

## Out of the Shadows: Redeeming the Contributions of Evelyn Dewey to Education and Social Justice (1909-1919)

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### Abstract

*Evelyn Dewey (1889-1965) is known as the daughter of John Dewey (1859-1952) while little has been written about her contributions as an educator and social activist in her own right. The purpose of this article is to highlight the life and works of Evelyn Dewey from 1909-1919 and beyond. As a political and social activist, Evelyn Dewey supported the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) and the strike known as the Waistmakers' Revolt before she began her extensive research for the book, Schools of To-Morrow (Dewey & Dewey, 1915). She also worked for the Public Education Association and the Bureau of Educational Experiments, as well as Columbia University. Her work for the Bureau resulted in two books, New Schools for Old (Dewey, 1919), and Methods and Results of Testing School Children (Dewey, Child, & Ruml, 1920). After 1919, Evelyn Dewey was involved in speaking engagements concerning experimental schools and extensive writing that resulted in three books, The Dalton Laboratory Plan (Dewey, 1922), Children of the New Day (Glover & Dewey, 1934) and Behavior Development in Infants (Dewey, 1935).*

**Key Words:** Evelyn Riggs Dewey / Evelyn Riggs (née Dewey) Granville Smith Jr. (1889-1965), John Dewey (1859-1952), Marie Turner Harvey (1866-1952), Elisabeth Antoinette Irwin (1880-1942), Harriet Merrill Johnson (1867-1934), Marietta Johnson (1864-1938), Lucy Sprague Mitchell (1878-1967), Dorothy Payne Whitney Willard Straight (1887-1965), Bureau of Educational Experiments, Gary School League, National Social Unit Organization.

### INTRODUCTION

*Schools of To-Morrow*, published in 1915 by Evelyn Dewey (1889-1965) and her father John Dewey (1859-1952), included a collection of reports on experimental schools they personally investigated between 1913 and 1915. Evelyn made the field visits to all the schools reviewed in the book, with the exception of Marietta Johnson's School of Organic Education in Fairhope, Alabama, which investigated by her father John and her brother Sabino during Christmas week of 1913. *Schools of To-Morrow* launched Evelyn and John's slogan *learning by doing*. However, even though John Dewey in his writings up to 1915 had never used the phrase, the famed *learning by doing* is still ascribed to him, and not to his daughter Evelyn and him. Shortly after the book was issued, a review of it appeared in the *New York Herald* (1915). This review did not mention Evelyn, did not report that she did most of the research, and failed to acknowledge her as a co-author. Decades later, references to *Schools of To-Morrow* continued to reference John Dewey, but would often neglect to mention Evelyn Dewey's contribution. For example, Patricia Graham (1967) described John Dewey as the "founder of one of the most renowned early experimental schools...as well as the author of *Schools of To-Morrow*, a classic description of early progressive schooling in America" (p. 13). This kind

of unwarranted marginalization of Evelyn Dewey's merit stands in contrast to the fact that her father, John, contributed far less to their co-authored book than Evelyn did (Aldridge, Kilgo, Jepkemboi, & Rutto-Korir, 2014). In contrast, *The Sun* (1915) did praise Evelyn's research. But marginalization of her contribution followed. *The Sun* blamed Evelyn for the book's shortcomings and editorial misbalances:

In *Schools of To-morrow*...are recorded the impressions of Miss Evelyn Dewey, who made a survey of experimental schools in different parts of the country, together with some theorizing by Dr. John Dewey...The book contains neither index nor bibliography. The chapter headings give no clue to the schools or localities examined. Indeed the structure of the book, which is evidently the work of the younger author, is an excellent instance of the result of doing things too easily and too quickly. It is easy writing, but hard reading. Rambling theorizing, loose thinking and haphazard illustration do not instruct or convince. Nor can a book thus made be used as a reference work.

Yet, the stunning fact that the book has never since been out of print invalidates *The Sun's* assessment of the book. It appears the book fills a gap in the knowledge base of early progressive schools that is still relevant today. The staggering sales mirror expectations of the publisher's education editor Burges Johnson (1944), who later detailed,

I wanted a book that would sell as widely as possible through all channels...[The] second chapter greatly cheered me. It was simply expressed, and parents interested in schools but knowing little about them could understand it. So I went back to Columbia [University]...to Dr. [John] Dewey...I burst into fulsome praise of chapter two, and asked him whether he would be willing to have the book begin with that chapter, and move the opening pages over to the middle of the book. He listened to me quietly and then said in his gentle voice, "What you say interests me greatly. I wrote the first chapter, and my daughter Evelyn wrote the second" (pp. 186-187).

In her chapter on John Dewey in *Learning from the Past*, Jennifer Wolfe (2002) reviewed *Schools of To-Morrow*, referring to Burges Johnson's anecdote, and cites John Dewey's surprised words. She followed up by informing readers that Evelyn wrote another book. This approaches marginalization of Evelyn's qualities. Wolfe then described Marietta Johnson's Fairhope School of Organic Education, referencing its description in *Schools of To-Morrow*. She stated that when visiting the school by the end of December 1913, John Dewey himself took the famous *frontispiece* photograph in the book, showing Marietta Johnson and eight students in front of the school's main building (p. 201). However, Johnson probably distributed press kits to journalists and visitors, including the photo in question. *New York Times* (Edwards, 1913) published the exact same photograph *nine months before* John Dewey allegedly took the photo, *American Magazine* (Bennett, 1913) printed the photograph nearly *half a year before* Dewey's visit to Fairhope, *The Survey* (Hunt, 1913) had the photo almost *two weeks before* he left New York City for Alabama, and *Good Housekeeping* (Young, 1914) included the specific photo in their January 1914 issue, *just about instantaneously following* Dewey's Fairhope visit! Marginalizing someone often constitutes the unintended flipside of emblazoning one's hero (Aldridge & Christensen, 2013).

