From Nursing to Nursery School: The Life and Works of Harriet M. Johnson from 1900-1934

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Abstract

Much has been written about the educational life and works of Harriet Merrill Johnson (1867-1934) involving her work as Director of the very first laboratory nursery school in the United States and her revolutionary theories about nursery education. Little to nothing has been on paper about her visiting nursing work for the Henry Street Settlement, Hartley House settlement and other institutions, her unionist work for the Women's Trade Union League, and her landmark work with the Public Education Association of the City of New York introducing visiting teachers and Binet testing in public school education. In 1916, she was one of three founders of the Bureau of Educational Experiments, the later Bank Street College of Education, renowned for its progressive teachers and educators.

Already throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century, Harriet M. Johnson together with her life-long companion Harriet Forbes formed an out-of-the-closet lesbian couple that was non-guardedly open and straightforward about their gender leaning. For several years the Forbes-Johnson duo formed a household together with another pair of women (~ the Marot-Pratt couple). Yet, they in all probability were the first candidly lesbian couple ever to adopt a child, 'bequeathing' her with both their family names, 'baptizing' her with a combined hyphenated family name (Forbes-Johnson), and raising her in their 'two-mother' household.

While this case study extensively describes the life of Harriet M. Johnson during the period 1900-1920, the authors certainly did not forget to examine her 1920-1934 educational theorizing about nursery education that until today without any question has been underreported in the literature — even by Bank Street College of Education.

We cautiously remind readers that this is a descriptive article. Again, we sincerely hope that we encourage young researchers to build their analysis on this text!

Key Words: *F. Matthias Alexander (1869–1955), Alice Barrows Fernandez (1878-1954), Evelyn Riggs Dewey (1889-1965), John Dewey (1859-1952), Harriet Forbes (1867-?), Mary Pauline (Polly) Forbes-Johnson (1916-2002), Patty Smith Hill (1868-1946), Harriet Merrill Johnson (1867-1934), Helen Marot (1865-1940), Mary Stuart Marot (1860-1938), Lucy Sprague Mitchell (1878-1967), Caroline Pratt (1867-1954), William Albert Wirt (1874-1938), Bureau of Educational Experiments, Gary School League, Public Education Association of the City of New York, Shirtwaist Makers' Strike, Visiting Teachers, Women's Trade Union League.*

Figure 1: Harriet Merrill Johnson. (Courtesy Archives of Bank Street College of Education, New York City).

Introduction

Harriet Merrill Johnson (1867-1934) was born on August 28, 1867 in Portland, Maine to Helen (*née* Merrill) Johnson and Samuel P. Johnson. She had one sibling, her older sister Caroline (Carrie) Marie (born 1858). Although we have extremely limited knowledge of her early career, it is known that the family moved to Bangor, Maine in 1871, where they first lived on Kenduskeag Avenue and later moved to Montgomery Street. They became members of the Central Church, and Harriet attended public schools (Biber, 1936b). We do not know whether she attended one of the two Normal Schools in Maine at that time (Eastern State Normal School in Castine, Western State Normal School in Farmington); however, during her twenties she taught for a number of years in a Bangor private school.

In 1895, Harriet M. Johnson entered the nurses' training course at Massachusetts Homœopathic Hospital in Boston. One year earlier, her future life-long companion Harriet Forbes (1867-?), a 1890 Vassar College graduate, had already begun her nurses' training in the same hospital after having been a private secretary in Hondo, Mexico for a while (*Vassar Miscellany*, 1891, p. 160). Forbes graduated in 1897, Johnson in 1898 (Homœopathic Hospital, 1900, p. 33).

After graduation Johnson became a private nurse for two years. Then, since its opening in June 1900, she was Superintendent of the Nurses' Training at Trull Hospital, the homeopathic hospital in Biddeford, Maine (Biber, 1936b). And next, at some unspecified time in 1901, both Forbes and Johnson became Instructors in the Massachusetts Homœopathic Hospital Training School (Alline, 1902).

In 1902, after moving to New York City, Johnson and Forbes completed a one-year course in Hospital Economics at Teachers College, Columbia University (Banfield, 1902). (Note that in May 1904, both women would be among the founders of the Hospital Economics Association (Beazley, 1904), and that Johnson would become the Association's first treasurer.) After her graduation in Hospital Economics, Johnson attended several other short Nursing and Health courses at Teachers College. It seems that at an unspecified date, most probably by the end of 1902, or early in 1903, Forbes and Johnson also graduated from the Sloane Maternity Hospital nurses' training in New York City (Forbes & Johnson, 1905, *title page*).

1903-1909: Henry Street Settlement & Hartley House: Visiting District Nurse

In March 1903, Harriet Forbes and Harriet M. Johnson began work as Visiting District Nurses at Lillian Wald's Nurses' Settlement in Henry Street in Manhattan's Lower East Side (around that time renamed Henry Street Settlement), and at Hartley House, under auspices of the first (Pratt, 1903; Wolfe, 2000). Hartley House is a settlement house, established in January 1897 in Hell's Kitchen — the densely populated Middle West Side of New York City. "Forty thousand persons in twenty-three overcrowded blocks constitute the "parish" of this settlement" states the 1905 *Bibliography of College, Social, University and Church Settlements* (Montgomery (Ed.), 1905, p. 78). The *Handbook of Settlements* lists the aims of Hartley House: "to help prepare children and young people for lives of useful citizenship…to conduct neighborhood clubs and classes for social and educational purposes…to provide places of residence for men and women desirous of engaging in social work" (Woods & Kennedy (Eds.), 1911, p. 204).

Johnson first reported her work in "The Relation of Visiting Nurses to Public Philanthropies" in the *American Journal of Nursing*. While indicating that district nurses from then on would be represented by a committee at the yearly National Conference of Charities and Correction (see also: *American Journal of Nursing*, 1905), and after stressing cooperation with other social agencies, she epitomized, "[The visiting nurse] finds a child out of school because he is crippled, blind, or mentally defective, and growing up to be a burden, if not a menace, to the family and the community," and proposed that visiting nurses "can put the parents in touch with the institution or individuals who are ready to give the needed opportunity, and can often remove the prejudice that would deprive the child of his right to be helped" (Johnson, 1905, p. 493). Visiting nurses dealt with all kinds of social issues: unsanitary living conditions, prevention of diseases, child labor, housing in overcrowded city districts, and adjustment of the public school curriculum. Visiting nurses educated patients and their families at the same time, about, for instance, ventilation of the home, sanitation, drainage, and the treatment of infectious diseases.

The same year, Forbes and Johnson (1905) published *Home Nursing*, a book promoting basic hygienic and nursing skills in relation to nursing a patient at home. It rapidly became the instruction manual for visiting nurses and for people who cared for a sick or injured family member at the home, or who nursed someone who had had surgery and recovered at home. In her "The Visiting Nurse and Acute Illness" in the January 1906 *Visiting Nurse Quarterly Magazine*, reprinted in *The Dietetic And Hygiene Gazette* (Johnson, 1906b), Johnson pointed out that the "overcrowding of the hospitals and their insufficient endowment brings into special prominence the treatment of acute cases of illness in the home" (p. 248). She maintained, "We claim for our work a certain educational value, and here is field enough to test its worth" (p. 249), clarifying her point in a maternalistic way:

> Here is order to be brought out of chaos, quiet and cleanliness to be proved valuable, something to be taught about foods, about the functions of the body, about the importance of fresh air and sunshine, and with it all comes a sense, on the part of the family, of satisfaction in a fight well won, and an unconscious acceptance and recognition of life's duties. (p. 240)
>
> The poor have enough burdens. Life hurls these wholesale upon their bent backs and they struggle on with little effort to free themselves; but the duties, the responsibilities of life they seem not to carry and if they are made to face the problem of caring for a child or a mother through serious illness they have passed one milestone on the path of citizenship. (p. 249).

In 1905, when Forbes and Johnson co-published their *Home Nursing* handbook, Johnson's employment at Hartley House had transformed from working as a Visiting District Nurse to working as a Trained Nurse, as a Substitute Nurse, and as a Cooking Teacher (Wolfe, 2002, p. 311). It is therefore evident that a substantial part of her work was actually done within the walls of Hartley House. One of her co-workers at the settlement house was Mary S. Marot, then Director of Children's Work. According to Staring (2013b) it was to be expected that Forbes, Johnson and Marot would compare the work of a visiting nurse and of a feasible visiting teacher, the more so because Marot "in connection with one of the social settlements, had done work of this [last] kind, in Philadelphia" (Richman, 1910, p. 163). While in the winter of 1906 the Forbes-Johnson couple took up joint residence in a three-room flat in the tenements in the East Side as an extension of the Henry Street Settlement (*American Journal of Nursing*, 1906; *New York Press*, 1906), Marot investigated

options to start a visiting teacher program, paying attention to socio-educational issues like truancy, child labor, and success or failure in school. She then began work as a visiting teacher in the spring of 1906. At that time, Forbes and Johnson joined the Bronx District Committee of the Charity Organization Society of the City of New York (Brandt (Ed.), 1907, pp. 185, 193, 229). It is not known whether they remained working at Hartley House (too).

In 1907, after Mary Marot had led a conference on a viable expansion of the visiting teacher program under the auspices of the Public Education Association of the City of New York (PEA), the PEA took the visiting teachers' program as a branch of its own. Marot resigned her work at Hartley House to become Chairman of the Home and School Visiting Committee of the PEA (Staring, Aldridge, & Bouchard, 2014). Also in 1908, Harriet M. Johnson became a member of Marot's PEA Home and School Visiting Committee Staff. Next, in 1908, Johnson joined the staff of Public Health Nurses at the Henry Street Settlement (*Sun*, 1934).

In winter 1908, settlement house workers began producing exhibits about causes and consequences of population overcrowding in New York City. In March, they put together the Exhibit of Congestion of Population in the Museum of Natural History. In April, the exhibition moved to Brooklyn (Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, 1908; Marsh, 1908; Martin, 1908). According to the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (1908c), "The purpose of the exhibition in the Brooklyn Institute Art Building is to set forth some of the many problems of a congested city, the dangers that are the result of overcrowding tenement houses, lack of ventilation, no playgrounds, inadequate transportation, and to show also the possibilities of public improvements, which, if made or begun now, will make for the future health and welfare of the masses." Early in May, during the Second Union Label Fair of the Brooklyn Central Labor Union, held at the Labor Lyceum, members of the New York branch of the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) — among them Harriet Forbes and Harriet M. Johnson — displayed an archetypal tenement sweatshop they had prepared for the Congestion exhibit (*Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1908a-b).

The following year, Forbes and Johnson resigned their Visiting District Nurse work under the auspices of Henry Street Settlement altogether to join Mary Marot's PEA Home and School Visiting Committee full-time when they began work as visiting teachers under the PEA (*Evening Post*, 1909; *Sun*, 1909). The *American Journal of Nursing* (1909) explained:

> [Forbes and Johnson] study the environment and home and living conditions of children who cause anxiety to the teachers, and also study the children themselves with care, being for this purpose admitted to the class-rooms, the purpose of their work being to discover causes which may lead to delinquency and so prevent children from going far enough to fall into the hands of the truant officer. It is purely social work, not taking up the physical causes which are watched over by the public school nurses. It calls for great delicacy and intelligence, and is deeply absorbing. (p. 440).

Up until then, Dorothy Payne Whitney (1887-1965), who later became Dorothy Straight after marrying Willard D. Straight in 1911 came into a major inheritance in 1904. She subsidized the new PEA Visiting Teacher Fund in order to pay the salaries of Forbes and Johnson for their visiting teacher activities. Other wealthy PEA donors, including Alice and Irene Lewisohn, subsidized the work of the other visiting teachers (e.g., Public Education Association, 1914, pp. 39, 41, 44).

1909-1910: The Shirtwaist Makers' Strike

It is fascinating that both Forbes and Johnson were already active Women's Trade Union League allies during the 1908 Brooklyn Union Label Fair (see above). Secretary of the New York branch of the WTUL was Mary Marot's younger sister Helen Marot (Staring & Aldridge, 2015). It must have been about that time, or early in 1909, that Forbes and Johnson became household members at 218 West 4th Street together with another women couple — Helen Marot and her life-long companion Caroline Pratt. The 1910 United States Federal Census shows that Forbes was head of the household; Johnson, Marot and Pratt were her partners, while Emma James — a fifth woman living at the same address — was servant in the home. Philosopher Seigfried (1996) wonders, "We can only guess what images 'homelike' evoked for [open]

lesbians like Harriet Johnson and Harriet Forbes, who set up housekeeping in a homophobic world" (p. 103). The four women also shared political ideas as well as an analogous view on how to improve societal circumstances. Not only were they devoted WTUL allies; at least three of them (Forbes, Marot, Pratt) were also members of NYC Branch 1 of the Socialist Party; it is not known whether Johnson was a party member too. As well, all four had worked for, or with, the Hartley House settlement. They knew each other for years, most probably since March 1903 when Forbes and Johnson began work for the Hartley House settlement where Pratt taught an experimental manual training method (Staring, 2013a-b, 2015).

And then, in November 1909, perhaps the largest strike of women workers in the history of American labor movement began — the *Shirtwaist Makers' Strike*. The strike originated in response to a firing of workers who attempted to organize a union at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory — notorious for their draconian sweatshop conditions. On November 22, comrades of the 1st and 25th Branches of the Socialist Party held a meeting at the "Rooms of Misses Pratt and Marot, 218 West 4th Street" (*New York Call*, 1909). It was the very evening when the *Shirtwaist Makers' Strike* began at an emergency meeting of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) in the Cooper Union auditorium. A resolution for a strike was taken. Strikers fought for their right to organize, for higher wages, and for shorter working hours (Staring, 2013b). Forbes, Johnson, Marot, and Pratt hurried to Cooper Union's Great Hall as soon as the Socialist Party meeting ended. *Hampton's Magazine* (1910) later wrote that on November 22, the stage at Cooper Union "was well filled with members of the Women's Trade Union League" (p. 424).

One historian observes that it has taken many "years for historians to reacknowledge what the community [of lesbians] knew all along," that is, regarding support for the waist makers' strike "lesbians were at the centre of radical organizing on the East Side, and that their relationships influenced radical politics and strategy" (Schulman, 1994, p. 136). In her historical monograph of the WTUL of New York, Dye (1980) explains the almost incomparable close relationships, which the WTUL allies formed with each other during the first decade of the league's existence. She states that they during the years 1903-1913 shared a number of characteristics: almost all of them were women; they were, without exception, wealthy, single and well educated; and many — prior to their work for the WTUL — had worked as a social reformer, or had been working for a charitable organization. Dye also remarks, that "in their friendships and living arrangements many WTUL women lived their ideal of sorority by establishing their closest emotional ties with other women" and that for many allies "the WTUL was a full-time commitment, a way of life" (p. 56). She refers to the fact that the women formed a kind of feminist compassionate friendship network, encouraging each other in their unionist and personal life, and that several WTUL allies formed enduring relationships, maintaining household with one another. She specifically mentions, "Helen Marot lived all her adult life with Caroline Pratt" (p. 57). Recent scholarship, often self-identified as *feminist* and *gay* history, permits concluding that a group of WTUL women — some of whom were lesbian — were deeply involved in union activities and led support activities of this major strike of mostly women workers. The picture emerges of a group of women — some lesbian, but not only lesbians — who were deeply involved in WTUL union activities. Besides Forbes, Johnson, the Marot sisters, and Pratt, Florence Rauh (who served on the WTUL Publicity Committee during 1910-1911), her sister Ida Rauh (who was Chairman of the WTUL Legislative Committee during 1910-1911), Edna Louise Smith (who would finance Pratt's Play School in 1913 and in 1914), and Evelyn Dewey (John Dewey's daughter) were involved (Staring, 2013b). Many of the women in this group were also *physically* involved — as volunteer pickets — in the 1909-1910 waist makers' uprising. The *New York Times* (1909) ran a page-long story on "College Girls As Pickets In A Strike," subtitled, "How the Fair Graduates Organized the Campaign for the Shirtwaist Makers," stating:

> For once the factory girl and the college girl are making a fight together. Within the last two weeks some forty women have joined the fighting ranks of the shirtwaist girls, and they have never done more than wear shirtwaists. They are college graduates, most of them, suffragists some of them, all of them with independent incomes, some of them with millions.

The *Times* article ends by a listing of thirty-seven names, all of members of the group of volunteer "college girls" pickets, including "Miss Carolin[e] Pratt, Miss Harriet Forbes, Miss Harriet Johnson…Miss Ida Rauh" (*New York Times*, 1909).

The strike, lasting for thirteen weeks, in bitterly cold winter conditions, and involving perhaps as many as 40,000 strikers, ended in March 1910. The victory, of course, belonged to the ILGWU strikers and their families. Yet, the middle class WTUL volunteers' support of the strike made a difference too.

1910-1913: The Aftermath of the Shirtwaist Makers' Strike

Successive annual reports of the WTUL show that Harriet Forbes, Harriet M. Johnson, Helen Marot, and Mary Marot were very active in WTUL governing bodies, annually swapping chairs as members of standing committees: Education Committee 1909-1910: Forbes, Johnson and Mary Marot; Education Committee 1910-1911: Forbes, Johnson, Helen Marot and Mary Marot; Italian Committee 1911-1912: Forbes and Helen Marot. Between 1908 and 1913, Caroline Pratt was on the Finance Committee.

But these militant WTUL officers did not shun other tasks either. For instance, during 1910, Mary Marot and Harriet M. Johnson organized evening English classes for foreign-speaking girls at the WTUL headquarters (*New York Call*, 1910; *New York Times*, 1910). Furthermore, at some time, most probably later in 1910, Johnson was then appointed head of the newly formed PEA Visiting Teacher Staff.

During summer and autumn 1910, Harriet M. Johnson and her housemate, colleague WTUL officer, and good friend Caroline Pratt, as well as Patty S. Hill (1868-1946) — head of the Teachers College kindergarten department and Assistant Professor of Kindergarten Education at the College — were on the Sub Committee on Home Life, which organized part of the January 18 - February 12, 1911 New York Child Welfare Exhibit in the 71st Regiment Armory (New York Child Welfare Committee, 1911, p. 24). The aim of their sub-committee was, "to show that even in the cramped and humble flats and tenements of New York, there may be real homes" (p. 24). Amongst other things, they organized a booth for wooden toys manufactured by Pratt (*Do-With Toys*™). Three months later, the exhibit was held in Chicago too: the Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, in the Coliseum (May 11 to 15).

By 1910, population congestion in New York City had become appalling. City authorities established a special commission to investigate. Their *Report of the New York City Commission on Congestion of Population* lists Johnson's housemate Helen Marot as one of the individuals who appeared before the commission. Marot testified in her capacity as Secretary of the New York branch of the WTUL (New York City Commission, 1911, p. 272; see: Staring & Aldridge, 2015). Around the same time, Helen Marot's sister Mary published "A Partial Remedy For School Congestion," an article on overcrowding of schools related to the work of visiting teachers (Marot, 1910; see: Staring, Aldridge, & Bouchard, 2014).

In 1911, private as well as municipal activities were instigated to combat school congestion. For example, several hundred representatives of schools and religious and civic groups of lower Manhattan districts organized as the *School and Civic League of the Ninth District* to deal with population and school congestion problems. Interestingly, Johnson chaired the Programme Committee of the newly established League that, it seems, met once or twice a year (*Evening Post*, 1911; *School*, 1911, 1912a-b). In February 1913, at a School and Civic League meeting at the Hudson Park library branch, both Forbes and Johnson, as visiting teachers "for the district, told some of their experiences" (*Branch Library News*, 1914).

> Miss Johnson…advocated closer co-operation between the school and the home and more intensive work. She expressed the hope that the schools would take up social science work similar to that which has proved satisfactory to the hospitals. Miss Forbes…cited special instances showing that much of the work of the visiting teacher can not be done by the grade teacher, or attendance officer. (*School*, 1914).

