

Remaking Growing Up: Nineteenth-Century America

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During the nineteenth century, a new stage of life, separating childhood from adulthood, emerged among the middle class. This newly recognized stage was characterized by prolonged dependency and extended schooling.

This article, based in part on first person accounts of growing up, explores the forces which led to this life course transformation. It also explores the effects of this new set of values concerning adolescence on youngsters, according to gender and class.

Au cours du 19^e siècle, les classes moyennes décelèrent une nouvelle étape dans le cycle de vie : l'adolescence. Celle-ci se caractérisait par une dépendance prolongée vis-à-vis des parents et l'extension de la scolarité.

Cet article, qui s'appuie en partie sur des sources autobiographiques, examine, d'une part, les facteurs qui amenèrent la reconnaissance de cette spécificité de l'adolescence et, d'autre part, l'impact des nouvelles conceptions de l'adolescence sur les jeunes, selon leur sexe ou leur classe.

I — Toward an Interpretation of Growing Up

A. Paths of growing up: exemplars

Lucien Cyrus Boynton was born in Weathersfield, Vermont, on February 13, 1811. The story he recorded in the 437-page journal of his youth and early adulthood, 1835-1853, strikes familiarly as one we typically construe as a "traditional path" of growing up. The son of Cyrus and Hannah, he graduated from nearby Middlebury College in 1834. After a period of school teaching, he entered Andover Theological Seminary in 1835. Graduating in 1838, Lucien failed to find a church. Drifting back into school teaching, he taught for more than one year in Delaware and five more in Virginia. Returning north, he continued studying the law, which he had begun in Virginia. In 1846, he

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was admitted to the bar in Woodstock, Vermont, and in 1847, to the Massachusetts bar in Worcester. Finally, he settled in Uxbridge, Massachusetts, living there at least until 1853, when the diary closed.

In 1852, at age 41, he married Sarah Judson Cole, widow of Rev. Albert Cole of Bluehill, Maine. In the apt words of its editor, the journal reveals its author's personality as "an interesting compound of Puritanism and egotism". In his thirties, Boynton made several tentative marital advances toward eligible women, and experienced two unsuccessful love affairs. The 1852 marriage to Sarah Cole, replete with a wedding journey to Niagara Falls, may well have pivoted on her "pecuniary charms", the diary hints.¹

Mary Anna Longstreth's early years suggest the transitions to fundamentally transformed "paths" of growing up. Born on February 9, 1811, to Quakers Isaac and Mary Collins Longstreth, Mary Anna was "an infant greatly desired and joyfully welcomed, and certainly not the less gratifying to her parents, that her beauty and unruffled serenity of temper were matters of general comment and admiration." About three years later, on the birth of her sister, Anna began her early schooling with mornings at a dame school, her time there spent in recitation and easy stitching practice. Precocity was not feared here, nor was female intellect. Gender nonetheless made for difference.

More serious study commenced with five years in reading, grammar and writing at the Misses Cox. At age eight, Mary Anna began to study Latin with a private master, followed by others who taught her Greek and French, until John Brewer opened a school for girls that included the classics, in Philadelphia in 1824. From 1826 until 1829, Mary Anna served as Brewer's assistant. Despite the loss of her mother when she was sixteen (an aunt assumed the mother's place), Mary Anna's diary conveys her seriousness and religiosity blended with happiness, "almost childlike buoyancy", and aspiration. Studies were leavened by parties among the girls. A lifelong vocation as teacher early developed, and she opened her first school when aged but eighteen years.²

William H. McIntosh, born in Albany, New York, began his autobiography with his birth in 1837, 26 years after Boynton. By 1843, his Scottish-born, immigrant father, in search of security, moved the family to Racine, Wisconsin. McIntosh's growing up was qualitatively and quantitatively different than Boynton's. His was a more modern, emerging "middle class path". Unintendedly, the autobiography communicates this in its earliest pages when McIntosh opines, "there must be five epochs to a life, viz: — Infancy, Childhood, Youth, Manhood, and Old Age." Revealing his own awareness of transformed circumstances of growing up — even for the child of modest

1. Solon J. Buck, "Selections from the Journal of Lucien C. Boynton, 1835-1853", *Proceedings, American Antiquarian Society*, 18 (1933), 329-389; see also Joseph F. Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

2. Helen W. Ludlow, *Memoir of Mary Anna Longstreth* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1886), 12, *passim*.

family means — he wrote: “A child in red, black-dotted flannel playing by a brook bank in a valley by a rude small house delighted to watch the quick movements of the speckled trout. At school, teased by roguish girls and punished by the mistress for futile attempts at retaliation. With sled, playing on the streets of Albany and hiding behind doors to elude pursuing policemen....”

Despite the “rudeness” of Racine, the family’s constantly shifting finances and the “crudeness” of schooling, William’s childhood and youth was strictly scheduled by the calendar of school as well as church. His family life was marked equally by maternal concern with demeanor, morality, appearance and attention to learning. Domestic responsibilities did not preclude play, enhanced by the opportunities a young boy’s curiosity about his rural surroundings stimulated. Interest in the opposite sex arrived early. Retrospectively, William pointed to the onset and characteristics of what came to be called adolescence — including generational conflicts: “A Man is as his youth has been passed and youth begins at about twelve years of age, with many much earlier. I had, although living much with Nature in the fields and groves, a strong desire for company, but my parents saw fit to restrain their children from attending places of amusement and taking part in the gatherings that enlivened the monotony of long winter nights... I had in the entry upon my youth strong points in my favor that later proved staying qualities in time of need. I had perfect health, appetite was sharp, sleep was sound and refreshing and exercise at play or work pleasurable.”

In 1853, William boarded in Racine in order to attend the city grammar school’s high school department. Although sometimes homesick and often dissatisfied with the style and quality of instruction, he eagerly mastered his lessons and engaged in the debating club. He also took in “the activity on the street, the attendance at fires and at lectures on spiritualism, speeches on politics and sermons on Sundays....” At the same time,

Society of the girls had attraction that were fast driving thought of education into the background. There were parties on two or three evenings each week which I attended with great pleasure and much profit, as this social intercourse steadily wore off the rusticity engendered by my solitary farm life. The young ladies were handsome, bright and delightful company and these evenings were better passed than in study and of great help to me... In the society of these young ladies I was happy, and while in their presence cared very little about planes, prisms, hydrostatics or Latin declensions...

The period of youthful pranks, an age-based, peer culture — visiting friends, smoking cigars, drinking alcohol, sharing in a wedding *charivari* — ended with a change in place of boarding and the resumption of a settled family environment there.

After assisting his own family in the 1856 summer harvest, William was sent to study at Beloit College. Despite rigorous studies and harassment by the senior class, he kept his health in part by exercising at cricket and football, “contests sometimes very earnest and very violent”. He found “the outside

world was *terra incognita* to us in our seclusion. I lived with the college bounds....” Occupied by revivals and the debating society, he ended his formal schooling in December 1857, at age 20. After assisting on the family farm, McIntosh began what proved to be his life-long career in teaching, first at the local district school. Service in the Civil War interrupted his rise through the teaching ranks; at war’s end, he returned to the schools. He had married Anna Cosper in 1864, at age 27.³

B. *The issues*

These three episodes strikingly frame basic issues in the integrated histories of childhood, adolescence and youth: what I call “growing up”. Their contrasts distinguish Lucien Boynton’s passages toward his adulthood from those of his peer, Mary Anna Longstreth, and his near-contemporary, William McIntosh. In so doing, they preface the manner in which common ways — I term them “paths” — of growing up were transformed. Growing up was recreated, often irregularly and contradictorily, for young women and men, during the nineteenth century. The extent of difference, as well as important commonalities, among even so small a sample, suggest the scope and challenge of this critical subject, connected to so many of the principal forces and themes of the era and its history.