The purpose of this article is to highlight some of the unknown contributions of Evelyn Dewey by answering the following question: "What were Evelyn Dewey's contributions to the history of education from 1909 to 1919?" This paper describes gaps in the life and works of Evelyn beginning in 1909, and explains the events and contexts related to *Schools of To-morrow*, and the influence the book had in bringing the Gary Plan to the forefront. Further, the article discusses Evelyn's contributions regarding the PEA Psychological Survey, the Bureau of Educational Experiments, the Porter School Experiment, the Cincinnati Social Unit Experiment, and her work beyond 1919 in promoting progressive education.

### Gaps in the Life and Works of Evelyn Dewey

In November 1909, the *Shirtwaist Makers' Strike* began, the largest strike of female workers in the history of American labour movement — also known as the *Waistmakers' Revolt* or *Uprising of the Twenty Thousand*. The strike lasted for more than two extremely cold winter months, until February 1910, involving many thousands of strikers. Well-off, politically active women supported the strike as allies of the NYC branch of the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL). These 'college girls,' in *New York Times* (1909) phraseology, predominantly raised sums of money for the strike fund and gave legal assistance to strikers who were under arrest. At the time, Evelyn Dewey at age 20 was supporting WTUL politics (Carlton, 1986). Many of her WTUL ally equals were renowned women in settlement work, education, women's suffrage, and politics, like Laura Elliott, Harriet Forbes, Harriet Johnson, Helen Marot, her sister Mary Marot, Caroline Pratt, Ida Rauh, Elizabeth Roemer, and Rose Pastor Stokes. Many in the strikers support group of opinionated women were also *physically* involved in the waist makers' uprising as volunteer pickets — in the bitter cold (Staring, 2013a). Note that at the time several of these women were WTUL Officers. They remained Officers for years, while they changed WTUL jobs each year (e.g., *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1910). Several of them also worked for the Public Education Association of the City of New York (Staring, 2013b).

The fact that Evelyn Dewey, at the time still studying, in 1909 accorded WTUL policy regarding supporting the *Shirtwaist Makers' Strike* is not widely known. It is symptomatic for how historians of education deal with Evelyn's life story. It is as if she, even more than her mother Alice seemed to be (Staring & Aldridge, 2014), stood forever in the shadow of her father John. Large gaps exist in her biography.

At the time of the *Shirtwaist Makers' Strike*, Evelyn was studying at Barnard College, New York City, an elite Seven Sisters school. She graduated B.A. in 1911. Evelyn Dewey was known as one of her class' "militant suffragists and socialists" (*New York Herald*, 1911). Besides being the Secretary-Treasurer of the College Settlements Association, she was President of the Barnard Chapter of the Collegiate Equal Suffrage League of New York State (Allen (Ed.) 1910). Her fascination with women's working conditions, woman's rights, and woman suffrage without any doubt found inspiration in her mother's outspoken feminist and equal suffrage standpoints (Staring & Aldridge, 2014). The Barnard yearbook of her class cites Evelyn's assurance, "I am a firm believer in Woman's Rights; especially the right to do as she pleases" (Allen (Ed.), 1910, p. 169).

As a member of the Athletic Association, Evelyn was active in sports. And she was culturally active. In addition to being a member of the English Club, La Société Française, and the Philosophy Club, she was a member of the Alpha Phi Fraternity (Allen (Ed.), 1910; Kirchwey (Ed.), 1909; Meyers (Ed.) 1911). In November 1908, the Barnard sophomore class performed James Barrie's *The Little Minister* (New York Press, 1908). Evelyn played the role of Nanny Webster. In spring 1909, she was among undergraduates who organized a performance at Barnard of Percy Mackaye's *Canterbury Pilgrims* (*Evening Post*, 1909; *Sun*, 1909). And in winter 1910, she was busy — together with other members of Barnard's Undergraduate Association — staging the performance of *Much Ado About Nothing*, the 1910 Barnard Play (*New York Herald*, 1910; *New York Tribune*, 1910a). Finally, in 1910, Evelyn was elected Editor-in-chief of *The Barnard Bear*, the literary supplement of *The Barnard Bulletin* (*Evening Post*, 1910; Meyers (Ed.), 1911; *New York Tribune*, 1910b). The Barnard yearbook 'Statistics' of her class state that she predicted to become "Most famous in the future" (Allen (Ed.), 1910, p. 161).