While Harriet Forbes in the spring and summer of 1911 was on a WTUL committee of home visitors to establish how victim families could be helped best after the infamous March 25, 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire (*New York Call*, 1911; Staring & Aldridge, 2015), Harriet M. Johnson was attending a summer class in Binet testing procedures "for the training of teachers of backward children of the University of New York," supervised by the New Jersey Training School for Feeble-Minded Girls and Boys at Vineland, New Jersey under direction of Henry Goddard who had introduced the Binet and Simon tests in the U.S.A. in 1908 (see: *Training School*, 1912, p. 77; Zenderland, 1998, pp. 137-142). During her summer course, on June 7, Johnson together with a fellow student visited 'classes for backward children' in two schools in Philadelphia. They wrote a report about the visit, describing conversations with the Principals of the Samuel

J. Randall School and the Wharton School. They also outlined encounters with a number of students in two classes in the Wharton School. The following sketch typifies their inquisitiveness.

> One boy of ten could not read a word last fall, could not talk perfectly, and had been given up as hopeless by the regular teacher. Since last September he has been in this special class, and was now able to read from his primer. He was most pleased when called upon [by his teacher] to bring his book and read nearly a page to us. By Binet test he ranked four last September. We tested him and found that he was now five mentally. The Principal said that she believed that when this child was fifteen he would test fifteen…As we looked at the little fellow and his record we were inclined to feel that the teacher was too optimistic concerning his future. (Johnson & Steinbach, 1911, p. 91).

Even though the women were equally enthused by what they saw in the Wharton School, they still retained doubts. "In both of the classes we visited we noticed the shambling gait and under-sized physique characteristic of the feeble-minded" (p. 92). They did not further specify hesitations regarding the final outcome of the work done in the Philadelphia special 'classes for backward children.'

After certification, Johnson began using her learnt Binet testing skills in her daily visiting teacher work. For example, after Caroline Pratt founded Play School in September 1913, Johnson *bineted* the Play School students in April 1914 — meaning, she administered Binet tests to the children (after Alfred Binet).

1913-1915: The Gary Plan

Visiting teachers were a novel sight on the educational horizon. The *Geneva Daily Times* (1913) called them a new type of "school ma'ams." Promoting the social work of visiting teachers by the PEA — inclusive the administering of Binet tests — paid off. In 1912, for instance, PEA visiting teachers Mary Flexner, Eleanor Johnson, and Harriet M. Johnson were among the experts at the 1912 Conference of Charities and Correction held at Orange, New Jersey to "demonstrate efficient methods and effective achievements in the educational 'treatment' of feeble-minded and otherwise 'defective' children" (*Survey*, 1912, p. 115). Later, Flexner (1913) noted the broad success of visiting teachers in an April 1913 PEA report. By the time the PEA employed almost ten visiting teachers, that is, around 1913, the NYC Board of Education began using the services of visiting teachers too (*The Survey*, 1913).

Another focus of Johnson's PEA work became the promoting of the Gary Plan, or Wirt Plan — named after its originator William Wirt of Gary, Indiana. During the mid-1910s, books, pamphlets, reports, and magazine and newspaper articles about a large-scale educational experiment in Gary, Indiana fed a need for background information to help understand a heated debate over a proposal by NYC Mayor John Purroy Mitchel to address school congestion by introducing a Gary-type system to the city's public schools. The prolonged 1914-1917 debate, turning into an unfeigned school war in 1917, was perhaps the first to be nationwide reported in newspapers, magazines, and journals. Most informative for NYC residents were local newspaper articles and bulletins published by the PEA. In order to review Johnson's contribution to the Gary Plan discussion, the following will briefly review its historical background.

Figure 2: William A. Wirt. (Jeroen Staring Collection).

William Wirt and the Gary Plan

William Albert Wirt (1874-1938) was born near Markle, Indiana, where he attended public schools. In 1892, Wirt entered De Pauw University in Greencastle, Indiana. He graduated with a M.A. degree in Political Science, did post-graduate work at two universities in Germany, and studied educational methods in several European countries. Later he also was a student of John Dewey's at the University of Chicago. After a teaching assignment in Redkey, Indiana, he first became Superintendent of Schools in Bluffton, Indiana before he, in 1907, accepted the post of Superintendent of Schools in Gary, Indiana — a steel industry town founded the previous year and named after its founder Judge Elbert A. Gary of the United States Steel Corporation.

Wirt's plan, implemented since 1908 in three of Gary's nine new schools, was also known as the Gary Plan, the Gary System, the Work-Study-Play System, the Platoon System, the Duplicate Schools Plan, the Two-School Plan, and the Double School Plan. It intended to use the whole school most efficiently. In order to fully utilize school buildings and the equipment, students were split up into two platoons, or two groups, in fact: two schools within the one school. Briefly and schematically, while School X students were busy in the school's academic classrooms, School Y students were receiving art instruction, or making homework in the library or auditorium or in a museum, or were receiving physical education in the gymnasium, swimming pool, or on the playground, or manual training and industrial arts in shops. School X students swapped places with School Y students in the afternoon. In contrast to the majority of primary and secondary students elsewhere, students in Gary Plan schools received decent pre-vocational education and physical education, and were therefore "exposed to many work-related activities, socialization experiences,

and planned physical exercise, in addition to the basic academic subjects" (Thiede, 2010, p. 397). Wirt defended his philosophy in the *American Review of Reviews* (1915):

> If you want to create a complete child world within the adult world, you must allow the children to be kept wholesomely busy at work, study, and play to make the right sort of men and women of them. School cannot do this alone. The parks, the libraries, the churches, the playgrounds must all work with the school to accomplish this desired end, and the school is best suited to coordinate these several agencies' work. (p. 589).

Wirt's plan flourished well in Gary. Schools in other parts of the country began experimenting with the program too. Bourne (1916) mentioned schools in Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania.

In March 1914, Harriet M. Johnson visited Gary, Indiana in the company of her PEA co-worker Lucy Sprague Mitchell. Johnson's (1914) report *The Schools of Gary* appeared as a PEA Bulletin early in July. She opened by stating that "Gary, with its 40,000 inhabitants, represents in its school situation the essential interests and problems of any large municipality. Furthermore, the immigrant problem is not pressing, but varies quite as much in Gary as it does in New York City" (p. 1), meaning some schools had 10% foreign born students, others as much as 60%. After citing Wirt saying that children are born investigators, Johnson stressed that the Gary Schools encourage student initiative, both in and outside the actual school building. She found Gary students alert, self-controlled and, indeed, full of initiative. Even though the schools paid attention to both vocational and cultural subjects, Johnson thought that there were "gaps here and there…but the general plan is sound and its execution is well on its way" (p. 2).

In spite of this, Johnson definitely stumbled over the fact that in Gary schools there was not "enough provision for the study of the individual child" (p. 2). Still, she thought the fault was not in the Wirt Plan, so it could "be met by decreasing the size of the classes [of exactly 40 students per class] and increasing the number of teachers" (p. 2), even though she doubted the practicability of her prognosis. Yet, it is a theme that was to become central in Johnson's attitude towards schools in general, and kindergartens and nursery schools in particular. For instance, only two years later, in 1916, "the need of studying the individuality of the child" (*New York Times*, 1916) was the exact theme of her speech at the First National Conference of Visiting Teachers and Home and School Visitors (see below)!

In her Gary schools report, Johnson (1914) further depicted the immediate physical environment of two of the Gary Schools she had observed: a kind of School Park had been created surrounding the schools, including gardens, playgrounds, baseball fields, and basketball and tennis grounds. The report also sketches the interior of the schools, including an art auditorium, gymnasium, science laboratories, music studios, stores, a bank, a day nursery, and even repair shops. Next, she drew attention to Wirt's plan itself, under four separate headings: the system, flexibility, efficiency, and co-operation — these will not be reproduced in this case study since reviewing the topics would lead into details.

Of importance here is Johnson's paragraph comparing the NYC Visiting Teacher program and the Gary Register Teacher program:

> The functioning of such visitors, as conceived by the Public Education Association of New York City, is the treatment of cases of maladjustment to school, home and neighborhood conditions, their adjustment by school modification or outside co-operation, and the consequent prevention of more serious difficulties. In schools organized on such a social basis as those in Gary, these needs are recognized and anticipated in large measure by the regular school activities…The children in each [Gary] district are assigned, irrespectively of age or grade, to a grade teacher who is called a register teacher. She meets her group once a week for general conference and gives out their monthly reports. Failure in self-control or scholarship, irregular attendance, lateness and other questions of school maladjustment are reported to her…The plan is rather new and is not completely worked out, but it presents large possibilities and opportunity for future development, and is particularly interesting on account of the idea it embodies of a special department of social service as an intrinsic part of the school organization. (p. 8).

In June 1914, NYC Mayor Mitchel made a trip to Gary too. Yet, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (1914) found that he perhaps could have done better by merely reading Johnson's report:

> [Wirt's] schools are well worth a visit, but it was not absolutely necessary for [Mayor Mitchel's] party to go there, as Harriet M. Johnson…has made a study of the Gary Schools and has prepared a full report of what she saw and heard, and this report will be issued in print form in a few days.

Johnson's PEA Bulletin *The Schools of Gary* not only commanded attention of journalists aspiring to advice Mayor Mitchel, but also of many involved in educational reform, especially within the PEA. Head of the PEA Vocational Education Survey Alice Barrows Fernandez and her assistant Elizabeth Roemer were among PEA workers influenced by Johnson's report (Staring, Aldridge, & Bouchard, 2014). Roemer became so intrigued by the Gary schools that she resigned her work in August 1914, and began teaching in Gary a month later. At first she taught in the middle grades, but in 1916 she became director of registering children, keeping track of truancy and organizing a scheme of visiting teachers in Gary.

In November 1914, Barrows Fernandez (1914), a former Dewey student, announced plans for an experiment with the Gary system in a public school in Manhattan. NYC Mayor Mitchel must have pleased her, because in October he already hired Wirt for a week every month of the school year to combat public school congestion in the city. Wirt first introduced his plan in two utterly overcrowded schools in the Bronx. As a consequence of swift achievements in introducing the plan in both schools, the Board of Education asked Wirt in December to implement the program in eleven more elementary schools in the Bronx. Next, in winter 1915, Barrows Fernandez was appointed Special Secretary to Wirt in New York City. She began writing flaming articles for the *New York Tribune*, later using her twice-weekly column "What Is The Gary Plan?" in the same newspaper to unrestrictedly propagandize the Gary Plan.

Note that as of January 1915, the PEA as a whole began officially endorsing the NYC Board of Education's proposition to "Garyize" schools in the Bronx. Not quite half a year later, in May 1915, a conference upon introducing the Gary Plan in the city's public schools was held in the East Hall of the Russell Sage Foundation Building. Harriet M. Johnson gave an outline of the plan and spoke about her 1914 study of the Gary schools she had investigated. Barrows Fernandez and Wirt also lauded the plan (*Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1915; *Daily Standard Union*, 1915; *New York Times*, 1915a). As well, "Professor John Dewey of Columbia University sent a letter urging the adaptation of the Gary plan to New York's schools" (*New York Times*, 1915b).

Figure 3: Allice Barrows (in swivel chair) and William A. Wirt (far right). (Jeroen Staring Collection).

Next, in June, the Board of Education finally approved the reorganization of additional eleven schools in the Bronx. From that exact moment onwards the PEA put full pressure on public opinion to embrace the "Garyizing" of congested public schools, while others within the PEA hierarchy took over Johnson's role of promoting the Gary Plan (Staring, 2013b). For instance, PEA Director Howard Nudd eulogized the plan time and again during public meetings organized by the PEA. He also put out a series of letters about Wirt's plan to the editors of various NYC newspapers. Later, the PEA published a number of evaluating reports about Wirt's plan, and even issued a Bulletin with Wirt's official reports to the Board of Education (Wirt, 1916).

1916: Polly Forbes-Johnson's Birthyear, Conference of Visiting Teachers

1916 was an extremely busy year for Harriet Forbes and Harriet M. Johnson. Unquestionably number 1 in importance to them was their adoption of a baby girl, born on April 7, 1916 in Milo, Maine. The girl was baptized Mary Pauline (Polly) Forbes-Johnson (1916-2002). Johnson became the girl's legal parent. Polly formed the origin of what is called 'The Polly Log' (now Series C of the SG1 Harriet M. Johnson Papers in the Archives of Bank Street College of Education, New York City). During Polly's childhood years, both of her parents regularly took notes of their observations of her physical, psychological, mental, and social development. The documents (also called 'Polly Files') formed a foundation for Johnson's later ideas related to nursery school education. Quite understandably, Polly attended City and Country School.

Forbes and Johnson raised Polly in their two-mother home. In June 1933, Polly was among a group of students who travelled to Europe to study "international living" in Germany during two months, living with German families, making friendships with Germans in general, participating in study and sport, like taking a canoe trip or trying mountain climbing, and lastly, and certainly not insignificant, gaining "command of the Hitler regime" (*Sun*, 1933b; *Syracuse Journal*, 1933). They would also for a short time travel in France and Austria. In September 1934, after the death of her mother Harriet M. Johnson, Polly began the four-year progressive education program at Bennington College — opened in 1932 in Bennington, Vermont (*Balliston Spa Daily Journal*, 1934). In 1936 and 1937, newspapers wrote about Polly Forbes-Johnson as the first "Girl Motorcyclist" who made a six-week solo tour to South America on her Indian Scout (e.g., *Elmira Star-Gazette*, 1936). On May 28, 1937 she was married to Charles M. Storey, Jr. Later, she would graduate from the Clarence White School of Photography in New York City, eventually becoming a celebrated photographer.

Secondly, in May 1916, Johnson, together with Lucy Sprague Mitchell and her husband Wesley, founded the Bureau of Educational Experiments (Cenedella, 1996, 1998; Cuffaro, 2012). This new venue in Johnson's life will be reviewed in the next section of this case study (see below).

Thirdly, in early July 1916, Johnson gave a presentation on the coordinating activities of visiting teachers at the 1916 Ninth Congress of the American School Hygiene Association, July 4-8, in New York City. She sketched the following mal-coordinated, chaotic situation of support agencies in schools:

> The "whole child," who is the educator's special problem, is in danger of dismemberment at the hands of the teachers, largely interested in his capacity for learning, the physician, dealing mainly with his physical condition, and the psychologist, studying his mental development. To contribute to the complexity of the situation comes often the social worker or the relief agent, acquainted with him in relation to family or economic problems. All these agents work independently. (Johnson, 1917, p. 196).

In contrast, she suggested cooperation under lead of a visiting teacher, explaining,

> Children are reported to the visiting teacher for classroom difficulties such as scholarship, conduct or attendance below standard, for social maladjustments such as home or neighborhood conditions which seem adverse, or for mental or physical difficulties which do not come within the jurisdiction of the departments of education or of health. It becomes the duty of the visiting teacher to follow such difficulties back as far as possible to their causes; her activities consist of

> effort toward the removal of such causes and the restoration of the child to normal relationship with his school environment. (p. 197).

After drawing case studies of two children, Johnson asserted, "It is not enough to establish a casual connection between the classroom and the social agents in the school. There ought to be an active current of intercommunication directed by an intentional policy" (pp. 199-200).

Lastly, at the same time, from July 5 to 7, the PEA organized the First National Conference of Visiting Teachers and Home and School Visitors, held in New York City (*Evening Post*, 1916). The National Education Association mothered the Conference (*Journal of Education*, 1916). Former PEA worker Roemer (see above) delivered an address on visiting teachers in Gary — called 'Register Teachers' (Schoff & Lombard, 1916). And Johnson spoke on "The Visiting Teacher," stressing "the need of studying the individuality of the child" (*New York Times*, 1916). In fact, she said the visiting teacher's tasks were "To recognize, to study, and to respect the individuality of the child; to this end to establish informal relationships with him; and to adapt conditions of the home, school, and society to his needs" (Schoff & Lombard, 1916, p. 294). The actual text of her speech is missing.

The July 1916 PEA Conference had to prove that the visiting teacher program, begun in 1905 by Marot, Johnson and Forbes when working together at Hartley House, was flourishing a decade later. Yet, until that time, it was hardly known beyond New York City Boroughs. Its road to becoming a nationwide success was a long one. The First National Conference of Visiting Teachers was the first step.

Simultaneous to the Conference, the PEA launched *The Visiting Teacher in New York City*, compiled by Harriet M. Johnson during the previous two years — as eloquently stated by PEA Director Nudd in his introductory words (1916, p. *ix*). We will not at length review Johnson's book — as we will not comprehensively review her other books, bulletin texts, and articles either. It suffices, we think, that we pinpoint one interesting feature: Johnson (1916) again stressed the necessity of extensively studying the individuality of children. She found that visiting teachers first and foremost should be particularly competent observers of individual children and their behavior in differing environments.

> In examining the work of the visiting teachers, it seems to fall into two rather definite lines. First in importance comes the analysis of individual children. This is essentially the work of the visiting teacher in the effort to trace back the school difficulty to its cause and to make adjustments that will place the child in a more sympathetic relationship with his school environment. It involves observation of the child in school and outside, a knowledge of conditions that are affecting him, made possible by frequent and informal interviews held as friend and adviser rather than as coercive and authoritative agent, and it very frequently means securing the coöperation of other persons or organizations. All this work has, however, one end, that of understanding the child and his needs and of helping him get the full value of his school course…The second phase of the visiting teacher's activities has grown out of the need her acquaintance with the children has shown. It is work with groups or with the school as a whole, in contrast to the intensive study of individuals. (pp. 6-7).

In *The Visiting Teacher in New York City*, Johnson sketched illustrative case studies of children who had received help from and were backed by visiting teachers, pointing up the correct use of record forms, and delivering an extended analysis of all cases reported in the year 1913-1914, discussing and tabulating, for instance, age, grade, physical condition, nativity, and family status distribution correlated to reasons for reporting and investigation. Johnson also arranged in tables the PEA visiting teacher work for the years 1912-1915, at the same time analyzing it. Lastly, she conversed the needs of children in one specific school "in a very neglected district" (p. 82), again sketching several illustrative case studies.

1916: The Founding of The Bureau of Educational Experiments

In late 1913, Harriet M. Johnson, in the company of her PEA co-worker Lucy Sprague Mitchell, first visited her former housemate Caroline Pratt's Play School, an experimental nursing school/kindergarten co-founded by Pratt and Edna Louise Smith (1885-1922) in September of that year. Later, Sprague Mitchell (1953) would write, "I kept visiting Caroline Pratt's school [in 1914], becoming more and more convinced that it

was only through an experimental approach in such a school that I could learn what children were really like. I wanted to be a part of this experiment" (p. 251). Her interest in "what children were really like" had a history. In 1911, Lucy Sprague, up until then single, took a short sabbatical from her position as Dean of Women at the University of California, Berkeley. Sprague travelled to New York City and worked as an intern with a number of prominent women in education and social settlement. In her autobiographical *Two Lives* (1953), she wrote of her internship in public schools that "This is the work for me…Public education is the most constructive attack on social problems" (p. 210).

In 1913, after marrying economist Wesley C. Mitchell and moving to Manhattan, she, now Lucy Sprague Mitchell, began to work as a volunteer for the PEA under the direction of Harriet M. Johnson. An extension of her Berkeley work as Dean of female students that included giving pioneering courses in sex education to female university students seems to have constituted part of her PEA activities. In October 1913, she made a presentation on teaching sex education at a meeting of the Society of Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis. An article by Sprague Mitchell (1914) in *The Survey* likely parallels her 1913 presentation, proposing novel means to implement sex education program in elementary schools. Little more than a year later, Sprague Mitchell (1916) reported first results of the proposed instruction. She was also present at the October 1915 meeting of the Society of Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis, again discussing matters of sex education (see: Gregory, 1916; Leland, 1915; Wile, 1915).

