


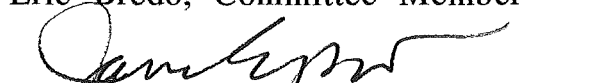
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Curry School of Education
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia

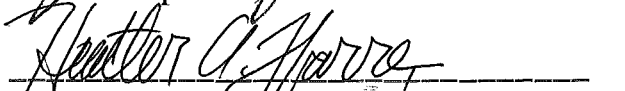
APPROVAL OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation, *A Muscular Christian in a Secular World*, has been approved by the Graduate Faculty of the Curry School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Jennings L. Wagoner Jr., Advisor


Eric Bredo, Committee Member


James Esposito, Committee Member


Heather Warren, Committee Member

Feb. 22, 1995 Date

A Muscular Christian in a Secular World

Mark Denis Desjardins
Charlottesville, Virginia

B.A., Bates College, 1988
M.Ed., University of Virginia, 1992

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University of Virginia

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testimony to Endicott Peabody and his school that the history of the school has been well preserved.

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ABSTRACT

The history of the private secondary boarding school in America is a fertile and expansive topic. A thorough examination of this subject would involve including such institutions as military academy's, country day schools, academies, church-affiliated, and non-sectarian boarding schools. In addition, each one of these categories can be further broken down into single sex and coeducational schools. For the purpose of this study, I have chosen to focus on the rise of the church-affiliated boarding school and in particular, Endicott Peabody's, Groton School.

The overarching goal of this study is to deepen our understanding of Peabody ideals of a properly educated student and the ways in which his ideas were challenged, shaped and redefined during his fifty-six year tenure as the school's headmaster. This study also considers the views of individuals who remained directly opposed to Peabody's beliefs. Finally, consideration is given to how major historical movements marking the period between the Civil War and the end of World War One impacted Groton's development.

Although Peabody made no significant contributions in regard to advancing educational theory, it can be argued that in some small measure he has touched the lives of many Americans. Groton School graduates, for instance, have assumed such positions as the presidency of the United States, foreign ambassadors, novelists, educators, and artists. Indeed, Peabody's dream was to build a

school that produced a cadre of morally and ethically sound politicians. This study, then, examines the extent to which Peabody's vision was realized.

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Introduction

A Muscular Christian in a Secular World: The Educational Ideals of Endicott Peabody and the Mission of Groton School

Do not think that Endicott Peabody had an easy time. There were difficult periods [and] boys, parents, and graduates were often critical. But this great schoolmaster stood like a rock for what he considered sound educational policy and discipline.

Lewis Perry, Headmaster, Phillips Exeter Academy (1945)

Ours is the complex story of the constant interplay of men and ideas, institutions and society.

James McLachlan (1970)

Animosity Towards Private Education

In a 1910 address at the Centennial anniversary of the Lawrenceville School, Woodrow Wilson, president of Princeton University acknowledged some of the advantages of a boarding school education:

A great school like this does not stop with what it does in the class room; it organizes athletics and sports of every kind, it organizes life morning to night; and it does so when at its best by an intimate association of teacher with the pupil, so that the impact of the mature mind upon the less mature will be constant and influential.¹

¹Woodrow Wilson, "Address at the Centennial of the Lawrenceville School, 1910" as quoted in James McLachlan, American Boarding Schools: A Historical Study, New York, 1970), 3. See also, Roland J. Mulford, History of the Lawrenceville School 1810-1935, (Princeton, NJ., 1935), 130-133. Endicott Peabody was also an honorary speaker at this celebration.

In spite of Wilson's acclamation, independent or private schools have not fared well in American educational history.² Educators and the public alike have viewed the establishment of private schools as a threat to public education. This was certainly the case in the antebellum era when Horace Mann argued that private institutions would drain the common-school of "some of the most intelligent men."³ Although Mann was a graduate of a New England academy, he considered the existence of private education as anathema to his vision of a common-school system for all children. His system was designed to insure that a basic level of education "was available and equal to all, and part of the birthright of every American child."⁴ Furthermore, he claimed his universal education plan was the "great

²Private schools here are defined as those institutions which have formal ties to a religiously affiliated association. Currently, most American students attending private schools are enrolled in Catholic schools. During the last two decades, a number of conservative Christian schools and evangelical schools have augmented the number of religiously based private schools. In contrast, independent schools are nonparochial, self-governed, non-profit enterprises. Independent schools educate less than two percent of the national high school population and represent a diversity of educational missions which "leads independent school educators to resort to definition by exclusion, simply because it is easier than trying to create a definition broad enough to include all these schools. . . ." Pearl R Kane, "Independent Schools in American Education," Teachers College Record, vol. 92 #3 (Spring, 1991) :397. For a more detailed account of independent schools see, Pearl R. Kane, Independent Schools, Independent Thinkers, (San Francisco, 1993). A good summary of the differences between public and private secondary schools can be found in James S. Coleman and Thomas Hoffer, Public and Private High School: The Impact of Communities, (New York, 1987).

³Horace Mann as quoted in Carl F. Kaestle, Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society 1780-1860, (New York, 1983), 116.

⁴Horace Mann, "Twelfth Annual Report (1848), as found in Lawrence Cremin, ed. The Republic and the School: Horace Mann on the Education of Free Men, (New York, 1957), 79-112.

equalizer of human conditions" that could potentially diminish class distinctions and alleviate most social problems.⁵

Mann's confidence in the ameliorative powers of the common-school system encouraged his followers to dismiss private schools as pernicious institutions whose existence challenged American democracy. Organizing an extensive and often vindictive campaign against the private schools, Mann preached that these institutions taught "aristocratic" and "upper class" values which encouraged the burgeoning demarcation between the well-educated social elite and the often illiterate working class. Historian Carl Kaestle has argued that Mann and his supporters were concerned that the "goals of a common-school system, moral training, discipline, patriotism, mutual understanding, formal equality, and cultural assimilation, could not be achieved if substantial numbers of children were in independent schools."⁶

The residual effect of Mann's polemic against private schools has been the charge that elitism is endemic to these institutions. Consequently, scholars with a democratic-progressive orientation have tended to downplay the contributions of boarding schools. According to a recent study of private schools, "One of the reasons there is so little research on the topic of elite schools is that the mere

⁵Ibid. There were two important components to Mann's common-school program: public support and public control. The former involved creating local and statewide taxation systems that could support an adequate number of elementary and secondary public schools. Mann maintained that each generation had a moral obligation to insure every child received an education. Second, public governance and control were necessary to insure that the schools reflected the ideals and values of a republican-Protestant-capitalist society.

⁶Kaestle, Pillars of the Republic, 118.

assertion that elite schools exist . . . goes against the American grain that democracy is supposed to begin at the schoolhouse door."⁷

Concurrent with the long-standing suspicion of "elite" schools has been the tendency of American educational historians to focus predominately on the rise of public education. This was certainly the case for the first generation of educational historians who, in effect, concentrated on events and conditions relating almost exclusively to public schools. Moreover, many of these scholars portrayed a hagiographic image of the common-school forefathers.

Historical Oversight of Boarding Schools

Michael Katz, an educational historian who has been labeled a "radical revisionist," objected to this tainted view and suggested that historians need to assume a less reverential attitude toward the accomplishments and contributions of American public schools.⁸ David Tyack concurred, and proclaimed that until recently, "the major purpose of educational history was to give teachers and administrators a greater sense of professional esprit and identity."⁹ These historians in part were rejecting the works of Ellwood P. Cubberley and other scholars who celebrated the founding of public schooling and yet overlooked or criticized the tradition and contributions of the private school.¹⁰ The "Cubberlean tradition"

⁷Peter W. Cookson, Jr. and Caroline Hodges Persell, Preparing for Power: America's Elite Boarding Schools, (New York, 1985), 15.

⁸Michael B. Katz, ed., Education in American History: Readings on the Social Issues, (New York, 1974), vii.

⁹David B. Tyack, One Best System, (Cambridge, Ma., 1974), 9.

¹⁰Ibid., 8.

was first soundly attacked by historian Bernard Bailyn who contended over three decades ago that:

Cubberley and the others told a dramatic story of how the delicate seeds of the idea and institutions of public education had lived precariously amid religious and other old-fashioned forms of education until nineteenth-century reformers, fighting bigotry and ignorance, cleared the way for their full flowering.¹¹

Although the history of the American secondary school understandably is largely the history of the rise of the public high school, a unidimensional story has left out important chapters. Traditional educational historians have often ignored the existence and contributions of other educational agencies: the Sunday School, Bible Schools, local town academies, and boarding schools. Furthermore, while the Sunday School and Bible School have recently received attention, the development and expansion of the secondary boarding school remains largely unexamined.¹²

There still are other reasons for this lack of attention. Boarding schools have historically served a relatively small clientele and have demanded a high tuition. Also, some historians and the general public have perhaps been prone to perceive boarding schools as unproductive, luxurious resorts for spoiled children.

¹¹Bernard Bailyn, Education in the Forming of American Society, (New York, 1960), 11-12.

¹²For a detailed description of the Sunday School see Anne Boylan's Sunday School, (New Haven, 1988). Virginia Lieson Brereton's Training God's Army, (Bloomington, Indiana, 1990), is an excellent portrayal of the origins and evolution of the Bible School. Despite its 1964 publication date, Theodore R.Sizer's Age of the Academies, (New York, 1964), is still one of the most widely quoted sources on the academy movement. As for the historical development of boarding schools, James McLachlan's American Boarding Schools, is to date the only in-depth historical analysis of these institutions.

To be sure, boarding schools have catered to a small percentage of the population. At the same time however, the reasons for this have not always been fully understood. To begin with, elevated tuition rates have been primarily responsible for the limited access of the general population into boarding schools. Those who could afford private education tended to be of privileged financial status. The fact that these schools served a wealthier and more socially exclusive clientele than either the academies or the public schools has led some critics to claim that boarding schools routinely set high tuition prices in order to discourage or prevent the lower classes from attending. In other words, an intentional, socially-oriented plot on the part of boarding schools to deny certain individuals admission into their community has been assumed.

While a "class" division cannot be denied, there is more to the matter than class conspiracy. Tuition rates at boarding schools have to be high because they cover room and board, as well what is considered to be "quality education." Moreover, low student-teacher ratios inflate costs. Headmasters have limited student enrollment to "preserve the successful execution of the system and instruction of the school."¹³

Some historians and social critics have criticized boarding schools by asserting that the socially exclusive practices of these institutions precluded them from improving American society. Early educational historians assumed that boarding schools were private

¹³Joseph G. Cogswell, Outline of the system of education at the Round Hill School with a list of the present instructors and of the pupils from its commencement until this time June-1831, (Boston, 1831), 16.

clubs and bastions of snobbery which were specifically designed to inculcate privileged youth with aristocratic values and manners. More recent historians also have often presented an exaggerated image of the exclusivity of New England boarding schools.¹⁴

Although boarding schools have traditionally been patronized by a privileged elite, this fact does not justify historical oversight or misrepresentation. From an educational perspective, it may be more productive to examine carefully the particular challenges "social exclusivity" presented for the early school founders and headmasters. For example, how were the schoolmasters to inspire the children of inherited wealth? Students born to wealth were often indolent and rebellious because they assumed they could achieve financial success, not by dint of hard work, but through inheritance.