### 1915: Schools of To-Morrow

At Barnard College, Evelyn Dewey roomed with President of the Socialist Club Margaret Naumburg — also: Assistant Editor of *The Barnard Bear*, and member of the Athletic Association, the College Settlements Association, the English Club, the Barnard Chapter of the Collegiate Equal Suffrage League of New York State (Meyers (Ed.), 1911; Morris (Ed.), 1912). After her graduation in 1912, Naumburg visited Europe and attended the first International Montessori Teacher Training Course in Rome, Italy. In autumn 1913, Naumburg and her dear friend Claire Raphael began offering a Montessori class at Lillian Wald's Henry Street Settlement in Manhattan's Lower East Side (Staring, Bouchard, & Aldridge, 2014). Given that her parents Alice and John were fascinated with Montessori education principles, Evelyn Dewey and her mother Alice followed Naumburg's example and vacationed in Europe, from autumn 1913 to winter 1914, also visiting Montessori schools. In January 1914, they met Maria Montessori in person (Staring & Aldridge, 2014).

On December 19, 1913 — after he presided the December 8 welcome for Maria Montessori in the United States at the NYC Carnegie Hall — John and his fourteen-year-old adopted son Sabino left New York City by train travelling to the deep-southern state of Alabama. A few months before, the Fairhope League promoting Marietta Johnson's School of Organic Education had invited John to investigate the school. He accepted. John and Sabino arrived well

prepared. Two weeks prior to their visit lasting until after Christmas, they read two richly illustrated articles in the December 6, 1913 *Survey* that discuss educational aspects of the school's curriculum. Marietta Johnson (1913) herself wrote the first article, and Secretary of the Fairhope League Jean Lee Hunt (1913) the other.

After their return from Europe, Alice and Evelyn exchanged stories and experiences with John and Sabino about the schools they had examined. After John had made his report to the Fairhope League during the early months of 1914, *The Survey* issued a sizeable excerpt from his animated testimony (Dewey, 1914). Marietta Johnson (1974) later remembered, "Dewey's report of the work has been of inestimable value, not only in establishing it in the minds of educators and others, but it has been a tremendous help in securing funds" (p. 41).

Then, at that precise time, inspiration must have sparked: Evelyn and John would write a book together, examining Johnson's and other educational experiments in the light of so-called 'New Education' educational renewal principles. Evelyn began visiting experimental schools, and she and her father began writing the manuscript of one of the most profitable books in education ever. In May 1915, daughter and father Dewey were among the first to release a volume on different experimental schools that had sprung up during the previous decade: *Schools of To-Morrow*. The book was a huge success, and it remained a spectacular success ever since. It informed the general public about the nation-wide existence of reforming schools. And it explained their educational views.

The book's revenues facilitated Evelyn to become self-supportive, and independent. On the other hand, the book was also a precious gift sent from heaven for the schools it reviewed. For instance, the chapter titled "An Experiment in Education as Natural Development" deals in its entirety with the Fairhope School of Organic Education. That chapter alone reinforced the already enormous interest in Marietta Johnson's school. It states that Marietta Johnson was well known because she carried on a summer course for training teachers at Greenwich, Connecticut; it mentions that she criticized conventional schools that disregard the needs of children; it informs its readers that the underlying principle of her methods was Rousseau's idea that the "child is best prepared for life as an adult by experiencing in childhood what has meaning to him as a child" (pp. 18); and it declares that children in the Fairhope school were allowed to move about both in work and play, and that they were given the greatest liberty of development, stressing their general development, following the so-called "path of natural growth" (p. 21). Even though there were no forced tasks in Johnson's school,

The children are not freed, however, from all discipline. They must keep at work while they are in school, and learn not to bother their neighbors, as well as to help them when necessary. Caprice or laziness does not excuse a child from following a healthy or useful regime (p. 25).

*Schools of To-Morrow* further explains that children teach themselves to read at eight, nine or ten years of age and that curriculum subjects should be given to meet a demand of the children for greater knowledge. The book points out that Johnson was “trying an experiment under conditions which hold in public schools,” believing that her methods were “feasible for any public school system” (p. 23). It clarified the division into ‘life class’ groups, instead of grades, taking away the emphasis upon the children’s failures or shortcomings. It mentions activities, which Marietta Johnson labelled as substitutes for the usual curriculum — “physical exercise, nature study, music, hand work, field geography, story telling, sense culture, fundamental conceptions of number, dramatizations, and games” (p. 29) — and delivers a description of these, partly outdoors, activities.

Well-known philosopher and journalist Randolph Bourne (1886-1918), former student of John Dewey’s, exclaimed in *The New Republic* (1915), “No school carries out more carefully Professor Dewey’s dictum that the child can only be educated by concerning himself with what has meaning to him as a child, and not what is to have meaning to him later as an adult” (p. 64). Bourne found that the school’s informality constituted its charm and the secret of its success. It goes without saying that scores of other book reviews also pointed to the revolutionary curriculum of the Fairhope School of Organic Education, generating even more interest in the school. One reviewer even stated that *Schools of To-Morrow* was prophetic since it described “what is now being done in a few schools in order to show what must soon be done in all” (Moore, 1916).

Another example. Caroline Pratt (1948), who in 1913 founded Play School (later renamed City and Country School), recalled that the “mention of our little school [in *Schools of To-Morrow*] was our first recognition in the educational world” (p. 55). She remembered a visit by Dorothy Payne Whitney Willard Straight (1887-1965) who in 1904 had come into a major inheritance and was since pre-eminent among the NYC Public Education Association donors (Cohen, 1964). Mrs. Straight also was a member of the Fairhope League, a social activist, and supporter of women’s trade unions. Together with her husband she financially supported *The New Republic*, a journal of opinion they had founded in 1914 (Rauchway, 2001). Pratt (1948) wrote, “As a result [of mention of Play School in *Schools of To-Morrow*] there were more visitors and some offers of financial assistance. Mrs.