Consider, for example, in just these cases, the roles of: family, social class and gender; geographic and social locations; institutions; ideas, expectations and norms; individual understanding, aspirations and experiences; and of course chance. The transits toward adulthood, their direction, pace and rhythms through component parts — life course stages of childhood, adolescence and youth — were ever more clearly defined, demarcated and bounded. The dynamism, the potential for change and the human complications of constraints and opportunities inherent in the historical moment are unmistakable, if difficult to isolate and label. Differently placed young persons encountered and responded to the forces of change in different ways. In the epochal passage from approximately the last third of the eighteenth century through the first decades of the twentieth century, social class, gender, race and ethnicity — in complex compounds to be sure — emerged as engines of principal shifts. They came to define, rhetorically and more substantively, the “paths” of growing up. The environment in which the young newly came to age was transformed too. Families, institutions, policies and their connections to cultural and material structures were remade. In a nutshell, as social, cultural, demographic and economic shifts gave new meanings to biological or physiological categories, “modern” forms of growing up emerged from a sea of “traditional” and “transitional” paths.⁴

3. William H. McIntosh, *Autobiography*, manuscript, Newberry Library, 2, 23, 30, 34, 40.

4. This essay is a preliminary sketch of one section and some of the arguments of a research project and book in progress, “Conflicting Paths: The Transformation of Growing Up,

This evolution, key elements of which we begin to elucidate in this brief essay, forms one of the major chapters in the origins of modern social relationships. After introducing the kinds of first person testimonial accounts that make possible important new excursions into the domain of growing up, this essay discursively takes up a series of key issues and interpretive problems. In part, the focus is bibliographical and critical stock-taking. We are equally concerned with the necessity and opportunity for remaking the study and interpretation of growing up: transcending prior limitations and staking new ground from which the historical remaking of growing up may be written in a new way.

C. *Problems: boundaries, concepts, chronologies*

As recently as 1971, David Rothman asked, “do age groups in fact have histories?”⁵ A decade later, a rush of studies suggested an affirmative answer to the question. Yet, in 1981, Lawrence Stone commented: “Far more controversial is the dating of the emergence of the concept of adolescence as a clearly defined period of life after puberty during which a young person remains in a position of dependence. Hall saw it emerge only in the late nineteenth century. Demos and Gillis place it in the early nineteenth century. Kett puts it later, and others — including myself — much earlier.” Stone continues, arguing that “the dispute seems to be more about boundaries and definitions than about concrete social realities, and the difference between ‘youth’ and ‘adolescence’ to be mainly one of terminology.”⁶

1750-1920”. The larger project integrates research into more than 500 personal sources (memoirs, autobiographies, diaries, letters, etc.) of growing up with a structural, social and demographic and cultural interpretation. It seeks to develop novel ways of exploiting and presenting first-person testimonial materials for social and cultural history, thus, their presence here. It addresses my definitions and use of “path” as metaphor and concept and my approach to normative and theoretical issues as it tells the story of the sociocultural transformation that created modern class, gender, race and ethnic “paths” of growing up and the roles of the young in that complicated process. For assistance to date, I acknowledge the aid of the American Antiquarian Society, National Endowment for the Humanities, Newberry Library, Texas State Archives, Barker History Center, University of Texas at Dallas, and research assistant Jill Milling. See also my collection, *Growing Up in America: Historical Experiences* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), and “The History of Childhood and Youth: Beyond Infancy?”, *History of Education Quarterly*, 26 (1986), 95-109.

5. David J. Rothman, “Documents in Search of a Historian: Toward a History of Children and Youth in America”, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 2 (1971), 367.

6. Lawrence Stone, “Family History in the 1980s: Past Achievements and Future Trends”, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 12 (1981), 69. See also David Bakan, “Adolescence in America: From Idea to Social Fact”, *Daedalus*, 100 (1971), 979-995; John and Virginia Demos, “Adolescence in Historical Perspective”, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 31 (1969), 632-638; Glen H. Elder, Jr., “Adolescence in Historical Perspective” in *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology*, ed. by Joseph Adelson (New York: John Wiley, 1980), 3-46; John R. Gillis, *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770-present*, rev. ed. (New York: Academic Press, 1981); Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977); Kett, *Rites*.

A later scholar implicitly disputes Stone's claim that the terms were synonymous. In *History of Bourgeois Perception*, Donald Lowe asserts,

in bourgeois society, youth became yet another age separating childhood from adulthood. Previously, youth had been not so much an age, but a semidependent status in society, when one had already left the family to become an apprentice, a servant, a page, or a student elsewhere, but had not yet gotten married or set up an independent household. It had been, in effect, an intermediate space between family and society at large. But industrialization and urbanization both strengthened and prolonged the bourgeois family. Bourgeois youth now reverted from that intermediate space into the family. One stayed at home much longer after childhood, and had to go to school to acquire the necessary virtues of rationality and discipline, in preparation for the mature, adult world.⁷

Lowe places this highly significant development prior to the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century "phenomenon of adolescence". Overattention to the formal concept of adolescence can lead quickly into semantic, chronological, and terminological mazes. In so far as concrete social realities are concerned, that can be misleading and counterproductive. Now is the time to reopen the questions surrounding the origins of modern adolescence and childhood. This essay suggests that their lines came together in new ways during the social transformations spanning the late eighteenth through the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

Numerous threads of recent historiography point toward a reinterpretation of American history. Emphasis increasingly centers on the years from the early republic to those surrounding the Civil War as among the most seminal for social development. To simplify grossly, the age of commerce stimulated that of industry, cities grew at their most rapid rate, great migrations redistributed the population, and the modern middle and working class emerged. Basic elements of culture were reoriented. Families were reorganized, the place of women transformed. New social, economic, cultural and political relationships restructured the cycles and courses of many lives. In this complex process, key aspects of childhood and what in time came to be called "adolescence" developed as both consequence and active participant in the larger remaking of society. The commonality of that term itself and much formal theorizing largely postdated the emergence of this stage in life. This was especially true for those who might be called "early" adolescents, generally no older than 15 or 16 years of age. Basic changes also affected those younger and older: children, adolescents, youths with their shifting social and geographic locations and dependency relations.

In this essay, little more than an outline and some examples of this major set of transformations may be presented. At this stage of research and revision, that is itself important. In part, my purpose is to synthesize, reinterpret and extend the findings of a variety of studies which scholarly specialization often

7. Donald Lowe, *History of Bourgeois Perception* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 52.

segregates. To that work, I add selected examples of my current use of first person "stories" of growing up, integrating them into a more structural framework. As in the case of the "boundary" issues above, I criticize previous interpretations. I also begin to formulate a new approach to the history of growing up.

Chronology and timing, as well as the nature and pace of change, constitute one significant dimension. That is one issue whose resolution has proved difficult. Formal naming often follows, rather than precedes, basic social change. Finally, the transformations of growing up which I identify should not be exaggerated. It was not a homogeneous process of life course reconstruction. Nor was it completed during this period. Rather, it was irregular and uneven, often, but not always relating directly to one's social class and place of residence as well as gender, ethnicity and race. Neither was it an easy accommodation. It was often marked by conflict and crises. Lucien Boynton's, Mary Anna Longstreth's and William McIntosh's lives take us into this history. Others' "paths" reveal different forms of dependency. Together they highlight the often contradictory position of young persons for whom just forming normative images were seized by private and public agents and institutions as standards for expected conduct and attitude.