The schoolmasters' promotion of Puritan values such as parsimony, self-discipline, and reverence were often in direct conflict with the self-indulging ideals that parents had instilled in their sons. Moreover, the teachers in boarding schools have rarely been members of the "elite" of American society. As James McLachlan has observed:

With one or two exceptions, most boarding school headmasters were not rich Americans, but middle-income intellectuals, moralists, or clergymen, who would have blanched at the sight of an upper-class value, and

¹⁴Although there are certain characteristics that define each boarding school, as a whole these institutions have become more similar to one another over time. However, by assuming the presentist viewpoint that all boarding schools are alike, educational historians and sociologists have often ignored the variegated historical origins of these schools.

who were the heirs of educational traditions that transcended particular social classes.¹⁵

If boarding school students displayed upper-class "manners," it was often the case that "most boys at these schools had probably learned them before leaving home."¹⁶ Boarding school educators had a difficult time convincing students that they should try to live less conspicuously consumptive lifestyles. As McLachlan contends, "For most of their history, these schools have consciously educated their students to avoid, abjure, and despise most of what are traditionally thought to be aristocratic or upper class values and styles of life."¹⁷ He continues by noting that:

[Boarding schools] have worked instead to prevent the development of aristocratic attitudes. They have tried to inculcate their students with what are usually thought to be classically middle-class values: self-restraint, rigid self-control, severe frugality in personal style, and the ability to postpone immediate gratification for larger future ends.¹⁸

It is not difficult to understand why the perception of the boarding school as an aristocratic entity exists. A review of the literature demonstrates that twentieth century sociologists have helped to perpetuate the misconception of boarding school exclusivity. For example, sociologist Steven Levine has argued that boarding school founders set up their institutions as a "means of preserving their social position in the face of threats from groups encroaching upon them for above and below," a charge that is not

¹⁵McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 11.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., 11.

without foundation.¹⁹ Furthermore, In Philadelphia Gentlemen, E. Digby Baltzell asserted that the original intent of the boarding schools and their founders was to create a single national aristocratic class.²⁰ The dominant sociological view, then, has been that the primary aim of the boarding school was to bring together the "children of established families and those of newly risen industrialists and help mold them into a single social group by providing a common culture and similar set of experiences."²¹ This contention has also been supported by C. Wright Mills who argued that boarding schools were created in order to establish a single national upper-class. In The Power Elite, Mills asserted that boarding schools "were the most important agency for transmitting the traditions of the upper social classes and regulating the admission of new wealth and talent."²²

This commonly supported interpretation has fostered limited tolerance for the dissonant voice of historian James McLachlan, who as noted, has stressed that boarding school educators did not consciously inculcate students with upper-class values. Although the

¹⁹Steven Levine, "The Rise of American Boarding Schools and the Development of a National Upper Class." Social Problems, vol. 28 #1 (October, 1980) : 72.

²⁰It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a lengthy analysis of Baltzell's arguments. Individuals interested in exploring his thesis can refer to the chapter, "Education of the Elite" in E. Digby Baltzell, Philadelphia Gentlemen: The Making of a National Upper Class, (Glencoe, Illinois, 1958).

²¹Levine, "The Rise of American Boarding Schools, and the Development of a National Upper Class," 64.

²²C. Wright Mill, The Power Elite, (New York, 1959), 11. Also adding to the literature that debunked the aims and aspirations of the boarding school founders are William Dornhoff, Who Rules America, (Englewood Cliff, N.J.) and Dixon Wecter, The Saga of American Society: A Record of Social Aspiration 1607-1937, (New York, 1937).

assertions of Levine and Baltzell and Mills contain elements of veracity, their conclusions, as McLachlan has suggested, are only a partial analysis of the complex history of boarding schools. It is among the purposes of this study, then, to shed new light on the history of the American boarding school.

More specifically, this dissertation is a study of Groton School and its founder, Endicott Peabody. The primary focus of the study is an examination of Peabody's educational ideals, including his original intent in founding Groton and the ways in which challenges to his intended mission for the school affected its direction during Peabody's fifty-six year tenure as headmaster. The story will consider the views of individuals who opposed Peabody's educational vision and analyze the ways in which their beliefs were different from (and in some instances modified) those held by Peabody. The relationship between the development of the school and the major historical movements that marked the period between the Civil War era and the end of the First World War will also be given careful consideration.

It is the intention of the author to differentiate this study from the several previous institutional histories of both Groton and other Episcopal Church affiliated boarding schools in several ways. To date, either loyal alumni or faculty have written most studies of independent schools. There is at present no institutional history of Groton School beyond works commissioned by the Board of Trustees and privately printed.²³ Peabody's major biographer, Frank D.

²³See William Amory Gardner, Groton Myths and Memories, (Concord, N.H., 1928); Frank Ashburn, Fifty Years On: A Short History of Groton School,

Ashburn, wrote an affectionate portrait of his mentor while his subject was still alive. However, a more detailed and scholarly analysis of this unique man's life deserves and will receive attention in this dissertation.

In general, the "in-house" histories, including Groton's, portray developments and important individuals associated with the school in only a favorable fashion and gave little or no attention to the larger historical context. Moreover, these histories tended to focus exclusively on the headmasters and other influential faculty members. This study will not be merely an institutional history of the Groton School, nor will it be a complete biography of Endicott Peabody. At the conclusion of this study, however, a great deal will have been learned both about the school and the man. Finally, the interaction among segments of the Groton community--students, faculty, alumni, trustee members, parents and other school supporters and detractors--will be a concern in this study.

Both the Groton School and Endicott Peabody deserve renewed attention. It can be argued that both Peabody and Groton have in at least some measure touched the life of every American. Groton graduates have influenced the quality of our lives from such positions as the presidency of the United States to novelists, magazine editors, politicians, foreign ambassadors, and legions of bankers, doctors, educators, and lawyers.²⁴ Moreover, Peabody's

(Groton, MA., 1935); Views From the Circle: Seventy-Five Years of Groton School, (Groton, MA., 1960) and Acosta Nichols, Forty Years More: A History of Groton School 1934-1974, (Groton, MA, 1976),

²⁴In the field of literature, Oliver LaFarge's novel Laughing Boy, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1930. Louis Auchincloss wrote The Rector of Justin, Pursuit of the Prodigal, The House of Five Talents, Portrait in Brownstone, and several

concern for developing an educational community modeled on the principles of a Christian family influenced the founding and development of several other boarding schools.

Describing the origin and evolution of J. P. Morgan's American financial empire founded in 1838 by a distant relative of Endicott Peabody's, Ron Chernow remarked: "Perhaps no other institution has been so encrusted with legend, so ripe with mystery, or exposed to such bitter polemic."²⁵ In my view, the same can be said regarding the history of Groton School. Long-time Groton master William Amory Gardner captured the essence of this quandary when he wrote:

Groton School is perfectly incomprehensible to those who have not belonged to it: only partly comprehensible to those who have belonged or still belong. Hence it is peculiarly subject to unfair criticism. The praise and

other novels. Ellery Sedgwick was editor of Leslie's Magazine, McClure's and the Atlantic Monthly. In the arena of public service, Groton graduates have made significant contributions. George Rublee served as Counsel to the American Embassy in Mexico and was the first Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission. Frank L. Polk was Counselor for the Department of State and later Undersecretary of State. Frederick Hale was a two term Senator from Maine. Dean Acheson served as Undersecretary of the Treasury and eventually was appointed as Franklin Roosevelt's Secretary of State. William Averell Harriman was Assistant Secretary of State, and then later served as Ambassador to Morocco and Russia. McGeorge Bundy was Special Assistant for National Security Affairs in both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Franklin D. Roosevelt served as president of the United States from 1933-1945. Many graduates also had long established careers in education. Ashbel G. Gulliver was Dean of the Yale Law School for six years. Frank Ashburn, Arthur Milliken, Roger B. Merriman, Jr., John Chandler, and Shaun Kelly were all headmasters of various independent schools. While the majority of graduates pursued business careers, upon the Rector's retirement in 1940, eighty-eighty alumni were lawyers and forty had become doctors. For a more detailed listing of the careers of Groton graduates, see Frank Ashburn, Peabody of Groton: A Portrait, (Cambridge, Ma, 1967) 317-330.

²⁵Ron Chernow, The House of Morgan: An American Dynasty and the Rise of Modern Finance, (New York, 1990), xi.

blame bestowed on it by the world are often ludicrously undeserved. It is in almost equal measure over- praised and under-praised, over-blamed and under-blamed.²⁶

Historian August Heckscher claims educational institutions ". . . tend to be changelings: they outgrow their original aims and live on to serve new purposes."²⁷ This study, then, is an effort to deepen our understanding of the strains of institution building and change at one specific institution. TheodoreSizer argues that a "school's history makes a lens through which past lives can be seen."²⁸ Moreover, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis note that "books about education are always about much more than that."²⁹ In this regard, by examining the evolution of the Groton School through the eyes of its founder and constituents, this study promises to add an important dimension to our understanding of American boarding schools, of religious education, of Peabody's influential ideas regarding the development of Christian gentlemen, and of late nineteenth century and early twentieth century American life.

This dissertation will begin by examining the history of the church affiliated boarding school in America. In particular, it will explore how Peabody's founding of the Groton School was a natural evolution of an idea which began in the early national period.

²⁶William Amory Gardner, Groton Myths and Memories, (Groton, MA., 1928), v-vi.

²⁷August Heckscher, St. Paul's: The Life of a New England School, (New York, 1980), 360.

²⁸Theodore R.Sizer, "Forward," in Susan McIntosh Lloyd, The Putney School: A Progressive Experiment, (New Haven, 1987), xi.

²⁹Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life, (New York, 1976), vii.

Moreover, an analysis of Peabody's ideas and vision of what a proper education should be will be considered. The remainder of this study will focus on how Peabody's original mission of educating Christian gentlemen was challenged and redefined by the internal and external constituents of the schools. In addition, attention will be given to the influence on the school of the major movements in America between the postbellum era and the beginning of World War I.

While the overarching goal of this dissertation is to deepen our understanding of the American boarding school tradition, of Peabody's ideal of a properly educated student and the way in which his ideas were challenged, shaped and redefined, it is only a partial history of Peabody's fifty-six year tenure at Groton School. To a large degree, Peabody's personal involvement in major cultural, intellectual, and social movements was reduced significantly after the end of World War I. To begin with, Peabody, who at this time was sixty-two, felt that he had less energy and time to be dedicated to issues other than the immediate concerns of Groton School. This belief was, in fact, revealed in his personal correspondence. In the nascent stages of Groton, for instance, Peabody both wrote to and received letters from a variety of individuals, including prominent social reformers, university educators, politicians, and high ranking members of the Episcopalian hierarchy. To a certain extent during the last twenty-five years of his administration, his correspondence was practically limited to Groton constituents. Moreover, toward the later part of his administration Peabody felt a strong obligation to insure that his predecessor would never have to worry about the

financial condition of Groton. Therefore, unlike the early years, Peabody spent a good deal of time raising money for the endowment, or what fellow headmasters called "The Almighty Wall."

More than five decades ago a representative from the Macmillan Publishing Company wrote to Peabody:

. . . [T]he Macmillan Company is still very keenly interested in anything that you might have to offer us. We are convinced that there are few men in America who can look back upon so rich a life of service as yours, or one who can speak with more authority in the field of education and in the preparation of youth for civic and social responsibility. We believe that there is a large audience waiting to hear what you have to say.³⁰

Peabody, however, never had the patience or desire to put his story into words. Nonetheless, fifty years have passed since Peabody's death and indeed, it is time for the story of his life and school, warts and all, to be told.

