attracted 3,000 people on consecutive Sundays. Arguing for the services' usefulness, Salmon said: "As a community we have very little unity of purpose, and no concerted action to accomplish a common end. Each man goes his own way, with little reference to his neighbor." [11]

Wishing for the City Beautiful

In contrast, Salmon deplored, the "excess individualism" in architectural choices that she believed blighted the visual appearance of Poughkeepsie. She admired instead the emphasis on harmony of the City Beautiful inspired by architects like Daniel Burnham, who designed the Chicago Exposition of 1893 and the then recent plan for the mall in the nation's capital. Salmon admired its emphasis upon harmony as opposed to what she deemed the customary excessive individualism in the design of individual buildings. She complained in 1908 that the "finest location in the city [Poughkeepsie] is occupied by a crowded mass of buildings incongruous in style of architecture, in building material, in the purpose for which they are used." The courthouse square, almost entirely rebuilt for half a million dollars since 1900, "contains the court house, a bank building, a business block, the building of the express companies, an engine house and a saloon." [12]

Noting many new real estate developments underway, she asked whether Poughkeepsie might take steps toward "some united plan and harmonious action? A landscape architect could be secured who would make a careful study of all of our natural advantages, report on a general, harmonious scheme of improvement…" [13] Then putting her money where her mouth was, Salmon, at her own considerable expense, brought the distinguished landscape architect James Nolen to Poughkeepsie to lecture and devise a plan for the city. To her great disappointment, his plan sat idle on archive shelves due to objections from real estate interests. The city continued its haphazard expansion according to developers' interests and tastes.

She lamented the transformation from a residential to an industrial city: "Two-family houses and flats have sprung up by the hundreds, while small cheap restaurants, furnished rooms, cheap amusements, and more than a score of public laundries record a population industrial in character and more or less floating in its domestic life." Like other progressives, whether devout or not, she drew upon religious inspiration and rhetoric from the evangelical Protestant past, blurring the boundaries between religion and reform. Congestion had increased to the

point that rear houses were being built in the yards behind other houses, and a "large number of covered tenement-house outside stairways …have been attached to older residences." [14]

In the 1890s, still living at the college, Salmon had founded a Vassar chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, although she never seems to have shared the D.A.R.'s preoccupation with creating historical monuments and marking battle sites. But seeing the organization as a possible agency for addressing other social needs, she agreed to serve as regent of the Poughkeepsie chapter. She soon named committees on streets, parks, and school playgrounds. In 1908, writing to the *Eagle* as "DAR," she described at length Chicago's South Park System, the prize exhibit at the first annual convention of the National Playground Association. Replete with ball fields, tennis courts, swimming pools, lunch rooms, and reading and assembly rooms, it had had sharply reduced juvenile offenses in the stockyards district. Salmon argued that "the elements of their system are practicable for towns and smaller cities; and that this municipal equipment is less costly than jails…and as sound sense as good pavements and clean streets." [15] By 1911 Poughkeepsie created its first playground.

Shy and never one to seek publicity for herself, Salmon summoned up her courage to expose social evils in the belief that an aroused public would then attack them. Her favorite newspaper, the New York *Evening Post*, exemplified her faith when it observed in 1907 that "That great American institution, the revival meeting, is being ordered anew" to combat a variety of urban plagues. "After all, men need only 'get together' and be shown the light by earnest exhorters in order to strike down an evil, great or small." [16]

Battling Poughkeepsie's "Evils"

That faith in the power of moral exhortation brought Lucy Salmon to public attention in 1906 and 1907. In two speeches, first at the YWCA, then the YMCA, she decried "city evils." She claimed: "there are 300 floating votes [to be bought] in Poughkeepsie. We know where the trading goes on, yet we say nothing. There's open gambling on the boat races… Merchants say openly that they're afraid to vote against gambling because they're afraid to lose business…" [17] Calling alcoholism a disease, she decried saloons open on Sunday, violating state law. She concluded by describing the reform of politics in Ithaca and in Galveston, Texas, after its flood. Salmon asked why Poughkeepsie couldn't get rid of money in politics and learn to vote a split ticket, removing national parties and issues from its municipal elections.