Willard Straight came with a friend and spent a whole morning, and the size of the check she sent me later was generous evidence that the morning had been interesting” (p. 55).

### **Schools of To-Morrow and the Gary Plan**

So, Evelyn and John Dewey’s *Schools of To-Morrow* was a massive success in more than one sense. It tremendously helped educational experiments to thrive, or to survive, in difficult times. Yet by paying a large amount of attention to new, efficiently directed schools in Gary, Indiana, the book also landed in the centre of an evolving school war. The Gary schools efficiency had been developed by William Wirt, another former student of John Dewey (Mohl, 1975). Since 1914, Wirt also helped address problems related to overcrowding of New York City public schools. His so-called Gary Plan, also known as Wirt Plan, suggested implementing Gary schooling schemes as well as firm class reorganizations in those congested NYC schools. The 1915-1917 debates rising around the plan probably were the first to be reported nationwide in the media. Well-known school reformers like Scot Nearing (1915), and John Dewey’s former students Alice Barrows Fernandez and Randolph Bourne backed Wirt’s labours. Barrows Fernandez wrote about the educational reform in “What Is The Gary Plan?” — her twice-weekly *New York Tribune* column (e.g., Barrows Fernandez, 1915b). Bourne, close friend of Evelyn, first bestowed praise in his series on the subject in the March, April and May 1915 issues of *New Republic* (Wallace, 1991). A year later, he gathered all his Wirt Plan related writings in one volume, *The Gary Schools* (1916).

The Public Education Association of the City of New York (PEA) also resolutely backed Wirt’s work. In 1914 they issued a bulletin on Gary schools, that is, a report written by their Head of the Visiting Teachers Department Harriet Johnson (1914), who in the company of Lucy Sprague Mitchell, another PEA worker, had visited Gary, Indiana to investigate Gary schools. During 1916 and 1917, debates heated up and developed into a real school war (Ravitch, 1974). The PEA added fuel by supporting Wirt’s plan in newspapers and popular magazines, and by issuing several more bulletins discussing its merits.

### **1915: PEA Psychological Survey**

Evelyn Dewey, at some time or another, most probably after publication of *Schools of To-Morrow*, began working for the Public Education Association of the City of New York. There she met the women she admired since the *Shirtwaist Makers’ Strike*. Soon after, she worked under Lucy Sprague Mitchell, Head of the PEA Psychological Survey. What is the

underlying history of this auspicious *rendezvous* with many WTUL allies who were PEA workers? It is related to Lucy Sprague Mitchell's strategic networking efforts.

In the fall of 1911, Dean of Women at the University of California Lucy Sprague (1878-1967) resided in Manhattan. During a series of apprenticeships she worked with a number of foremost women in social settlement and education — including Lillian Wald (Head worker at Henry Street Settlement), Florence Kelley (former resident of Chicago's Hull House; Henry Street Settlement resident; Secretary of the National Consumers' League) and Julia Richman (District Superintendent of Public Schools). During *tête-à-têtes* with her mentors, Sprague became aware of the accomplishments of such strong NYC women like Elisabeth Irwin, Harriet Johnson, and Helen and Mary Marot who in their own right as well as cooperatively within organizations like the WTUL and the PEA addressed issues of educational renewal. Likely, Sprague met these women in person.

Two years later, in 1913, Sprague married economist Wesley Mitchell. The couple moved from Berkeley to Manhattan. Now Mrs. Sprague Mitchell offered her services to the PEA, where she began volunteer work under mental test forerunner and Head of the Visiting Teachers Department Harriet Johnson (1867-1934). Johnson had received her mental test training at the New Jersey Training School for Feeble-Minded Girls and Boys at Vineland, New Jersey, directed by well-known IQ tester and eugenicist Henry Goddard (Johnson & Steinbach, 1911). In winter 1914, Johnson and Sprague Mitchell investigated the schools in Gary, Indiana — resulting in Johnson's 1914 report *The Schools of Gary*, issued as PEA bulletin (see above). Later in 1914, Sprague Mitchell also worked under Elisabeth Irwin (1880-1942), another intelligence test pioneer working for the PEA (Irwin, 1913, 1914, 1916).

Mid-1914, Sprague Mitchell accepted the post of Chair of the PEA Committee on Hygiene of School Children. Subsequently, she published two articles on meaningful sex education (Sprague Mitchell, 1914, 1916). Later in 1914, she started developing ideas for a "Psychological Clinic for Normal School Children" (*Daily Standard Union*, 1914). Early in 1915, then, after having worked under IQ test overseeing mentors Harriet Johnson and Elisabeth Irwin, she began conducting psychological tests herself "in four public schools with children of different economic, social and racial backgrounds" (Sprague Mitchell, 1953, p. 250). And lastly, in the fall that year, she began working as Head of the PEA Psychological Survey — organized according to her own 1914 ideas to establish a psychological clinic for school children. Among her staff were PEA workers Harriet Forbes and Eleanor Johnson, and Frederick Ellis, an expert in IQ-testing

working at the NYC Neurological Institute (who in 1919, together with Sprague Mitchell's husband Wesley was among the co-founders of the New School for Social Research). Later, PEA worker Harriet Johnson became a staff member too. Another staff member was Evelyn Dewey.