³⁰R.L. De Wilton to Endicott Peabody, June 8, 1942, Peabody MSS.

Section One

The Beginnings of the American Boarding School

Before analyzing the specific educational philosophy and subsequent rise and evolution of Groton School, part one of this dissertation focuses specifically on uncovering the boarding school tradition in the United States. In this regard, Chapter Two examines when and why the first American boarding schools were founded. Moreover, it also explains the extent to which a common historical lineage developed between these first schools and their founders.

Chapter Three continues the story of the rise of American boarding schools from the perspective of Groton School founder and headmaster, Endicott Peabody. Peabody's original intentions for founding an Episcopal boarding school for young men are examined, as is the extent to which his childhood and early adult experiences influenced his decision to become a headmaster. Consideration is also given to the development of the earlier boarding schools and the extent of their influence on Peabody's decision to establish Groton.

Chapter Four is an attempt to place the founding of Groton School in the historical context of the time. Factors other than Peabody's personal motivations for founding Groton [i.e. cultural, social intellectual, and political phenomena] are given consideration. For example, why were parents, despite Peabody's lack of significant educational experience, typically enthusiastic about sending their sons to Groton?

Exploring each of these issues in greater detail reveals that, for the most part, each private secondary boarding school had its own distinctive history, purpose, and character. Yet at the same time, the ensuing analysis also provides insight into how Peabody benefited greatly from the previous establishment of an indigenous American boarding school tradition.

Chapter One

The American Boarding School in Historical Perspective: Laying the Foundation for Groton School

A major aim of the American boarding school has been to preserve the innocence of childhood into pure and responsible maturity. . . . The gentlemanly ideal to which it has attempted to mold its students has been a conservative one.
James McLachlan (1970)

The history of the American boarding school is a fertile and expansive topic. Each school has its own distinctive history, purpose, and character, as well as general features shared by schools of a similar character. In order to understand the historical context of these institutions, then, it is essential to examine the common lineage that linked American boarding schools with one another, and yet distinguished them from their European ancestry. Through this analysis, the reader will gain understanding of the boarding school as an early nineteenth century American phenomenon rather than as an attempt to reproduce an aspect of the European educational tradition.

Despite an original attachment to a European model, the history of Round Hill School, Flushing Institute, and St. Paul's School demonstrates the establishment of a unique American boarding school tradition. Elements of this tradition transcend the particular vision and philosophy of the founders and headmasters of each respective institution.

The Anthologists

The inspiration for the development of the American boarding school originated among a small group of New England intellectuals, the so-called Anthologists, who were dedicated to promoting the values and virtues of a gentlemanly education.¹ The group's members included such illustrious figures as John Quincy Adams, Daniel Webster, and John Thorton Kirkland. Two distinguished scholars associated with the Anthologists, Joseph Green Cogswell and George Bancroft, brought the American boarding school ideal to fruition. Both men were educated at Phillips Exeter Academy and later at Harvard. Cogswell matriculated at Harvard when he was sixteen, studied law for two years, then later returned to Harvard as a Latin tutor until he resigned in 1813 because of poor health. Bancroft entered Harvard, barely an adolescent at age thirteen. He graduated four years later and spent the next year in Harvard divinity school. In 1817 Bancroft and Cogswell joined their former Harvard classmates, George Ticknor and Edward Everett, to study in Göttingen University.

These four individuals were struck by the inferior condition of both secondary and higher education in America. The United States,

¹James McLachlan, American Boarding Schools: A Historical Study, (New York, 1970), 27. The Anthologists' name was derived from a magazine entitled The Monthly Anthology, or Magazine of Polite Literature shortly after William Emerson, minister of a Boston church, accepted the position as its editor in 1803. Moreover, its fourteen original members comprised some of the most cultured gentlemen--all of the Federalist persuasion--in Boston. These Bostonians had met routinely to discuss the contents of their journal and the nature of American society. See McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 27-30 and Mark A. DeWolfe Howe, ed., Journal of the Proceedings of the Society Which Conducts The Monthly Anthology and Boston Review, (Boston, 1910).

they believed, had enough competent lawyers and ministers, but desperately lacked scholars devoted to rigorous study.² At the time these men attended Harvard, the college's admissions standards were loose and informal. In their opinion, the relaxed entrance policies and requirements of Harvard perpetuated a poor academic environment.³ In fact, it was their particular disillusionment with the state of education at Harvard that inspired them to travel abroad and study in Germany.⁴

While in Europe, Cogswell became acquainted with the German educational systems and those of France, Switzerland, and England as well. His visits to a variety of European educational institutions introduced him to the diversity and quality of schools in western Europe. One of the most important lessons he learned was how far Americans were from sponsoring internationally competitive institutions of secondary and higher education. He was so distraught that he wrote two scathing essays in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine. In these articles, Cogswell was acrimonious towards both American culture and its system of education. He claimed that academies, as a whole, including the one from which he had graduated, were "totally deficient; there is not one, from Maine to Georgia which has yet sent forth a single first rate scholar; no, not one since the settlement of the country, equal even to the most

²Van Wyck Brooks, The Flowering of New England 1815-1865, (Boston, 1936), 77.

³David B. Tyack, George Ticknor and the Boston Brahmins, (Cambridge, MA., 1967), 92.

⁴Ibid., 92.

ordinary of the thirty or forty, which come out every year from Schule Fforta and Meissen."⁵

Of all the educational institutions on the European continent that Cogswell visited, he was most impressed with a boarding school run by Phillip Emanuel von Fellenberg at Hofwyl near Berne, Switzerland.⁶ Fellenberg, a former disciple of Johann Pestalozzi at Yverdun, Switzerland was considered a leading nineteenth century educational theorist and practitioner. Both Pestalozzi and Fellenberg embraced a romantic notion of childhood. They had successfully applied the principles of Locke's philosophy of the malleability of the child's mind into the daily routines of their respective schools. Cogswell was quite impressed with the importance that these educators placed upon the gradual development of intellectual and physical aspects of a young child's mind and body.⁷ Fellenberg's philosophy of protecting children from the nefarious influences of a corrupt world was especially appealing to Cogswell. Bancroft and Cogswell returned home hoping they could convince Harvard's President John Kirkland to improve their alma mater's dedication to rigorous scholarship.⁸

⁵Joseph G. Cogswell, "Means of Learning and the State of Learning in the United States of America," Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, IV (1818-1819), 547. Cogswell's other article was entitled "On the State of Learning in the United States of America," Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, IV (1818-1819), 641-649.

⁶David Hein, "The High Church Origins of the American Boarding School," Journal of Ecclesiastical History, October 1991, vol. 42 no. 4, 577.

⁷McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 60.

⁸Tyack, George Ticknor and the Boston Brahmins, 84.

At first, their quest for academic improvement seemed promising when President Kirkland hired both men as faculty members. Bancroft, who was awarded a Master of Arts and a Doctor of Philosophy at Gottingen, became a Latin and Greek tutor. Cogswell accepted a dual appointment as librarian and Professor of Mineralogy and Geology. The two quickly concluded that the education they had received in Germany was far superior to that of their Harvard colleagues.

The only way Americans could become the intellectual equals of the Europeans, Cogswell and Bancroft believed, was by improving the quality of education offered at secondary schools and colleges. This could only be accomplished, they insisted, if the administrators of institutions such as Harvard demanded stiffer admissions requirements and significantly improved the quality of their instructors. After a brief tenure at Harvard, both men became frustrated with the general lack of enthusiasm among the faculty and administration for implementing revolutionary, academic reforms. Thus, George Bancroft wrote his brother-in-law, Samuel A. Eliot, "I have found [Harvard] College a sickening and wearisome place."⁹

Cogswell and Bancroft had returned from their European sojourn stimulated by the idea of developing a school patterned after Fellenberg's model. While their appointments to the Harvard faculty delayed the immediate implementation of this idea, both men

⁹ George Ticknor to Samuel A. Eliot in the Spring of 1823, as cited in Mark A. Dewolfe Howe, ed., The Life and Letters of George Bancroft Vol. I, (New York, 1908), 163.

continued to discuss the future possibility of founding a boarding school. Cogswell, in particular, had high enthusiasm for this project. As the Harvard librarian, he was anxious about being "under the control of others" in a college in which the methods of instruction and curriculum seemed antiquated compared to what he and Bancroft had experienced at Gottingen.¹⁰

Round Hill School

Bancroft's and Cogswell's mounting frustration over failed reform efforts at Harvard motivated them to apply what they had learned in Germany and at Hofwyl to create the Round Hill School in 1823. It was readily apparent to their closest friends that the primary reason these scholars founded Round Hill stemmed from their "discontent at their situation in Cambridge."¹¹ Eight years after Round Hill opened, Cogswell recalled the concerns and convictions that encouraged him to pour his energy into founding the boarding school:

It owed its origin to a belief in the mind of its present director and his former associate, that a better provision, than then existed, might be made of a systematic and through course of early instruction and mental and moral discipline combined with means for promoting health and vigor of constitution.¹²

American education, Cogswell and Bancroft held, would benefit greatly from the type of intellectual and moral training that a

¹⁰ Howe, Life and Letters of George Bancroft, vol. I., 103; Tyack, George Ticknor and the Boston Brahmins, 100.

¹¹ George Ticknor to Samuel A. Eliot, February, 1823, as cited in Howe, Life and Letters of George Ticknor Vol. I, 167.

¹² Cogswell, Outline of a system of education at the Round Hill School, 3.

"family-like" boarding school offered.¹³ Secondary schools, they maintained, needed to provide students with an intellectually stimulating environment in order for reform in higher education to take root. It was from schools such as Round Hill that Cogswell and Bancroft believed the new generation of properly educated men would emerge. In fact, some members of the Harvard Corporation maintained that the successful future of their own institution hinged upon the establishment of academically oriented schools such as Round Hill. The Corporation was quite impressed with the proposal of Cogswell and Bancroft and agreed to lend them \$8,000 of the \$12,000 needed to purchase the land and buildings for the school.¹⁴

Despite the intriguing and unique educational opportunities Round Hill afforded secondary students, Harvard's interest in establishing Round Hill was in part a calculated business decision. In 1823, the Massachusetts legislature denied Harvard the \$10,000 that the state had granted annually for the last ten years. This sum of money had been used by Harvard to help defray the high tuition costs of the poorer students. Within four years of the legislature's enactment, the number of undergraduates had been reduced from

¹³ The term "family like" is meant to distinguish Round Hill School from other boarding schools which existed at this time. Unlike Round Hill, pre-existing boarding schools were more like boarding houses; run by one or two individuals and housing between five and twenty students. Round Hill was designed to educate several hundred students in an atmosphere similar to the early nineteenth century American colleges.