To turn Rothman's question on its side, age groups have a different kind of history. Not accessible in traditional or normative historiographic terms of event and common narrative, they are composed of changing patterns and experiences of physical location; authority structures and relations; familial, peer and community relationships; degrees and manifestations of dependency and autonomy; economic or educational obligations; expectations; cultural and psychological pressures; and the like. No monolithic causal factor — term it modernization, urbanization, or industrialization — alone determines their nature. Nor is there a single homogeneous history of age groups. These relationships and experiences are punctuated and differentiated by social class, sex, ethnicity, race, geographic location as well as the shifting social and cultural meanings of age itself.

The origins of new social realities of growing up are located in the decades spanning the later eighteenth through middle nineteenth century. This is especially, but not exclusively true, for those in their childhood to mid-teen years and from middle-class families. Crucial to this conception are neither Stone's stress on a much earlier stage of youth nor Kett's emphasis on the later formulation of a cultural and biological concept of adolescence. As Kett himself notes, but does not elaborate, "the concept of adolescence did not develop as a mere by-product of the later stages of industrialization, but was an expression of distinctive values relating to children and the family that originated in America as early as the 1830s." In other words, the portion of growing up that adolescence occupied was treated as distinct well before it was conceptualized or discovered at the end of the nineteenth century: "The youth whose social definition — and indeed, whose whole being — was

determined by a biological process of maturation” and “a conception of behavior imposed on youth”.⁸ To the contrary, it was much more the active adaptation of many families and their young to a world undergoing unprecedented and bewildering changes.

Growing up, as I term the process of moving through the successive phases of childhood, adolescence and youth, refers to those structural, behavioral and psychological qualities that were remade or redefined over the course of this period. Adolescence came to define the years between puberty and youth. Its principal characteristic is **dependency**, increasingly prolonged and institutionalized. Its boundaries were set by new, more intense and lengthier familial relationships on one side, and external, typically educational institutions on the other. It served as the pivot, as it were, of growing up. Its transformations, its years began to encompass the panoply of other characteristics that later came to mark the formal concept: a sense of vulnerability to temptation and danger; a greater need and desire for active familial, especially maternal socialization, nurture, character formation, shelter and guidance; a fear of precocity and especially of sexuality; greater stress on formal education and training; the notion of a career (for young men) for which a moratorium prior to choice and careful selection and preparation was required; and, of course, far more attention and concern to this stage of the life course itself.

The early life stories of William McIntosh and to a degree Mary Anna Longstreth exemplify the transformations as well as some of the conflicts, tensions, irregularities and contradictions in contrast, for example, to Lucien Boynton. So, too, does Etta Richards Harlow, in Vermont. In her 1860-1861 diary, her fourteenth year was marked at first by consciousness of her birth date and age which in turn provide the stimulus to commence the life record. School, Band of Hope temperance activity for children, home and domesticity, and clothing provide her focus. “It is quite natural”, she writes, to be home alone with mother; at another time, she notes how “natural” it is to be at school.⁹ In sum, the position of and expectations about this middle class segment of the population came to resemble far more closely modern patterns of growing up and adolescence by middle decades of the century than prior notions of youth.

8. Kett, *Rites*, 7, 243. On middle class, see Michael B. Katz, Michael J. Doucet and Mark J. Stern, *The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982. See also “Twelve to Sixteen: Early Adolescence”, *Daedalus*, 100 (Fall, 1971).

9. Etta Richards Harlow, *Diary*, 1860-1861, manuscript, American Antiquarian Society.

II — The Shaping Forces

A. *Families, social changes and growing up*

The onset of this complicated set of life course transformations took place amid the rapid expansion of a commercial capitalist economy and the new social relationships that that transition engendered, rural as well as urban. Of special significance were the spread of the marketplace, growth of wage labor, separation of home and workplace, and parallel processes of reshaping familial and gender roles and responsibilities.¹⁰ Although cities may well have provided early crucibles for change in their heightened impacts on individuals and families, they were not the sole agents of transformation, as McIntosh shows. Although industrialization contributed, it did not have the independent, dominating role often assigned generically to it.

During the transition, first to commercial and subsequently to industrial capitalism, great changes reshaped the organization of families. Most significantly for this discussion are separation of home and work place, increased nuclearity of household structure, decline in marital fertility, and prolonged residence of children in parents' homes. As Katz observes in Canadian and United States studies, the first two began among the working class and the wage earning part of the business class (clerks and related workers), the third among the business class, especially its least affluent, most specialized and most mobile members. The fourth began about the same time in both classes, although the children of the business class, importantly, usually remained longer in school whereas those of the working class went to work, as accounts by artisans' children illustrate. Within these epochal shifts toward a recognizably modern family form are found the origins of modern paths of growing up. As Katz notes, "to some extent, the adoption of new patterns of domestic organization had reflected shifts in values..., but the key lies rather in the family economy, in the strains, opportunities and anxieties induced by the differential social impact of capitalist development upon domestic life."¹¹

Structural and material changes formed the preconditions and foundations for the remaking of growing up. From the mid-eighteenth century forward, new patterns of culture and thought concerning human nature, especially that of women and children, and the power of environment, intersected

10. See, among the literature, Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Carl N. Degler, *At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Katz, *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Nineteenth-Century City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975); Katz et al., *Social Organization*; Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

11. Katz et al., *Social Organization*, 347-348, 347. See also Peter D. McClelland and Robert J. Zeckhauser, *Demographic Dimensions of the New Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Ryan, *Cradle*; Maris A. Vinovskis, *Fertility in Massachusetts from the Revolution to the Civil War* (New York: Academic Press, 1981).

with them. Of these, rationalism stemming from the Enlightenment in its religiously qualified American version, newer currents of romanticism, evangelism, republicanism, environmentalism and concern about order and discipline were most salient, whatever their collective or singular contradictions or uneasy accommodations. Relatively novel concepts of childhood and childrearing, woman- and motherhood, family, institutions and environments, combined in complex fashion with the sources of individual personality and character — as William McIntosh had become aware — and contributed to the transformation of growing up and to the creation of adolescence. Their relationships with social and economic changes were reinforcing if sometimes contradictory. In the process, not only were expectations revised, but entirely new relationships were established, along with new paths of growing up.¹²

More specifically, the separation of work and home and the subsequent impact on women's work reshaped gender roles for parents and children. In conjunction with shifts in cultural norms, a new and increasingly separate domestic sphere and a culture of domesticity emerged, with maternal responsibility and suitability, mandated for the development of the young. Assumptions about the nature, and the nurturing, of children accompanied this redefinition. Childhood was accorded a new importance that corresponded to its plasticity and innocence, and its need for an active parental, especially maternal role in shaping development from the earliest moments. Cott notes, "as other tasks and persons filtered out of the household, the mother-child relationship became more salient: the mother's role in child care, like other work roles, became more discrete and specialized in the urban/commercial milieu that spawned the childrearing literature."¹³ Gentler, more feminine methods came to the fore, as emphasis fell upon the active shaping of character and conscience, the new internalized personal controls of self-discipline. Such, at least, was the new theory. Mothers, not surprisingly, required more extensive training and education for these heavy responsibilities — which their children begin to express in personal accounts — contributing in turn to young women's increasing rates of formal schooling and prolonged family

12. Ruth Bloch, "American Feminine Ideals in Transition: The Rise of the Moral Mother, 1785-1815", *Feminist Studies*, 4 (1978), 101-126; Cott, *Bonds*, "Notes Toward an Interpretation of Antebellum Childrearing", *Psychohistory Review*, 6 (1978), 4-20; Degler, *At Odds*; Demos and Demos, "Adolescence"; Harvey J. Graff, "Patterns of Adolescence and Child Dependency in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century City: A Sample from Boston, 1860", *History of Education Quarterly*, 13 (1973), 129-143; Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Kett, *Rites*, "Growing Up in Rural New England, 1800-1840" in *Anonymous Americans*, ed. by Tamara K. Hareven (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1971), 1-16; "Adolescence and Youth in Nineteenth-Century America", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 2 (1971), 95-110; James McLachlan, *American Boarding Schools: A Historical Study* (New York: Scribners, 1970); Ryan, *Cradle*; Peter G. Slater, *Child in the New England Mind in Death and in Life* (Hamden, CT: Archon, 1977); Bernard Wishy, *The Child and the Republic: The Dawn of Modern American Child Nurture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968).