This PEA Psychological Survey department comprised an auspicious clustering of extremely able female PEA workers, pioneering administering of Binet-Simon intelligence tests, and related tests, in NYC public schools. The majority of these PEA test administrators had organized strike supports in the textile industry in the past, were politically active women, served the equal suffrage cause, and were incessantly busy renewing education on various levels, for instance, while expanding the PEA Visiting Teacher program (Johnson, 1916; Staring, 2013b). Within a short time, Evelyn Dewey under their guidance grew to be a skilled administrator of mental tests as well. Five years later she would co-author one of the first leading monographs on testing school children (Dewey, Child, & Ruml, 1920).

In spite of all this, the PEA Psychological Survey was short-lived. In the spring of 1916, the Survey's staff — Evelyn Dewey included — would unite into an independent organization, the Bureau of Educational Experiments (BEE). However, before addressing the history of the Bureau, an undersized transitional episode should not remain unmentioned.

### 1916: Gary School League

Harriet Johnson and Lucy Sprague Mitchell's early 1914 trip to Gary, Indiana (see above) constituted one of the first visits to Gary made by representatives of NYC organizations. *The Schools of Gary*, Johnson's (1914) report published as PEA bulletin commanded attention of many involved in educational reform, surely not only outside PEA walls. The report inspired at least three PEA hearts and minds: Elizabeth Roemer (c. 1870-1961; former Head worker at Richmond Hill Settlement), Elsa Ueland (1888-1980; former worker at City Richmond Hill Settlement), and Alice Barrows Fernandez (1878-1954; former English teacher; former fellowship student of John Dewey). At the time, Roemer and Ueland were assistants to Barrows Fernandez, Head of the PEA Vocational Education Survey. They became so aflame, that they resigned from PEA work in August 1914, and began teaching in Gary in September. Later, early in 1916, Ueland who had written a very positive article on Gary Schools (1915) was appointed Special Secretary to Superintendent William Wirt (Cohen, 1990). Her work in Gary included gathering school data, composing informing articles on Gary schools (e.g., Ueland, 1916), and guiding around visitors.

In the fall of 1914, Barrows Fernandez visited her former PEA co-workers Roemer and Ueland teaching in Gary and became as enthused as they were about Gary schools and Wirt's Plan. In winter 1915, she was appointed Special Secretary to Wirt in New York City. Her eagerness to straight away promote Gary achievements led to setting up meetings with the editors of *The Survey* and *The New Republic* (Lane, 1916), resulting, for example, in Bourne's series of *New Republic* articles mentioned above. Before she in the fall of 1915 began writing her twice-weekly column "What Is The Gary Plan?" for *New York Tribune*, Barrows Fernandez (1915a) had already written a flaming page-long richly illustrated article about Gary schools for the same newspaper. In June 1915, *New York Tribune* had issued a second passionate article by her pen (Howes & Fernandez, 1915).

Due to Barrows Fernandez' good offices, Wirt and local NYC settlement head workers and leaders of various philanthropic organizations met to deliberate the Gary Plan of reorganizing congested NYC schools. Further, Barrows Fernandez kept Wirt's NYC agenda (he resided in New York one week in every month) while she herself "spoke at innumerable meetings of parent, teacher, civic, neighborhood, religious, welfare, and labor groups" (Cohen & Mohl, 1979, p. 43). Barrows Fernandez continued stimulating others, like Secretary of the Women's Municipal League Agnes de Lima, to focus on the Gary Plan (e.g., *Evening Post*, 1915, 1916; Wallace, 1991). In her own words, Wirt's Plan represented the "Greatest Step Forward in Education [the] World Has Ever Attempted" (Barrows Fernandez, 1916).

In March 1916, *New York Call* reporter Florence Tanenbaum (1916) pointed out that Margaret Naumburg and Claire Raphael Reis who at the time were co-directing Montessori classes at NYC Leete School (Staring, Bouchard, & Aldridge, 2014), Alice Chipman Dewey, and other progressives — without question including female PEA workers — became members of a committee of one hundred women propagandizing Wirt's Plan of restructuring and reorganizing the inner city's overcrowded public schools. In all probability, PEA worker Evelyn Dewey was among those one hundred women; nonetheless, she is not listed in Tanenbaum's report. A few weeks later, in April 1916, the committee of one hundred women organized into the Gary School League, in support of the Gary Plan. Among the League's officers were Evelyn's mother Alice, and PEA Psychological Survey workers Eleanor Johnson and Lucy Sprague Mitchell. While Alice Chipman Dewey was Chair of the legislative committee, and Eleanor Johnson became Chair of the co-operation committee, Lucy Sprague Mitchell was elected Chair of the enlarged scope of the organization (*New York Times*, 1916).

They remained Gary School League Officers until March 1917 (*City Record*, 1917).

As we do not know the whereabouts of the minutes of the meetings of the Gary School League, we have limited knowledge of the League's activities during its first years, 1916-1918. As of March 1916, NYC newspapers regularly reported about the Gary School League (directed by Barrows Fernandez since 1917), its bulletins, its exhibits, and its series of movies showing Gary schools (Staring, 2013b). Yet, without access to the League's possibly surviving archive, Evelyn Dewey's potential association with the Gary School League remains shadowy.