¹⁴ McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 82. McLachlan searched the Harvard College Papers and discovered that this was the only instance in which Harvard loaned money to a secondary school. The agreement between Harvard and the school founders was apparently made in January 1824. His source of this information is: Bancroft to John Davis, February 4, 1824; Cogswell to John Davis, 12 July, 1824, Harvard College Papers.

three hundred to two hundred.¹⁵ Harvard's unprecedented decision to lend money to a fledgling secondary school was actually an investment in the college's future and somewhat remarkable in light of the college's reduced income. Between 1823 and 1831, Round Hill amply repaid Harvard by bolstering the college's declining enrollment with fifty well-prepared (and one assumes, economically viable) students.¹⁶

With respect to its arduous daily schedule and well-structured weekly routine, no other American school had previously attempted what Cogswell and Bancroft initiated at Round Hill.¹⁷ One educational historian has noted that unlike the academies or other private schools of the Jacksonian era, Round Hill's educational philosophy addressed the "harmonious development of the physical, intellectual, and moral faculties by means of a rigorous, detailed schedule covering a liberal curriculum of studies both classical and modern, as well as exercise and play."¹⁸ Cogswell and Bancroft had designed Round Hill as a school that functioned according to the concepts and values of an extended family, as at Fellenberg's Hofwyl. Cogswell wrote of Fellenberg, "Nothing could resemble more a tender and solicitous parent, surrounded by a family of obedient and

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ronald Story, "Harvard Students, the Boston Elite, and the New England Preparatory System, 1800-1876," in B. Edward McClellan and William J. Reese, eds., The Social History of American Education, (Chicago, 1988), 84.

¹⁷McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 83.

¹⁸Otto F. Kraushaar, American Non-Public Schools: Patterns of Diversity, (Baltimore, 1972), 63.

affectionate children."¹⁹ At Round Hill as at Hofwyl, adults assumed an in loco parentis role; they advised, coached, and nurtured students through a demanding program created to deepen each student's moral and intellectual attributes.²⁰ A school prospectus was sent to potential families that might have an interest in sending their sons to the boarding school. It summarized the philosophy of Round Hill accordingly:

If we could attempt to form the characters as well as to cultivate the minds of the young, we must be able to control all their occupations. For this reason we intend to have them under the same roof with ourselves, and we become responsible for their manners, habits and morals, no less than for their profession in useful knowledge.²¹

Cogswell and Bancroft noted further: "constant supervision, salutary restraint, competent guidance and instruction, and affectionate intercourse are held out as the means which could be used for counteracting evil propensities preventing aberrations from duty, extending to industry and securing improvement."²²

The Fellenbergian influence on both men was profound. This influence is most clearly revealed in a letter that Bancroft wrote his

¹⁹Joseph Cogswell as quoted in Augustus Heckscher, St. Paul's School: The Life of A New England School, (New York, 1980), 3.

²⁰ Hein, "The High Church Origins of the American Boarding School," Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 578.

²¹ Joseph G. Cogswell and George Bancroft, Prospectus for a School to be Established at Round Hill, Northampton, Massachusetts, (Cambridge, MA., 1823), 4.

²²Ibid., 10.

friend Samuel A. Eliot announcing his plans to leave Harvard and join Cogswell at Round Hill:

Shall I tell you a plan of mine? . . . I have consulted the book, which treats of education. I have reflected on the means and ends of education. Now I am going to turn Schoolmaster. . . . We intend going into the country, and we shall choose a pleasant site, where nature in her loveliness may ring calmness and inspire purity. We will live retired from the clamors of scandal and the disputes of their irresolute.²³

Like Fellenberg, Cogswell and Bancroft believed the only way to instill a proper relationship between the students and masters was to organize the school's activities so that students were constantly busy and exposed to adult role models. The comments from the Bancroft letters seem to indicate that the first few weeks of Round Hill were a glorious success. Bancroft wrote to his good friend, Edward Everett:

We are going on very smoothly and happily. . . . At Northampton we are left entirely to ourselves; and there is some comfort in shaping one's conduct by one's own inclinations and views without being obliged to bend to the ignorance of others. . . . Our little family is fast forming habits of obedience and order; and as confinement and retirement are no evils to a scholar, there is nothing which is unpleasant in our situation.²⁴

To outsiders, the world of Round Hill was a bizarre and curious place. Two years after its opening, a newsman from the United

²³ George Bancroft to Samuel A. Eliot, December 3, 1822, as cited in Howe, Life and Letters of George Bancroft, vol. I, 61-62.

²⁴ George Bancroft to Edward Everett November 5, 1823, as cited in Ibid., 170.

States Literary Gazette visited the school for several days. His assignment was to talk with students and faculty and write an article informing the general public on what he observed at Round Hill.²⁵ His portrayal of the typical Round Hill pupil's school day is quite revealing in terms of the school's strenuous daily routine.

They rise in the winter at six; and, after the devotional exercises of the morning are busy with teaching and study till eight, at which time all breakfast. They then engage in vigorous exercise till nine, when the season for intellectual labor again commences, and continues till noon. Two hours are allowed for exercise, dining, and rest, when at two, studies are resumed and continued till four. An hour and a half is then employed in sports and exercise suited to the season. The evening meal is over by six, when some time is passed in attending to declamations, and then about an hour and a half is given to study and exercises of devotion. The instructors and pupils spend a few moments around the fire, and the boys are sent to bed at half past eight.²⁶

In the view of the general public, Round Hill remained an intriguing place that most people believed was modeled after the English public schools. Fortunately for Round Hill students, neither Cogswell nor Bancroft was overly impressed with England's public schools. Unlike the warm and cozy atmosphere of Fellenberg's schools, students within the infamous British system were subjected to harsh floggings, degrading faggings, and other unpleasant

²⁵Ibid., 174.

²⁶ The United States Literary Gazette, February 15, 1825 as quoted in Howe, Life and Letters of George Bancroft, vol. I, 174. For a more detailed description of the daily routine at Round Hill, see Joseph G. Cogswell and George Bancroft, Prospectus of a School to be Established at Round Hill, Northampton, Massachusetts and John Spencer Bassett, "The Round Hill School," Proceedings of American Antiquarian Society, (1917), 18-62.

brutalities. Although Cogswell wanted to convey to students that discipline was important, he insisted that the message be enforced through gentle persuasion rather than by repeated beatings. "[Practically] no corporal punishment was practiced in the school," one graduate recalled, and if a student violated any school rules, "deprivation of meals and retention in the school-room were the lighter penalties."²⁷ Indeed, unlike his British counterparts, Cogswell used corporal punishment sparingly and resorted to it "only for offenses of a dangerous tendency believing that the frequent application of it is not likely to be very improving of the character of a pupil, or the temper of the instructor."²⁸

In most instances involving misguided students, Cogswell simply called a student into his study and slightly scolded him. The individual case of pupil George Shattuck provides a typical example of how Cogswell conducted the disciplinary aspect of his job. It seems young Shattuck was quite curious about the transactions in the local town tavern. A short while after Shattuck had ventured into the tavern, Cogswell happened to visit the establishment. Upon seeing the student, Cogswell instructed him to visit his private study. Shattuck, fearful of a hard spanking, was greatly relieved when

²⁷George E. Ellis, "Recollections of Round Hill School," Educational Review, April 1891, vol. 1 no. 4, 339.

²⁸ Cogswell, Outline of A system of education to be founded at the Round Hill School, 5. In this outline Cogswell went into considerable detail about his opposition to beating and punishing students. He wanted his faculty to develop a positive relationship with the students. He believed the administering of corporal punishment was anathema to developing a cohesive relationship between students and parents.

Cogswell gently scolded him and accepted upon his word that he would not stray into the tavern again.²⁹

It was precisely this type of adult-student interaction as well as a highly structured curriculum of "ancient classics [as] the very center of the great system of luminaries" which convinced fathers such as Robert Livingston of New York to send their sons to Round Hill.³⁰ Round Hill's curriculum consisted of courses in English language (grammar, speaking and writing), French, Spanish, German, Greek, Latin, and a smattering of mathematics, ancient history, geography, natural philosophy and book-keeping.³¹ Cogswell wrote a personal grading report for each student and sent it to the anxiously awaiting parents. Of Livingston's son Eugene, Cogswell wrote: "I am fully persuaded that the same faithful prosecution of his studies will give him a highly cultivated mind and a familiar acquaintance with the various subjects of inquiry, which every gentleman should understand."³²

Unlike Cogswell, Bancroft soon grew tired of the arduous daily routine of a schoolmaster. Bancroft's poor vision and eccentric behavior made him vulnerable to the numerous and sometimes cruel

²⁹Heckscher, St. Paul's, 3-4. Heckscher discovered the details of this story while reading the letters of George Shattuck that were written to his father. Heckscher contended that these letters were an invaluable source of information that reveal major differences between the Round Hill School and the English Public schools. He comments on the story described in the text by noting that it "speaks volumes--especially when set against the brutalities and floggings visited upon most [English public school] students at this time."

³⁰ Carl F. Kaestle, Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860, (New York, 1983), 54.

³¹Cogswell, Outline of a System of Education, 15.

³² Joseph Cogswell to Robert L. Livingston, March 29, 1828, as cited in Kaestle, Pillars of the Republic, 54.

pranks of the students.³³ George E. Ellis, a former pupil at Round Hill, wrote of Bancroft: "He was absent-minded, dreamy and often in abstracted moods as well as very nearsighted. . . . The boys, who called him with familiarity 'the Critter,' were fond of playing tricks upon him, which they would do with impunity, owing to his shortness of vision."³⁴

At the outset, Cogswell and Bancroft had to struggle to convince parents that their highly priced secondary education was a worthwhile investment. However, the fact that Round Hill was able to open its doors and adhere to principles of a "well-rounded" educational philosophy impressed a variety of national figures. Shortly after its opening, Thomas Jefferson endorsed the work of the school by writing that it "will certainly provide a great blessing to the individuals who can obtain access to it."³⁵ Inevitably, the only people in the Jacksonian era who could afford the exorbitant tuition of Round Hill were families of the "artificial" aristocracy."³⁶ Round

³³ Howe, Life and Letters of George Bancroft, 177.

³⁴George Ellis, "Recollections of Round Hill School," Educational Review, 341.

³⁵ Thomas Jefferson as quoted in John Spencer Bassett, "The Round Hill School," American Antiquarian Society Proceedings, XXVII, (1917), 32, 48; cf. McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 82.

³⁶McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 90. McLachlan argued that members of the Round Hill alumni were "almost a living register of John Quincy Adams artificial aristocracy." Ibid., 90. In addition, a perusal of the appendix of Cogswell's Outline of a System of Education reveals a list of the states from which Round Hill students and graduates came. Massachusetts had the highest number of graduates (89); these included Thomas C. Amory, Henry W. Bellows, and Theodore Sedgwick. New York had the next largest number of graduates (46) followed by South Carolina (34) and Maryland (32). Students also came from a variety of other states including Maine, New Hampshire, Virginia, and North Carolina.

Hill provided an excellent education to those members of the "upper-class" who could afford it.

In 1823, for example, Cogswell and Bancroft charged an annual tuition rate of three hundred dollars; by contrast, Harvard College at that time cost one-hundred-and-seventy-six dollars.³⁷ Most families, of course, were unable to afford a secondary school education that cost almost twice as much as the venerated Harvard College. Consequently, only the wealthiest families could have been able fiscally to send their sons to boarding school for two to four years, and still have enough money to pay for an additional four years of college. Yet, maintaining a small but affluent clientele was a most practical fiscal matter for the schools: without filling their dormitories with the sons of the patrician class, boarding schools such as Round Hill could not have kept their doors open.