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Fair at Hooker Street

But unlike Jane Addams at Hull House, who challenged the political boss controlling her Chicago district, Salmon watched corruption in local politics from the sidelines. She clipped the *Eagle*'s 1908 story of how "King William" McCabe's men defeated a primary opponent in the Irish political stronghold in Ward 1. They admitted that "they had the Italian and Polack element solid, and they all turned out." The opponent claimed that the sheriff's bookkeeper had pockets wadded with "green," which he paid out to "floaters." Also the opponent "had no patronage to offer while McCabe has been getting people in the ward jobs right and left on the streets and in the department of public works." [18]

Good government reformers like Lucy Salmon (referred to sarcastically as "GooGoos" by politicians) saw a local ward leader like McCabe as the enemy. Their ideal of the good citizen assumed a detached, thoughtful consideration of issues and candidates followed by rational choices at the polls. Like native middle-class reformers in other American cities, they rarely appreciated the social usefulness of "bosses" who provided immigrant constituencies with urgently needed forms of assistance. On the other hand, by the 1900s Poughkeepsie's second- and third-generation German- and Irish-Americans included "respectable" leaders with whom Salmon could cooperate. She showed less interest in their immigrant

origins. Although in *Main Street* she could enumerate Poughkeepsie's ethnic restaurants and count forty-seven nationalities in the city, immigrants and questions about assimilation and Americanization did not figure prominently in her writing about her city at the time of the second greatest wave of foreign immigration in the nation's history.

The Lonely Path of a Woman Reformer in a Male World

Salmon's public speaking and writing on local needs and issues did capture the attention of business and professional leaders hoping to promote local improvements. In 1907 she was the sole woman among fifteen men on the organizing committee for a series of "public conferences on City Affairs" held at Vassar Brothers Institute in February and March.[19] That conference brought together the mayor and Common Council, five representatives from the chamber of commerce, eleven from the Dutchess County Historical Society, ten from the Civic League, nine from the Knights of Columbus, seven each from the YMCA and the YWCA, six from Vassar Brothers Institute, four from the city library, and others from the press, realty companies, and the Arts and Crafts movement.

The local chamber of commerce, founded in 1906, took an active role in promoting civic improvements. In 1910 it invited Salmon to be a member of its Committee on Municipal Affairs and Legislation; current topics included city planning, beautifying approaches to the city, clearing streets, and creating a truly patriotic Fourth of July. That may have meant taking the celebration away from rowdier, especially foreign, groups. The chamber then appointed Salmon as chair of its Committee on Cleanup. But New York City newspapers like the *Times* and the *Sun* got wind of her plans for that campaign, and the resulting "unpleasant notoriety" led her to resign, despite the efforts of the chamber's president to persuade her to continue.[20] She was deeply distressed by caricatures of her plans and spurious interviews attributed to her.

The cleanup campaign went on without her leadership in June 1911, although she was asked to choose the suburban Arlington contingent for its final inspection tour. In a fall 1911 article on "The Rejuvenation of Poughkeepsie" in *The American City,* the magazine of the American Civic Association, the chamber of commerce received credit for the campaign and for other improvements Salmon had been urging for years. Whether this self-effacing reformer preferred that silence after her previous experience with unpleasant publicity is unknown. She seemed very happy with the local leadership of Mayor Horace Sague, the unlikely Democrat elected for three terms in this normally Republican city, who shared her interests in civic rejuvenation.

The acceptance of Salmon as a partner in civic work did not extend to chamber socializing. Although male members of her Cleanup Committee met regularly at her house, they would not include her in their company at chamber dinners. Year after year she sent in her check for the cost of that event, only to have it returned with a note that having women at the banquet was "impracticable."[21] Generally, while a newspaper might refer to her as "one of the most progressive women in this part of New York State," Salmon's struggle to make women equal partners in civic improvement campaigns remained difficult. To her dismay, the Poughkeepsie *Evening Enterprise* noted in 1914 that the very shy Professor Salmon is "the acknowledged leader of progressive thought and action at Vassar College… Just a generation ahead of the times with visions of a purer democracy, she has naturally paid the penalty … of all great reformers … of being misunderstood."[22]