### 1916: Bureau of Educational Experiments

In May 1916, on the heels of receiving a substantial inheritance, PEA worker Lucy Sprague Mitchell, her husband Wesley, and PEA worker Harriet Johnson founded the Bureau of Educational Experiments. The Bureau strove to be a simple, cooperative, flexible and democratic organization, not unlike how social settlements like the NYC Hartley House were run. The initial Bureau of Educational Experiments counted twelve charter members: nine women, and three men, who met in diverse councils and formed various committees. The women were Evelyn Dewey, Harriet Forbes, Laura Garrett (special teacher in sex education), Jean Lee Hunt, Elisabeth Irwin, Eleanor Johnson, Harriet Johnson, Caroline Pratt, and Lucy Sprague Mitchell. Sprague Mitchell's husband predominantly sat on the Board of Trustees. The other two men, Frederick Ellis and Arthur Hulbert (Director of a high school in Park Ridge, New Jersey) essentially shared committee work with the female members. By 1917, the majority of the women had changed work from PEA to the Bureau. Since annual reports of the Public Education Association for the years 1914-1917 are missing (Cohen, 1964), we cannot be sure about specific dates.

Virtually all minutes of meetings of Bureau committees are in the archives of Bank Street College of Education, supplemented by minutes in the archives of City and Country School — both in New York City. The two collections, put together, form a complete archive of Bureau minutes, 1916-1920. They show that the Bureau, 1916-1919, had no accurately thought through direction *vis-à-vis* its purposes. The Bureau cultured a hybrid position. Consequently it limped on two legs, as a clearinghouse gathering and distributing educational information, issuing bulletins, preparing exhibits, maintaining a specialized library, and as an organization conducting and subsidizing a range of educational experiments.

Interestingly: as of June 1916, the Bureau minutes show that a hired female field worker visited schools

in Gary, Indiana; she also visited so-called ‘Garyized schools’ in other cities. She then put together a comprehensive literature collection relating to the Gary Plan; a Bureau publication about the collection is missing. So, there seems to have occurred a rather seamless transition from the work done within PEA offices to work developing within BEE offices. This was emblematic for the early period of the Bureau.

After having completed the Gary schools / Wirt Plan material collection, the BEE field worker began examining other experimental schools — resulting in publication of several Bureau bulletins in 1917. Charter members of the Bureau began planning experiments in four education-related fields: teaching, health, administrative problems, and lastly, school and community. The many topics of interest included Gary school methods, Marietta Johnson’s educational views, quality of light and air in schoolrooms, discipline in schools, and Alexander’s muscular coordination and breathing habit changing procedures (Staring, Bouchard, & Aldridge, 2014; see below). During the fall of 1916 and winter months 1917, the Bureau held a number of informal conferences. Topics included industrial education, vocational guidance, dramatization in schoolwork, toys and play, nature study and social hygiene, summer camps, and rural schools. Next, Bureau members began writing detailed plans for specific experiments. Twenty proposals were handed in. Only a few plans survived scrutiny (Staring, 2013b).

### 1916-1919: Porter School Experiment

One BEE plan that survived scrutiny involved researching a country school. In 1916, Evelyn Dewey began investigating Porter School — a typical ‘one-horse,’ one-room school in the tradition of the ‘Little Red School House’ in Porter, four miles out of Kirksville, Missouri. This was the first of Evelyn Dewey’s two research activities between 1916 and 1920. The other research activity, commissioned by the Columbia University, was the investigation of educational aspects of a community organization experiment in Cincinnati, Ohio (*Labor Advocate*, 1917; Mitchell, 1919; *New York Herald*, 1918; Phillips, 1940) — to be reviewed below.

Between 1910 and 1912, Marie Turner Harvey (1866-1952) productively directed the Model Rural School of the State Normal School at Kirksville. She taught one-room school didactics, and stressed the importance of acknowledging the interests of the rural population while serving the needs of country community life. In 1912 she began practicing her own recently developed school methods at Porter School (Harvey, 1912), remodelling the out-of-repair school building in collective labour with the students’ parents, putting running water into the building, organizing school

gardens and a demonstration experimental farm, community clubs, music clubs, and music bands. She conducted poultry experiments and kept good relations with the State Agricultural College, learning about the latest science finds. She organized social gatherings at the schoolhouse, aiming to transform the school into a focal point of social activities, thereby revitalizing community life. She taught laundering, domestic sciences, and agricultural principles (testing milk, seeds, and studying soils). She also installed school heating, electricity, telephone connections, and flush closets (Harvey, 1917, 1919, 1920; Staring, 2013b).

Members of the Bureau of Educational Experiments became interested in the educational improvements in Harvey’s rural community school. In November 1916, they decided to make an arrangement with Harvey to appropriate \$3,200 as financial support for the duration of one year. Evelyn Dewey began visiting the school regularly, aiding Harvey. She reported her finds and experiences in her (1919) *New Schools for Old*. This Bureau sponsored book describes the history of the 1912-1919 transformations and regeneration of Porter School. Over the following years it was reprinted several times, indicating its popularity among educators and parents.