Throughout 1914, Sprague Mitchell assisted Harriet M. Johnson in Public School 3, and also collaborated with other PEA workers, for example with Binet testing pioneer Elisabeth Irwin (Boardman, 1917; Franklin, 1919; Irwin, 1913, 1914, 1916, 1919, 1920; Irwin & Marks, 1924; *New York Tribune*, 1919b; O'Han, 2009; Staring, 2013b). She administered mental tests on schoolchildren, made home investigations together with PEA visiting teachers, and gathered physical data of the children by measuring the senses, length, weight, nutrition status, blood pressure, *etc*. It seems, for a brief time in 1914, Sprague Mitchell has also worked at the Department of Mentally Retarded Children of the New York City Board of Education, under Elizabeth Farrell (Davis, 1967). Yet, mid-1914, she accepted the post of Chairman of the PEA Committee on Hygiene of School Children.

Next, in December 1914, at the annual meeting of the National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes, held in New York City, Sprague Mitchell read a paper suggesting psychological testing of children through a "Psychological Clinic for Normal School Children" (*Daily Standard Union*, 1914). In 1915, following up on her Binet testing experience, she wrote a proposal to establish a clinic to administer psychological tests to schoolchildren, which was funded as Psychological Survey in the same year. Note that she wrote the proposal in consultation with, among others, Harriet M. Johnson. In that same year, she was also on the Sub-Committee of the Women's Advisory Committee on the Training of Defective Children at the New York University (*New York University Bulletin*, 1916). In the fall, Sprague Mitchell began, together with her staff, working out of her own Greenwich Village home as newly elected head of the PEA Psychological Survey. Staff members were PEA worker Evelyn Dewey (Staring & Aldridge, 2014a), PEA Visiting Teacher Harriet Forbes, PEA Visiting Teacher Eleanor Johnson, and psychologist and mental testing pioneer Frederick Ellis (Staring, 2013b). In winter 1916, Harriet M. Johnson also joined her staff.

By the end of 1915, the PEA Psychological Survey staff came together with Sprague Mitchell's husband Wesley, Binet testing pioneer PEA worker Elisabeth Irwin, PEA Visiting Teacher Harriet M. Johnson, sex education Special Teacher Laura Garrett, Secretary of the Fairhope League in support of Marietta Johnson's Alabama School of Organic Education Jean Lee Hunt (Staring, 2013b, 2014), and long-time socialist friends and former house mates of Harriet M. Johnson: Helen Marot and Caroline Pratt (Staring, 2013a-b; Staring & Aldridge, 2015) — discussing an idea to establish and organize an educational clearinghouse. They called themselves the Bureau of School Information.

In March 1916, an aunt of Sprague Mitchell's died, leaving her daughter Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge tremendous wealth. Coolidge offered to use part of her inheritance to support the plans for the envisaged Bureau of School Information. Following a meeting of Coolidge and Sprague Mitchell, the clearinghouse planners came up with a new scheme. The renewed plans made Coolidge commit the first ten forthcoming annual dividends of her stocks, amounting up to $50,000 a year, to the organization to be established. In May 1916, then, Lucy Sprague Mitchell, her husband Wesley Clair Mitchell, and Harriet M. Johnson founded the Bureau of Educational Experiments. Johnson became the Bureau's General Secretary. Half a year later, the Bureau had already opened offices at 70 Fifth Avenue, including a reading room with

hundreds of educational books, bulletins, reports, etc., available to educational professionals and to the lay public. The Bureau strove to be a simple, cooperative, flexible and democratic organization, its aims being both to collect and share information about progressive education, and to conduct, promote, and support educational experiments (*Journal of Education*, 1917; *School*, 1917).

1916: The First Year of The Bureau of Educational Experiments

The majority of the women who became Bureau of Educational Experiments charter members were former PEA workers who during the previous two years had vigorously supported the "Garyizing" of New York City's public schools. For instance, in April 1916, merely one month before the Bureau was established, PEA workers and later Bureau charter members Sprague Mitchell and Eleanor Johnson became officers of the Gary School League that endorsed the Gary Plan to reorganize congested NYC public schools (Staring, 2013b). Each chaired a Gary School League standing committee for one year. On the other hand, one month after its establishment, the Bureau already hired a field worker to collect all accessible information regarding the Gary Plan. Within a quarter of a year, she put together the most complete collection of Gary Plan material available. The Bureau distributed a *Gary Bibliography* (now missing), written by former PEA worker Elsa Ueland (Staring, Aldridge, & Bouchard, 2014).

The Bureau also hired a researcher and artist to put together an exhibit consisting of fifteen screens detailing characteristics of the Gary Plan. The screens were exhibited at public meetings informing the public of plans to reorganize the overcrowded NYC public school system. After NYC Mayor Mitchel failed to win re-election in November 1917 and the Wirt Plan came to a halt, the Bureau withdrew the screens from further exhibition. The screens were stored. In 1918, William Wirt accepted transporting them to Gary to be on display in one of the schools in Gary, Indiana.

It is apparent: throughout 1916 and 1917, Bureau charter members supported principles of the Gary Plan as well as the Gary School League. Most interestingly in this respect: John Dewey, promoter of "Garyizing" NYC public schools, and William Wirt, originator of the Gary Plan who headed the inner-city "Garyizing" of NYC public schools, served as the Bureau's *honorary members*! It looks as if all 1916 and 1917 Gary Plan ties came together in the Bureau of Educational Experiments' offices!

Figure 4: John Dewey. (Jeroen Staring Collection).

The Bureau's first scheduling consisted of listing subjects of interest in a number of education-related fields: teaching (31 topics); health (14 topics); administrative problems (7 topics), and lastly, school and community (24 topics). The many subjects included Gary school methods, discipline in schools, the visiting teachers program, and Laura Garrett's sex education scheme (Staring, 2013b), but also F. Matthias Alexander's muscular coordination and breathing habits changing procedures (Staring, Bouchard, & Aldridge, 2014), as well as, surprisingly, Marietta Johnson's educational principles (Staring, 2014). In order to narrow down the 76 topics list, Bureau charter members and a number of interested outsiders were called to write a more or less detailed plan for research or otherwise. These were handed in during the fall of 1916 and the winter of 1917. Among the plans were Harriet Forbes' *Proposed Study of Nutrition*, Harriet M. Johnson's *Plan for Bureau to put in next year's program*, and Caroline Pratt's *A Country Summer Play School*.

Johnson's *Plan for Bureau to put in next year's program*, kept in the Archives of City and Country School, New York City, brought forward a suggestion to found an experimental laboratory nursery school for pre-school children:

> I should like to see the Bureau undertake an educational experiment with children under school age. The purpose of such an experiment should be to answer some of the questions regarding the mental and physical life of young children which are constantly being suggested by problems arising in their school lives, and to make a contribution to the scientific study of pre-school habit forming or education. It should extend over a long term of years and to it could be related all other experiments conducted by the organization. (p. 1).

A number of informal conferences — for Bureau charter members only — were held during the winter months of 1917 in order to determine which plans were practicable. Topics included industrial education, vocational guidance, the use of dramatization in schoolwork, toys and play in education, nature study and social hygiene, rural schools, and summer camps. Bureau charter members thereby gained an overview of subjects for further research, at the same time turning themselves in involved professionals. Of the almost two dozen plans handed in, only a few survived scrutiny. Plans in the form of requests for financial help did not gain any positive evaluation and were turned down.

1917 & 1918: The Bureau of Educational Experiments

As stated above, Bureau of Educational Experiments charter members approved a number of plans and reconsidered others. For instance, *Plan Submitted to the Bureau of Educational Experiments*, that is, Sprague Mitchell's plan to investigate F. M. Alexander's muscular coordination and breathing habits changing procedures was not approved. *Conference on the Educational Aspects of Military Training in Public Schools*, a plan handed in by Bureau charter member Pratt's companion Helen Marot, was also turned down. However, the Bureau requested Marot to write instead a specified plan on recruiting city boys to do farm labour in the countryside. Marot's new plan did lead to an actual experiment, a farm cadet camp set up in summer 1917 in Stanley, near Geneva in upstate New York, administered by the Bureau (Staring, 2013a-b; Staring & Aldridge, 2015). And while Pratt's plan for *A Country Summer Play School* received more or less immediate approval, Forbes' *Proposed Study of Nutrition* to start a nutrition experiment in a NYC public school was only approved in a later, second instance — in 1917. Johnson's *Plan for Bureau to put in next year's program* to found an experimental laboratory nursery school for pre-school children, on the other hand, was not approved until late 1918. Between 1917 and 1919, several circumstances had to change drastically, and had to become more favourable, before Johnson's plan would be approved by the end of 1918, and would eventually be effectual in September 1919.

Firstly, Lucy Sprague Mitchell's ties with Caroline Pratt and her Play School had become very close since her first visit to the school in 1913. In the fall of 1915, Sprague Mitchell offered to house part of the expanding Play School, if needed. In 1916, the promise turned reality when the Mitchell family moved to 15 Washington Square North, and Play school moved into an old stable behind the new Mitchell home — with a separate entrance at 14 MacDougal Alley. The Mitchells converted the stable into a school with three classrooms, and transformed the back yard into a decent play-yard. In summer 1917, Sprague Mitchell bought two buildings at 16-18 West 8th Street (*New York Herald*, 1917b). Since about November 1917, 16 West 8th Street housed the offices of the Bureau of Educational Experiments. As of January 1918, 18 West 8th Street provided accommodation for a number of classes of the rapidly expanding Play School. Even so, until the fall of 1918, two groups of children would remain attending school at 206 West 13th Street — that is, at Marot and Pratt's townhouse.

After the founding of the Bureau of Educational Experiments in spring 1916, Bureau members began making plans to turn Play School into the Bureau's laboratory kindergarten and elementary school. Throughout 1917 and 1918, however, plans by Bureau charter member Caroline Pratt and her companion Helen Marot to found a pre-vocational school annex 'Toy Shop' manufacturing wooden toys obstructed the further planning of a Bureau laboratory kindergarten and elementary school. Marot and Pratt's plans, by extension, also obstructed planning a possible founding of a Bureau laboratory nursery school. The late 1918

collapse of plans to found a pre-vocational school annex toy-manufacturing shop made room for other Bureau-backed initiatives (Staring, 2013a-b; Staring & Aldridge, 2015).

Secondly, after the U.S. entered World War I, many changes took place, on a national level, but also at the offices of the Bureau of Educational Experiments. On April 2, 1917, politically active and militant women from New York City and other cities celebrated "the seating of the first woman ever elected to Congress in the United States" Republican *and* pacifist Jeannette Rankin of Montana at a "suffrage breakfast" at the Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. (*Evening Star*, 1917; *New York Herald*, 1917a). Among them were Harriet Forbes, feminist educator and journalist Henrietta Rodman (Staring, 2013b), biographer Katharine Anthony, and her life long companion, PEA worker, Binet testing pioneer, and Bureau charter member Elisabeth Irwin. Among the women forming the committee in charge were Anthony and Irwin (*Evening Post*, 1917; O'Han, 2009). Four days later, the feminist and suffragist anti-war fairy tale was over. On April 6, 1917, the United States declared war on Germany. As a consequence, conditions leading to hunger, malnutrition, undernourishment, and related maladies like tuberculosis in inner cities seriously worsened (*New York Times*, 1917). Already in spring 1917, on behalf of the Bureau, Harriet Forbes interviewed Tufts University Professor of Pediatrics William R. P. Emerson to set up and supervise a nutrition experiment in New York City. Early in 1918, then, the Bureau hired Emerson's services (Emerson, 1919a-b, 1922; Emerson & Manny, 1920). The first Bureau-backed publications announcing cooperation between the Bureau and Emerson appeared in the media in June 1918, referring to preparatory work to begin nutrition experiments in Public School 64, a large NYC public school (Uzzell, 1918a-b). First results of this nutrition experiment at Public School 64 were encouraging. The Bureau was capable of carrying out a relatively large, long-term experiment involving many children as well as researchers, an indication that the Bureau seemed to be in a position to lead other long-term studies as well. In 1919, Bureau hired psychologist David Mitchell (1919) published a first interim report; a year later he and Harriet Forbes jointly published a second interim report (Mitchell & Forbes, 1920). Both reports received positive media reviews. In 1921, a final well-documented account of the complete 1918-1921 nutrition researches under Bureau lead in Public School 64 appeared in book format, *Health Education and the Nutrition Class* (Hunt, Johnson, & Lincoln, 1921).

Thirdly, since March 1918, Sprague Mitchell served on the administrative council of an organization to open day nurseries and maternity clinics under the aegis of the Henry Street Settlement (Goewey, 1918). While World War I hardships aggravated inner-city public health and child welfare circumstances, she experienced the all-pervasive need for well-organized nursery schools. Around this time, Harriet M. Johnson must have begun working as an adviser to a day nursery started by "neighborhood mothers" (Biber, Sprague Mitchell, Stanton, & Woodcock, 1936, p. *xv*). Its location is not known, nor the period of time that Johnson worked there. On December 2, 1918, following the November 1918 armistice and following her grown understanding of mother and child health care facilities as well as day nurseries, Sprague Mitchell addressed an one-page internal Bureau of Educational Experiments communication "To Every Member of the Working Council" (kept in the Archives of Bank Street College of Education, New York City), informing them,

> I have a strong feeling that neither as a group nor as individuals are we any longer aiming at the formation of a laboratory school…[I propose] to start a laboratory school. Concretely I propose that we find someone to undertake for us experimental classes of children, say from eight to twelve years old…I suggest the middle ages for the children because the Play School is experimenting with younger children and Miss [Helen] Marot's plan for a [pre-vocational] school is for older children while the middle field is not covered by any general experiment with which we are concerned…In addition to this I propose we seriously consider starting a class of very young children — say from one to two to three.

Early in 1919, then, the three developments pointed out above were rapidly gaining momentum. More and more, Play School came into focus as the most likely candidate for becoming the Bureau's laboratory kindergarten and elementary school for children up to twelve years, thereby fulfilling Sprague Mitchell's first wish. The early 1919 collapse of Marot and Pratt's plan to found a pre-vocational school annex 'Toy Shop' manufacturing wooden toys only aided the decision making process regarding expanding Play School, that is, concerning adding 'middle field' classes of children of eight to twelve years old (see: Staring &

Aldridge, 2015). Further, the nutrition research at Public School 64 became a centre of research activities around which Bureau management and planning was developing efficiently, nourishing hopes that the Bureau was at least competent enough to administer one laboratory school, perhaps even two laboratory schools. Lastly, Sprague Mitchell's inspirational words of beginning classes for children between eight and twelve as well as beginning a class of pre-school children not only revitalized a 1917-1918 Bureau desire of opening a laboratory kindergarten and primary school, it also re-energized Harriet M. Johnson's late 1916 *Plan for Bureau to put in next year's program*, that is, her proposal to establish a — laboratory — day nursery managed by the Bureau. In fact, Sprague Mitchell's December 1918 ideas inspired Bureau members to begin planning to open two laboratory schools: a laboratory nursery school and the expanded laboratory Play School.

Nursery School: Pioneer Research

In April 1919, Play School became City and Country School, the first step on the path to becoming the Bureau's official laboratory kindergarten and elementary school. In September 1919, when City and Country School opened its doors again after the summer break, now officially as the Bureau's laboratory kindergarten and elementary school, Harriet M. Johnson in chorus opened the doors of the first specialized experimental laboratory nursery school in the United States, "in rented rooms in a house on Varick Street" (Sprague Mitchell, 1953, p. 280). Note that Johnson's life-long companion Harriet Forbes at the time was a teacher at Pratt's City and Country School (City & Country School, 1919, p. 3). Three years later, Johnson (1922) would write in her Bureau Bulletin *A Nursery School Experiment*:

> During the first two years our quarters were the two lower floors of old houses, with outside porches for sleeping. The house arrangement was for the most part very satisfactory. It gave a very spacious indoor play-room which could be divided when the children needed to be separated; it also gave us extra sleeping space since half the biog room was adequate for either play or sleep, and an additional room on the lower floor could be used either for dining or for an overflow play-room. (p. 8).

What was certainly unique about Johnson's Nursery School was the fact that the Bureau psychologist and the Bureau physician kept careful records of their findings related to mental testing, health status, nutrition status, etc., of the Nursery School children (Biber, 1972b; Sprague Mitchell, 1922; Vandewalker, 1923). *Health News* (1922) reported,

> In establishing the Nursery School, [the Bureau's] aim has been to place the child in an environment planned, so far as possible, to eliminate the factors leading to [physical, mental and social] handicaps, and to observe him at an early age with a view to accumulating further knowledge as to the best conditions for development…The development of motor coordination, symptoms of fatigue and its causes, irritability and other expressions of maladjustment are being studied by the physician and psychologist who are in charge of the research work of the Bureau. During the period they are in the Nursery School, the children are under the immediate care and observation of an educator who has had much experience in this type of work, and who is the member of the group to whom the concept of such a school is due. Much information is secured informally and casually in connection with the current work of the school. A daily detailed record is made of each child…The Nursery School has its own kitchen, open-air sleeping space, dressing room and toilet, roof garden and out-of-door shelter. (pp. 95-96).

Another unique Nursery School feature — as also observed by *Health News* — was the fact that a "daily detailed record [was] made of each child." Until around 1922 both Bureau laboratory schools (City and Country School and Nursery School) had unrestricted access to school recorder Mary Marot (Johnson, 1922) — former Hartley House settlement worker, former WTUL officer, former PEA visiting teacher, and now the Bureau's record keeper (Staring, 2013b; Staring, Aldridge, & Bouchard, 2014). Not only was she the originator of the visiting teacher concept together with Johnson and Forbes, but she also became the foremost designer of record forms in use by PEA visiting teachers to register their findings. In *The Visiting Teacher in New York City*, Johnson (1916) highly admired Marot's record forms as suggestive guides "for a

visitor beginning the work, and in the hands of a director who understands the possibilities and limitations of visiting teacher service, it is a most valuable means of estimating the efficiency and resourcefulness of the members of the staff" (p. 19).

Of course, similar record forms for keeping track of observations of daily behavior and experiences of Nursery School children were particularly welcome to study the physical, psychological, emotional, interactional, and social growth of each individual child.

In 1922, the Bureau of Educational Experiments issued its twelfth and last Bulletin: Mary Marot's (1922) *School Records*, detailing record forms developed by Marot herself since March 1918 while working as the Bureau's recorder at City and Country School, Nursery School, and several public elementary schools, among them Public School 64. The booklet has numerous examples of notes made by Marot by means of the forms used in the schools mentioned. Note that Caroline Pratt previously, from 1901 to 1908, kept careful records of her observations of the children's accomplishments in her experimental woodworking classes at the Hartley House settlement (Staring, 2015), and later of the physical, psychological and social progress of children in Play School, their play, and their block play as well, but note that these were not systematized. (The records of Pratt's observations in Play School are in the Archives of City and Country School, New York City.) Since September 1918, even before Play School became City and Country School in 1919, teacher Leila Stott and her co-teachers wrote detailed minutes of fortnightly and special meetings of the school's staff (see also: Stott, 1921, 1927, 1928). As well, since its establishment in 1916, the Bureau of Educational Experiments developed a treasured custom of fussily accounting meetings of their various committees through accurate minutes.

It will therefore not come as a surprise that Johnson was punctilious too in recording observations of behavior and experiences of her school's children (Antler, 1987; Rohe, 1921). Johnson's (1928a) *Children in the Nursery School* has a half-book-long capital part about school records kept at Nursery School (pp. 151-310). "How We Keep Records of the Children's Growth," the first chapter in that specific part of the book includes descriptions of the ways records were kept at Nursery School. "The data gathered are used for long term studies," wrote Johnson, but the data were also used "to keep the teachers oriented in regard to the use of the equipment by individual children, its educational value, the necessity for change or modification, the needs of individuals and the general status of the group" (p. 153). Johnson's remark that data were used to ascertain "the necessity for change or modification" indicates that Nursery School was already pioneering small-scale short-term action research during the 1920s!