Although Round Hill was academically successful, there were several factors that forced the closing of the school in 1834. First, Bancroft had only planned to stay at Round Hill for a few years. After his marriage in 1827 to Sarah Dwight, daughter of a wealthy Springfield business owner, Bancroft seemed less than enthusiastic about his life as a schoolmaster.³⁸ "I suppose that Mr. Bancroft, though meaning in all things to be kind and faithful, was, by temperament and lack of sympathy with the feeling and ways of young boys, disqualified from winning their regard and from being helpful and stimulating to them," one graduate recalled of Bancroft's

³⁷Ronald Story, "Harvard Students, the Boston Elite, and the New England Preparatory System, 1800-1876," in B. Edward McClellan and William J. Reese, eds. The Social History of American Education, (Chicago, 1988), 74.

³⁸McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 99.

departure.³⁹ Ultimately, Bancroft severed his ties with the institution in 1831 and eventually became a preeminent United States historian and a high ranking Democratic party official.

Historian James McLachlan concluded that Bancroft's withdrawal exacerbated the ongoing financial difficulties of operating an expensive boarding school. While Cogswell remained the "emotional center of the school," he was a poor businessman. In spite of the financial assistance of several prominent Americans, Round Hill sunk deeper and deeper into debt.⁴⁰ Eventually Cogswell grew tired of constantly trying to raise funds for the school, and after an unsuccessful effort to sell the school to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in 1834, Cogswell decided to shut the doors of Round Hill forever. "I have a vague idea that [Round Hill's failure]," claimed graduate George E. Ellis, "resulted [from] a burdensome debt and mortgage, lack of internal discipline, and a loss of harmony . . . between principals Cogswell and Bancroft. . . ."⁴¹ James McLachlan suggested that in addition to the insurmountable financial obstacles and administrative turmoil Cogswell faced in 1834, Round Hill's demise was a product of the school being "at least one, and perhaps two generations early on the American academic scene--an unassailable foreign element in the structure of American education."⁴²

³⁹Ellis, "Recollections of Round Hill School," Educational Review, 342.

⁴⁰McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 100.

⁴¹Ellis, "Recollections of Round Hill School," Educational Review, 344.

⁴²McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 98-99.

The closing of Round Hill, however, did not represent the disappearance of "family-like" boarding schools. Round Hill's legacy survived by inspiring and influencing the rise of "family-like" boarding schools in the years to come. As McLachlan writes of school's historic contributions:

The image of Round Hill never faded away completely; many of the social conditions that had contributed to its initial success only intensified over succeeding decades. Scores of alumni would treasure its memory and seek for their sons an education which would recreate the brief golden days of their own and the republic's youth.⁴³

Flushing Institute

When Round Hill closed, Cogswell was able to recommend an attractive educational alternative to parents of students who had not yet graduated. He suggested to concerned parents that they send their sons to William Augustus Muhlenberg's Flushing Institute located in Long Island, New York.

While Cogswell and Bancroft were primarily concerned with developing the gentleman scholar, Muhlenberg was attuned to helping his students attain the highest type of Christian character.⁴⁴ Muhlenberg's ideal education consisted of a system in which intellectual, moral, physical and spiritual forces should be systematically organized to advance Christianity.⁴⁵ While Cogswell and Bancroft had loosely incorporated spirituality into Round Hill's

⁴³Ibid., 101.

⁴⁴Hein, "The High Church Origins of the American Boarding School," Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 578.

⁴⁵William W. Newton, Dr. Muhlenberg, (Boston, 1890), 76.

ethos, Muhlenberg's Flushing Institute was dominated by a strict adherence to the doctrine of the Episcopal Church.

William Augustus Muhlenberg was born in Philadelphia in 1786 and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1815.⁴⁶ Early in his life, Muhlenberg had developed an interest in becoming an Episcopal clergyman. However, as of 1815, there were no formally established theological seminaries of the Episcopal Church. Therefore, individuals interested in preparing for the ministry had to serve as apprentices to appointed clergymen.⁴⁷ Having graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, Muhlenberg studied under the thoughtful tutelage of Jackson Kemper. Two years later, in 1817, he was ordained to the diaconate by Bishop William White.⁴⁸ At this time, Muhlenberg committed his life to broadening and enriching the work of the Episcopal Church. One of his first assignments as a minister was to teach in the public schools of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. In a manner similar to Cogswell and Bancroft, Muhlenberg soon became frustrated with the inferior level of education at his school. He was particularly distraught over the fact that devotional exercises were not conducted in the public schools.

Muhlenberg's belief in the ameliorative powers of education and his concern for advancing the work of the Episcopal Church inspired him to found his own denominational boarding school. His school combined the Episcopal traditions and rituals which were best suited for the Christian education of a child. At an inaugural address

⁴⁶ Alive W. Shardon, William Augustus Muhlenberg, (Philadelphia, 1971), 7-8.

⁴⁷Ibid., 19

⁴⁸Ibid.

at College Point, Long Island, Muhlenberg promulgated the educational virtues of Episcopalianism:

The Episcopal Church with its catholic faith, its venerable rites and chastened forms, its enlightened reverence for antiquity, its habits of subordination, and its love of genuine Protestant liberty, presented a form of Christianity that eminently qualified it for molding the character of the young and, in these days of reckless innovation, for training the Christian Citizen.⁴⁹

An Episcopal Church historian wrote that it was Muhlenberg "who first started and made successful, with the success which has been the fruitful germ of all its rich after-growth, the church school."⁵⁰ While Round Hill's focus on preparing gentleman and scholars was flavored by Christian ideals, Muhlenberg emphasized the development of Christian character as the primary aim of his institution. According to McLachlan:

While they hardly slighted Christianity, Cogswell and Bancroft's main objective at Round Hill was the development of gentlemen and scholars. But the metamorphosis of the boarding school into the Episcopal church school necessarily implied a shift in priority of goals. While Muhlenberg and his successors would continue to strive to educate Christian gentlemen and scholars, they would empathize much more strongly the Christian elements of the ideal type.⁵¹

⁴⁹ William Augustus Muhlenberg, "An Address delivered at the laying of the corner-stone of St. Paul's College, College Point, L.I., Oct. 15, 1836, as cited in Anne Ayers ed., Evangelical Catholic Papers, vol. 2, (New York 1877), 63-73.

⁵⁰ Charles C. Tiffany, A History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, (New York, 1895), 259.

⁵¹ McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 106.

The idea of a student's educational experiences being determined by a single Christian denomination pervaded the school's advertisements, all of which were penned by Muhlenberg. As he noted in one publication:

In applying Christianity thoroughly to education it must be viewed in some one of its existing forms. We cannot take it in the abstract. We cannot deal only in the few general principles which are acknowledged by all denominations. To make the proposed experiment fairly successful Christianity must be taught as it is professed by some particular church.⁵²

Although the mission and philosophy of Round Hill was somewhat different from that of Flushing, Muhlenberg referred to Cogswell's school in Flushing's promotional literature, mentioning that Flushing was to be modeled after "the celebrated school at Northampton."⁵³ In addition, he wrote to his friend, Jack Kemper, that his school "will be the same grade as the famous one at Northampton."⁵⁴

⁵²William Augustus Muhlenberg, The Application of Christianity to Education, being the principles and Plan of Education to be adopted in the Institute at Flushing, Long Island, (Jamaica, NY., 1828), 7, as cited in Shardon, William Augustus Muhlenberg, 66.

⁵³ Shardon, William Augustus Muhlenberg, 66.

⁵⁴William Augustus Muhlenberg to Jackson Kemper, February 11, 1828, as cited in Shardon, William Augustus Muhlenberg, 68. It is important to note that Shardon conducted a search of the Cogswell and Bancroft Papers in the manuscript room of the New York Public Library. This search revealed that no substantial evidence exists that "Muhlenberg contacted these men in forming plans for his school nor does the catalogue of Muhlenberg's library indicate that he had any of the publications of or about Fellenberg or the Round Hill School. The evidence is nonetheless fairly convincing that Muhlenberg was influenced by these two schools to some degree." Ibid., 74

Muhlenberg declared that "Christianity must be taught as it is professed by some particular church."⁵⁵ He revealed in a letter to his friend Robert Vaux that his patience had expired with the typical education of America's youth: "I send you by mail a copy of my school project--Christian Education. I believe [this] to be the 'one thing needful' of the present day!! [I am] tired of talking to others about schemes for reformation [so] I have resolved to do what I can in the good cause myself."⁵⁶ Muhlenberg's former experiences as a teacher in the public schools of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, fully convinced him that in public schools education was "too narrowly confined to intellectual and physical aspects, while moral education was sadly neglected."⁵⁷ Religious education could only be truly accomplished, argued Muhlenberg, if his school ran like a Christian family. As at Round Hill, faculty at Flushing acted "as surrogate parents, who lived and worked in close contact with students, guiding them through the detailed round of daily activities designed to help develop their intellectual and moral attributes to the fullest. . . ."⁵⁸

Flushing appeared unique because it combined intellectual, physical and moral education in a Christian "family" environment.⁵⁹

⁵⁵William A. Muhlenberg, The Application of Christianity to Education, (Jamaica, NY., 1828), 7.

⁵⁶ William A. Muhlenberg to Robert Vaux, February 12, 1828, as cited in Shardon, William Augustus Muhlenberg, 68-69.

⁵⁷McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 113.

⁵⁸Hein, "The High Church Origins of the American Boarding School," Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 577.

⁵⁹Shardon, William Augustus Muhlenberg, 64. While Round Hill was the first American "family-like" boarding school, Flushing was the first "family-like" church boarding school.

Muhlenberg held that the Christian school could provide a more supportive and religious atmosphere than even the family. Moreover, he maintained that the salvation of the country hinged on the principles of Christian education.⁶⁰

The typical school day at Flushing was as regulated and arduous as at Round Hill. However, while the students at Round Hill were allowed to leave the campus to attend the church of their parents' choice, mandatory chapel service was required of all Flushing students. The Flushing boys attended chapel at least three times a day and even more often on the weekends. An excerpt from The Journal of the Flushing Institute, a monthly publication sent to parents, describes the average school day:

The ordinary day began with the waking bell, at ten minutes before six. Then came the roll call and prayers in the chapel, after which the boys had their breakfast. The morning was spent in study and recitations. The five afternoon hours were spent in recreation, study, recitation, recreation and study, respectively. Evenings were times for reading and relaxation. Chapel ended the day at nine o'clock.⁶¹

As at Round Hill, Flushing's curriculum also reflected concern for the physical development of the students. Similar to Cogswell, Bancroft and later generations of school headmasters, Muhlenberg maintained that proper physical education was a "powerful auxiliary

⁶⁰ Ayers, The Life of Dr. Muhlenberg, 79.

⁶¹ Muhlenberg, Journal of the Institute of Flushing, August, 1833, 14-22, November, 1832, 13, as cited in Shardon, William Augustus Muhlenberg, 73.

to moral discipline."⁶² In writing the school prospectus, Muhlenberg cited the importance of students improving their health as well as their minds.