### 1919: Evelyn’s Exit from the Bureau

Since 1916, Sprague Mitchell, her husband, and their children had had lessons with F. Matthias Alexander, prompted by the spasticity of one of the children. It was the year Sprague Mitchell received an inheritance from a relative that allowed her to found the Bureau of Educational Experiments. Alexander’s successes in ‘treating’ the Mitchell child, as well as the other Mitchells, and Columbia University scholars like Evelyn’s father John Dewey, Richard M. Hodge, Horace Kallen, and James Harvey Robinson, encouraged Sprague Mitchell to recommend her colleague Bureau members to study Alexander’s methods in an elementary school setting, and to invite Alexander to address an informal 1917 Bureau conference. However, action on the proposal was postponed. Another idea (to observe a group of children in Caroline Pratt’s Play School, including before-and-after physical examinations and ‘shadowgraphs’ of the children) was not followed up. And during 1917-1918, due to all kinds of difficulties related to firmly establishing Bureau priorities (Staring, 2013b), Sprague Mitchell’s 1916 proposal to study Alexander’s methods was not realized.

In February 1918, Alexander’s disapproving and condescending views on the use of dance and music in progressive education classes appeared in the expanded edition of his *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*. Alexander’s book, including John Dewey’s (1918) introductory word, caused commotion amid New York

progressives. For instance, critic Randolph Bourne (1918a-b) effectively satirized and savaged Alexander's attempts at an evolutionary theory (Staring, 1994, 2005). Others not only attacked the eugenics and evolution theory in the book, but also Alexander's (1918) disapproval of music, dancing, drawing, and carpentering in experimental schools — “so-called ‘free’ schools” in his vocabulary (p. 123).

In November 1918, while during a meeting Bureau members were discussing the possibility of having someone trained by Alexander placed as a teacher in his methods in Caroline Pratt's Play School, Evelyn Dewey strongly disapproved. She voiced strong objections to having *any* teacher trained with Alexander in an elementary school. Wesley Mitchell (1918) attempted to intervene, later, unsuccessfully. Whatever the motivation for Evelyn's November 1918 outburst, one consequence was that Alexander's procedures to manage postural and breathing habits were never examined by the Bureau. Another consequence: Evelyn attended only one more Bureau meeting. In protest, in January 1919, she resigned from BEE activities. Minutes of several subsequent Bureau meetings in the Bank Street College of Education Archives show that remaining Bureau members regretted her resignation. Faithful to Evelyn, though, the Bureau aided publication of two books that were already in preparation to get published: *New Schools for Old* (Dewey, 1919) and *Methods and Results of Testing School Children* (Dewey, Child, & Ruml, 1920).

### 1917-1920: The Cincinnati Social Unit Experiment

Articles in the 1919 *New York Herald* and *The Sun* discussing community organization show that Evelyn Dewey — commissioned by Columbia University — was expected to write a report summarizing her research of how educational pursuits all through a Cincinnati Social Unit Experiment had progressed since the start of the experiment in 1917. For instance, *New York Herald* (1919) reported,

The Social Unit [Organization] was formed in New York in April 1916, at the home of Mrs. Williard D. Straight. An initial experiment, in which sixteen cities participated, was decided upon. The Mohawk-Brighton District of Cincinnati was selected for the experiment. The district in which the venture was first tried was organized by blocks and occupational groups. The people themselves thus organized took over and handled for themselves much that is usually done by outside agencies. The eyes of the entire country were drawn to the enterprise. The institution's most recent triumph was the result of an investigation made by twelve experts. The outcome of the investigation was a decision to expand the experiment to more districts.

Evelyn Dewey, “of Columbia University” (*Sun*, 1919), was one of the experts (Devine, 1920a-b; Phillips (Ed.), 1919; *Survey*, 1922). Dinwiddie and Mead (1921) issued their review of the Cincinnati Social Unit Experiment, titled *Community Responsibility*. Before they (pp. 71-77) explained what Evelyn Dewey had investigated “from the point of view of the educational developments,” they cited her words spoken at a conference: “The educational value of the Unit is, I think, the thing that stands out most strongly” (p. 71). Familiarity about Evelyn Dewey's role in this particular experiment disappeared in oblivion, a rare reference notwithstanding (e.g., Dorf & Sable, 1998). The specified report she was expected to write is missing, perhaps never written. Further research is needed to explore the nature of Evelyn's appointment at Columbia University as well as her exact position in the history of the Cincinnati community organization experiment.

### 1919-1935: Explaining Progressive Education practices

In 1919, Evelyn Dewey began editing the letters written home by her parents who were travelling and working in the Far East. The result, *Letters from China and Japan*, appeared a year later (Dewey (Ed.), 1920). The work related to the editing and publication of the book, work related to publishing *Methods and Results of Testing School Children* (Dewey, Child, & Ruml, 1920), as well as her 1920 journey to China to visit her parents, possibly prevented Evelyn from writing the definitive report about her findings in Cincinnati?

After her return from China, Evelyn occasionally delivered lectures; for instance, on December 6, 1921 she lectured about “The Psychology of the Experimental Schools” at the Poughkeepsie Vassar College Faculty Club (*Poughkeepsie Eagle-News*, 1921). Also in 1921, Evelyn Dewey (1921a-b) published a two-partite article in *The Nation* — the second part discussing Manhattan's Children's School, that is, the school co-founded in 1914 by her Barnard roommate Margaret Naumburg and Claire Raphael, renamed Walden School in 1922 (Staring, Bouchard, & Aldridge, 2014). Already a year later Evelyn Dewey (1922) issued a monograph describing the Dalton Laboratory Plan, whereas *Evening Post* (1922) published a rare interview with her about the aims and working of Columbia University Professor of Education William Heard Kilpatrick's so-called Project Method.