13. Cott, "Notes", 9.

residence and dependency. As their growing up transformed in consequence, the complex connections emerge more clearly.

Many of the precise linkages have not been elaborated. My present work elicits them through accounts of individual experiences of growing up. Nevertheless, it was not coincidental that the beginnings of an irregular but lengthy secular trend in marital fertility — toward smaller and more nuclear households — began at about the same time as other changes. Economic and cultural imperatives reinforced each other in stimulating change and response. As childrearing became the domain of mothers (reiterated in children's notes and memories) and as the family ideal (more than the reality) became privatized and separate from the world outside it, that world was seen as alien, corrupting, and threatening. Not only were women to remain separate from it, but so, too, were the young. Construed as innocent, malleable and vulnerable, their formative years were prolonged throughout the century — as families were able to afford it. Among the consequences of these intricate responses was that when the young did leave home, first as children for schooling, special institutional environments were crafted carefully for them. Further, the separation from home and family was sentimentalized and invested with a new, more momentous sense of danger and possible crisis. To this, fourteen-year-old Etta Harlow indirectly referred, and young McIntosh was concerned more directly. Concern for young people's protection and their future was not the least of these fears. Theory and fact, we need to remember, did not always overlap neatly; neither were all families able to or desirous of participating in these transformations. Notions of the "normal" were still in construction as Bruce Bellingham's and Linda Gordon's studies dramatically reveal.¹⁴

Emphasis of contemporaries and later students falls more on childhood than adolescence. Nevertheless, the early creation of what may well be termed adolescence was a concomitant aspect of these transformations. The lengthening period of residence with parents, with its prolongation of child and

14. Kirk Jeffrey, "The Family as Utopian Retreat from the City: The Nineteenth-Century Contribution" in *The Family, Communes, and Utopian Societies*, ed. by S. TeSelle (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 21-41; John Modell and Tamara K. Hareven, "Urbanization and the Malleable Household: An Examination of Boarding and Lodging in American Families", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 35 (1973), 467-478; Ryan, *Cradle, Kett, Rites*; Modell, Frank Furstenberg and Theodore Hershberg, "Social Change and the Transition to Adulthood in Historical Perspective", *Journal of Family History*, 1 (1976), 7-32. See also Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence* (New York: Viking, 1988); Bruce Bellingham, "The Unspeakable Blessing: Street Children, Reform Rhetoric, and Misery in Early Industrial Capitalism", *Politics and Society*, 12 (1983), 303-330; "Institution and Family: An Alternative View of Nineteenth-Century Child Saving", *Social Problems*, 33 (1986), 533-557; "The History of Childhood Since the 'Invention of Childhood': Some Issues in the Eighties", *Journal of Family History*, 13 (1988), 347-358; "Waifs and Strays: Child Abandonment, Foster Care, and Families in Mid-Nineteenth-Century New York" in *The Uses of Charity: The Poor on Relief in the Nineteenth-Century Metropolis*, ed. by Peter Mandler (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 123-160, and his forthcoming book; Viviana Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

youthful dependency outlined this shift in experience, on one hand, as William McIntosh experienced and also saw. Changes and variations in the nature of that experience, differentiated especially by class and sex, and also by ethnicity, race and place of residence, were no less important. The young of all classes increased their time with families of origin. Rural children's memories and records, sometimes filtered through a sentimentalized or romanticized glaze, testify to the irregularity of change and persisting diversity of experience. So, too, do those of town and city apprentices and young workers. All within the first half of the nineteenth century, the emergent trends, the inconsistencies, variability and contradictions of growing up's remaking achieve new life and liveliness in testimonies ranging from John Albee's confessions of rural New England boyhood or John Ball's early western migration, to young Bostonian David Clapp's mixed efforts to go to "skool", sleigh, and serve a printer's apprenticeship, Jeremiah Curtin's delayed higher education and career success, Susan Brown Forbes's late teenage factory work, Caroline Clapp Briggs' idyllic New England childhood, Emily Virginia Semple's plantation world of childhood and youth, and Merrill Ober's amazing pursuit of learning and culture in rural Vermont.¹⁵

Searching for an elaborated concept of adolescence, frequent use of such a term, or concentration on the exact range of ages, while not unimportant tasks, easily deflects attention from the cultural and social processes of growing up's new emergence. Joined with the testimonies of the personal life stories, invaluable new evidence for the creation of new patterns of growing also derives from recent community studies.¹⁶ Data from a number of

15. See Kett, *Rites*. But now, see, John Albee, *Confessions of Boyhood* (Boston: Badger, 1910); John Ball, *Autobiography*, compiled by his daughters, Kate Ball Powers, Flora Ball Hopkins, Lucy Ball (Grand Rapids, MI: Dean-Hicks, 1925); David Clapp, *Journal*, manuscript, 1820-1824, American Antiquarian Society; *Memoirs of Jeremiah Curtin*, ed. by Joseph Schafer, Wisconsin Biography Series, II (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1940); Susan E. Parsons Brown Forbes, *Diaries*, 1841-1908, manuscript, American Antiquarian Society; Caroline Clapp Briggs, *Reminiscences and Letters* (Boston: Houghton and Mifflin, 1897); Emily Virginia Semple, "Reminiscences of my Early Life and Relatives"; [Merrill Ober], "A Journal of Village Life", ed. by Wilson O. Clough, *New England Quarterly*, 1 (1928), 32-40; among many others.

16. Especially important among the literature are Cott, "Young Men in the Second Great Awakening in New England", *Feminist Studies*, 3 (1975), 15-29; Bernard Farber, *Guardians of Virtue; Salem Families in 1800* (New York: Basic Books, 1972); Laurence A. Glasco, "The Life Cycles and Household Structures of American Ethnic Groups: Irish, Germans, and Native-Born Whites in Buffalo, New York, 1855", *Journal of Urban History*, 1 (1975), 339-364; Graff, "Patterns", *The Literacy Myth: Literacy and Social Structure in the Nineteenth-Century City* (New York: Academic Press, 1979); Hareven, ed., *Transitions: The Family and the Life Course in Historical Perspective* (New York: Academic Press, 1978); Carl F. Kaestle and Maris A. Vinovskis, "From Fireside to Factory: School Entry and School Leaving in Nineteenth-Century Massachusetts" in *Transitions*, ed. by Hareven, 135-185; "From Apron Strings to ABCs: Parents, Children, and Schooling in Nineteenth-Century Massachusetts" in *Turning Points: Historical and Sociological Essays on the Family* (*American Journal of Sociology*, Supplement, 84), ed. by John Demos and Sarane Boocock (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), S39-80; *Education and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century*

communities document highlight the changes in general and structural patterns of growing up for large numbers of children and youth. The process of transformation and the dynamic elements of which it was comprised are identified clearly through this lens; in the light of the personal stories, each mirrors instructively the other.