Let a boy have his due share of exercise, let his diet be simple and wholesome, let certain hours be appropriated to manly sports and he will return contented to his books. And when he retires to his chambers it will be to sleep, not to concert mischief or corrupt his companions.⁶³

While Bancroft's numerous encounters with devious boys often placed him in an adversarial relationship with his students, Muhlenberg was able to garner the respect and admiration of most Flushing students. Muhlenberg typically defended himself from occasional student pranks. Once a restless student sneaked into Muhlenberg's bed chamber at night and tried to scare the sleeping headmaster. When the boy had penetrated deep into his room, Muhlenberg instantly sprang up, grabbed the incredulous youth, dragged him to the wash basin, and proceeded to empty its contents onto the bewildered boy's head. Muhlenberg released the youth who quickly skirted away probably too ashamed to tell his comrades that the headmaster had duped him.⁶⁴

Muhlenberg rarely administered corporal punishment against recalcitrant students claiming that "I never whipped a boy, unless he

⁶²Muhlenberg, "Application of Christianity to Education, Being the Principles and Plan of Education to be Adopted in the Institute at Flushing, Long Island," 7, as cited in Shardon, William Augustus Muhlenberg, 66.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴Newton, Dr., Muhlenberg, 45.

asked me."⁶⁵ Henry Augustus Coit, while an awkward young student at Flushing, once wrote to his father: "Dr. Muhlenberg's character is inestimable. He sympathizes and enters into the boy's feelings."⁶⁶ Coit, who would later become St. Paul's School first headmaster, wrote in another letter, "Dr. Muhlenberg is an evangelical High Churchman. I observed Wesley's Hymns on his table, and a good many works on Christian education, church music, and architecture on his shelves."⁶⁷ Muhlenberg's kind and benevolent attitude towards his students had a tremendous impact upon their future lives. One of Coit's biographers wrote of Muhlenberg's influence:

From College Point, Henry Coit brought away a memory of a school in which the chapel was the center of the whole school life, a school in which boys lived in dormitories of curtained cubicles, a school with gardens and a gymnasium and with water close by where the boys could swim and row.⁶⁸

Exerts from Muhlenberg's personal diary also reveal his compassion for Flushing students. A typical entry discussed his efforts to introduce students into the Episcopal ministry: "Spent an hour in conversation and prayer with _____. He wishes to consecrate his life as a missionary. O God, I thank thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee that in thy Sovereign grace thou does dispose one of my

⁶⁵Shardon, William Augustus Muhlenberg, 102.

⁶⁶Henry A. Coit as quoted in Pier, St. Paul's, 5.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid., 7.

spiritual children towards this highest exercise of the Christian ministry."⁶⁹

Flushing's faculty was also quite impressed with the dedication and strength of Muhlenberg's character. Thomas K. Wharton kept a diary of his daily routine while teaching at Flushing. In his first few months as a member of the school community, Wharton commented: "The general features of the system [at the Flushing Institute] both moral and educational were taken from the famous institution of the Fellenberg at Berne in Switzerland--whose view our excellent principal has fully espoused and elaborated in his establishment with great success."⁷⁰ It seems Wharton's enthusiasm for Flushing continued throughout the school year for at the end of his first year he wrote:

This is an admirable Institution and doubtless much genuine piety exist here. . . . It is apparent that more good order and diligence need not be desired--none of those improper expressions so common among schoolboys seem current here and there is but little of the petty quarrels, bickering, and ill will which disgrace all large assemblies of youth--the general sentiment here seems against them.⁷¹

The belief in the innocence and Christian nurture of the child made boarding schools an attractive option to parents who were concerned about the religious education of their children. Historian Joseph Kett

⁶⁹Excerpt from Muhlenberg Diary, as quoted in Ayers, Dr. Muhlenberg, 115.

⁷⁰Wharton, Diary, December 1832, as cited in Shardon, William Augustus Muhlenberg, 77.

⁷¹Wharton, Diary, July 26, 1833 as cited in Ibid., 77.

argued that, "the heightened awareness of childhood in the early-nineteenth-century America involved not only a recognition of the organic character of human growth, but also a tendency toward preserving juvenile innocence rather than stimulating children to imitate adults."⁷²

Muhlenberg's apparent success at the secondary level encouraged him to channel his energies into developing a grammar school and college. He purchased land at College Point, Long Island and opened St. Paul's College in 1838.⁵⁸ Unfortunately for Muhlenberg, his educational enterprises were to suffer a fate similar to that of the Round Hill School. There were several reasons for the closing of Muhlenberg's schools. First, he failed to raise enough endowment money so that the New York Board of Regents refused to give St. Paul's degree-granting powers.⁷³ Second, the college had numerous discipline problems with its students. Finally, his latest biographer has maintained that Muhlenberg's decision to leave the teaching profession was a combination of his higher calling to help establish the Episcopal Church in metropolitan areas, and his intense desire to assist the impoverished. Once Muhlenberg left Flushing, the college and secondary school collapsed quickly. "The school had been built so much around [Muhlenberg]," argued his recent biographer, "that without his distinguished name and engaging personality it

⁷²Joseph Kett, "Adolescence and Youth in Nineteenth-Century America," in Michael B. Katz ed., Education in American History: Reading on the Social Issues, (New York, 1974), 53.

⁵⁸ Shardon, William Augustus Muhlenberg, 78-85.

⁷³Ibid., 85

could not attract students."⁷⁴ Muhlenberg retired from the boarding school business in 1844, and turned his attention to urban reform. His concern over the social problems of the cities inspired him to found the Church of Holy Communion at Sixth Avenue and Twentieth Street in New York City in 1846.⁷⁵

Muhlenberg's experiment at Flushing, like Cogswell's at Round Hill, was not without influence. Several of Flushing's and St. Paul's alumni and faculty provided the leadership for the founding of the next generation of boarding schools. At about the time that Muhlenberg was forced to close Flushing, St. James College near Hagerstown, Maryland was chartered in 1842. Founded by Bishop William R. Whittingham, the college borrowed heavily from the educational philosophy of Muhlenberg's institutions. Yet unlike Round Hill or Flushing Institute, St. James served a predominantly southern population.⁷⁶ Ultimately, its geographical location and heavy reliance on southern boys for tuition were responsible for its demise. During the Civil War years, the school enrollment dropped precipitously from two hundred to less than fifty.⁷⁷ Like both Round Hill and Flushing, St. James was forced to close its doors. And much like the supporters of the Round Hill and Flushing, the individuals responsible for founding and maintaining the mission of St. James college influenced and inspired the founders of other church-affiliated boarding schools: St. Paul's School (1855), St. Mark's

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid., 100.

⁷⁶Hein, "The High Church Origins of the American Boarding School," The Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 582.

⁷⁷Heckscher, St. Paul's, 42

School (Southborough, Massachusetts 1865) and Groton School (1884). Indeed, each school had originated and evolved in a relatively similar pattern. All three schools were established in bucolic settings, sheltered their students from the corrupting influences of the outside world, and were specifically designed to develop Christian values and character.⁷⁸

St. Paul's School

The contributions of Cogswell, Bancroft and especially Muhlenberg helped pave the way for developing the idea of nurturing the religious development of American youth. It was precisely the inability of Dr. George Shattuck, a successful Boston physician and a Round Hill graduate to provide his sons with a well rounded education that inspired him in 1855 to found St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire. Round Hill, Flushing and St. James had all closed and George Shattuck was convinced that his sons needed an environment where "green fields and trees, streams, and ponds, beautiful scenery, flowers, and minerals are educators."⁷⁹

George Shattuck, a prominent Boston Brahmin, had recently inherited the family summer residence in Concord, New Hampshire. As Shattuck's medical practice expanded, his family spent less time at the country estate. Dissatisfied with the limited range of educational options available to his young sons in New England, Shattuck set out to recreate the school of his youth by making the summer residence into a boarding school.⁸⁰ However, Shattuck was

⁷⁸Ibid., 133.

⁷⁹George Shattuck, as quoted in Pier, St. Paul's School, 12.

⁸⁰Pier, St. Paul's School, 10.

not content with only the intellectual development of his sons. He also desired to instill in them proper Christian values. To this end he sought a nurturing environment, similar to that of Muhlenberg's Flushing Institute. Eventually, St. Paul's would bridge the gap between the ideals of Round Hill School and those of the Flushing Institute.⁸¹ The legacy of Cogswell, Bancroft and Muhlenberg was permanently cemented into the institutional structure of St. Paul's. August Heckscher, author of the most recent institutional history of St. Paul's, wrote of his alma mater's origins: "Out of Yverdon and Hofwyl via Round Hill School, out of Flushing Institute on Long Island and St. James College in Maryland, came the impulses that were to start St. Paul's on its course."⁸²

The inspiration for St. Paul's, then, was not the English public schools or the well-established New England academies. Although some customs of the English schools were later adopted by St. Paul's and some former academy students and teachers were part of the school's community, Shattuck consciously avoided imitating Rugby, Eton, Phillips Andover and Phillips Exeter.⁸³ Shattuck's objective of providing a nurturing educational environment kept him from emulating the practices of either the English public schools or the well-established New England academies.⁸⁴ St. Paul's, argued McLachlan, "brought together the Federalist goals of molding the

⁸¹McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 134.

⁸²Heckscher, St. Paul's, 3.

⁸³Ibid., 2-3.

⁸⁴Ibid., 2.

child to the image of the Christian gentleman and scholar and the evangelical impulse of bringing about the conversion of the child thorough gentle Christian nurture."⁸⁵ Both Round Hill and Flushing were unique for their time. Later, Victorians embraced the concept of Christian nurture and concerned parents showed increased interest in providing their sons with the educational opportunity to develop their Christian manhood.

Next to the financial commitment to his school, perhaps Shattuck's most important decision was choosing a headmaster. Unlike the founders of either Round Hill or Flushing, Shattuck was unable himself to assume the duties of headmaster. For such an important decision, he sought the advice of his newly created Board of Trustees which included churchmen, lawyers, and physicians.⁸⁶ One board member, Samuel H. Huntington, a prominent Connecticut churchman, wrote to Shattuck that the school must obtain a headmaster who is "a gentleman, a scholar and a Christian" and whose daily life "shall be the most effective admonition of the indolent and wayward."⁸⁷ Shattuck and the Board finally settled on a young twenty-six year-old clergyman, Henry Coit. Although Coit was young and inexperienced, Shattuck believed he possessed the characteristics and abilities of a promising career as headmaster.

Having graduated from the Flushing Institute, Coit had matriculated at the University of Pennsylvania. Poor health interrupted his studies in Philadelphia and he later received his B.A.

⁸⁵McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 149.

⁸⁶Heckscher, St. Paul's, 9.

⁸⁷Samuel Huntington to George Shattuck, February 1855, as cited in Ibid.

degree from St. James College where he also served as a Greek and Latin tutor.⁸⁸ After graduation, he entered the ministry and was soon ordained as a deacon. Coit spent the next few years teaching in parish churches in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and western New York until St. Paul's sought his services.⁸⁹ During the first years of the Coit administration, Muhlenberg's influence was readily apparent in all facets of the school. Coit's memories of Muhlenberg's unequivocal devotion to promoting Christian education would later persuade him to remain headmaster at St. Paul's, when in 1867, he was offered the presidency of Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut.⁹⁰ Both Muhlenberg and Coit, argued one St. Paul's historian, possessed a "burning intensity of religious conviction" and a strong sense of what strict and paternalistic administration could accomplish.⁹¹

With the establishment of St. Paul's School, a former Muhlenberg pupil and Flushing graduate, Henry Augustus Coit, became a headmaster to whom students, faculty, parents, and trustees alike would look for spiritual and moral guidance. At the young age of twenty six, Coit fully accepted this awesome responsibility for nurturing and elevating the community's Christian character and intellectual development. Moreover, Muhlenberg's influence had a profound impact upon Coit's headmastering

⁸⁸ Heckscher, St. Paul's, 14.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 14-15.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 44.