Salmon seems to have played a less active role in civic affairs after her Cleanup Committee resignation. But she continued to push for greater participation by women of all classes. Writing in 1912 as "Help Wanted," she protested the restriction of so many activities to men, or ladies, with no place for a working woman. In 1906 she had been urging formation of a Women's University Club; two years later, she reminded Poughkeepsians in a sarcastic letter that city women were "rightly excluded" from all organizations but Vassar Brothers Institute.[23] She kept at it. In 1913 some members of Poughkeepsie's women's organizations tried to form a civic committee through which they could act to promote the general welfare. A Women's League for Civic Education paved the way for the League of Women Voters. By 1916 the president of the city's Common Council could say, in claiming Poughkeepsie was as progressive as any other city, that it "has the great mass of its women banded together in more than a dozen clubs."[24]

Promoting Urban Planning for Poughkeepsie

At Vassar College, Salmon made an effort to incorporate her interest in city planning into the curriculum. She kept abreast of new developments through the American Civic Association. And she continued to speak out from time to time on local questions. After the Riverview Military Academy closed, she recommended that the building be turned into a public trade or technical school because of its proximity to large manufacturing firms on the riverfront. Typically, she cited examples worthy of emulation: the University of Cincinnati had worked out cooperation between itself and manufacturers whereby students could work part time in a factory while studying, thus getting both theory and application. Coming back to her long-standing concern with parks, she noted that Riverview's

extensive grounds could be used for recreation and athletics in a congested part of Poughkeepsie that badly needed such opportunities. That did come about; the trade school did not.

Salmon believed in working with business and professional leaders wherever her planning and reform interests converged with theirs, as they did in improving the city's appearance and its reputation as a healthy environment. But she did not share their preoccupation with spurring economic growth and their focus on attracting new businesses and industries. Significantly, the planner she had brought at her own expense to Poughkeepsie in 1915 was noted for his expertise in landscaping, whereas the urban planners the city would turn to in the 1920s took for granted that their priority was planning for population and economic growth.

The planner chosen by the Common Council to make a presentation was Myron West of Chicago. He came to Poughkeepsie in 1924, the same year that U.S. Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover published a Standard Zoning Act intended as a model for American cities. The Common Council accepted West's offer to devise a plan for $5,000. He provided a comprehensive zoning and street plan, including street corrections; evaluation of the location of transit, rail, and water transportation; streets; schools; parks; public buildings; and—a never-ending concern for Poughkeepsie—revitalization of its waterfront. West also plotted streets beyond municipal boundaries to discourage haphazard growth by suburban developers and, if possible, to annex more territory for the city's future expansion.

West's ambitious plan, especially for dealing with traffic and city streets, received favorable public response. Although the Merchants' Association in 1919 had bitterly fought police department efforts to limit car parking on Main Street, by 1924 merchants had concluded that unrestricted parking prevented shoppers from getting to their stores. But it soon became apparent that Poughkeepsie's legislators and businessmen had narrower aims than West's plan. They primarily sought zoning, widening or extending streets, annexation of territory beyond municipal boundaries, and finding a suitable location for a new vehicular bridge across the Hudson. In 1926 the mayor appointed a committee of twenty-five businessmen and professionals to review West's plan, but did not set up a planning commission, as West and urban planners generally preferred. Instead, the mayor assigned all responsibility for action to his corporate counsel and Board of Public Works, a clear sign that he was not committed to professional planning. Business goals and political concerns, then as now usually in conflict with planning ideals, prevailed. This political resolution of who should control planning seems unlikely to have pleased Salmon, but her dedication to municipal reform lived on, first in

the local suffrage movement and then, after winning the vote, in the Women's City and County Club.

From Suffrage to the Women's City and County Club

Civic improvement and a variety of related reforms had received a powerful boost from the local women's suffrage drive during the 1910s. Leadership for that drive came from female faculty at Vassar College, especially those who had chosen to live in the city. The latter avoided the hindrance of the college's ban, in effect until 1916, of suffrage activity on campus. Lucy Salmon worked with the National American Woman Suffrage Association and collaborated with her colleague, Professor of English Laura Johnson Wylie, in forming the local Equal Suffrage League. Wylie lived not far from Salmon at 116 Market Street. Today, the modest Carpenter Gothic-style dwelling is home of the organization Hudson River Sloop Clearwater.