Mary Ryan's interpretation of the middle-class family in Oneida County and Utica, New York, 1790-1865, provides one important example. Fixing her analysis within the terms of change used here, she discovers "many innovations in family practice, attitudes, and relations emanated from a select segment of the region's shifting social structure, namely, the farmers, artisans and shopkeepers buffeted by the intensified competition and instability of a rapidly growing marketplace." In the "emergence of a definable middle class", new domestic patterns congealed into a sequence of strategies for child and youth development. In those, the key elements of transformation are found, especially for boys. In contrast with previous patterns in Utica and elsewhere, the native-born male's life cycle, especially during the teen years, was reconstructed.

Significantly, Ryan discovers new relationships among these young men, their families of origin and especially their mothers, their educational institutions, and their early jobs by the 1850s and 1860s. As also reflected in the personal testimonies, new family strategies focused upon the young. Maternal domesticity and new childrearing practices reigned in privatized family residences separated from work places and relocated in "bucolic settings on the outskirts of the city", as the social order transformed. For early adolescents, several strategies were most important. With occupational preparation increasingly separate and distinct from the family home, only "make-believe work" inculcated early work habits. "The profit was collected in moral rather than monetary currency", in character rather than material support for the family. McIntosh's mother lived this history. An extended moratorium on productive labor, especially for boys, was imposed. This may, Ryan contends, have engendered conflict as their activities were differentiated from their fathers, in contrast to the lesser gap between mothers and daughters, their respective roles, and preparation for them. Comparing even briefly the youthful experiences of Caroline Clapp Briggs in Massachusetts with that of

Massachusetts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Katz, *People of Hamilton*; "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment", *History of Education Quarterly*, 16 (1976), 381-407; "Origins of the Institutional State", *Marxist Perspectives*, 1 (1978), 6-22; Katz and Ian Davey, "Youth and Early Industrialization in a Canadian City" in *Turning Points*, ed. by Demos and Boocock, 881-119; Katz *et al.*, *Social Organization*; Ryan, *Cradle*; Selwyn K. Troen, "Popular Education in Nineteenth Century St. Louis", *History of Education Quarterly*, 13 (1973), 23-40; more generally, see Gillis, *Youth*; Kett, "Adolescence", *Rites*; now see the studies collected in my *Growing Up in America*; Joseph Hawes and N. Ray Hiner, *American Childhood* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985).

Samuel Busey in Maryland underscores this distinction in paths of growing up as they developed.¹⁷

Early adolescence for boys was in part a strategic response to this problem. "Something had to be done to help families navigate more smoothly through this awkward later stage of male childhood." The school provided an intermediary environment between home and later work. Schooling itself was hardly novel. What changed, however, as personal testimonies reflect, was its systematic nature, place in familial strategies, and key contribution to reshaping the life course of individuals. In part, it came to **define** (early, at least) adolescence; in this, it would only increase with time. Age and gender conflict would not only abate (at least on the surface. The transition from home increasingly delayed, new pressures and anxieties for middle-class occupational preparation and status maintenance would also be met, at least in part and in theory. Busey's mother's refusal to consent to his appointment to West Point, instead "persistently designated the profession of medicine for me, which I as stubbornly declined..." only rings stereotypically to late twentieth-century ears! (He did become a doctor.)

Not coincidentally, the expansion and reformation of schooling during this period included age-grading, new softer and more familial pedagogical styles, the feminization of the teaching force, and the beginnings of public secondary education. Ironically, in Utica, playtime activities also developed, as boys under the age of sixteen "often mimicked adult roles and responsibilities." Autobiographical materials begin to describe more play, and to describe it more pleasurably and openly. Not yet the narrowly age-graded peer groups that emerged by the end of the century, their origins and functions were not only prefigured, but so were the sources of strains and conflict. First-person accounts of growing up in towns and cities also include more mention and a wide range of encounters with peers — of both sexes in some cases. Another expression of early youth culture was the proliferation of newspapers published for this market as well as regular features for the young in many other periodicals.¹⁸

More generally, the length of time that the young remained in their parents' homes measurably increased. Both departures at later ages and proportions of the age group affected reflect their critical shift. The traditional alternative of boarding declined rapidly. Prolonged residence at home, Ryan avers, "was the favorite strategy of native-born youth and the middle class in

17. Ryan, *Cradle*, xiii, 147, 161-162; Briggs, *Reminiscences*; Samuel Claggett Busey, *A Souvenir with an Autobiographical Sketch of Early Life and Selected Miscellaneous Addresses and Communications* (Washington, DC, 1896); compare with studies of Kett, cited above.

18. Ryan, *Cradle*, 162, 164; see also, Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983); Kaestle and Vinovskis, *Education*; Katz, *The Irony of Early School Reform* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968); Kett, *Rites*; Daniel T. Rodgers, "Socializing Middle-Class Children: Institutions, Fables, and Work Values in Nineteenth-Century America", *Journal of Social History*, 13 (1980), 354-367.

particular....” Parental authority over the teenaged increased: “Parents could exercise considerable care and authority over adult children and, accordingly, that obtaining middle-class status was not just a matter of self creation: it was also the culmination of a parental strategy.” Conversely, dependency for the young increased.

Second, prolongation of dependency in persisting residence at home was accompanied by delayed entry into the labor force. Class and ethnic differences sharply marked this phenomena. Of all those under the age of 15 in Utica in 1855, though, fewer than four percent were recorded with an occupation. Early adolescence came to preclude early labor force entry; work began only at its end points. Early jobs (within one’s career) and continuing familial residence far more often overlapped. Ryan quips, “some of these home-bound youths were simply basking in the salubrious home influences recommended by childrearing theorists who would prohibit children ‘from encountering prematurely the seductive wiles that the wicked world will be sure to throw around them’.” A moratorium from dangerously precocious home-leaving and job-entry corresponded to a lengthening exposure to maternal and familial domesticity and its presumed impact on overlapping extended shelter and moral character development. Economic and cultural thrusts intricately reinforced one another. In the process, “through the extended residence of young sons and a variety of attendant parental services, the family helped to ensure the production [indeed, much of the creation] of the middle class, even if it required horizontal movement from skilled manual to white-collar jobs.”

Third, and no less importantly, increasing numbers of children, led — in years and regularity of attendance — by the middle class, were remaining in school. This constituted a strategic response of families and their young. At once, it formed a response to concern about preparation for future occupations — for maintaining class status or securing social mobility — further training in proper habits or values, and protection of the vulnerable young from temptation or premature entry into the “wicked world”. Under these pressures, the secondary school — increasingly graded by age — emerged in new public and private forms. For most of Utica’s young, 15 marked the end of schooling.¹⁹

In Utica and in personal stories, especially among middle-class families and particularly (but not only) among sons, growing up’s early adolescent years were etched within a difficult and anxiety-ridden time of socioeconomic and cultural transition. Its outline required more time and transitions to complete. In creating a new stage in the early life course, aimed at reshaping the young’s social and psychological relations, it looked more to the future

19. Ryan, *Cradle*, 168, 179; see also the work of Cott, Kett, Wishy, Katz, Katz and Davey, Katz *et al.*, McLachlan, cited above, and Kett, “Curing the Disease of Precocity” in *Turning Points*, ed. by Demos and Boocock, S183-211; David F. Allmindinger, “Mount Holyoke Students Encounter the Need for Life-Planning”, *History of Education Quarterly*, 19 (1979), 27-46.

than to the past. Its roots lay in the first one-half to two-thirds of the nineteenth century.