Nursery School used three different forms to keep records: daily charts, weekly summaries, and full-day records. Johnson developed a method to take daily notes on perforated scratch pads, making it easier to process the data she and others gathered.

> We attempt to keep our entries separated so that no more than one topic is treated on one page. At the end of each week the pages are torn off and assembled in the weekly summary…After the scratch pad sheets are arranged in [a specific] order the recorder makes sure that the necessary interpolations, interpretations or additions are made and then the mass of notes is handed over to a secretary for typing. Before we devised this method we had either to dictate, rewrite or closely cross reference our rough notes and the task was almost beyond possibility in time and effort. We have found the use of the perforated pad very practicable and simple and a great labor-saving device. (pp. 161-162).

Barbara Biber, Lucy Sprague Mitchell, Jessie Stanton, and Louise Woodcock (1936) would later write in their introductory text to the posthumously published *School Begins at Two*, that these records, "even uninterpreted, make a genuine contribution to the methods of studying growth." They added that Johnson did not work out the records in isolation, but that she examined them together with the Bureau of Educational Experiments' anthropologist, physician, psychologist, social workers, statistician, and other recorders, and that her interpretations "bear the imprints of many minds" (p. *xviii*).

Johnson (1928a) wished to research such subjects as "Can we discover what part social contacts should play in nursery school experience and how social techniques develop? How different are children at the different ages represented in the nursery school? How ought they to be grouped?" (p. 154). Biber, Sprague Mitchell, Stanton, and Woodcock (1936) added other topics researched by Johnson, such as, "When

should a child be given responsibility for his own actions," and, "What effect has emotional stability upon the development of work habits?" (pp. *xix-xx*). Interestingly, Johnson (1928a) confessed, "In the beginning we made the usual mistake of observers of young children: we tended to record the unusual manifestations; we missed out on the everyday-day and the consecutive" (p. 160). To be sure, Johnson encountered methodological pitfalls never noticed before by investigators of young children.

> In the course of this discipline of record taking, Miss Johnson faced questions such as the technical reliability of her records; the value of qualitative descriptions of behavior which could not be reduced to quantitative measurements; the significance in understanding nursery school children of formal psychological tests, of bodily proportions, of home attitudes; and above all, the possibility of building the observations of the various specialists into an organic picture of a growing child. (Biber, Sprague Mitchell, Stanton, & Woodcock, 1936, p. *xix*).

Johnson (1928a) herself gave an overview of her research intentions.

> A description of our method of taking records and the use to which they can be put may seem unconvincing because of our tentative approach to it. We are attempting to study the reactions of children to their environment, what they do to the environment, how they adapt the materials and persons in it to their own purposes, and what the environment does to them, how their behavior is modified by conditions which they find or which their own reactions bring about. These are fundamental problems in education and in psychology, and we are still in the initial stages of attack upon them…We are attempting to study a child's individual and characteristic way of responding to situations set up by the Nursery School environment. (pp. 165-166).

Elsie Ripley Clapp, one of the early 1920s' City and Country School teachers, would later write in her memoirs that Johnson's "meticulous attention to detail" impressed her enormously (in Stack Jr., 2004, p. 132). And in his "Introduction" to Johnson's 1928 book, Bureau of Educational Experiments' psychologist Frederick W. Ellis (1928) essentially praised Johnson's "continuous close recording of the activities of the children with a positive emphasis on the relation of growth facts and growth needs to behavior" (p. *viii*). As well, renowned Bank Street College of Education educationalist Barbara Biber (1972a) later in her "Introductory Essay" to the 1972 reprint of Johnson's 1928 book thought extremely highly of her school records. Or, in the words of Biber's sister Charlotte Biber Winsor (1976), "It was a very small group with a very large staff, and they compiled many records because they were masters of recording"(p. 143).

1921: The Move to West 12th Street / West 13th Street

In 1921, both Bureau laboratory schools moved to their new address in New York City —169-173 West 12th Street / 144-148 West 13th Street. This relocation had a somewhat complicated history. Early in May 1920, Sprague Mitchell purchased two adjacent buildings on West 13th Street in addition to buying three adjacent buildings on West 12th Street — their back gardens facing those of the new properties on West 12th Street. The *Sun and The New York Herald* (1920d) reported, "Duross Company were the brokers in the sale of the five houses at 146 and 148 West Thirteenth Street and 169 to 173 West Twelfth Street to the Miss Pratt Kindergarten School" (see also: *Sun and The New York Herald*, 1920a). In June 1920, Sprague Mitchell additionally bought 144 West 13th Street (*New York Tribune*, 1920c) — formally leased to Harriet M. Johnson in November 1920 (*New York Tribune*, 1920b) by her agent Wm. A. White & Sons (*Sun and The New York Herald*, 1920b). In January 1921, *American Contractor* (1921) announced that construction work to alter and rebuild the other five houses on West 12th Street and West 13th Street would "start soon" (p. 41). Probably around that time, Harriet Forbes, Harriet M. Johnson, and their daughter Polly, as well as Nursery School, already moved to 144 West 13th Street.

September 1920 newspaper announcements bestow the impression that Sprague Mitchell could easily finance the purchase of the six buildings, claiming that she in that month sold the 16-18 West 8th Street buildings, bought in 1917, doubling her investments. "It is an interesting fact that the price brought [in 1920] was twice what it sold for two years ago," wrote the *New York Tribune* (1920a) and the *Sun and The New York Herald* (1920c). In spite of this news of 100% profit made within a couple of years, later newspaper notices strongly suggest that the September 1920 transaction did not happen as expected and that

the Bureau and the Bureau's laboratory schools therefore still occupied the West 8th Street buildings. In June 1921, both West 8th Street houses were leased for Sprague Mitchell for a period of nineteen years, meaning the buildings continued to be Sprague Mitchell's property (e.g., *Evening Telegram*, 1921; see also: *Sun*, 1930).

Yet, newspaper reports denote that the Bureau and City and Country School consequently had to depart 16-18 West 8th Street in summer 1921. And indeed, by that exact time, the complete Mitchell family, the offices of the Bureau of Educational Experiments, and to finish, Pratt's laboratory City and Country School moved into the altered West 12th Street and West 13th Street houses. The back-gardens between these houses served as one great joint playground for City and Country School; and the roof garden mentioned in *Health News* above was in fact Nursery School's playground on top of the school's rooms at 144 West 13th Street and on top of 146 West 13th Street: "Our present plant has a playground extending over the roofs of two houses. The hall and stair-well break the space and an area of about 17 feet by 13 feet is glass enclosed. A space about 17 feet by 18 feet is filled with rounded quartz pebbles to a depth of 8 inches, with thorough drainage…The remainder of the roof is tiled. In the center the dumb waiter shaft rises and about it we have built a seat which the children use in various activities. A cement sand box with a water-proof cover is built against a chimney that divides the roof near the shelter" (Johnson, 1922, p. 12). Elsie Ripley Clapp wrote in her memoirs that Nursery School "was located on the upper floor of the school building. To go up there was to enter a different world, a happy, peaceful world separated by a soundproof door from the main lower floors" (in Stack Jr., 2004, p. 131). The school had one group of eight children. Three full-time teachers, among them Johnson, formed the school's staff. Tuition fee was fifty dollars a month (Forest, 1929; Johnson, 1922, 1928a; *Western Daily Press*, 1929). Photographs in a number of articles and bulletins about nursery schools in the United States as well as photographs in Johnson's own publications show the school's playground on the roof of the West 13th Street building (e.g., Barnard, 1926; Johnson, 1922, 1924a, 1925a, 1928a, 1930d-e, 1931b; National Advisory Committee, 1934; *Survey*, 1926).

Note that the Marot-Pratt couple remained living in their West 13th Street townhouse, only 50 yards west from City and Country School's new accommodation. Note further that all six buildings owned by Sprague Mitchell would eventually be sold to City and Country School ten years later, in June 1931 (*Evening Post*, 1931). Yet the Forbes-Johnson family still leased 144 West 13th Street for at least a handful of years afterwards. After Harriet M. Johnson died in winter 1934, and Polly began attending Bennington College later that year, Harriet Forbes lived alone at 144 West 13th Street.

1922: *A Nursery School Experiment*

It must be obvious that Lucy Sprague Mitchell's ties with Caroline Pratt and her City and Country School on the one hand, and with Harriet M. Johnson and her Nursery School on the other hand were exceptionally close since 1919. As of 1921, ties between the Mitchells and the Forbes-Johnson couple and daughter Polly became even closer — that is, after Forbes, Johnson and their daughter Polly, as well as Nursery School, and later the Mitchell family, the Bureau of Educational Experiments, and City and Country School had moved to West 12th Street and West 13th Street. As of 1919, both families spent holidays together in the Mitchell summer home at Huckleberry Rocks, Greensboro, Vermont (Antler, 1987; Sprague Mitchell, 1953). This was not a law of the Medes and Persians, though, as is shown by the fact that Johnson and her daughter Polly during late March and early April 1925 vacationed together alone in Nassau, New York (*Evening Post*, 1925). As might be expected, all four Mitchell children as well as Polly attended City and Country School.

In line with procedures regarding a number of other Bureau experiments, Johnson had to account her educational experiment in a Bureau Bulletin — the 1922 booklet titled *A Nursery School Experiment*. This Bulletin has an "Introduction" by Lucy Sprague Mitchell (1922). Harriet M. Johnson (1922) wrote the main text, and music teacher Carmen Sylva Reuben (1922) described the foundations for the Nursery School's music lessons.

Lucy Sprague Mitchell (1922) wrote in her "Introduction" to the Bulletin,

> Why do we want such young children? The question has been asked us oftener than any other since our Nursery School was started some three years ago. We have two answers and neither is that of the Day Nursery or the English type of Nursery School. Unlike these other organizations

> we did not set about our task of caring for children from fifteen months to three years of age because of the economic situation of working or professional mothers, — though this situation is distinctly a part of our problem. Our answers are not in terms of social or economic need. Our first answer is in terms of educational need: we feel that the educational factors in the environment for babies need study and planning as much as and perhaps more than those in the environment of older children. Our second answer is in terms of research: we feel the need of fuller scientific data concerning children's growth, — growth of every sort that is measurable or observable. (p. 3).

Sprague Mitchell stated that Nursery School was not experimenting in diets, the amount of clothing or in many physical details to which they attended. Instead they were experimenting in "the equipment and situations which lead to muscular coordination, to experimentation, to purposeful activities, to emotional stability" (p. 3). She further indicated that children who attended Caroline Pratt's laboratory City and Country School had already developed "sets of habits" when they entered the school at age three. This fact raised questions, "Had they as babies these different action patterns from the beginning? Or what environmental influences have brought them about?" (p. 3).

Research questions regarding the interaction of growth and environment had led to the opening of Nursery School in 1919. Its research staff included a physician, a psychologist and a social worker who kept growth records of the children over a succession of several years, gathering data regarding home circumstances, specific fatigue, laboratory, clinical, radiological, cardiological and orthopedic data, as well as data regarding psychological "Stanford revision and performance tests" (p. 5). Sprague Mitchell concluded,

> Slowly they are filling gaps in our knowledge; slowly they are building a conception of growth. To get this continuous sequence of records and measurements on growth is our second answer to the question of why we wish such young children…This report aims only to show how we are making the effort to study the educational factors in the environment of small children and to gather scientific data concerning their growth" (p. 5).

Harriet M. Johnson (1922) wrote in her introductory section to *A Nursery School Experiment* that the school originated from a 1918 nursery school experiment, not further specified, but giving its children between nine and twenty-eight months "all day care and a program approximating in many ways the one we have attempted" (p. 7). Between 1919 and 1921, Nursery School was housed "in rented rooms in a house on Varick Street" (Sprague Mitchell, 1953, p. 280; see above). In 1921, the school moved to 144 West 13th Street. Johnson (1922) wrote,

> Aside from the additional space and the ease for babies on a first floor our present quarters are much more suitable and it is this set-up which I shall describe. The essentials remain constant and can be met under a variety of conditions. They are briefly: a generous indoor and outdoor play space, sleeping quarters isolated from the sound of voices and capable of being divided so that sleepers will not disturb each other, an isolation room, a good sized kitchen and dressing room with toilet. (p. 8).

Johnson gave detailed descriptions of play rooms, sleeping quarters, kitchen, dressing room, stairs, and lastly the out-door roof playground (see also above). She explained why there was an age range limitation and why the size of the group was restricted to eight children. Next, the school's specific choice of play equipment and lists of in-doors and out of doors play materials completed the description of the physical side of Nursery School. An explanation of the school's program, an extensive account of the school's recording activities of the children's bodily control, social control, associative memory, and use of language, as well as representative excerpts from the records followed. A summary of arguments concluded the Bulletin's main text. Johnson wrapped up,

> We are trying to set up a laboratory in which growth can be studied. An environment favourable to growth must assure children physical care, but it must moreover provide them with opportunities for experience, experience in the use of their bodies and in dealing with things and with persons.

> Our environment is not the product of one person's thinking. Long before the Bureau of Educational Experiments established our Nursery School, the City and Country School was conducting classes for children of three and four, and Miss Caroline Pratt's conclusions on equipment for small children have been the basis of our choice of play material...We are indebted to her, moreover, not only for her contribution to the subject of equipment but for the educational philosophy which underlies our method of approach to children. (p. 64).

On the other hand, and this must be clearly stated here, Lucy Sprague Mitchell, Harriet Forbes, Harriet M. Johnson and other Bureau of Educational Experiments charter members had deep-felt reservations about scientific research visions held by Bureau consulting scientists. They found them ignoring fascinating observations (Staring, 2013b). Sprague Mitchell (1953, p. 460) wrote in her autobiography,

> At once, [hired Bureau of Educational Experiments physician Dr. Lincoln] ran into difficulties when she began to measure height — or length — as measurements were taken when the babies were lying down. They wiggled. They seemed to be made of rubber — shorter one day than the day before. In the Child Research Institute at Minneapolis, they put the babies into casts so they *couldn't* wiggle. They got the measurements. And they weren't interested in the wiggle. We were. Nor were they bothered that casts might be an emotional strain to the babies. Again, we were…Wiggling was an interesting behavior in young children. Emotions were a very important part of children. But could wiggles or emotions be measured? If not, they must lie outside the realm of scientific study. (p. 460).

Sprague Mitchell's critique of the Bureau physician's measurement problems represented a keen insight into the inability of then existing education physical growth measurement models. Yet, the Bureau members' frustrations led to an interesting invention. Johnson (1922) wrote, "Every four weeks the children are…measured. At first we attempted heights, but it was manifestly impossible to get accurate measurements of children who were just beginning to stand up without support. Miss [Harriet] Forbes, the Bureau health worker, devised a measuring board to be used with the child in recumbent position" (pp. 26-27; see Figure 5). The frustrations also led to completely new research questions, and even to new ways to design research.

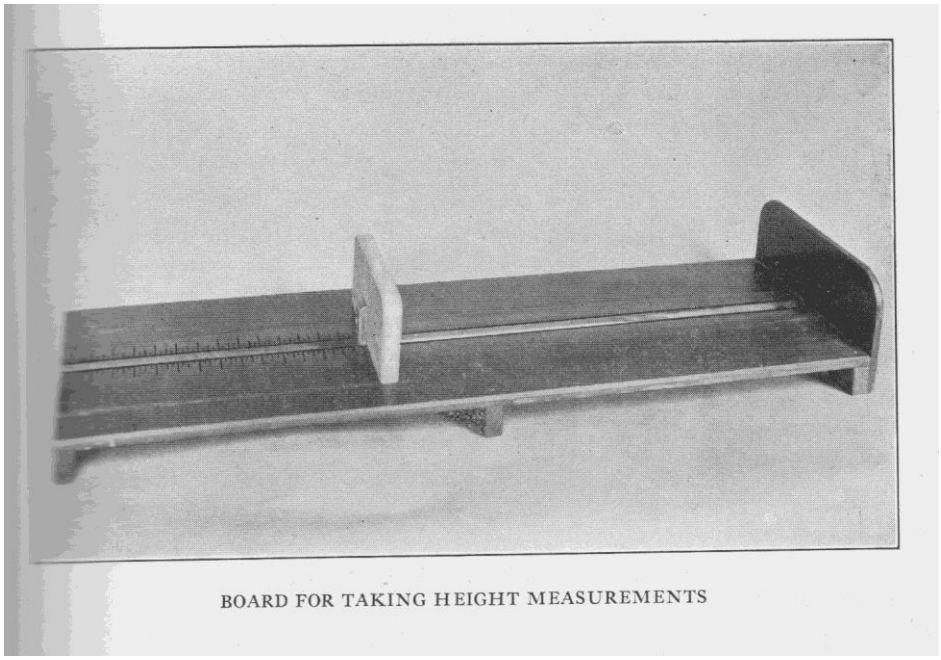

Figure 5: Harriet Forbes's board for taking height measurements. (Johnson, 1922, p. 27).

"Music," written by Carmen Sylva Reuben (1922), constituted the closing part in *A Nursery School Experiment*. Most probably Reuben's music program followed guidelines first worked out at Caroline Pratt's Play School before it became the Bureau's laboratory kindergarten and elementary school, City and Country School. Reuben, however, did not mention this. She stated,

> In a general way I should say we want for our children these musical capacities and experiences:
>
> 1. The ability really to *hear* music, i.e., to know how to listen...
> 2. A background of experience with as good music as we can provide; a bowing acquaintance with the very best…
> 3. The ability to respond freely to music — to sing or dance, to take part in musical expression of some sort without technical training… (p. 67).

Reuben listed research questions under two classes: "Responses during the daily music period," and "Responses outside of the regular music period" (p. 68). She gave selections from daily notes taken by her and the other teachers. She also presented the history of the development of the school's musical program, including her own musical activities and the children's possible ways of reacting and experiencing, and she listed examples of musical material used during "Singing (with piano accompaniment) and playing to the children" (p. 69), "Singing songs (unaccompanied) to the children at other times during the day" (p. 71), "Singing short phrases or intervals (two tones differing in pitch)" (p. 73), and lastly, "Allowing experimentation with simple instruments" (p. 73).

Reuben's contribution to *A Nursery School Experiment* has musical discoveries that will not be assessed here. A separate publication will in the near future pay attention to her musicological finds.

Did Nursery School Teach F. M. Alexander's Procedures?

In 1920, at the annual meeting of the Queensboro League of Mothers' Clubs at the NYC Hotel Pennsylvania, Lucy Sprague Mitchell told her audience of Johnson's Nursery School, claiming it was "an experimental school for little children in which, beginning with babies of 16 months, the children are taught muscle coordination" (*Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1920). And in her introduction to Johnson's 1922 Bureau Bulletin *A Nursery School Experiment*, Sprague Mitchell (1922) wrote that Nursery School was experimenting "in the equipment and situations which lead to muscular coordination, to experimentation, to purposeful activities, to emotional stability" (p. 3). Then again, later, in her autobiography *Two Lives*, Sprague Mitchell (1953) wrote, "We worked on ways to preserve good posture through play equipment in the Nursery [School] and dance exercises for older children [in City and Country School]. I was working with Matthias Alexander, whose technique for restoring good posture had many followers…Following Alexander's technique, I worked with a number of children" (pp. 464-465).

The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* report of Lucy Sprague Mitchell's address before the Queensboro League of Mothers' Clubs at the NYC Hotel Pennsylvania, cited above, seems to suggest that during the first year of its existence the Bureau's Nursery School keenly taught F. M. Alexander's muscular coordination procedures to very young children. In addition, Sprague Mitchell's memoirs seem to suggest that she taught Alexander's "technique" to a number of Nursery School or City and Country School children. (For details and history of Alexander's procedures, see: Staring, 2005, 2007a-b, forthcoming; Staring, Bouchard, & Aldridge, 2014).