During the mid-1920s and early 1930s, Evelyn Dewey (e.g., 1925, 1926) wrote book reviews for *Progressive Education*, the journal issued by the Progressive Education Association. Evelyn disappeared from the media platforms until in 1928 she was a member of a



delegation of twenty-five educators sent to survey education, especially educational experiments, in the U.S.S.R., headed by her father John (*Daily Worker*, 1928). After returning from the U.S.S.R., Evelyn campaigned for better relations with Russia. For instance, on December 7, 1928 she was one of the speakers at a meeting where the Philadelphia chapter of the American Society for Cultural Relations with Russia was organized (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1928).

In 1934, she co-authored *Children of the New Day* (Glover & Dewey, 1934), a book that essentially explains to educators and parents the technical reports of the 1932 White House Conference of Child Health and Protection. Evelyn Dewey married in that year, and became Mrs. Granville Smith Jr. The couple lived at a farm near Kirksville, Missouri.

In 1935, using her maiden name, Evelyn published *Behavior Development in Infants* — her final book, a survey of the literature on growth processes and infant behavior that had been published since she in 1919 resigned from her work at the Bureau of Educational Experiments.

Finally, “in 1939, John Dewey’s youngest child, Jane Mary, collaborated with her sister Evelyn to write a biographical essay on their father” (Durst, 2010, p. 10). Tanner (1997) also acknowledged that this biographical chapter was a collaborative effort between Jane Mary and Evelyn. However, Jane Mary Dewey was referenced as the sole author, even though a footnote stated, “This biography was written by the daughters of its subject” (Dewey, 1939, p. 3). Other collaborations and writings of Evelyn Dewey may have also been eclipsed. Future researchers should examine the literature closely for further examples of how Evelyn Dewey’s works have been marginalized.

Evelyn Riggs (*née* Dewey) Granville Smith Jr. died in 1965.

## CONCLUSION

Our case study of Evelyn Dewey’s activities during the second decade in the 20<sup>th</sup> century revealed that she, like her mother Alice, most certainly did *not* live in the shadow of her father John. A sketch of Evelyn Dewey’s activities and contributions after the launch of *Schools of To-Morrow* is found in *Figure One*. Our research results show that before graduating from Barnard College, she was already politically active, as a militant suffragist and as a socialist, supporting the *Shirtwaist Makers’ Strike* as a WTUL ally. After her graduation she received a perfect training in investigating schools, first from her mother during vacationing in Europe, later by examining experimental schools herself and theorizing about them in cooperation with her father, synchronizing the manuscript of their co-authored book *Schools of To-Morrow*. These 1909-1915 activities constituted the perfect basis for her 1916-1935 research work and her publications describing progressive education practices.

We did not extensively address her 1920-1935 researches and writings, though. Our initial research results, reviewed above and listed in *Figure One*, are intended to motivate further research to *exactly* determine Evelyn Dewey’s place in the history of education. As in case of our article discussing her mother’s life and works (Staring & Aldridge, 2014), we consider our research as preliminary, again hoping to enthuse young colleague researchers to dive into further investigations.

**Figure One**

**Evelyn Dewey's Activities and Contributions from 1909-1919 and Beyond**

1909-1915	Political and Social Activist and supporter of the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL)
	Graduate of Barnard College in 1911
	Visited and observed Montessori Education with her mother, Alice Chipman Dewey in Europe 1913-1914
	Observed and researched progressive schools throughout the U.S. for <i>Schools of To-Morrow</i> 1914-1915
1915-1919	Co-authored <i>Schools of To-Morrow</i>
	Worked for the Public Education Association, administering mental tests 1915-1916
	Possibly a member of the Gary School League 1916-1918
	Worked for the Bureau of Educational Experiments Investigated the Porter School between 1916-1919 Issued <i>New Schools for Old</i> (Dewey, 1919)
	Worked for Columbia University Investigated the educational experiences of the Cincinnati Social Unit Experiment between 1917-1920
After 1919	Co-authored <i>Methods and Results of Testing School Children</i> (Dewey, Child, & Ruml, 1920)
	Issued <i>Letters from China and Japan, by John Dewey and Alice Chipman Dewey</i> (Dewey (Ed.), 1920)
	Gave lectures of progressive education on the psychology of experimental schools
	Wrote an article in <i>The Nation</i> about Children's School, later renamed Walden School (Dewey, 1921b)
	Issued a monograph describing Helen Parkhurst's <i>Dalton Laboratory Plan</i> (Dewey, 1922)
	Was interviewed by the <i>Evening Post</i> (1922) concerning Kilpatrick's Project Method
	Wrote book reviews for the journal, <i>Progressive Education</i>
	Visited and surveyed educational experiments in the U.S.S.R.
	Co-authored the 1934 book, <i>Children of the New Day</i> (Glover & Dewey, 1934)
	Published her final book in 1935, <i>Behavior Development in Infants</i> (Dewey, 1935)

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