The League elected Wylie its president in 1910. Years later, the *Poughkeepsie Courier* described her as a "woman of indomitable energy, she was the local leader of the woman suffrage movement from 1910 to 1928."[25] Of the seventy-four community members listed as supporters at a league event, twenty-eight were connected with Vassar. The league proved to be remarkably efficient and well-informed in their ward canvassing. In the successful 1917 referendum on a state constitutional amendment enfranchising women, Poughkeepsie was the only major population center along the Hudson River north of New York City that voted in favor of it.

Wylie believed that having won the vote, women needed to demonstrate that they were responsible citizens. She led the way to a reorganization of suffragists, first as the Women's City Club and then as the Women's City and County Club, to promote "the cause of good government" and the "health, protection and welfare of all citizens."[26] No other area organization in the early twentieth century matched its range of civic and humanitarian efforts. Another offshoot of the Equal Suffrage League, the League of Women Voters, did not fare as well as the club during the interwar years, but surpassed it in membership after World War II.

The Women's City and County Club began with a roster of highly educated and often socially prominent women. They included Mrs. Richard Aldrich of Barrytown; Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt of Hyde Park; Mrs. Henry Morgenthau, Jr., of Hopewell Junction; Mrs. Gordon Norrie; Mrs. Henry Noble MacCracken, wife of Vassar's president; and Rhoda Hinkley, Mrs. Theodore DuBois, and Dr. Grace Kimball, all of Poughkeepsie. In their first year, this pioneering group felt the

community didn't take them very seriously until they established a Community Kitchen during the great flu epidemic. That led many Poughkeepsians to realize "that there was a small group of women who were vitally interested in the advancement of public welfare and who wished to be of real service to the community."[27]

The club then brought Helen Thompson of New York City's Tenement House Department to conduct a survey of poor housing conditions in Poughkeepsie. With Thompson's report, the Women's City and County Club in its second year persuaded the Common Council to pass an amendment to the city's building code requiring more depth to lots, more air space between houses, and greater privacy in tenements. Prodded by individuals and organizations to do something "about the untidy condition of our streets," the women also persuaded the city Board of Health to create a "clean up week."[28] The club encouraged members to acquaint themselves with government officers through the visits and conferences it sponsored. It also pursued group visits to local institutions like Hudson River State Hospital and other health agencies, the Community Theatre, Neighborhood House, the Children's Home, and public schools. As the club made its scope county-wide, it conducted additional systematic surveys, including one on health conditions in Dutchess County's rural schools.

Investigation Prompts Action

When members discovered a major problem where their influence might be of assistance, they moved quickly to address it, as they did in hounding city officials to enforce long-neglected rules on garbage collection. That successful campaign brought them more public attention and encouraged further action. They mobilized local schools and other agencies to undertake or expand "Americanization" programs for immigrants. They cooperated with the Board of Education in urging foreign-born men to join night-school classes, resulting in a doubling of attendance. Because home duties prevented women from attending, the club persuaded the board to start home classes in English and to pay for the teachers.

The club's Industrial Committee brought Florence Kelly of the National Consumers League to talk about pending legislation affecting women and children. It then held a meeting—one of the club's most successful—on "The Industrial Crisis and How to Meet it," with discussion by the general manager of the Dutchess Manufacturing Co., the organizer for the International Garment Makers Union for Women, and the spokesman for the Operatives of the Garner Print Works of Wappingers Falls. The committee tried "to have employers represented equally with employees in the audience."[29] The 125 employees attending

PHOTO: SIDNEY S. BENHAM, USED BY PERMISSION OF STANLEY BENHAM, JR. AND VIRGINIA AUGERSON

Market Street Poughkeepsie, c. 1900

packed clubrooms to capacity.

The club created committees on Juvenile Court Protection, Child Welfare, Tuberculosis, City Planning, Lincoln Center, Law Enforcement, Civic Education, and International Relations, among others. It sent representatives to Albany to lobby for reforms like abolition of child labor and to meetings sponsored by other local clubs and the Federation of Women's Clubs. In 1921 one national periodical cited Poughkeepsie's Women's City and County Club as one of the four most important clubs in the United States.