Yet, the authors have found no conspicuous evidence that Alexander's procedures were (ever) taught in Johnson's Nursery School. It is certain, on the other hand, that his procedures were taught in Play School in early 1917, but were *not* taught in Play School in autumn 1918 and winter 1919, or later when Play School became City and Country School (consult, for instance, the February 15, 1921 "Bureau of Educational Experiments. Bulletin I" in the archives of City and Country School). However, minutes of the November 27, 1918 City and Country School teachers meeting (in *Minutes of Staff Meetings 1918-1919* in the school's Archives) show there was discussion among teachers regarding what to do about "serious flat footedness" of a particular child.

> Mrs. [Lucy Sprague] Mitchell said Mr. Alexander considers flatfootedness most subtle sign of lack of coordination and that it disappears as coordination is achieved. Mr. [Alexander] would consider casts for his feet worst possible treatment, wrong approach to problem. Question arose what to do under circumstances and Miss Pratt recommended taking up with [Bureau psychologist] Dr. [Buford J.] Johnson question of giving him treatment under [Alexander's

> assistant] Miss [Ethel] Webb instead of casts and jacket. (*Minutes of Staff Meetings 1918-1919*, p. 6).

Even though treatment under Alexander's assistant Webb was considered for a particular child, minutes of the February 6, 1919 teachers meeting (in the school's Archives) show that Caroline Pratt did *not* approve teaching of Alexander's "method" in her Play School without any means of recording results and making scientific analysis thereof:

> Miss Pratt told of [someone's] offer to do work in the school on Alexander method. Discussion following brought out agreement on comparative valuelessness of treatment without accompanying accurate physical records to make scientific test possible. (*Minutes of Staff Meetings 1918-1919*, p. 12).

Since analogous reasoning would have been applicable for the other, later, Bureau of Educational Experiments laboratory school as well, that is, Nursery School (opened September 1919), it is highly *un*likely that Alexander's "method" was taught there. Harriet M. Johnson herself did not discuss the theme in her 1922 Bureau Bulletin *A Nursery School Experiment*, nor in her later writings and lectures.

This theme remains a subject for further research.

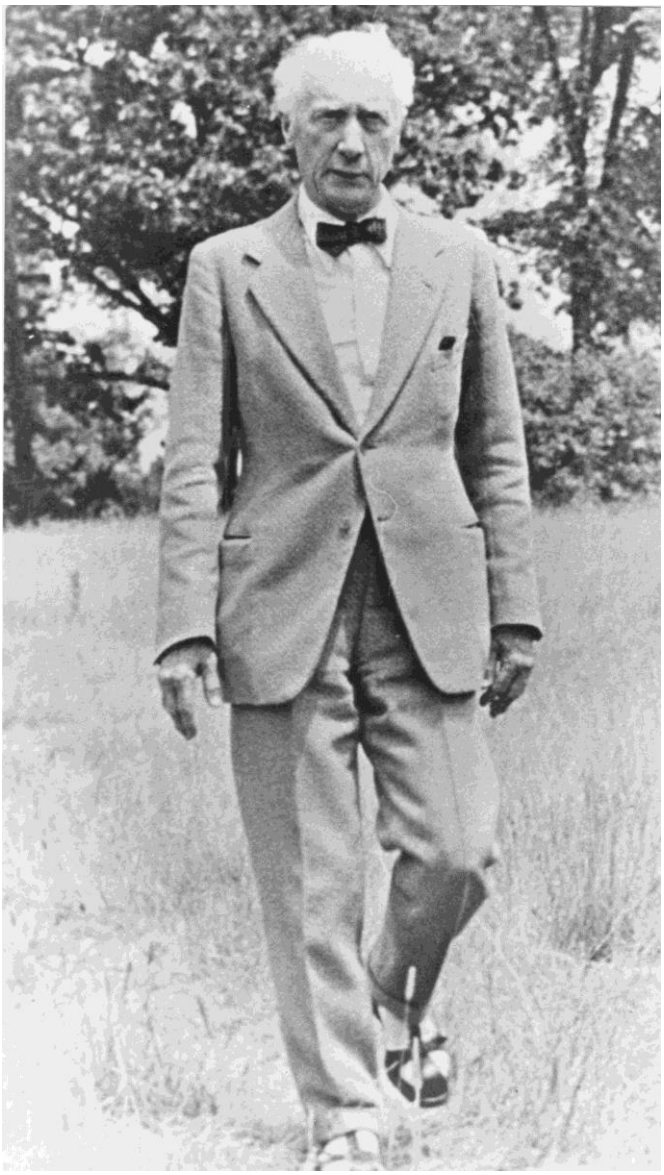

Figure 6: Frederick Matthias Alexander. (With permission of the Canadian Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique).

1924: "Mental Hygiene of Younger Children"

Still in 1922, Nursery School was discussed during the annual meeting of the American Child Hygiene Association (Edwards, 1923), while the following year, eminent educationist Arnold Gesell (1923, pp. 51-52) cited lengthily from Johnson's 1922 Bureau Bulletin *A Nursery School Experiment* in his handbook *The Pre-School Child.* Gesell evidently made Johnson's Nursery School known in the world of early childhood education. Also in 1923, *Christian Science Monitor* had a 2-column long article discussing Nursery School and its aims.

> The great adventure of children of a year and a half is that of locomotion and balance, learning to use their legs in walking and climbing, and, up to three and beyond, vigorous full-body activities characterize their play. The play-room, therefore, faces cheerily south, and contains about 500 square feet of floor space. A balcony with steps at one end, and a slide that slopes invitingly down to a mattress occupies one side. Adult furnishings are eliminated…In all its play and various activities the child is taught to take care of itself in any situation…The children never become passive and dependent, although the teachers are always kind and helpful with suggestions…The children are taught to take care of, and to put away, their toys…But young as they are, the children are encouraged to settle their own troubles…One of the most interesting phases of the school life is the daily record kept, of the child's actions, and his conduct. (*Christian Science Monitor*, 1923).

In 1924, the Bureau of Educational Experiments issued a revised edition of *A Nursery School Experiment* (Johnson, 1924a; see also: Johnson, 1973a). Sprague Mitchell's original introductory text and Johnson's original sections remained unchanged, yet a similar section by Maude Stewart (1924) replaced the Bulletin's original piece on music by mezzo-soprano Carmen Sylva Reuben (1922). Note that at the time, Stewart also gave music lessons at City and Country School (Bevans 1929; Pratt & Stanton, 1926; Stack Jr., 2004) — as an assistant to contralto Harriette G. Hubbell (City & Country School, 1919; Hubbell, 1924; H. M. Johnson in introductory note in Stewart, 1924, pp. 67-68; Stott, 1921). Stewart's (1924) aim was "the heightening of the babies' pleasure in their activities" (p. 68). She stated,

> In any case music for these early years should be chosen that will best heighten child pleasures of rhythm (evidenced largely through big-muscle responses), melody (from cooings and gurglings, through spontaneous tunes with nonsense syllables, to short "songs" that make "sense"), or mere accompaniment that is evidently enjoyed but evokes no more tangible response at the moment. (p. 68).

In contrast to Reuben's 1922 contribution to *A Nursery School Experiment* there are no musicological discoveries in Stewart's contribution to the Bulletin's 1924 edition. She presented a straightforward list of musical pieces played on the piano, but also a selection of original music from the children themselves. An extended section citing notes made during observation of the children's responses during music concludes Stewart's contribution to the 1924 *A Nursery School Experiment*.

Next, in June 1924, Harriet M. Johnson went to Toronto, Canada to deliver an address during the annual session of the National Conference of Social Work, held from June 25 to July 2. She summarized the aims of her Nursery School in a very precise way (Johnson, 1924b).

> Education is a question of experience and growth, harmonious development and integration, and it is in the last analysis an individual matter. It is only from this point of view that the bureau nursery school is of interest to you, for we have no clinical work going on…We have tried to make the set-up like a home in its informality and intimacy and unlike it in that it is planned to serve children's activities rather than adults' occupations…The general tendency of the Nursery School environment should be then to open up avenues of physical investigation, to make possible experimentation in the use of limbs and body, to turn children to a free attack upon play materials, and to introduce them gradually to a social life, the privileges and restrictions of which

> they share. We must remember that nursery babies on arrival have not yet perfected their powers of locomotion. (pp. 451-452).

She further explained:

> We try not to hold children back in their experiments with their bodies and the physical environment, but in really perilous undertakings we attempt to assure them safety…We feel that the introduction to group life should come very slowly, in the first place because, as I have said, we believe that experimentation with the physical environment is more profitable than with human material, and in the second because there must develop out of social experience a social technique, if success is to crown our efforts to live together. (p. 453).

Johnson told her Toronto audience about the scientific aims of Nursery School. In fact, Johnson acknowledged that very little data were available about the physical, cognitive, emotional and social growth of each individual baby or pre-school age child — referencing a recognized 1906 work by famed British neurophysiologist Charles Sherrington (see italics):

> We know very little about small children. We have tried to understand them by introspection which has led us into intricate irrelevances. We must, I believe, work back from behavior to "*the integrative action of the nervous system*" before we can understand the simplicities as well as the complexities of a child's response. If we can once accept the assumption that the child under three is carrying on a life with which cerebral activities have little to do, we shall have taken an important step toward a scientific study of children. Postural tonus, conditions in the viscera, fluctuations in kinesthesia, are responsible for an interplay of nervous impulses directing the response of the organism. The response is modified or conditioned by what is met in the environment but for some time is probably distinctly on the sensory level…Our experiment is still too young to show results that would admit of quantitative analysis…We are watching children grow. We are trying, in the first place, to explain what we see in the light of what science can give us on the developmental needs of the human organism, and second to find soils which are most suitable for growth-channels through which growth can flow to the wider sea of adult fulfillment. (pp. 454-455; italics added).

1925: "Educational Implications of the Nursery School"

In 1925, *Progressive Education*, in a special issue on the pre-school child and nursery schools to promote theorizing about nursery school education in the United States, published Harriet M. Johnson's "Educational Implications of the Nursery School" in which she elaborated on the children's physical and social needs. Again, her explanation of the physical seems *not* to have been indicative of teaching Alexander's muscle coordination methods.

> Briefly stated these needs are, first, for practice in locomotion which to our babies is a new art, and for exercise and control of the body through the big muscles of trunk, arms and legs; second, for further sense experiences so that out of a vague awareness of objects in the mass there will emerge perceptions of differing qualities…third, for an organization and extension of the experiences that life has so far brought them; and fourth, for the establishment and practice of routine physical habits until they become automatic. (Johnson, 1925c, p. 29).

Johnson made it perfectly clear that the school's teachers did not "try to provide for sense *training*," but that they made sure that "there are situations and materials which will give sense *experiences*" (pp. 29-30; Johnson's emphasis). This conception of teaching and education approaches Irwin and Marks' (1924) maxim, "Education should not consist of acquiring information but of acquiring experience" (p. 118).

Johnson found that her *laboratory* school differed from other nursery schools "in that it is part of a research problem which deals with phases of growth and associates in its study scientists in various fields," and she insisted that the Bureau of Educational Experiments' interest in her school was "especially in its educational implications and their application to school programs and procedure" (p. 29). Like seeing to it

that the children's physical needs were satisfied, so Johnson saw to it that the children were only gradually introduced to social contacts. She would not agree with (Piaget's) 'age level performances.'

> But as we also let children learn by experience the possibilities of situations as they develop, so, as they gain in poise, do we let them take the consequences of their advances to each other…We are more and more impressed with the value which lies in a child's orderly progression through the activities and concerns — social, emotional and physical — which are appropriate to his age level. We feel that it would be dogmatic to list these age level performances categorically. They show qualitative rather than quantitative distinctions. (p. 32).

This description of the Bureau's Nursery School in the 1925 *Progressive Education* special issue made a great impression in pre-school age education circles. A few months later, *Kindergarten & First Grade* reprinted the article in their May issue (Johnson, 1925b).

Around summer 1925, the Bureau of Educational Experiments published a reprint of the second, officially revised edition of its Bulletin *A Nursery School Experiment* (Johnson, 1925a). Yet, Johnson was not a prolific writer in the vein of, for instance, her Bureau co-worker Caroline Pratt. And she did not attend a lot of conferences (e.g., *Little Falls Herald*, 1921), nor did she regularly deliver lectures. In October 1925, nonetheless, she spoke on the pre-school child at the opening of the Mount Vernon Play School at Mount Vernon, New York. There she declared that the United States already counted 46 nursery schools (see also: de Lima, 1926, p. 54), emphasizing, however, that they still lacked standards. "We must decide whether these are to be didactic in character or whether they are to meet the needs of growth of the child naturally and normally," she said, adding, "These needs are energy, athletic for the body, sensory experience and social environment" (in *Daily Argus*, 1925). A week later, the *New York Times* was keen to publish "Rearing of Children Becoming a Science" (Clark, 1925), an article reporting the first national conference on parenthood, organized by the Child Study Association of America in the Waldorf Astoria in New York City. The article discussed the recent emancipation of women, scientific study of pre-school age children, and the post-war emergence of nursery schools in the United States, also referencing Johnson's opinions:

> No comprehensive census of nursery schools has been compiled, so it is impossible to estimate the total number in existence. Miss Harriet Johnson of the Nursery School of the Bureau of Educational Experiments recently found at least forty-five of them in different cities from California to Maine, and classified them according to their primary purpose — research, training for teaching, and so on. According to Miss Johnson, an increasing number of nursery schools are being organized by groups of mothers here and there which have not yet grown to be full-fledged institutions. She believes there is great danger that they will increase faster than trained directors can be supplied.

1926: "The Education of the Nursery School Child"

During the subsequent two years, Harriet M. Johnson published only one article — in *Childhood Education* — and a book review — in *Progressive Education*. In fact, she directed all of her attention to writing her book *Children in the Nursery School* that would be launched in 1928.

In summer 1926, Harriet M. Johnson attended the annual meeting of the National Education Association of the United States, held at Philadelphia, where she delivered an address titled "The Education of the Nursery School Child" — later published in *Childhood Education* (Johnson, 1926a) as well as in the Association's *Proceedings* (Johnson, 1926b). After indicating that a questionnaire sent out to the nearly fifty nursery schools in the United States may have influenced the way the schools responded, Johnson (1926b) stated that the reactions from the schools revealed that their programs differed widely, from the general "making the child fit to live with" to the remedial "training children in correct habits" (p. 499). Johnson, however, would discuss the education of children from the idea of growth.

Again, she distinguished three needs of children.

A. The need for motor experiences. The growth from tottering baby to steadfast walker, for instance, should be seen as the first "special job that the baby has before him" (p. 499). Children therefore must be

given time and opportunity to gain various motor experiences. While development of the finer coordination should not be stressed, the children should freely develop their larger muscles.

B. The need for sensory experiences. Johnson advised, "The child's incessant tendency to touch and to feel, to investigate, to handle, and to manipulate indicate that materials which lead to sense discriminations should be provided" (p. 500). This should lead to a balanced physical growth.

> Growth is to what end? ...The growth we are seeking to assure for our children means development in power and control — control of the body, a growing power to deal with the environment and to understand their relationship to it, with a resulting harmony in functioning. Our ambition for the children whose futures we are helping to shape is that they shall use to the fullest possible extent the powers given them by their physical and nervous structures, and that they shall be offered an opportunity to learn to modify the environment to their needs on the one hand, and to adjust themselves to its conditions on the other. (p. 500).

C. The need for social experiences. According to Johnson, the nursery school can offer opportunities for social contact — discussed already extensively by Johnson (1925c) the previous year in *Progressive Education* (see above). Johnson found that when children are between three and four years old their play develops into "well-sustained dramatic play" (p. 503). Yet, in general, this third need is not first in importance for Johnson. She wrote,

> Our experience leads us to believe that social contacts should be encouraged to remain on the lower levels as long as possible and that the child's experiments with his environment should be made first and chiefly with materials…

adding that she believed

> that the nursery school program should be so arranged that individual play impulses can be carried on without interruption, that the children's schemes can be protected from encroachment, that a division of the group can be made or that a child can play entirely alone if he seems to need it. (pp. 504-505).

All in all, Johnson's address delivered at the 1926 annual meeting of the National Education Association of the United States had no real surprises when compared to her earlier writings regarding early childhood education. She concluded,

> Conceiving of growth as a dynamic process, [the teacher] must evaluate education by the opportunities it gives to children for increase in physical power and control, for increase in harmony and integration of the affective life and for exercise of the creative impulse in dealing with the environment. (p. 505).

1927/1928: "Observations on Young Children in a Nursery School"

1927 was a moderately calm year. *Progressive Education* issued Harriet M. Johnson's (1927) book review of Ilse Forest's *Pre-school Education* — not to be reviewed here. On December 13, she addressed a conference organized by the Child Study Association of America in their headquarters in New York City. "Observations on Young Children in a Nursery School," her address, discussed the "habit formation of young children, and the requirements for equipment, set-up and age groupings" in Nursery School (*Child Study*, 1928, p. 13). In addition to her talk, Johnson answered questions asked by the audience about thumb sucking, the Nursery School's roof playground, and lastly, block play at the Bureau laboratory schools, that is, City and Country School and Nursery School. It is very likely that her article titled "Responsibilities for the Young Child" in the January 1928 issue of *Child Study* presents a number of elements of her December 1927 address before the Child Study Association of America. In it, Johnson (1928c) questioned a variety of duties of parents to their pre-school age children, and the responsibilities they are supposed to assume.

> First on the list, I shall place the responsibility for carrying on their own play activities, for being able to choose an occupation and to work at it with a minimum of dependence upon adults or

> other children. This ability cannot just happen. It implies at the outset a set of responsibilities for adults which they must face very frankly. (p. 3).

A number of such, now more or less obvious parents' responsibilities, like providing adequate playthings and providing play space, were listed (see also: *Playground*, 1928). Nevertheless, in that sense, according to Johnson (1928c), it is not enough that parents, for instance, provide furniture, books, or kitchen utensils as play materials, because young children will inevitably be "thrown back to dependence upon parents" (p. 3) at one time or another, and they certainly will not, for example, instinctively grasp the nature and meaning of, for instance, books (given that they will tug them about, or tear them apart, etc.).

A second parent responsibility discussed, is what Johnson called "habit training."

> [Habits] are of great importance in physical and social growth, and of necessity bulk large in the program of a child from birth till they are well established…Cheerful acceptance is all that is asked of babies; and though the bolder spirits register strenuous objection and resentment, the normally favored child succumbs with a good grace to his daily routine long before the runabout age is reached…His acceptance is the beginning of responsibility. (p. 4).

Brushing of teeth and lacing of shoes are just what they are, but the activities also help children develop their dexterity and their personal habits. They help them experience joy and satisfaction, and they facilitate to establish themselves as "independent and self-sufficient" beings, making "the processes of self-help automatic" so that they "can use their recourses for more creative and dynamic activities" (p. 4). But not every pre-school child establishes bladder-control at the same age, or can dress and undress himself at the same age. It was Johnson's advice that "habits are most readily formed when the process itself, or the attendant circumstances, bring satisfaction," and are being performed "by a humorous approach" (p. 5). Her opinion of how pre-school age children learn may still be surprising today; it should not surprise us, though, knowing her view of the physical needs of pre-school children:

> Pedagogy has always concerned itself with the learning process. Those of us, whether parents or teachers, who have to do with the rearing of babies should set ourselves the task of finding out how they learn and how they can most effectively use the interests that develop with growth to establish desirable techniques. We shall find, I believe, that the chief subject of our study will be muscular exercise and control. (p. 5).