Michael Katz's structural analysis of commercial and early industrializing Hamilton, Ontario, and Buffalo and Erie County, New York, complement and extend this perspective. They underscore the disappearance of "semi-autonomy", an earlier phase of youth's life courses in which they resided in the homes of families other than their own parents, as boarders, relatives, servants, apprentices. "Young people had exchanged the complete supervision of their parents for a relatively more autonomous though still subordinate relationship with another household." The passing of semiautonomy and its replacement by the new dependency of early adolescence encompassed young persons of all ages. For those in the earlier adolescent years — male and female —, the shift apparently commenced and was completed earlier. For them in particular, dependency in terms of prolonged family residence was almost universal by the middle decades of the century. Loss of work opportunities — for those apprenticed and those boarding — was accompanied by new forms of family and institutional relationships. Home ties progressively eclipsed those of community. New boundaries were erected — in theory and in fact. For rural, small town, and migrating youths, the transformation was more irregular as paths varied in pace and extent of change.

Increasing school attendance accompanied lengthening home-staying. Everywhere, it seem, early middle-class adolescents accounted for much of the growth in schooling. It was young persons from that class for whom delayed entry into work corresponded with lengthier periods of schooling and residence with parents. Interestingly, this contrasted with the 1861-1871 expansion of young men's work in Hamilton's early industrialization. Katz neatly summarizes:

Thus, two patterns emerge: first, among 13- to 16-year olds, the children of the business class (professionals, men in commercial occupations, masters and manufacturers) were more likely to attend school than children of the working class. Second, men in professions more often sent their sons than their daughters to school. With the exception of the construction trades, the pattern among children of masters, skilled wage workers and laborers was reversed: their daughters attended more often. These patterns underline the increased connection between schooling and employment perceived by the parents of the business class and the attractiveness to the children of masters and to the working class of jobs that did not require prolonged schooling. Professionals and merchants encouraged their sons to stay longer at school than their daughters probably because they felt that schooling had become increasingly important for male occupations. Conversely, young working men left school earlier than their sisters because they could find work more easily.

Growing up — with its clear correlates of class and gender — shifted in these ways. Their experiences were simultaneously differentiated, especially

as early industrialization provided new job opportunities for working-class youths and differently-situated families and youths responded differentially.²⁰

B. *Class, ethnicity and generation*

Multivariate analysis like Katz's amplifies Ryan's study of family and community transformation. Both reflect and are reflected in personal stories. The complexity and unevenness of growing up's transformations emerge more clearly. Thus, on one hand, Katz finds young persons from all backgrounds staying longer at home and going to school in greater numbers. Yet, on the other hand, "experiences of young people of varying ethnic and class origins did differ significantly." Class and ethnicity, which were interrelated, and gender too, affected ages of leaving home and duration of family residence, length of schooling, age of entry into work force, and type and level of early jobs. (In Buffalo, however, young women continued to leave home much earlier, between ages 13 and 14, with many becoming servants.) In this way, the lines of adolescence directly emerged with more general processes of change and response. Social class and ethnicity cut across most paths from home leaving to school attendance and work entry, though not always simply or linearly. Important components of the remaking of growing up and the origins of adolescence were shared. But they differed critically in the degree to which those aspects came together and in the extent that adolescence was experienced newly as part of their life course. The remaking of growing up in terms of the stage of adolescence took its shape from the conjunction of the determining and defining factors, from prolonged family residence to new forms of socialization and work entry. In this, it was a class phenomenon.²¹

As personal testimony underscores even more dramatically, the shifts in paths and patterns of growing up were more than uneven and irregular. For many families and young persons, they long remained irrelevant. Stansell's study of street children in New York City during this period shows this well. Differing from both the new early adolescence and the semi-autonomous paths, their early independence was "dictated by exigency, but...also intertwined with patterns of motherhood, parenthood and childhood." This was the response of the poor to earn their own keep and help make ends meet at home: though peddling, scavenging, theft, prostitution and the like.

Raising one's children properly did not mean protecting them from the world of work; on the contrary, it involved teaching them to shoulder those heavy burdens of labor which were the common lot of their class, to be hardworking

20. Katz *et al.*, *Social Organization*, 245, 271-272; see also studies by Katz, Katz and Davey, Kett, Modell and Hareven, cited above, and Richard Wall, "The Age at Leaving Home", *Journal of Family History*, 3 (1978), 181-202. Susan Forbes' *Diaries* provide an example of extending schooling, to age 18, before moving to Lowell, MA, to board and work in a textile mill.

21. Katz *et al.*, *Social Organization*, 261; see also Glasco, "Life Cycles", and compare with Kaestle and Vinovskis, "From Fireside to Factory", "From Apron Strings to ABCs", *Education*.

and dutiful to kin and neighbors. By the same token, laboring children gained an early autonomy from their parents, an autonomy alien to the experience of more privileged children.²²

Here, too, generational tensions could not be avoided. Children learned independence within the bounds of family obligation. This self-sufficiency could not always be controlled by parents, who could not limit what was learned on the streets. That either strategies or aspirations need not conflict across generations, but could also be complementary and sensitive, emerges from Bellingham's major study of the Children's Aid Society in New York City. Linda Gordon's study of family violence in Boston reflects the conflicts and contradictions of gender, social and age inequalities.

Despite the seeming irrelevance of changing patterns of growing up for many such children, they contributed to the creation and spread of the new experiences and practices. Ironically and contradictorily, the changes sometimes rebounded upon themselves or their peers. Perceived increasingly as alien, threatening and deviant, the visible presence of these poor families and children in the streets formed an extreme counter against which middle-class domestic socialization was compared and reorganized. The contrast provided a striking stimulus to their own responses and class reactions. Elements of protected childhood and early adolescence and institutional development stood high among them. The independence of these children and youths was designated as delinquent and symptomatic of domestic failure. In turn, middle-class families and reformers emphasized the need to maintain the dependency of their own youngsters. At the same time, efforts to intervene and reform the family life and socialization of the poor and alien seized upon aspects of new middle-class ideology and practice. Aimed at others, those expectations, norms and hopes were often inappropriate, incomplete and contradictory.

Recent studies gain from integration with the testimony of personal sources begun here. Together they contribute significant new data that speak to the key issues in the history of growing up. Those discussed above are neither isolated nor exceptional examples. Other cases, less developed and sometimes less concerned directly with growing up, confirm and extend the argument. Significant, here, are Farber's analysis of Salem in 1800; Glasco's work on Buffalo; my own studies of Boston and illiterate families; the

22. Christine Stansell, "Women, Children, and the Uses of the Streets: Class and Gender Conflict in New York City, 1850-1860", *Feminist Studies*, 8 (1982), 313; Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* (New York: Knopf, 1986); Bellingham, "Waifs", "Institution and Family", "Unspeakable Blessing"; Gordon, *Heroes*; Michael B. Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America* (New York: Basic, 1986); Zelizer, *Pricing*; W. Norton Grubb and Marvin Lazerson, *Broken Promises: How Americans Fail Their Children* (New York: Basic, 1982). See also Modell *et al.*, "Social Change". Here, the personal source testimony is very limited; much of what may be located comes from the pen of reformers or has been moralized or romanticized to the point of great distortion. The resolution of this complication demands special attention, as does that of gender, below.