By the mid-1920s, however, the club's growth slowed and so did the activities of some of its committees. Yet in its first years the club had stirred city and county officials to address a number of problems. For discussion of shared issues, it had brought together representatives of diverse interest groups, notably leaders of women's unions and company officers or spokesmen. It had prodded and supported local voluntary associations in settlement house, Americanization, and other activities intended to help newcomers and the needy. It did not conduct those activities itself, however, nor did members interact closely or continuously with those being helped. While the attitudes of club members were more inclusive and democratic than those of earlier charitable workers, there was still a social distance between them and their beneficiaries. However, this should not obscure

the fact that these largely upper- or upper-middle class women created the most important bridges—of concern and assistance, if not of direct social interaction—between the many diverse groups who made up the fragmented population of Poughkeepsie and Dutchess County.

A mosaic cannot serve as an adequate metaphor for a changing, fluid society, but it has the advantage of calling attention to the many fragments in that society at a given moment in time. Poughkeepsie was not then, or ever, a homogenous population, so it is a mistake to speak of Poughkeepsians as a whole as if they shared a common consciousness. That mistake imposes a unity that has never existed. But as the story of the Women's City and County Club indicates, a lack of unity has not meant that important linkages cannot be made at times between the leaders of even quite diverse social groups, leading to shared purposes and action. Such linkages permit more broadly-based civic actions, which, to varying extent, benefit the many rather than the few. That happened nationwide during the Progressive movement and in Poughkeepsie largely through the work of women reformers such as Lucy Maynard Salmon.

Endnotes

1. Quoted in Nicholas Adams and Bonnie Smith, eds., *History and the Texture of Modern Life: Selected Essays, Lucy Maynard Salmon* (Philadelphia, 2001), 8.
2. From *Main Street* in ibid., 89.
3. Ibid., 16-17.
4. See especially Folders 57:10, 57:11, and 57:13 in the Salmon Papers.
5. See Miss Salmon's book of clippings, 1902-1908 in Salmon papers, her scrapbook of clippings from the Poughkeepsie *Daily Eagle* for 1898-1904 in Poughkeepsie Document Box, Local History Room, Adriance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie, New York.
6. *The Enterprise*, October 25, 1906.
7. Ibid., October 27, 1906.
8. *Sunday Courier*, June 9, 1912.
9. Letter from "Poughkeepsian" in the *Daily Eagle* (undated clipping in 1902-1908 scrapbook).
10. *The Enterprise*, November 9, 1906.
11. Ibid., March 16, 1916.
12. Ibid., April 7, 1908.
13. See Salmon's clipping from the *New York Tribune*, July 19, 1908 on Nolen's plan for beautification of Montclair, New Jersey. Also, Jon Teaford, *The Twentieth-Century American City* (Second edition, Baltimore, 1993), 67-8.
14. "Main Street" in Adams and Smith, eds., *History*, 90-91.
15. *Daily Eagle*, May 11, 1908.
16. New York *Evening Post*, November 4, 1908.
17. Untitled and undated clipping reporting Miss Salmon's talk to the YWCA in the 1902-1908 Scrapbook.

18. *Daily Eagle*, October 3, 1908.
19. See the printed handout dated January 17, 1907, for the conferences on city affairs, and Salmon's notes on representation of local organizations at the conferences. Salmon Papers.
20. Howard Platt of the Chamber of Commerce to Salmon, April 28, 1910. Louise Fargo Brown, *Apostle of Democracy: The Life of Lucy Maynard Salmon* (New York, 1943), 210-2.
21.
22. *Evening Enterprise*, July 14, 1914.
23. Poughkeepsie *Eagle*, March 2, 1909.
24. *Eagle News*, June 9, 1916.
25. Eva Boice, "Woman Suffrage, Vassar College, and Laura Johnson Wylie," *The Hudson River Valley Review*, 20 (Spring, 2004), 42.
26. Ibid., 43.
27. *Women's City and County Club,* Annual Report for 1921, 4-5. Adriance Library.
28. Ibid., 8.
29. Ibid., 7.