1928: *Children in the Nursery School*

In June 1928, Harriet M. Johnson (1928a) launched *Children in the Nursery School*, a valiant book about the Bureau's experimental laboratory nursery school. It received inspired reviews. For instance, colleague Bureau charter member Elisabeth Irwin (1929) wrote:

> Miss Johnson's book is at once a thoroughly scientific and a thoroughly human document. It contains, in addition to an interesting account of how one nursery school was conducted, a very illuminating exposition of the educational philosophy that lies behind the important and rapidly growing nursery school movement...*Children in the Nursery School* is a simple, authentic and exciting book. (p. 705).

Children in the Nursery School was written as a record of the first eight years of the school. Johnson's colleague Bureau charter member Frederick W. Ellis (1928) wrote the "Introduction" to the book and eloquently explained this was an important resource for three reasons. First, Johnson's Nursery School stayed with the age range of fourteen months to three years, resulting in a plethora of data for the age group that is often referred to as toddlers. Second, the Bureau experiment was guided not by current theories, philosophies or traditions, but by scientific facts. Finally, the data were based on copious notes and continual record keeping of the activities of the children, including a history of adult and child interactions and experiences. This resulted in a remarkable wealth of details. From these, Johnson made her own conclusions and did not try to force the data into generalizations or existing theories and philosophies.

Ellis clarified that the book tells "a real story of a real experience, both for the teacher and the children, one that is not divorced in any major respect from the general run of life experiences when children

are considered as units in the biological order of existences" (p. *x*). He concluded his introduction to the book by declaring, "Miss Johnson's experience will be of historical significance as well as of practical value for the rapidly growing number of nursery school experiments" (p. *xiv*).

After the "Introduction" by Ellis and the "Preface" by Johnson, *Children in the Nursery School* is divided into three major parts that include 1) why we do what we do, 2) our planning of the environment, and 3) records (Johnson, 1928a). A small fourth part, conclusion, concludes the book.

"The Schedule and the Rules," an important chapter under Part I ('Why We Do What We Do') describes how schedules and rules are made. At the beginning of each day, children made spontaneous choices of play materials. There was no formal meeting time or circle time. However, there were structured times for certain things. For example, children were given water when they arrived. During mid-morning, there was a snack and music time. Mealtime was a set time, followed by washing up and preparing for a nap.

Johnson carefully explained the Nursery School did not have a policy of *laissez faire.* Guidance and redirection were often administered, as needed. Continual and sustained observations and record keeping by the adults were going on throughout the day. Materials were not allowed to be misused or abused and all physical attacks from a child were quickly thwarted and redirection was applied. Johnson found that "a literally 'free' environment and literally 'free' activities are impossible and undesirable. In fact, freedom in the sense of lack of direction would not be education" (p. 45). In the Nursery School, adults initiated a processional type of behavior to interrupt squabbles or troubling situations. For example, children might be asked, in the form of a game, to run to the wall back and forth. Johnson explained that procedures were actually similar to a family. She concluded the first part of the book by defining nursery school as "an attempt to scale civilization down to the child level in its behavior demands and to open wider opportunities for active exploration than an adult world can afford" (p. 61) — according to Shapiro and Nager (2000) "an early expression of a central aspect of developmental-interaction: concern for both individual and the kinds of environments conducive to promoting development" (p. 9), adding that it typically was to be "a formulation built from close operation of children and school practice, not from traditional empirical research" (p. 9).

In "The Physical Environment," that is, the first chapter of Part II of the book ('Our Planning of the Environment'), Johnson — at last — defined the important concepts 'growth' and 'development.'

> I spoke…of the task of providing a "suitable" environment for nursery school children...In the terms of our experiment suitable must mean favorable for growth…Our environment must be one in which the processes of growth go on fully and at an adequate rate. By growth I do not mean increase in bulk alone but increase in power and control and in maturation. Development means to us all the progress toward maturity. (p. 65).

Central to growth and development is the play activity of children:

> To us the play activity of children is a dynamic process, stimulating growth and the integration of the entire organism as no system of training however skillfully devised could do. (p. 68).

Johnson provided a list of materials used at the school to meet the physiological needs of the children. These were separated into both outdoor and indoor materials. Outdoor included pails, tin pans, shovels, hammers and nails, balls, brooms, tow wheelbarrows, trailer carts, wagons, and kiddy kars. Some examples of indoor equipment included a slide, folding tables and chairs, balls, two wheel carts, the unpainted wooden blocks designed by Caroline Pratt (also used at City and Country School), dolls, and several Montessori products such as the Pink Tower and the Brown Stair Blocks. There were also drawing paper and large Milton Bradley crayons, as well as paper bags available for the children (pp. 75-80).

Next, "The Social Environment," the short second chapter of Part II, has the following important observation:

> The mechanisms for dealing profitably with the intricacies of social intercourse mature later than those which make possible profitable handling of the physical environment. Practically this demands from the teacher that she make provision in space and staff so that individual play and very loosely organized group play can be carried on without the application of obvious pressure

> or coercion. With this provision and with an environment that opens up to children rich opportunities for adventure and experiment, their individual needs can be served. (pp. 83-84).

Johnson sketched several contrasting conditions between babies and young children at home with babies and young children in a social group in a nursery school; for instance, she discussed the affective life, the acquisition of locomotion, the home furnishings, etc. However, she was afraid that her comparison "may seem an unjustified criticism of the home environment" (p. 98). She stated,

> We are not proposing to substitute the nursery school for the home but to supplement the home environment by one in which the baby is not the center of attention, where he has the companionship of his peers in age and where his opportunities for play are as seriously considered as work opportunities for the adult in office or home. (p. 98).

Without doubt, Johnson was not as drastic as Margaret Naumburg, Director of NYC Children's School (renamed Walden School in 1922), who according to a March 1919 *New York Times Magazine* report seems to have uttered at a meeting of the Women's Freedom Congress that young children "would be better away from their mothers…and brought up in a sort of big brooder house" (Wayne, 1919; see also: Bain in Folsom, 1941; Beatty, 1995; Rose, 1997; Staring, Bouchard, & Aldridge, 2014).

"Language and Rhythm," the third chapter in Part II of the book, includes observations of language development. Johnson (1928a) described the language approach the Nursery School used was based on Lucy Sprague Mitchell's approach that could be found in *The Here and Now Story Book* (Mitchell, 1921). Once again, adults took copious notes from their observations of language. They recorded the words, phrases, and sentences the children made. After mass data collection, the teachers decided it was important to record the utterances and syllables of children who had not spoken words. After months of observations and data collection, tentative conclusions such as the following were described in the book. Children who do not yet speak in words often use the following utterances: dee-dah, oo-woo, and wuh-wuh.

The goal of "Records of Children's Use of the Environment," an important chapter in Part III ('Records'), includes showing how the faculty and staff of the Nursery School were studying children's growth. For instance, Johnson used the example of the slide to explain children's growth in relation to using the slide. The case of a child named Philip was provided to show how his thinking, planning, and using the slide progressed over time. Another example described was from Peggy's records, and her development in drawing. Decades later, literacy researchers became interested in the developmental progression of children's drawings. However, Johnson and her Nursery School were far ahead of current literacy trends to chart children's developmental stages of art and writing. Other records concern the use of hammers and building blocks. As well, observation records demonstrate the rhythmic vocal responses of the children to the piano music and songs played as part of the day's program.

> We have no positive and formulated musical theory about [the] responses of children. We encourage them because they seem to be a natural spontaneous manifestation of growth. The formulation of varied syllables certainly must give flexibility and strength to the vocal apparatus. The tone and pitch variations help on the motor and sensory experiences. In this process we believe that the children's phrases represent in terms of enjoyment what any method of expression does to the artist. They are not permanent forms and it is not the form that gives pleasure, but the process. (p. 307).

Part IV of the book ('Conclusion') announces a future publication intended to discuss details of the school's health program. (In 1931, the announced article appeared in *Practical Home Economics* (Johnson, 1931a); see below.) Part IV also very briefly addresses issues of behavior problems and age grouping. Johnson's conclusions demonstrate her firm belief in the importance of focusing on the here and now, and not on the future. She explained,

> If I could offer evidence in the form of test scores or teachers' ratings or physical growth charts or behavior records, which would prove that nursery school children excelled when they reached the upper groups, it might serve as a convincing argument in support of these put forth here. At this particular stage of the game I am more eager to show children living in a rich and satisfying present than being prepared for a life to come, however excellent. (p. 314).

Johnson's Works Subsequent to *Children in the Nursery School*

Harriet M. Johnson's 1928 book most certainly filled a gap. A second printing already appeared in November of that year (Johnson, 1928b). And while *Children in the Nursery School* was issued in England in February the following year (Johnson, 1929), a third U.S. printing of the book was already called for in February 1930 (Johnson, 1930a). Later reprints (in 1934, 1936, 1938, 1972, and 1973) were issued after Johnson's death.

It is obvious that themes analyzed by Johnson in her 1922 Bureau Bulletin *A Nursery School Experiment* as well as in her 1924-1928 articles returned in *Children in the Nursery School.* Given that the book became such an unusual success as a handbook on the subject of post-war American experimental pre-school age childhood education, Johnson was regularly invited to address diverse meetings. Early in March 1929, for instance, she delivered an address before the Parent-Teacher Association of School Number 8 in Poughkeepsie. Members of the euthenics classes at Vassar College were also present (*Poughkeepsie Eagle-News*, 1929). Nearly three weeks later, the *Daily Boston Globe* had an interview with Johnson that formed a prominent part of an article on the nursery school movement.

> The young child is interested in getting the use of his body through all kinds of motor experiences...We encourage him to vary these experiments by providing him with the means…The baby is more inclined, Miss Johnson said, to "group" play than social play. He plays around and near other children rather than with them. (*Daily Boston Globe*, 1929).

Next, in April, Johnson spoke about "Advantages of Pre-School Education Away From the Home" at the annual meeting of the Free Kindergarten Society in Brooklyn (*Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1929; *Standard Union*, 1929). And in May, she was the presiding officer of a forenoon conference on nursery schools at the annual meeting of the International Kindergarten Union in Rochester, New York (*Journal of Home Economics*, 1929, p. 463). Unfortunately, manuscripts of the lectures, speeches and addresses are missing.

Johnson, on the other hand, also regularly received requests for articles. These requests led to a small flow of new publications in various journals in which she would once more work out themes she had addressed earlier. The first article appeared in 1929, seven more would follow in subsequent years.

In 1929, the National Society for the Study of Education published "Child Activities: Play" in their yearbook themed 'Preschool and Parental Education.' This chapter in the yearbook that amalgamated the work of Johnson and three contributing co-authors states that because of the fact that play activities in early childhood "are primarily determined by the nature and needs of the child's organism" adults are responsible to select for children "those activities fundamental in promoting growth and development" (H. M. Johnson, Garrison, G. E. Johnson, & Hulson, 1929, p. 693). The children's "tendency to be active" and their "tendency to be experimental" are characteristic of their play impulses (p. 693). Therefore, understanding the specifics of selecting hard-wearing and safe playthings for dramatization (blocks, boards, boxes, clothes, dolls), creative activities (blocks, tools, wood, paints, and clay), and social experiences is essential, just like understanding the particulars of the school's location is (country environments, or urban circumstances). The amalgamated chapter further discusses and references the available literature regarding play of very young children and play materials, and lists the basics of "the conduct of the adult in guiding activities" of pre-school age children (p. 698) — defined as "to encourage the child in his play while avoiding getting overdependent on them" (p. 701).

1929-1931: Partial Disintegration and Full Reorganization of the Bureau

In summer 1929, Caroline Pratt and City and Country School disunited from the Bureau of Educational Experiments (Sprague Mitchell, 1953). The partly disintegration of the Bureau and its activities eventually led to an educational and physical severance. As a result, in 1930, the Bureau would terminate its pioneer action research program. On the other hand, and this may have been the cause of the split-up, after initial talks in 1929 eight schools under Bureau lead would join forces to organize a student teacher training curriculum under the name of Cooperative School for Student Teachers (Grinberg, 2005; Sprague Mitchell, 1953). Harriet M. Johnson was on its Central Staff as well as on its Teaching Staff. She became the school's first General Secretary (Thornburg, 1930), and she taught classes on 'Observation and Record Taking' and

on 'Curriculum for Younger Children' (*69 Bank Street*, 1933). In addition to developing a one-year nursery, kindergarten and elementary school teacher education program for the eight cooperating schools, the Cooperative School for Student Teachers — in formation — set up a group of courses in progressive education procedures for teachers (*Sun*, 1932b, 1933d).

At some time in 1930, Nursery School, the Bureau of Educational Experiments, as well as the Mitchell family moved to 69 Bank Street — an old, overhauled, refurbished and modernized four-story warehouse of the former Fleischmann Yeast Company. Next, in June 1931, the three- and five-story buildings at 161-165 West 12th Street, and the four-story buildings at 144-148 West 13th Street, owned by Lucy Sprague Mitchell, were sold to City and Country School (*Evening Post*, 1931). The Forbes-Johnson family continued to live at 144 West 13th Street.

The Cooperative School for Student Teachers closely cooperated with the New School for Social Research (*Sun*, 1933b-c), the very first so-called 'university for adults' in the U.S.A., co-founded in 1919 by Mrs. Willard D. Straight, Bureau of Educational Experiments charter members Wesley C. Mitchell and Frederick W. Ellis, Bureau honorary member John Dewey, and others (*New York Tribune*, 1919a). Bureau charter member Mitchell was the New School's first Treasurer.

When the student teachers school was officially organized in August 1931, Johnson's Nursery School became one of eight schools where its students would be sent to practice (Mildram, 1931). Nursery School, until Johnson's death in 1934, would extend "to cover the ages between two and six" (Biber, Sprague Mitchell, Stanton, & Woodcock, 1936, p. *xv*). It was also expected that the children after attending Nursery School would attend Elisabeth Irwin's Little Red School House educational experiment at Public School 41 (Irwin, 1924, 1928a-b; Irwin & Marks, 1924; *Sun*, 1931) — breaking with the established tradition of then attending City and Country School (see: Rohe, 1921). In 1932, a letter of parents of children in the Nursery School reports the new loyalty to Irwin's school by assisting in raising funds to rescue Irwin's Little Red School House experiment that was on the verge of collapsing and at the same time becoming a private school (O'Han, 2009; *Sun*, 1932a) — and by pledging to send their children to the reborn Little Red School House in 1933 (*Evening Post*, 1932b).

The Cooperative School for Student Teachers — later renamed Cooperative School for Teachers — in due course became Bank Street College of Education, a graduate school.

1929: The Founding of the National Association for Nursery Education (NANE)

By 1929, there were two distinctly different movements occurring simultaneously in early childhood education within the United States. While Harriet M. Johnson became a leader in the evolving nursery school movement, the kindergarten movement was also evolving. Remarkably, the two movements approached each other in 1929 — as Nina C. Vandewalker (1923) had already predicted in an issue of *Kindergarten Circular* that predominantly reviewed Johnson's nursery school. Vandewalker wrote, "Thus far preschool education has been represented mainly by the kindergarten" (p. 4). She then explained,

> The nursery school will stimulate educational progress…by the new demonstration it is making of the kind of education that is appropriate for the preschool child. In this respect…it will reenforce the kindergarten conception that education is the directing of children's progressive development instead of instructing them in the tools of learning. From this standpoint children's interests and activities form the point of departure, and the school arts are learned as means by which children express their ideas. With such a motivation for the learning of the three R's their mastery becomes a pleasure instead of a task. (p. 4).

The American kindergarten movement can be traced all the way back to Froebel. In fact, the first kindergartens in the United States were taught in German (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000; Vandewalker, 1908). It was not until 1860 that Elizabeth Peabody opened the first English speaking kindergarten. In 1873 the first public school kindergarten began in St. Louis with Susan Blow as the teacher. By the end of the 1800s there was a need for a kindergarten organization and thus, The International Kindergarten Union was founded in 1892. Both Patty Smith Hill (1868-1946) and Susan Blow (1843-1916) were active members. During this time, kindergarten teachers were sometimes educated in normal schools. The major university training took place at either Teachers College of Columbia University under Patty Smith Hill — who began a laboratory nursery school at Columbia University Teachers College in 1921 — or at the University of Chicago. While

kindergartens in the United States began as Froebelian kindergartens, they evolved through the leadership of progressive educators, particularly Patty Smith Hill (Philippi-Siewertsz van Reesema, 1949; *Richmond Daily Register*, 1922), to become more open and less reliant on Froebel's philosophy and materials (Wolfe, 2000).

The nursery school movement in the United States can, on the one hand, be traced to England and the influence of the sisters Rachel McMillan (1859-1917) and Margaret McMillan (1860-1931). In 1914, well before Harriet M. Johnson became known in the nursery school movement, Rachel and Margaret McMillan opened the Open-Air Nursery School and Training Centre in Deptford, England. Physical welfare, nourishment, and health of the children from one-and-a-half to seven years old were goals of the McMillan school. The nursery school movement in the United States mainly evolved from post-World War I nursery schools founded on the principles of the McMillan nursery school in England. On the other hand, the movement also evolved from day nurseries founded during the final years of the war (Goewey, 1918).

Folsom (1941) identified a third impulse, coming from Harriet M. Johnson's work since the time she, in 1917, "presented her first plan for an educational experiment for young children to the Bureau of Educational Experiments" (p. 73). Most probably, Folsom's reference to Johnson's 1917 "first plan" concerns her *Plan for Bureau to put in next year's program* — that is, her more or less detailed research proposal handed in at some time during the fall of 1916 or the winter of 1917 to narrow down the Bureau's original 76 research topics (see above). "Johnson's main concern," according to historian of education Barbara Beatty (1995), "was to create an educational environment that maximized the objects and events with and from which young children could play and learn" (p. 140).

The authors of this case study share Folsom's angle; Johnson's work did indeed form the important third (*laboratory* / scientific research) impulse for the nursery school movement. Yet, additionally we are of opinion that Johnson's Nursery School ought to be studied in reference to Caroline Pratt's Play School and perhaps even to Naumburg and Raphael's Montessori Class.

It may come as a surprise: in 1935, writing about the twentieth anniversary celebrations of Walden School, a *New York Post* reporter stated, "It was originally a nursery school, adding a class each year until it now takes children from the two-year-old group through the last year of high school" (Seitz, 1935). In 1914 Margaret Naumburg and Claire Raphael had co-founded New York City's Montessori Class (Staring, Bouchard, & Aldridge, 2014) — renamed Children's School in 1917, and Walden School in 1922. Montessori Class was a kindergarten, yet perhaps also a kind of nursery school, because as of its opening October 5, 1914 the doors were open to children "from three to seven years of age" (*Evening Post*, 1914).

Yet, the *Daily Boston Globe* found in 1929 that New York City's Play School, co-founded in 1913 by Caroline Pratt and Edna Smith actually was the first American nursery school — notably established one year *prior to* the founding of the McMillan nursery school near London, England, or Naumburg and Raphael's Montessori Class in New York City (Philippi-Siewertsz van Reesema, 1949; Staring, 2013a-b, 2015).

> The first nursery school in this country was organized by Miss Caroline Pratt in 1913 from among a group of young children destined for the public schools. Called "The Play School," her venture attracted the attention of parents who were well able to pay fees and who asked that their children should be allowed to attend on that basis…As the school expanded, older children were added who objected to the name "Play School." It was then changed to that of City and Country School, under which it is famous all over the United States. Children are admitted at 3 years and may remain until 13. Affiliated with it is the nursery school of the Bureau of Educational Experiments, of which Miss [Harriet] Johnson is director, and a leading expert in this field. (*Daily Boston Globe*, 1929).