“transition” studies edited by Hareven; Troen’s study of St. Louis; Kaestle and Vinovskis’ research on Massachusetts communities; Kett’s more general work; as well as Bellingham’s and Gordon’s new work. A generally consistent picture, needing amplification, further sophistication and synthesis, but portraying the major reconstruction of growing up, especially but not exclusively for middle-class youths, emerges powerfully.²³

C. Gender

Still unclear, however, is the question of gender. In part, this follows simply and directly from less study of the female life course. It also derives from a general, if incomplete consensus about female adolescence in this period. In this view, girls’ adolescence was marked by the critical nature of puberty; it was short, but stormy. In the words of Kett, “girls were seen as experiencing a wrenching adolescence between 14 and 16, but not as having a stage of youth....”²⁴ Whereas there is an undoubted truth in this view, it is likely incomplete, and perhaps biased. The evidence discussed in this essay indicates that teenaged girls shared in some of the key transformations of growing up, sometimes similarly to their brothers, other times contrastingly. They, too, remained longer at home, underwent new socialization, went increasingly often and longer to school. In an important new sense, they were prepared for a “career” in “women’s work” as mother and wife, but also for certain kinds of paid labor of which teaching was most prominent.

In all of this, they may be said to share in the transformations, though experiencing them differently. In other respects, however, a young woman’s early teen years departed from emerging patterns. Their points of transition differed from their brothers’. The related fears and crises were of a different nature, as the biological and cultural event of puberty aptly symbolized and was seized upon. Gender identification and domestic/maternal training were dramatically different for girls, less conflictual and crisis-prone, with less sense of the anxieties and strains in preparation for the future. This is not, of course, to suggest that there were none: there were no doubt many. Those of sexuality and narrow bounds of cultural prescription plagued female adolescents and youths. Anxiety over one’s future and the need to work at least premaritally to which many personal sources speak, the potential shock of exchanging dependency within the parental home for dependency within husband’s (and the transfer of emotional bonds) were later events. The transitions within the adolescent years overall took on a different sort of meanings,

23. See the citations above.

24. Kett, “Adolescence”, 108; see also Carroll Smith Rosenberg, “Puberty to Menopause: The Cycle of Femininity in Nineteenth-Century America” in *Clio’s Consciousness Raised*, ed. by Mary Hartman and Lois Banner (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 23-37; Kett, *Rites*; Ryan, *Cradle*. Source bias is a severe problem here too; much of the usual evidence comes from moral, self-help and medical evidence, all of which carries its own biases. Personal statements are less than rare, for obvious reasons.

challenges and conflicts, and a different cluster of characteristics for girls. Regardless, we have much to learn in this area.²⁵

D. *Special institutions*

Many other developments, too numerous to detail here, impinge upon and extend this preliminary reinterpretation. There is, for example, the emergence of the private boarding school. While contradicting the principal trend toward prolonged home residence (for which it was criticized) and remaining very much a minority experience, the private school also highlights the roles of institutions, ideas and social class — gender, too — in the recreation of growing up. Recognizing the critical nature of the early teen years, contemporary boarding schools accommodated upper- and middle-class youths, some of whom had been precociously present at colleges. Historian James McLachlan demonstrates that these schools emerged within the same social transformation and terms as the transitions discussed so far. For example, Muhlenberg's Flushing Institute planned for students between the ages of 13 and 18: "The age of the collegians is the very period of life when they most need the discretionary guidance of parents and governors, and when no written laws are sufficient to regulate their conduct. From 14 to 18 is the most critical period of human life." Fragmentary evidence indicates that students' ages actually ranged from 9 to 16: our critical period of change.

Subsequently highly influential on other institutions, Flushing Institute was built upon the optimistic, evangelical spirit so important to the remaking of growing up in these years. Devoted to morality and character as well as to intellectual and physical training, the school was established on a family model. Rhetoric was stronger than reality, but the emphasis on home, family and maternal influence permeated the boarding institution and extended through at least early adolescence. "The family and the home were painted as a secluded refuge from a society which was daily growing less Christian, more competitive, and more confusing.... The boarding school was one manifestation of this quest for stability." In a form more extreme than most aimed at this age group, new boarding schools appealed to parents' fears of "the many possible deleterious effects of the city on their sons. Not only did the city threaten the child's health..., it posed an even greater threat to the child's morals." In response to perceptions of the formation of a delinquent "culture of youth" and the sense that society was losing control of its children, reformers and families turned increasingly toward new developmental notions, strategies and institutions for the young: for children and, to an unappreciated extent, adolescents. For most, girls as well as boys, extended public

25. See the works cited above by Allmindinger, Cott, Ryan and Mary Beth Norton, "Youthful Men and Domestic Women", *Reviews in American History*, 6 (1978), 171-177; Smith Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America", *Signs*, 1 (1975), 1-29; and the contrasting views of Ellen K. Rothman, *Courtship in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1985). Work in progress by Joan J. Brumberg, Cornell University, should prove very important on these issues.

schooling and family residence, anchored within new conceptions of human nature and socialization, met the need. For others, whose history underscores the class nature (as well as male orientation) of this transformation, private boarding schools constituted the strategic response. The seeds of secondary education for adolescents were born here and in other private institutions, as was the eventual domination of the public sphere.²⁶

Just as special institutions were created for the poor, dependent and delinquent, others emerged for the upper- and upper-middle class. Both were part of the same social reaction to perceptions of the nature and needs of the same ages. "Like the reform school, the boarding school was a completely controlled environment, carefully isolated from society in order to assure the development of a particular character and social type." No unnatural disturbance or premature severance of domestic ties of affection or authority need occur. Both affection and authority became increasingly difficult, for all sides, personal sources attest. "By sealing them off from society, the boarding school could effectively hasten the process of transforming the young into adolescents. This could be done either within the nineteenth-century bourgeois family or in an institution modeled on the family."²⁷ Within the controlled environment of schools like Flushing, typically romantic lines of nurturance formed the program. Individual boy's development was emphasized; emulation was avoided; intellectual training was qualified by moral concerns. But as in home and day schools, students were also to be prepared for competition within society.

E. *Law and policy; dependency and delinquency*

Dependency punctuated the lives of the young and of their families in many new ways. Most significant was the progressive intervention — through the law and social institutions — of public agencies into the processes of growing up. Neither a linear nor a simple history, the new uses of law and social institutions not only held tremendous potential for conflict and controversy, they also gave rise to multiple contradictions, not the least of which was the myth of the privatized family. As in the other key aspects of the remaking of growing up and the creation of adolescence, the changing shapes of the economy, social structure and culture transformed social relations.²⁸

26. McLachlan, *American Boarding Schools*, 117-118, 116, 118-119. See also McIntosh, *Autobiography*; James Barman Douglas, "Diary of the College Life and Time of James B. Douglas, Orwigsburg, PA, Yale College Class of 1852", 1849- 1853, 2 vols., manuscript, American Antiquarian Society.

27. McLachlan, *American Boarding Schools*, 123, 125.

28. See Michael Grossberg, *Governing the Hearth: Law and the Family in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985); Katz, *Irony*, "Origins of the Institutional State", "Education and Inequality: A Historical Perspective" in *Social History and Social Policy*, ed. by David J. Rothman and Stanton Wheeler (New York: Academic Press, 1981), 57-101; Katz *et al.*, *Social Organization*; Jamil S. Zainaldin, "The Emergence of a Modern American Family Law: Custody, Adoption, and the Courts, 1796-1851", *Northwestern University Law Review*, 73 (1979), 1038-1089; W. Norton Grubb and

Consider the example of juvenile justice reform, in which law and institutions moved together. The discovery and invention of juvenile delinquency in this period stemmed from the same sources as those of childhood and adolescence. The origins of each may well have depended on the other. As Schlossman shows, “from the creation of reformatories in 1820s to the establishment of juvenile courts three-quarters of a century later, the principal legal justification was the doctrine of *parens patriae*.” Under this broadly accepted view, new attention was accorded to the young and the State legitimated its right to stand in guard of minors. *Ex parte Crouse*, in 1838, was the seminal judicial action. In denying legal rights to the young and in easing external intervention into families, on one hand, the special nature of the young — their vulnerability, needs, relations to society present and future, etc. — was recognized and elaborated. (The ages of those most affected, histories of juvenile justice, social institutions and related topics all reveal most often as the early adolescent years.) Some parents were also given new alternatives for dealing with difficult young or difficult times. On the other hand, new institutions, especially reformatories, were created to house increasing numbers of young persons whose paths of growing up were perceived as “different”, deviating from newly developing norms and ideals.