⁹¹ Pier, St. Paul's, 6.

philosophy. Joseph Kinsman, a St. Paul's graduate, wrote of Dr. Coit in his autobiography:

In its beginning St. Paul's School simply meant Dr. Henry Augustus Coit, who might well have said, L'Ecole, C'est Moi. He had derived his ideals from Dr. William Augustus Muhlenberg of St. Paul's College, Flushing, which he attended; and of a number who in various places followed the Muhlenberg tradition, Dr. Coit gave it its fullest and most permanent embodiment. Dr. Muhlenberg's school was a family of boys, of which he was "school-father", the spiritual guide, friend and father--confessor of his school--sons, not merely schoolmaster: and everything was dominated by his own personality. . . . What Dr. Muhlenberg was at St. Paul's on Long Island, Dr. Coit was at St. Paul's in New Hampshire.⁹²

When establishing the rituals and traditions of St. Paul's, Coit was able to borrow heavily from the former customs of both the Flushing Institute and St. James.⁹³ Similar to Flushing, St. Paul's daily routine attended to the religious and intellectual needs of the students while keeping them occupied with other tasks throughout the day. The typical school day at St. Paul's was quite similar to that at Flushing:

In the summer months the students rose to a bell at five A.M., had prayers at 5:45 and breakfast at six. They studied from seven until 1:30 P.M. with a fifteen-minute recess at nine and a half-hour at eleven. Dinner was served at two, after which the afternoon was free for

⁹²Frederick Joseph Kinsman, Salve Mater (New York, 1920), 15.

⁹³Heckscher, St. Paul's, 36.

recreation. The boys had tea at 6:30 P.M., followed by a study hour from eight to nine.⁹⁴

While a deeply moral and spiritual individual, Coit at times displayed some eccentricities as headmaster. He governed St. Paul's with an iron hand, delegating few responsibilities to either students or faculty. The members of the senior class, or sixth form, were often treated with little respect. Coit's first biographer claimed "The sixth form in his day never had much organization."⁹⁵ He routinely referred to masters and boys as "my dear", paid irregular salaries, and operated the school with no formal business methods.⁹⁶ He was infamous for holding grudges against students long after they had graduated. This often created unpleasant and uncomfortable situations for alumni who returned to visit their school.

In one legendary instance three graduates ventured back onto the campus after a fifteen year hiatus. They wandered into Dr. Coit's office to pay their respects to the headmaster. Upon seeing these three gentlemen, Dr. Coit asserted cantankerously that their presence was not welcome at the school. The bewildered alumni were incredulous towards his reaction. One of them exclaimed afterwards, "We were so amazed by this totally unexpected outburst, we just stood where we were, dumbfounded. Finally, one of us said that if we weren't welcome we would leave. The Doctor [Coit] sat down at his desk, and resumed his work."⁹⁷ The trio quickly

⁹⁴ McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 168.

⁹⁵ James Knox, Henry Augustus Coit, 50.

⁹⁶ Toland, Diary, 14.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 7

boarded the next train to Boston never again to see the school until after Coit had died.

Whereas the founders of Round Hill, St. James, Flushing, and later St. Mark's and Groton enthusiastically embraced the concept of organized athletics, Dr. Coit remained barely tolerant of what he often described as "foolishness". His first biographer described him as a pale, thin, sickly figured man who he could "scarcely imagine in the act of running, or of tossing a ball."⁹⁸ His knowledge of athletics was severely limited. In fact, he rarely exercised and as rumor had it, he never took off his jacket even in the most stifling heat.⁹⁹ He obviously did not approve of the new rough and tumble games, especially a version of modern American football that appeared on campus. One day he came upon a scene where students and masters were struggling, and on-lookers were cheering loudly from the sidelines. Coit strolled out onto the field and, holding his walking can aloft, exclaimed "Tut, Tut! No more of this."¹⁰⁰ Participants bewildered at the bizarre reaction calmly explained to him that everything was under control. It is said that Coit "listened to the explanation, got in his carriage and rode away."¹⁰¹

Coit's eccentricities have led one St. Paul's historian to conclude: "personally I feel that Dr. Coit was an egocentric so convinced of his own superiority, so queer, and so deadly in earnest

⁹⁸Knox, Henry Augustus Coit, 37.

⁹⁹Toland, Diary, 7.

¹⁰⁰Pier, St. Paul's, 226.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

about everything, that he awed people, and was therefore rated as far greater a man than he really was."¹⁰² Yet when Coit assumed the headmastership in 1855, the school had only three students; when he turned over the reins of the school to his brother Joseph, in 1895, the enrollment was cresting at over three hundred and fifty.¹⁰³

Despite Coit's eccentric habits and, at times, bizarre interactions with the students, many parents obviously continued to send their sons to St. Paul's. In some cases, at least, parents believed a boarding school education may have offered a more nurturing environment than their own homes, academies, or public schools.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, Shattuck's presence continued to counterbalance the awkwardness of Coit's personality and his continued financial support helped to keep St. Paul's doors open. Indeed, Shattuck devoted an inordinate amount of his personal time and finances to insure that St. Paul's would survive during its neophyte stages. Without the well-timed financial or psychological support of Shattuck, St. Paul's may have suffered a fate similar to Round Hill and Flushing. One historian of the school said of Shattuck's contributions:

It mattered not the weather, nor the obligations of his own busy life: he would be there, often walking from the station, and seeking only to be of help. Tough persisting in his refusal to be named a trustee, he attended by

¹⁰²Toland, Diary, 15.

¹⁰³Toland, Diary, 21.

¹⁰⁴ Toland, Diary, 16.

invitation the annual meeting of the board, where his steady influence could be decisive.¹⁰⁵

St. Paul's atmosphere of familial Christian nurture, no matter how odd its headmaster seemed, was assumed by many parents to be the appropriate educational and religious environment for their children. It remains today as one of the oldest and most influential church affiliated boarding schools.

Conclusion

In retrospect, the origins of American boarding schools can be traced to a mixture of traditions borrowed from English, German, Swiss, and American schools. These institutions were publicly incorporated non-profit schools, run by Board of Trustees, and funded by philanthropic donations and tuition payments. Historically, they were located in pastoral settings where both students and faculty lived on campus far away from the perceived nefarious influences of swelling urban centers.

Boarding schools, for the most part, were never intended to serve the country as a whole; their exorbitant tuition prices and unique pedagogical methods drastically reduced the number of families who could either afford them or were interested in entrusting them with their children. Moreover, as the common lineage of the American boarding school tradition suggests, these institutions, to a large extent, were supported by a few wealthy backers and an inspirational and visionary headmaster who believed in the need for establishing a specific type of education not offered anywhere else.

¹⁰⁵Heckscher, St. Paul's, 76.

Often dismissed by historians and sociologists as bastions of elitism or exact replicas of their European counterparts, the history of the American boarding school has been either misinterpreted or ignored. While it was true that these schools did serve a privileged clientele, the reasons for their emergence in the Jacksonian era, and later, their rapid rise in postbellum America are more varied and complex than can be explained by a simplistic class analysis.

Each institution's founder had his own purpose and agenda for establishing a boarding school. Moreover, the extent to which the school's faculty, students, alumni, parents, Board of Trustees, and successive headmasters challenged or accepted the school's original mission varied at each institution. The individual struggles of each school to define its own set of values within the larger context of American society helped make these schools truly indigenous institutions.

Chapter Two

The Founding of Groton School

Fifty-four years ago we began a school which we hoped might have an influence for good upon boys entrusted to its care and so upon a large company with whom they might be brought into contact, and in time, perhaps upon the nation.

Endicott Peabody, (1939)

In the fifty years following the founding of the Flushing Institute, the torch of educating the new generation of Episcopal church supporters passed from William Augustus Muhlenberg to Henry A. Coit and then to Endicott Peabody. Peabody's example at Groton in turn inspired the establishment of such Episcopal boarding schools at St. George's in Rhode Island and the Baguio School in the Philippines. The headmasters of these schools, and especially Peabody, attempted to carry on Muhlenberg's tradition of Christian nurture and training the next generation of Episcopal church supporters and leaders. In reflecting upon why he founded Groton, Peabody wrote:

A reason for the founding of the School was partly owing to the need of a least another Church School; for there were but few of them in those days. . . . A Church School meant a religious community where there should be opportunities for preaching to boys and instruction in what was called Sacred studies; but where above all other features of the life there should be opportunities for worship, and that in accordance with the spirit and method of the Episcopal Church, where masters and boys should meet together as a fellowship and enter into services of reverence, thanksgiving, and consecration day by day. The result of this is the creation of a spiritual

atmosphere which would have a conscious or unconscious effect upon all who entered into the life of the School.¹

Similar to Muhlenberg and other Episcopal educators, Peabody was concerned about the expansion of the church in American society. As an educator, however, he believed his major responsibility was to inculcate a sense of proper Christian values within his students. "The aim of Groton is the aim which every Christian school has had ever since Christian schools began to be founded," Peabody once wrote. Continuing, he asserted "[Groton] is an institution of learning, but the learning is not an end in itself. The end is life."²

Peabody, as did other Episcopalian headmasters, often let Bishops and laymen battle over the political, economical, and cultural influence of their church in America. It was perhaps the struggle for the control of the church between such men as J.P. Morgan and Bishop Phillips Brooks that altered the original mission of the Episcopal boarding school:

There was irony in Muhlenberg's very success. That the family boarding school should become the preferred

¹Endicott Peabody, "Personal Recollections," 1944, Peabody MSS. cf. Frank D. Ashburn, Peabody of Groton: A Portrait, (Cambridge, MA., 1947), 72. Ashburn's work is the most detailed account of Peabody's life. However, his book was designed to be a portrait rather than a definitive biography. Ashburn wrote the book at the request of several Groton trustees. Peabody had an opportunity to read the original manuscript and commented extensively on it. Peabody felt his importance to Groton and society at large was vastly overstated. Moreover, in order to assist Ashburn with his book, Peabody wrote about twenty pages of manuscript--Personal Recollections--which described his motivation for founding Groton and how the school had evolved during his fifty-six years as its headmaster.

²Endicott Peabody, "The Aim of Groton School," The Church Militant, vol. 3, no. 3, April, 1900, 3.

school for the sons of America's emerging urban elites had hardly been his intention. But given the prevailing image of the child, the moral and physical character of America's burgeoning cities, the expense of running such a school, and the social composition of the Episcopal church, the outcome was perhaps inevitable.³

Although Peabody desired to prepare his students for the Episcopal ministry, other church laymen wanted the school to perpetuate the upper-class mores and manners of Wall Street. Muhlenberg's Flushing existed in a time when the ministry was a venerated occupation. The advent of a new industrial order, however, created a wealthy class whose educational agenda was often at odds with the philosophy of iconoclastic Episcopalian headmasters. Eventually, the highly influential Wall street establishment, armed with a competing educational vision, attempted to usurp the authority and influence of the Episcopal boarding school headmaster. Thus to a certain extent, it was the growing tension between the Wall Street men and the headmasters for the soul of the school that posed a challenge to the original intent and mission of these institutions.