Indeed, Johnson's *laboratory* Nursery School can, and should, be studied in reference to Pratt's Play School, and perhaps to Naumburg and Raphael's Montessori Class too (Forest, 1929). After all, Johnson was very familiar with Naumburg and Raphael's Montessori Class — renamed Children's School in 1917. In her capacity of the Bureau of Educational Experiments' General Secretary Harriet M. Johnson was directly involved with publication of Naumburg and Deming's 1917 Bureau Bulletin about Children's School — containing Deming's (1917) introductory essay and "A Direct Method of Education," that is, Naumburg's (1917) essay about the school's curriculum, two years later also reprinted in the *Modern School* magazine (Naumburg, 1919). Furthermore, ever since its founding in 1913, Johnson was intimately familiar with every

aspect of Caroline Pratt's Play School and its curriculum, because, as shown above, both women were very close friends and knew each other and each other's ideals and personal, political, trade union, and professional history perfectly since 1903. On the one hand, they shared teaching and settlement employment experiences as well as trade union work adventures; on the other hand, they shared political visions, gender leaning, and educational views. They even were housemates for a while!

Eventually, nursery schools became associated with schools of Home Economics and also with universities that developed laboratory schools (Davis & Hansen, 1933). These included Columbia, Yale, Minnesota, and UCLA. However, the earliest training schools for nursery school teachers included the Merrill-Palmer Motherhood and Home Training School in Detroit (1922), the Ruggles Street Nursery School and Training Center in Boston (1926), and the Bureau of Educational Experiments' Cooperative School for Student Teachers in New York City (1931) (Beatty, 1995; Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000).

This background is provided as the historical context for the roots of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) that traces its beginnings to the 1920s and its first publication, the 1930 *Minimum Essentials for Nursery School Education* booklet. As early as 1925, Patty Smith Hill — since 1922 a full Professor of Kindergarten Education at Teachers College, New York City — began organizing an association that would bring together both the kindergarten movement and the nursery school movement. "Patty Smith Hill identified a multidisciplinary group of 25 individuals, among them Arnold Gesell, Lois Meek (Stolz), and Abigail Eliot, to consider the need for a new association" (*History of NAEYC*, 2004, p. 1). Three meetings of an informal character were held in New York City in 1925, and a conference was organized in Washington, D.C. in February 1926. Patty Smith Hill, Harriet M. Johnson, and Director for the American Association of University Women Lois Hayden Meek (Stolz), among others, were on the program committee. A year later, in April 1927, the second conference was held in New York City; a third conference was held in 1929. "By 1929 the group was organized as the National Association for Nursery Education (NANE)" (*History of NAEYC*, 2004, p. 1) — renamed National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in 1964.

1930: *Minimum Essentials for Nursery School Education*

On May 18, 1929, the *Saturday Evening Post* published "Gone are the Days," co-authored by Harriet Johnson and Torrance Goddard. It is not certain whether Harriet M. Johnson was identical to the article's co-author Harriet Johnson, so we can only refer to the article here (see also: *Current Magazine Contents*, 1929). More of interest in the context of this case study, however, is the certain fact that Harriet M. Johnson later in 1929 co-authored the first NANE publication *Minimum Essentials for Nursery School Education*, a 16-page unpaginated booklet issued a few months later, in March 1930. Mary Dabney Davis of the United States Office of Education and Anna E. Richardson of the American Home Economics Association were Johnson's co-authors. Together they formed the Sub-Committee of the National Committee on Nursery Schools that prepared the booklet (Davis, Johnson, & Richardson, 1930).

The seminal pamphlet is often referenced in early childhood education literature, yet seldom reviewed. The complete text will not be reviewed here too; however, its underlying structure will be explained. Since it concerns an unpaginated booklet, we will refer to pages, which we numbered ourselves, beginning with the title page.

Chair of the National Committee on Nursery Schools Lois Hayden Meek (1930) stated in her "Foreword" that the nursery school movement was scarcely a decade old; 16 nursery schools were established 1919-1923, 108 were founded 1924-1928, and 22 were opened in 1929. Meek found, however, that during that time the "sociological implications and the scientific facts of the developmental stages of child growth which are basic to any program for the education of preschool children have not been established." She added,

> The need to insure certain minimum standards in nursery schools and at the same time to protect the movement from becoming stereotyped and static were at once the concern and the dilemma of the Committee. The present report is the result of an effort to meet both of these problems. For those who wish definite statements as to what is and what is not a nursery school the report will be disappointing. But for those who wish suggestions for developing a nursery school on the

> basis of the experience of leaders in the field the report will be stimulating and constructive. (p. 3).

Meek concluded her one-page "Foreword" by showing satiated appreciation for the booklet's authors. Above all, she thanked Johnson. "The Committee wishes to give especial recognition to the contribution of Harriet Johnson whose experimental work with preschool children makes her so well qualified to formulate tentative minimum essentials suggestive for growth and change rather than static acceptance" (p. 3).

Davis, Johnson and Richardson (1930) opened *Minimum Essentials for Nursery School Education* by indicating that nursery schools were still evolving and hence crystallization of practices and fixation of standards was undesirable, that the booklet "represents the best current practice," that they saw education as a "gradual, continual development of all the abilities of the individual," and that "activities of the nursery school" therefore "must be seen as a part of the continuing interrelated educational experience of home, community and school" (p. 5). Next they presented a nomenclature of the most common types of nursery school organization. Half a decade after the publication of *Minimum Essentials for Nursery School Education*, Wagoner, Thrum, Mayfield, and Andon (1935) abridged the classification of organization in their book *Observation of Young Children*.

> The minimum essentials for nursery school education, as formulated by the National Association for Nursery Education, list three types of organization: (1) a school for young children which may exist independently, as a part of some school organization, or as a part of a social-service institution; (2) a teacher-training center; and (3) a research center. (p. 2).

Does the staccato-like list deliver a good impression of the *Minimum Essentials…* booklet? It does. Davis, Johnson and Richardson (1930) summed up the three most usual types of organization in the introductory first part of the booklet as analytically as presented in *Observation of Young Children*, before they subsequently in the second part systematically enumerated and briefly discussed objectives of nursery school education — occasionally also adding listings of characteristics.

1. *Motor and sensory control*…
2. *Social adjustment*…
3. *Development of interest-drives*…
4. *Power to imitate, to choose, and to be occupied constructively*…
5. *Ability to find a medium for expression of feeling*…
6. *Appreciation*…
7. *Physical Development*…(pp. 6-8).

Such a taxonomy-like approach, although characteristic for that time, might disqualify Johnson's hand — after all, she never before advanced nursery school education so austerely. Yet, NANE had offered her a unique once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to help assemble methodically based data to strengthen the founding of rationally focussed and scientifically based nursery schools — too good to turn down? In a sense, it perfectly reflected the mission she obtained in 1919 from the Bureau of Educational Experiments! And in fact, when we read closely, we indubitably recognize Johnson's hand explaining her views and stance, cataloging what she had put forward in publications up to 1929.

The final part in the NANE booklet — by the way, by far the largest part — further examines and scrutinizes as methodically as the first key part the standards for the maintenance of the nursery schools. Davis, Johnson and Richardson found that those standards must be formulated, explained and reviewed in relation to five commanding subjects — each strictly, perhaps neatly subdivided, every now and then even sub-subdivided:

A. Children Enrolled….
    1. *General character of the group*….
    2. *Size of the group*…
    3. *Age of children*…
B. Personnel of School Staff…
    1. *Training*…
    2. *Number of staff*…
    3. *Methods used*…
C. Program of Activities…
    1. *Children*…

(a) Spontaneous play…
(b) Stories…
(c) Rhythmic Activities…
(d) Routine habits…
(e) Social responsibilities…
(f) Experience with growing things…
(g) Experience in a wider environment outside the school…
(h) Maintenance of health…

2. *Parents and the home*...
   (a) There should be an exchange of information between school and home…
   (b) Conferences with individual parents should be arranged…
   (c) Friendly visits in the home…
   (d) The parents should visit the nursery school…
   (e) Study Groups fore parents are advised…
   (f) Occasional parents' meetings are helpful…

D. Plant and Equipment...
   1. *Building*…
   2. *Playground*…
   3. *Equipment, apparatus, play materials*…

E. Records…
   1. *Attendance* with causes for absences.
   2. *Progress of child in adjusting to nursery routine*…
   3. *Progress in activities.*
      (a) Sensori-motor activities…
      (b) Development of impelling interest in play materials…
      (c) Social activities—progress of social adjustment…(pp. 9-16).

Interestingly, Mary Dabney Davis and Rowna Hansen (1933, pp. 16-18) delivered a far less systematic summary of *Minimum Essentials…* in their *Nursery Schools: Their Development and Current Practices in the United States*:

> *Motor and sensory control*. — The nursery school covers that comparatively short period of time when sheer activity engrosses the child and when activity is of the utmost physiological importance to him; the use of large pieces of equipment must help him assure the child control over himself and his immediate environment…
>
> *Social adjustment*. — Since awareness of other children and an understanding of how to play with others develop at different rates there must be provision for a young child to watch other children from the side lines for a time, at another time to make his contacts as fleeting as he will, and, as he arrives at a point of requisite preparedness, to become a responsible member of the group…
>
> *Development of interest-drives*. — The perversion of interest-drives in many adults emphasizes the importance of developing normal, healthy, and spontaneous "drives" in young children….
>
> *Physical development*. — During the early years of the child's life Physical growth and development are rapid and must be definitely safeguarded in the nursery school environment. (p. 17).

Today we would call Davis and Hansen's summary a more-or-less fashionable synopsis. Yet, since Davis was one of three authors of *Minimum Essentials…*, she certainly had the right of speech.

1930: A Very Productive Year for Harriet M. Johnson

Harriet M. Johnson published three other texts in 1930: "Pioneer Babies in the New Education," an "Introduction" in a photo-book, and "Play Materials for the Preschool Child" (that is, the first of two articles about playthings).

Two other items — a typescript titled "Courtesy and Manners" mentioned in *School Begins at Two* (Johnson, 1936), and a typescript titled "Treatment of Thumb-Sucking in the Nursery School" — are kept in the Archives of Bank Street College of Education in New York City. The first, "Courtesy and Manners," is available on-line since a couple of years. In 1930, Johnson gave a talk to the Parent Group of the Windward School about courtesy and manners. Because the typescript was never published in a magazine or journal, it will not be reviewed here. But, as stated, it is available on-line (see: Johnson, 1930f). Also in 1930, Johnson finished writing the manuscript for a talk at a symposium on thumb sucking, organized by the Child Study Association of America. "Treatment of Thumb-Sucking in the Nursery School," the typescript of the presentation, dated April 11, 1930, was never published in a magazine or journal; therefore, it will not be reviewed here. However, in 1932, *Child Study* published an article about a spring 1930 "round table discussion" on thumb sucking where papers of four experts, Johnson included, were " discussed in detail" (Hohman, Levy, Schroeder, & Johnson, 1932, p. 39). The article offers long excerpts from the four papers presented. In her paper, Harriet M. Johnson sketched the procedures used in the Bureau of Educational Experiments Nursery School. The text of the paper overlaps and nearly matches verbatim the typescript "Treatment of Thumb-Sucking in the Nursery School" kept in the archives of Bank Street College of Education, mentioned above. Johnson roughly drafted her school's philosophy as regards to thumb sucking.

> We make our attack indirectly, as we do on other habits which we wish to modify. Strong preferences, shyness, fears, the reliance on the familiar—all those are habits that we think are thwarting rather than developing, but we never press the point or make the child aware of our interest in it. Our job is to set up competing and more satisfying attractions. (Johnson in Hohman, Levy, Schroeder, & Johnson, 1932, p. 42).

She then explained how her school dealt with four differing situations involving thumb sucking, that is, 'naptime sucking,' 'daytime sucking,' thumb sucking when a child is bored, and lastly, thumb sucking when a child is tired. Letting the children sleep in sleeping bags usually adequately solved the first problem was Johnson's experience. The children were allowed to find their thumb and satisfy their desires, though. In cases of persistent thumb sucking, sleeping bags would be adjusted. The Nursery School procedure against daytime sucking, when children "are kept from activity they want to be doing, particularly if taken away from something they are enjoying" was to offer a child "an occupation that is absorbing," or "something that will employ his hands" (p. 42). This really effectual procedure is not helpful when the child is bored. "In that case we set before him some compelling situation, preferably with the group, which will lure him more than sitting down and sucking" (p. 42). In circumstances when children were tired, and habitually began sucking their thumbs, a similar procedure was used.

> Then we do the same sort of thing, only instead of making it an active pursuit, we try to introduce something which he can do sitting down; for instance, the sandbox…In a good many instances we find that a child will give up an activity that he cannot press through to a satisfactory conclusion; and thumbsucking or not, we try to make sure that when a child begins doing something that he has any sort of interest in, he is helped to bring it through to a performance that satisfies him unless he is attempting something so far beyond his ability that it is quite hopeless. (Johnson in Hohman, Levy, Schroeder, & Johnson, 1932, p. 43).

Note that the spring 1930 symposium on thumb sucking was very briefly reviewed in *The Journal of Home Economics* (1933, p. 155). For further summary information, we refer to two *Chicago Daily Tribune* articles that sum up the meeting's the subject matter (see: Bevans, 1934a-b).

After that, on May 17, 1930, Harriet M. Johnson led a meeting of teachers of nine nursery schools at Vassar College Nursery School, Poughkeepsie (*Vassar Miscellany News*, 1930). Unfortunately, the manuscript of her speech is missing.

On the other hand, Harriet M. Johnson (1930d) posed more than a few intriguing questions in her next article — "Pioneer Babies in the New Education," in *American Childhood*:

> What do the health provisions in the nursery school mean to [the] pioneer babies who are casting in their lot with newer education? What does it mean to an individualist like a two-year-old to find himself one of a group of ten or twenty? How does he use his time and what assurance has he that it is more fun or more worth his while than what he can find to do at home? (p. 17).

Johnson found the dietary standard higher as well as persistently kept up higher in the nursery school than in the average family, especially as regards variety of flavors and quantities of vegetables, fruit, cereal supper,

and starchy puddings. She thought — on dubious grounds of hearsay — that it was harder for nursery school toddlers to get contagious diseases because they would build up "immunity to ordinary communicable diseases by being in a group" (p. 18). As to being in a group of toddlers, Johnson declared it fortunate that really "intensive social play, like ball-throwing, or hauling each other in wagons" would spontaneously disintegrate and turn into less energetic individual play (p. 18). Such behavior ought to be encouraged, was her idea, since everybody should learn to contribute constructively to social living. Johnson summarized the nursery school's essentials as regards play materials and early physical needs of the toddlers.

> However, the ground work of the nursery school curriculum must be the activities carried on by the children. At first, in the earliest ages, these are largely big muscles exercises making for strength, agility and sureness in handling the body and large materials. Later the essentials are not ready-made apparatus and toys, however ingenious, but blocks, boards, boxes, raw stuff which children can use for their own purposes; plastic material like clay, crayons, cloth, paint, tools; and experiences with music, rhythms and language, so that the impulse toward re-creating the environment and the impulse toward emotional expression may be satisfied. (p. 19).

Yet, social qualities of play develop gradually, gaining significance as experiences with the world outside, the family and the school grow. Johnson concluded the article by indicating that the children's feelings of "security and satisfaction" and their "habits of work and habits of clear thinking" form the nursery schools' advantageous contributions to the "more extensive educational process" (p. 62).

Also in 1930, amazingly — perchance even to historians of education — Harriet M. Johnson wrote the introductory word to *The First Picture Book* showing twenty-four full-page photos of everyday objects by famous photographer Edward Steichen. His daughter, actress Mary Steichen Martin compiled the book, most probably in close collaboration with Johnson. After graduating from Vassar College, Poughkeepsie in 1925, Steichen Martin attended New York City's American Laboratory Theatre where famed Lee Strasberg was one of her co-students trying to comprehend Stanislavski's System of Method Acting.

In April 1928, Steichen Martin played Jeanne in a performance of Jean-Jacque Bernard's *Martine*. It is almost certain that her two children — 1926 born Nell, and 1928 born Linda Joan — attended Nursery School, where she and Johnson then must have befriended. Steichen Martin wrote *The First Picture Book*'s "Preface." Johnson (1930b), in her unpaginated one-page-long "Introduction" to the Steichen photo-book, wrote about the joint project of photographing pre-school age children's "intimate, homely, and familiar things" like a teddy bear, a clock, a comb, shoes and socks, and issuing the book of a selection of the photos. She found,

> Here is a new venture in the field of books for babies. It differs in many ways from the traditional picture book. It is not an illustrated story. It is not intended to inform or to introduce children to the unknown, nor to cultivate their appreciation for the excellent in art…Its aim is simply to give pleasure…The things portrayed here belong to an environment which has narrow boundaries, and to an early age level.

The First Picture Book, including Johnson's text, was reprinted in November 1930 (see: Johnson, 1930c). A year later, *The First Picture Book* (© 1930) was reissued, this time together in one volume with *The Second Picture Book* (© 1931, second Printing) — yet, it never sold well. Several years later, Gladys H. Bevans (1933) — author of *Chicago Tribune* columns on education that were also reprinted in other newspapers — stated in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* that the *First Picture Book* was recommended in a 1932 Bureau of Educational Experiments pamphlet titled *Equipment for Class of Ten 2-Year-Old Children* (now missing).

Five-and-a-half decades later, in the course of an interview with the *Milwaukee Journal* in 1988, then Mary Steichen Calderone told the reporter that she would love to reissue *The First Picture Book* during her retirement (Dennis, 1988). Three years later, eventually, the Library Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City through a limited edition (see: Johnson, 1991b), and simultaneously the New York City Whitney Museum of American Art itself through a commercial edition (see: Johnson, 1991c), made possible a reissue of the photo-book, in America. The commercial edition was published in Switzerland too (see: Johnson, 1991a) — where its German translation was reprinted almost every subsequent year until the turn of the millennium. A year later it was also issued in England (see: Johnson,

1992b). In spite of all publicity deriving from the classy upmarket American, English and Swiss reprints since 1991, Johnson's introductory text in the book and her collaboration to the photo-book project remained virtually unknown.

Returning here to the chronology of Johnson's life and texts. Next, "Play Materials for the Preschool Child" in the December 1930 issue of *American Childhood* was the first of two articles about playthings written by Johnson for the journal. "Creative Materials for the Preschool Child," the second article in *American Childhood*, appeared a month later.

Johnson's (1930e) article about play materials straight away ridicules ideas of progressive educators that the play of babies and toddlers led directly to serious occupations. "Using a see-saw board is supposed to be a problem in weight and balance, pushing a stick under a board demonstrates physics, block building is the beginning of mathematics, and community excursions teach social science" (p. 10). Johnson even reverted to a biologically inspired analogy to underline her comment, speaking about pre-school children as having "fairly emerged from what may be termed the larva stage."

It was her opinion, based on observation of the group of pre-school children in her nursery school, that they only gradually developed a level attention and "control of their bodies" while dealing with playthings provided. Only after they steadily developed "certain habits of busyness and self dependence," the children developed what may be called "mental activity;" only then they resolved to play with larger playthings, and their activities started simulating "real-life situations and procedures to which the children have themselves been subjected" (p. 10). Another later evolvement, according to Johnson, is "more ambitious drama." She identified three characteristics:

1. "actual first-hand experiences are taken as dramatic material;"
2. "the dramatic representation involves the use of the impulses noted in the immature reactions, the motor and sensory activities which are now directed to the end of living over and intensifying the recall of the past;"
3. "through it all runs and develops the social interest, the pleasure in shared activities and play schemes, with a language accompaniment which serves as a communicating medium" (p. 11).

Johnson further proposed a listing of conditions to which playthings had to meet — as also put forward in her other publications.

1931: Another Very Productive Year for Harriet M. Johnson

"Creative Materials for the Preschool Child," Harriet M. Johnson's (1931b) second well-illustrated *American Childhood* article about playthings describes the use of building blocks in dramatic play in her Nursery School. It is clear that the school had Unit Blocks — designed by Caroline Pratt approximately 1910 (Staring, 2015). Johnson wrote,

> The child is a craftsman. Blocks seem to us the most effective and basic tools. For indoor use they must have a unit form such as the brick, and all the other varieties must be derived from this unit, multiples of it up to the quadruple or divisions of it into half units, triangles and pillars. The addition of arches and curves and of cylinders of the unit length and of two diameters, enrich the possibility of this material especially for children…Out of doors large hollow blocks of two sizes…lend themselves to large constructions in which, quite literally, groups can play together. (p. 13).