The latter, of course, had more than an incidental relationship to the role of schooling, especially public schooling, and the rhetoric of family life in shaping new dependency. Dependency for more and more youths of the adolescent years came to be institutionalized. Contemporaries stressed common links and experiences between public school and reform school: “The reformatory”, the court in the Crouse case argued, “was nothing but a residential school for underprivileged children, a horizontal expansion of the fledgling public school system. A reformatory was ‘not a prison but a school’. Its objectives were in the broadest sense educational: to train children in industry, morality, the means to make a living and, most importantly, to isolate them from the ‘corrupting influences of improper associates’.” But the differences among them clearly were more important than the common fact of dependence on, and indeed definition by relationship to, an institution. The courts did not recognize that difference. The typical middle-class youngster was in school and at home, in preparation for a path vastly different from those for whom the reformatory was to constitute both home and school. The model for each, nevertheless, was formed in recognition of and reaction to the other. They constituted different sides of one complex response.

The extent to which those seen as delinquent dependents shared responses with those more safely ensconced in family homes is revealing. Reformatory promoters and sponsors joined with others concerned about the young

Marvin Lazerson, *Broken Promises: How Americans Fail Their Children* (New York: Basic Books, 1982); Barbara Brenzel, *Daughters of the State* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983); Gordon, *Heroes*; Bellingham, “Waifs”, “Institutions and Families”, “Unspeakable Blessing”.

in fearing and acting to limit precocity "because they had been forced to exercise their mental faculties earlier than their wealthier peers" and whose life on the streets "made delinquents more independent and self-reliant" than they should have been.²⁹ Idleness, a sign of danger, would be halted forcibly by new regimen of order and discipline. Idleness among the young, we begin to discover, was a real problem by mid-century; the responses to its recognition formed one of the stimuli toward prolonged dependency and adolescence.³⁰ A home and familial model and metaphor, however contradicted by differing realities, came to represent the goal and design of youth reformers and their institutions. Developmental theories and strategies for nurturance also linked the public "family" to the private domestic sphere. Principle broke down on application; early adolescence for one class of the young hardly succeeded in achieving its goals. For the incarcerated and delinquent dependent, contradictions mocked the origins of their adolescence, just as they did for the future of youth policy.

In practice as in theory, institutions, predominantly expanding public school systems, received the young, shaping and defining their new dependency by this relationship. The extent to which young people air their feelings, often critical ones, about time in school, increasingly characterizes their personal writing. This transformation was most advanced for early adolescents and children, especially but hardly solely those of the middle class for whom school attendance at these ages approached universality. When state legislatures began after mid-century to pass the first compulsory attendance laws, however weak or unenforceable, it was this age group that was bracketed. As with the formal enunciation and codification of the concept of adolescence itself, here too, behavior often preceded such statements.³¹

III — Remaking the History of Growing Up

The reinterpretation begun here raises as many questions as it answers. Together constituting basic changes in the practices and experiences of growing up, the origins of their remaking were well underway by the middle of the nineteenth century. Beginning in the last decades of the eighteenth century and likely accelerating by and after the 1820s, the pace and extent of change call out for further study. Census-based research typically beginning with 1850 cuts into an ongoing process of transformation. Within the inextricably intertwined reforging of economic, cultural and social relations, the boundaries,

29. Steven L. Schlossman, *Love and the American Delinquent: The Theory and Practice of "Progressive" Juvenile Justice, 1825-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 8, 10, 29; compare with Kett, *Rites*, "Curing". See also Brenzel, *Daughters*; Gordon, *Heroes*; Bellingham, "Waifs", "Institutions and Families", "Unspeakable Blessing".

30. See Katz, "The Origins of Public Education", "Origins of the Institutional State"; Katz and Davey, "Youth"; Katz *et al.*, *Social Organization*.

31. William M. Landes and Lewis C. Solomon, "Compulsory Schooling Legislation", *Journal of Economic History*, 32 (1972), 54-91; David B. Tyack, "Ways of Seeing: An Essay on the History of Compulsory Schooling", *Harvard Educational Review*, 46 (1976), 355-389.

concrete social realities and experiences, and to an incomplete but important extent, the semantics and theories of growing up were changing. As they did, they constituted and further sparked a series of reactions and responses that first culminated in a distinctly new approach to childhood and later a modern and complete concept of adolescence.³² Personal testimony and structural examination powerfully join in underscoring this epochal recreation of the life course, which we are only now beginning to investigate and understand.

Recognizing the nature of this developmental process and some of its key features sharpens the focus on the history of age groups and relations, and on the critical interplay of social change and cultural perceptions. It permits new readings with an eye toward a larger and deeper set of transformations of the kinds of data and testimony that Joseph Kett carefully presents.³³ It also makes imperative a wider investigation of individual and collective experiences and interpretations of the paths of growing up of a wider range of young persons. Especially significant in this perspective are the origins of new concerns, constructs, experiences and behaviors. In this respect, the evidence adduced by Kett concerning home, family and mothers; moral education; sexuality; precocity; notions about work and career; institutions and environments; age grading; romanticism and religiosity speak powerfully as they relate to early transformations. Following these leads is the next step. The roles of different ages require new emphasis. So do the variations, conflicts and contradictions that all contributed to the social and cultural conclusions that we have inherited and with which we are not often satisfied: images and expectations, often impinging on class, gender, race.³⁴

Discussing youth during early industrialization, Katz notes that by our standards, the years between puberty and marriage were assuming a more familiar form. Whether they may be termed adolescence, he considers partly a question of definition. In contrast with Kett's stress on adolescence as a later concept whose principal characteristic is its definition as a stage of life whose "whole being" is "determined by a biological process of maturation", Katz argues,

the prolonged dependency of young people on their parents and their increased education in specialized age-segregated institutions formed the basis for recognizing adolescence. Adolescence...may be defined as a phase of institutionalized dependency that came to characterized the experience of youth in the nineteenth century. It proceeded, as do many changes, in an uneven fashion.³⁵

32. On language and concept of "adolescence", see Kett, *Rites*.

33. Kett, "Adolescence", "Growing Up", *Rites*.

34. See also Grubb and Lazerson, *Broken Promises*; Harvey Kantor and Tyack, eds, *Work, Youth, and Schooling: Historical Perspectives on Vocationalism in American Education* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982); *Youth: Transition to Adulthood*, Report of the Panel on Youth of the President's Science Advisory Committee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).

35. Katz et al., *Social Organization*, 284; Kett, *Rites*.

Arguing that adolescence — indeed, all of growing up — was **recognized** in reactions to dependency, produced by history and culture rather than biology, is a major statement. Yet, that is not enough. That only begins to alert us to the complexity of the transformations and to the variety and variability of the changing human experiences of growing up. The transformation early originated in a sweeping process of social rearrangements whose terms, dimensions and impacts stimulated responses that led to the remaking of growing up.



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