Not only did Johnson sense that children are craftsmen, but she found that they are artists as well, building beautiful block designs — as a "result of an inner feeling of rhythm and balance" (p. 13). And they are actors too. "No experience is too complicated and elaborate for him to reproduce, and again blocks give him an adequate medium, a framework for his dramatic idea" (p. 13). Indoors, blocks in which the form of a train or a truck is indicated, wooden dolls, and wooden animals can add to the dramatic play. Outdoors, packing boxes, boards of different sizes, shovels, brooms, wagons, kiddy kars, and other "adaptable play materials" (p. 57) can be useful in dramatic play. The sketches of dramatic play with building blocks in this *American Childhood* article and in Johnson's book *Children in the Nursery School* (1928a, pp. 182-220) would in 1933 result in *The Art of Block Building*, a separate publication about the 'bringing into play' of building blocks in dramatic play (see the review of the 1933 booklet below).

Johnson (1931b) concluded by describing a number of procedures of taking field trips, and by listing four ways of recognizing the result of good trips.

> The results may be reckoned in various ways; by the habits of observation and of interest in the environment which are built up, by the increase in mental activity and the power to think through a situation, by the ingenuity and inventiveness developed in the adaptation of materials to representative use, and fourth and most important by far, by the stimulus that is given to the art-platy of children and the resulting pleasure and satisfaction. (p. 58).

In winter 1931, Johnson's (1931c) article "Dramatic Play in the Nursery School" in *Progressive Education* opened as follows:

> The small child lives in a self-centered world, the circumference of which is small even if in it is included all of the environment that affects him directly or indirectly. The child himself, however, sets narrow boundaries in terms of his own intimate share in that world's current events. The things that have happened to him and have happened repeatedly are his deepest concern, and as we watch we can trace the lines which have engaged his interest and his emotion. He will usually dramatize the experiences which lie nearest to him, sometimes with startling fidelity, sometimes with an elaboration suggesting that they are inspired either by fantasy or by unconscious desire. (p. 16).

The article lists forms of such dramatic play, for instance, the ceremonies that accompany going to bed and getting up, but Johnson also pointed at children playing telephone conversation, operating a gramophone, shoe-shining, shaving, cooking, baking, eating, etc. Interestingly, Johnson sketched an observation about children's play reactions accompanying the proportional measurements that were regularly taken in Nursery School: prior to the age of twenty-four months Johnson did not observe dramatic rehearsal of the procedures. However, the seniors in the group showed dramatic reproduction of the events in their play in which Johnson saw the early phases of authentic interest of children as well as a method of learning to experience, to recall and to embroider. Since learning progresses from the known to the unknown, education of pre-school age children should be learning from the familiar, yet also learning with the familiar. Teachers should not only stimulate the children's interests during the experience, but should help them recall these interests afterwards by discussing them. Again Johnson addressed the value of field trips, and she sketched the experiences and dramatic play with building blocks, paint, crayons, etc., of a group of six-year-olds discovering that Manhattan is an island. She indicated that the power of the phrases and language used by the children as a tool for their experimentation during their dramatic play grows steadily, and that their dramatic play is not part of a program, but reproduces personal experiences. It is most unfortunate that Salvatore Vascellaro's (2011) recent book *Out of the Classroom and into the World* about field trips organized and theorized by Lucy Sprague Mitchell did not prominently address Harriet M. Johnson's (or for that matter, Elisabeth Irwin, Marietta Johnson, Caroline Pratt, or Jessie Stanton's) influence on Sprague Mitchell (e.g., Taylor, 19128a-b). It would certainly have put her place in the history of organizing field trips for young children on a pedestal! Johnson (1931c) concluded the article in style.

> If we regard dramatic play as one of the methods of establishing one's relation with the world in which one lives, and of expressing the feeling, the emotion which is aroused by contacts and experience, we shall find two things happening to us: first, we shall see children in a new perspective, and second, we shall realize the possibilities of modern education as one of the arts. (p. 19).

Note that Harriet M. Johnson saw to it that the article was included in the second edition of Hartman and Shumaker's book *Creative Expression* (see: Johnson, 1932). The book was reprinted in 1939, and in 1971.

Next, on April 30, 1931, Harriet M. Johnson (1931d) gave a radio address about "Progressive Teachers" on WOR radio. The typescript of the address is in the Archives of Bank Street College of Education, and is now available on-line at the site of the Archives. Since it was never published in a magazine or journal, it will not be reviewed here. Then, on May 13, she visited the annual meeting of parents of the Livingston School in West Brighton, Staten Island. According to their custom "of inviting criticism, especially from people well informed on the methods of progressive schools," the parents had

invited Johnson to attend their annual meeting "prepared to say anything whatever she thinks about the school" (*Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1931).

The September issue of *Practical Home Economics* had Johnson's (1931a) "A Nursery School Health Program," a publication already announced in the concluding part of her 1928 book *Children in the Nursery School* (see above). Johnson dealt with the questions about the risk of contagion run by the Nursery School children, provisions made by the school guarding against trivial infections, arrangements made for sleep and rest, and questions about the school's nutrition standards.

Johnson affirmed that cases of (trivial) infections had occurred in her school. She described the procedure of detecting an infection and of isolation of the infected child. No secondary infection had taken place at Nursery School. The school maintained specific rules of exclusion; parents had to understand and accept them when admitting their child. Johnson stated the school's playground was "thoroughly drained and flooded with sunlight" (p. 268). There was no crowding of children at Nursery School, neither outdoors, nor indoors. There were provisions for both out-of-door sleeping in isolated, screened, open-air cubicles underneath the school's wide balcony as well as a dormitory method of sleeping inside — meaning, inside the classrooms. Johnson stated that the school's diet planning had "developed in accordance with the newer methods of nutrition" and "tended to a wider variety of foods, more emphasis upon green and leafy vegetables, and a tendency to a reduction of starch" (p. 268).

Regarding administering the school's health program, Johnson wrote,

> [We] make no attempt to bring its rules into the awareness of the children. We try to establish acceptance as an habitual reaction toward rest and sleep, toward routine performances like washing, dressing, and going to the toilet, and toward meal time. We try to make all these occasions happy and pleasurable so that the general level of enjoyment will be high at these times, and the anticipation at their approach will be keen…We do not call attention to the food, its appearance or taste and we never discuss food values with the children or urge them to eat in order that they may grow…It is really impossible to lay down general rules to guide teachers or parents on the question of treatment of feeding habits. It is in the final analysis an individual problem. (pp. 268 + 289).

Johnson concluded her article by presenting her early childhood education axiom:

> The child who has only the companionship of adults during his early years, lacks the mental stimulus of his fellow's interests. His play habits suffer, and his initiative, inventiveness, and independence have less soil upon which to grow. As one watches these nursery school children one feels above all that they are having a rich, joyous, wholesome life. Health and happiness proverbially go hand in hand. (p. 289).

Note that "A Nursery School Health Program" in *Practical Home Economics* turned out to be Johnson's last journal publication. The article finished a decade of writing about various educational procedures of the Bureau of Educational Experiments Nursery School.

Finally in 1931, in November, Johnson headed a discussion group on parent education, nutrition, play activity, and nursery school preparation at a conference of the National Association for Nursery Education in Temple University, Philadelphia (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1931). Unfortunately, the manuscript of her speech is missing.

Concluding this section: 1932 must have been a quiet year for Harriet M. Johnson. Perhaps she was already suffering from a disease that would progressively handicap her until her death in February 1934? The authors of this case study found only one reference to her activities in 1932. The *Evening Post* (1932a) reported that on April 13 she spoke on "The Pre-School Child" under the auspices of the Women's Division of the Federation for the Support of Jewish Philanthropic Societies at the Brightside Day Nursery. Unfortunately, the manuscript of her speech is missing.

1933: *The Art of Block Building*

In winter 1933, Harriet M. Johnson assisted in the planning of a two weeks' intensive program for the training of unemployed teachers to begin work as nursery teachers at twenty-five emergency nursery schools in New York City and forty-six emergency nursery schools in Up-State New York cities, to be opened by the Civil Works Service of the State Civil Works Administration. According to Folsom (1941), the nursery school movement received an impetus from the "launching of the emergency program in 1933 with federal relief funds" (p. 74). Unemployed nurses, doctors, and nutritionists as well as carpenters, cooks and garment workers found employment in the emergency nursery schools.

> Under the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and the Works Progress Administration, a great many federal nursery schools, originally known as emergency nursery schools, were set up, using qualified unemployed women as teachers and cooks, and serving, in practice, mainly low income families. Among other things, they gave a valuable supplementation to the food of the children. (p. 74).

Again, akin to the situation by the end of World War I, economic circumstances formed the underlying causes — women had to work exceptionally hard outside the home to keep their household afloat (e.g., Beatty, 1995; *Buffalo Courier-Express*, 1934; *Dansville Breeze*, 1933; *Evening Leader*, 1934). The Bureau of Educational Experiments' Cooperative School for Student Teachers and Teachers College at Columbia University carried out the training program in the state of New York (*Putnam County Courier*, 1936; Stanton, 1934; *Sun*, 1934b).

Later that year, Harriet M. Johnson delivered a lecture in a series on 'The School in the Present Day World' (*Sun*, 1933c). Unfortunately, the manuscript of her lecture is missing.

On a completely different level: Harriet M. Johnson and Harriet Forbes must have felt really proud parents of their daughter Polly, who in summer 1933 was among a group of students who went to Europe for several months to study the life of the citizens in Germany under the Hitler regime (see above; *Sun* 1933b; *Syracuse Journal*, 1933).

Also in 1933, Johnson (1933) wrote a booklet entitled *The Art of Block Building* on how blocks designed by Caroline Pratt support children's reconstruction and understanding of their world, and their learning in general. "These blocks were designed by Caroline Pratt and have always been used in the City and Country School. She has never given them her name and so they are found on the market under the name of the manufacturer and under various trade names" (p. 6). Although she did not explicitly develop stages of block play, Johnson described patterns and changes in children's block play over time. She explained children's first experience with blocks does not involve construction. There is a time, early on, when children stack of carry blocks without a specific purpose before true construction begins to occur. Purposeful use of blocks usually happens between the ages of two or three. At this point there is much repetitive behavior in block play. Parents and teachers understand the necessity of repetition. Johnson remarked, "All parents and teachers will agree that repetition in one form or another is characteristic of the child who is just beginning to perfect his locomotion or his language" (p. 8).

Enclosures appear early in children's block building behaviors. After some experience with construction, children build structures in decorative and balanced forms. Another pattern in block building development involves naming the structures. Naming is not common in twos and threes but naming structures becomes usual in older children. And, as children get older the intent of a structure and naming it, are often given by the child at the onset of construction. When children reach five or six, the buildings they make reproduce actual structures.

As children build with blocks, they develop the attitude of an artist. Further, Johnson reported children speak through blocks. Block building appears to increase children's verbal language facility through their description of the structures they constructed. Finally, by age six or seven, blocks have served their purpose with many children.

The Art of Block Building turned out to be Johnson's final publication. It was reprinted four times after her death (in 1951, 1955, 1962, and in 1966). Later it formed a chapter in three editions of Hirsch's *The Block Book* issued by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (in 1976, 1984, and 1996); it also appeared in 1983 as a chapter in Provenzo Jr. and Brett's *The Complete Block Book.*

1934 and 1936: Posthumous Publications

On February 21, 1934, Harriet Merrill Johnson died in Miami, Florida. She was not even 67 years old. The *Sun* (1934a) wrote in their obituary, "An adopted daughter, Miss Polly Forbes-Johnson, survives her." The fact that the newspaper forgot to mention that Harriet Forbes also survived Johnson must have been extremely hurtful to Forbes after all those years they had lived together and shared the good and the bad as a out-of-the-closet, non-guardedly open and straightforward lesbian couple.

To honor Johnson's life and her contributions to early childhood education, the Bureau Nursery School was renamed Harriet Johnson Nursery School (e.g., Lewis, 1946). A fund — The Harriet M. Johnson Memorial Fund — was created to assist financing the school's program and to spread Johnson's legacy. Among others, Mary Dabney Davis, Elisabeth Irwin, Caroline Pratt, Patty Smith Hill, John Dewey, and Wesley C. Mitchell were on the committee of the fund that additionally planned to co-finance the publication of Johnson's unfinished and unpublished texts as well as the re-publication of her classic *Children in the Nursery School*.

Three quarters of a year after her death, the second number of the *69 Bank Street* magazine had "The Modern Teacher" (Johnson, 1934), the first posthumous publication. The opening page of the article gives the impression of preparing for a discussion on what is now called 'class management,' addressing such questions as,

> What should the teacher's reaction be to personal attacks, and how does her response differ with different age levels? What should she do about flagrant social violations — biting, seizing toys, pushing? At what point shall she enter the play situation, to check or to stimulate? (p. 1).

Yet, the article turns out to be a general clarification of the qualities teachers should have, or have to develop. Most probably it was a redraft of a text Johnson used in the teacher training at the Cooperative School for Student Teachers.

Johnson found that teachers, before the times of the 'new education,' stood apart and above children, were never friends. But with the 'new education' they changed into "benevolent neutral" persons "so controlled that no personal flavor except approval or disapproval could reach the children" (p. 1). Instead, Johnson suggested a third teacher personality: teachers should be "the senior partner in a social organization" (p. 2). They would become freer and would be better understood by children. In fact, a teacher should be as authoritative as parents, nonetheless less corrective, "working all the time to make children independent of her" (p. 3). Broadly speaking, teachers should be new persons for the children, first playing to be a kind of substitute mother, but then, sooner rather than later, they should be persons who give out the impression that "play, the development of play interests and play products are really important" (p. 3).

> A teacher must be a person to whom a child is as real a person as another adult. If she actually and intuitively has this feeling about children, she will treat them as equals. She will be informal, casual, interestedly cordial and not patronizing in her relationship with them. In her man-to-man attitude she will consider difference in development but not in essential quality. Affection and respect will be combined. (p. 3).

Teachers should develop their own "individual artistry" (p. 4), like responding humorously to children's remarks, appreciating their jokes, or adapting their expressions in stories or poems. They should, as well, be able to detect symptoms of unusual behavior and responses of the children, and should know when a physician must be consulted. And, of course, a teacher should be able to work out "the principles on which she bases her educational procedures, the experiences which are to be offered children and the methods by which…continuity is maintained and the school's program becomes an integrated one" (p. 5). Teachers must be able to build a curriculum and to test it. And, for teachers who work in the 'newer education' and who should for that reason have an overall experimental attitude, Johnson listed the following qualities:

> The teacher needs first of all to *see* children…Second, she needs to realize children's powers, the scope of their ability to handle problems…Third, she needs to appreciate that children are essentially artists and that it is the process of creative use of materials rather than the resulting product that is important in growth. (p. 7).

It is interesting that Johnson then addressed the subject of student teachers who in her opinion are supposed to develop the quality of doing fieldwork in their own environment. That would be of help when they "lead their pupils back into the past or afar into distant fields" (p. 8).

The last of Harriet M. Johnson's seminal works is *School Begins at Two: A Book for Teachers and Parents*, posthumously published two years after her death — its publication co-financed by the publisher and by the Harriet M. Johnson Memorial Fund. This resource describes, in detail, the pre-school curriculum, foundations for a school philosophy, working hypotheses of a nursery school, and notes on the study of individual children in a school situation. *School Begins at Two* will not be reviewed at length here.

Part I in the book consists of the text of an unfinished manuscript on pre-school curriculum. The two larger middle sections in the book, together forming Part II, are amalgamations of various paragraphs taken from fifteen of Johnson's published and unpublished texts (see: Johnson, 1936, pp. 223-224). Among these, "Paper for Symposium on Thumb-Sucking" most probably equals "Treatment of Thumb-Sucking in the Nursery School" kept in the Archives of Bank Street College of Education, New York City. Barbara Biber (1936a), in her "Editorial Note' to Part III wrote that the last part of posthumously published *School Begins at Two* consists of "working notes" through which Johnson "constructed her picture of a child" (p. 160). Furthermore, an "Editorial Note" written by Barbara Biber — psychologist of the Harriet Johnson Nursery School — introduced each of the three parts in the book. She had edited the book for the Bureau of Educational Experiments from Johnson's published texts and manuscripts.

In Part I ('Preschool Curriculum'), Johnson (1936b) delineated the difference between the functions of school and home. She explained the nature and importance of school routines and rituals, as well as the salience of social and emotional development during pre-school. She concluded part I by describing the purposes and importance of play, particularly dramatic play, as part of the pre-school curriculum.

In Part II, consisting of the two sections 'Foundations for a School Philosophy' and 'Working Hypothesis of a Nursery School' already mentioned, Johnson explained how growth is the basis for the curriculum. Children's adaptations to the expectations of school are necessary and beneficial in promoting development. Additionally, Johnson described the importance of progressive teachers receiving a progressive education anchored in progressive philosophy and methods.

Part III of the book ('Notes on the Study of Individual Children in a School Situation') describes how children's growth was observed through their physical development, language development, social awareness, dramatic play, and play activities. Johnson concluded the book by comparing and contrasting two children of the same age with regard to several dimensions of growth, but especially in their language development and social activities.

During the late 1930s, *School Begins at Two* was reprinted once, in July 1939. In the 1970s, two other reprints followed (in 1970 and 1973).

Summary

There is no doubt that Harriet M. Johnson's nursing, hospital economics training, social work/visiting teacher work, social activism and psychometry background and experiences influenced the development of her research, her research design and her work at the Bureau of Educational Experiments and the Nursery School she developed and administered. Johnson's first professional years were spent as a nurse, a superintendent of nurse's training, an instructor at a hospital training school, a visiting nurse for settlement houses and other institutions, and as a pioneer with the Public Education Association, introducing visiting teachers and Binet testing in the public schools of New York City. As one of the three founders of the Bureau of Educational Experiments, Johnson became a progressive education pioneer through the development of one of the first nursery schools in the United States.

Indeed, the contributions of Harriet M. Johnson are far too numerous to be reviewed in detail in this summary. However, three notable contributions that have been marginalized are described here. While

Johnson has been credited as an innovator in progressive education and the development of nursery schools, the three applications of her work discussed in this summary have gone underreported. These include her trailblazing work in qualitative research methods in early education, her explanations of child development based on her observations of and interactions with young children, and her extensive research and understanding of block play.

Harriet M. Johnson was one of the first educators to use qualitative research methods with young children. While Lucy Sprague Mitchell has recently been credited as a qualitative research innovator (Christensen, 2008), Johnson has not received recognition for her pioneering efforts in qualitative research and research design. Johnson kept copious records of the daily activities in her Nursery School. Specifically, she kept daily charts, weekly summaries, and full-day records. From these records she and her staff gleaned patterns of child development that were forerunners of many noted male educators and psychologists who were given credit for information previously reported by Johnson. Specifically, her contributions to child development predated Piaget's findings. Franklin (2000) suggested, "The line traced from exploration of materials to representation parallels Piaget's discussion of the sensory-motor period and the evolution of representational functioning, which had not yet been published" (p. 67). Furthermore, Harriet M. Johnson is not as widely known for her studies of block play as Caroline Pratt, Jessie Stanton, or Patty Smith Hill. However, Johnson's research on block play continued to be reprinted and used by professional organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children until the turn of the millennium (see: Johnson, 1976, 1983, 1984, 1996, 2001). Johnson should be credited for teaching early childhood educators that the "focus on blocks and block building [is] part of a more encompassing concern with providing a physical environment geared to the child's state of development and optimized to promote intellectual and social growth" (Franklin, 2000, p. 52).

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