While some of his contemporaries either rejected the modern world or were corrupted by its influences, Endicott Peabody dedicated himself to the improvement of society. His educational vision was narrow yet broad, elitist yet democratic, and uncompromising yet compassionate. However, before analyzing Peabody's ideals and the emergence of Groton School, it is necessary to consider how Peabody's own childhood and young adult experiences aroused his desire to build a boarding school and

³James McLachlan, American Boarding Schools: A Historical Study, (New York, 1970), 134.

become a headmaster. This examination provides insight into how Peabody was influenced by the establishment and philosophy of the earliest American boarding schools. Moreover, an examination of the reasons Peabody jettisoned a promising investment banking career in order to open a religiously affiliated boarding school sharply illustrates the intensity of his commitment to serve the Episcopal Church and to educate the sons of America's upper-class.

The Early Years

Endicott Peabody, or "Cotty" as his close friends called him, was born in 1857 into a pure-bred Boston, Brahmin family. His ancestors had come to America from England, landed in Ipswich, Massachusetts in 1635, and over the next three centuries various members of the Peabody clan of Massachusetts contributed significantly to the industrial, economic and cultural development of the nation.⁴ Amassing a large fortune through his shipping company's transactions with Mediterranean, Chinese, and West Indian merchants, Endicott's great grandfather, Joseph Peabody (1757-1844), was one of early New England's most successful businessmen. Endicott's grandfather, Francis Peabody (1801-1867), was by all accounts an eccentric inventor and chemist who lived comfortably off his father's shipping fortune.⁵ Francis had six children, one of whom was Samuel Endicott Peabody (1825-1909). After attending Harvard for one year, Samuel went to work in the

⁴For a detailed account of ways in which the Peabody's helped to define and shape various institutions within this country, see Edwin P. Hoyt, The Peabody Influence: How a Great New England Family Helped to Build America, (New York, 1968). See also, Louise Hall Tharp, The Peabody Sisters of Salem, (Boston, 1950).

⁵Ibid., 237.

family business. He married Marianne Cabot Lee, whose father was the principal founder of Lee, Higginson, and Company. The couple had five children of which Endicott Peabody (1857-1944) was the third child.

Endicott spent the first twelve years of his life in the town of Salem where it was said one was either a "Peabody or a nobody." Growing up amongst a rather large and wealthy extended family, Endicott enjoyed a happy but, in good Victorian fashion, a restricted childhood.⁶ As a young boy, he attended a local dame school where he gained the reputation of being a rather mischievous fellow. Following a one year stint at the local dame school, Endicott was placed in the more disciplined environment of the Hacker School.

In 1871, when Endicott was thirteen, a great change occurred within his family. George Peabody of Baltimore, a distant relative, had successfully established the first American banking house in London back in 1838.⁷ Sixteen years later, he formed a partnership with a young American financial wizard, Junius Morgan. George, a life-long bachelor who someone once said "was one of the dullest men in the world" who "had positively no gift, except that of making money," died in 1871, whereupon Junius Morgan extended an

⁶Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 13. There is little information about Endicott Peabody's childhood years. The most detailed account of Peabody's youth can be found in Ashburn's, Peabody of Groton 1-30.

⁷ After George Peabody's death, the name Peabody was dropped from the company and the business was called the J.S. Morgan Company, and later Morgan and Company. For an excellent account of this influential financial institution see Ron Chernow, The House of Morgan: An American Banking Dynasty and the Rise of Modern Finance, (New York, 1990).

invitation to Endicott's father to join him in London.⁸ After carefully considering Morgan's offer, Samuel agreed, and the Peabody family moved to England for a seven year stay.

Enrolling at Cheltenham, a fledging English public secondary boarding school, Endicott seemed to assimilate easily into the British lifestyle. While at Cheltenham, Cotty developed his life-long enthusiasm for competitive athletics and rigorous exercise.⁹ "Certain things in Peabody stood out and impressed themselves upon one from the outset," one of his former classmates remarked about Peabody's Cheltenham days. Recalling Peabody's personality, his classmate wrote: '[Peabody had] great physical strength. Abounding energy and vigor. An overflowing supply of high spirits. A vivid sense of the humorous side of things. Life was to him a thing to be enjoyed.'¹⁰ On one occasion during the summer of 1890, Groton master Sherrard Billings traveled to Switzerland and by chance encountered this same classmate. Peabody's former schoolmate said to Billings, "How is Peabody, and does he still make a sacrament of

⁸Franklin Parker, George Peabody-1795-1869: Founder of Modern Philanthropy, (Nashville, TN., 1955), 93. Throughout most of his life, George Peabody was considered an ill-tempered miser. However, in his final years his philanthropic contributions were munificent. He endowed a Peabody Institute in Baltimore, museums at Harvard and Yale, and established an educational fund--over one million dollars--to ameliorate the quality of life for impecunious southern blacks. See, Chernow, The House of Morgan, 3-16. For a more detailed account of George Peabody's life, see also J.S. Bryant, The Life of the Late George Peabody, (Westminister, 1914); William D. Chapple, George Peabody: An Address, (Salem, MA., 1933) and Muriel Hindy, George Peabody: Merchant and Financier, 1829-1854, (New York, 1978).

⁹Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 15. Peabody's favorite sports were rowing, cricket, fives, and racquets.

¹⁰Charles E. T. Griffith to Frank D. Ashburn, January 13, 1932, Peabody MSS. Griffith attended secondary school (1871-1876) and later college with Endicott Peabody.

exercise?" Billings replied that he did and "that he has nearly killed me doing so."¹¹ Moreover, in a letter written late in his life, Walter Lawrence, a childhood friend and Cheltenham classmate, remembered that even as a young boy, Peabody possessed the qualities of a Christian gentleman:

I think that at first, to most of the School the brothers Peabody, as foreigners, were a distinct disappointment, for they were so adaptable, and fitted into our narrow and rather exclusive life, as though they had always been English. [Cotty] soon made his mark in the school. . . . He was fairly industrious, and excelled in games. But what we boys noticed, was his resolute character. It is perhaps fortunate that boys at school never think about the careers and the future of their comrades. If I had known that this bright, joyous and fine looking Cotty would become a Priest, Missionary, and great Schoolmaster, our relations might have been less free and unrestrained. . . . He was very outspoken and empathic. If he thought a thing was wrong, he would fight against it, and would never give up. But he was never an uncomfortable companion, never a prig. Always laughing, always sunny, yet, always vigilant.¹²

Trinity College

After attending Cheltenham for five years, Endicott matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1876. As at Cheltenham, he enjoyed well-rounded success and excelled athletically, socially, and academically. "Altogether Peabody's life at

¹¹Sherrard Billings, Notes on Groton, 1930, Peabody MSS. This unpublished notebook contained several pages of manuscript which Billings, a long-time master at Groton School, had written about his days at seminary with Peabody and the earliest years of Groton School.

¹² Walter Lawrence to Fannie Peabody, August 19, 1935, Peabody MSS. Fannie was Endicott Peabody's wife.

Cambridge was a period of all around growth," one of his college friends observed. "He gave much and received much. . . . He taught in a well known Sunday school in a poorer district of the town staffed by undergraduates . . . rowed in college . . . read steadily in his courses . . . enjoyed and freely participated in the social side of things."¹³

Describing a routine day in Cambridge, Peabody wrote:

I used to get up early in the morning to work and the bed-maker would come in and cook me some porridge. I would work for an hour, then breakfast would be sent up. I'd work through the morning, have lectures, then lunch either by myself or with a friend. The bed-maker would look after your lunch. Then you would go down to the boats if you were a rowing man; perhaps stop at the Pitt Club. You could post a letter there without putting a stamp on it. In rowing, you would always have a coach with you who would ride along the tow path. In the Bumping Races, the undergraduates would run along the bank with fog horns, bells, everything imaginable, and when they got near a bump it was the most complete presentation of a row.¹⁴

Studying hard and reading from Dickens, Arnold, Tennyson, Thackeray, and Kingsley, Peabody earned a first-class degree in lower law tripos.

Despite the knowledge Peabody gained from his intellectual training, it was his exposure to the Church of England that left the most profound influence upon him. His love for Anglican culture, coupled with the emotional warmth of the Episcopal Church, moved him so deeply that he experienced his first religious awakening. His

¹³Charles E. T. Griffith to Frank D. Ashburn, January 13, 1932, Peabody MSS.

¹⁴Endicott Peabody as quoted in, Hoyt, The Peabody Influence, 240.

spiritual awakening at college promoted him to desert the "sober, rational Unitarian faith of proper Bostonians, in which he had been raised. . . ." ¹⁵ Despite his family's adherence to the Unitarian faith, Peabody rejected the stoicism and coldness associated with its more intellectual traditions. ¹⁶

Episcopal Theological Seminary

Upon graduating from college, Peabody accepted a position in the investment banking firm founded by his mother's father, John Cabot Lee. Entering the business world with a "lurking distrust for industrial capitalism," Peabody's life ambition was to "make enough money so that he could retire and devote his life to worthwhile endeavors." ¹⁷ Rejecting the ostentatious materialism exhibited by many of his peers, Peabody held that "wealth up to a certain point is an advantage because it enables a man, if he will, to devote his service to the good of the community." ¹⁸

By all accounts Endicott was quite successful in the brokerage house, and both his peers and elders assumed he would rise quickly within the company. Describing young Peabody's transition into the business community, Miss Clara Endicott Sears, Endicott's cousin, wrote:

He came to his native land a wonderful specimen of stalwart youth, tall, broad shouldered, fair-haired, blue eyed, with an irresistible capacity for laughter, based

¹⁵Frank Kintrea, "Old Peabo" and the School," American Heritage , vol. 31 no. 6, October/November, 1980, 101.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷ McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 247.

¹⁸Endicott Peabody to C. Strunck, November 19, 1908, Peabody MSS.

largely upon the fact of his abounding health, his love of life, and an ingenious belief in everybody. . . . There wasn't a young man far or near as good looking as he was, but he seemed quite unconscious of the effect he was producing, and that added to his charm. And very soon a change began to come over him. In the midst of a playing, laughing mood, a sudden seriousness would sweep over his face. No one dared ask him the reason for this, because in spite of his genial spontaneity with those he met, even with members of his family, he held himself a little aloof when he was questioned too closely. But those who knew him best wondered about him. Something seemed to hold him in its grip and absorb him, and then his mood would change and he was his old self again. One did not have to know him very well to be aware of the fact that all the adulation he was getting ran from him like water off a duck's back.¹⁹

Despite his relatively smooth transition into the business world, there was an immense spiritual void in Peabody's life. He recalled: "I discovered that [investment banking] did not promise to bring into my life the interest and satisfaction I hoped would be there and the thought of entering the ministry which had passed through my mind in earlier years became more vivid."²⁰ Peabody's dissatisfaction with the business world, then, convinced him that perhaps his true calling was indeed the ministry.

A long-standing admirer of Phillips Brooks, who at the time was at the height of his powers within the Episcopal Church, Endicott decided to seek his spiritual counsel.²¹ After a brief exchange, Mr.

¹⁹Clara Sears to Frank Ashburn, 1944, Peabody MSS.

²⁰ Endicott Peabody, "Personal Recollections," 1944, Peabody MSS.

²¹ Clara Sears to Frank D. Ashburn, 1944, Peabody MSS. Over time, Brooks would greatly influence and enrich not only Peabody's life, but the development of Groton as well. Commenting on his enormous contributions to the school, Peabody recalled that Phillips Brooks "was deeply interested in the idea of [Groton] from the time it was first laid before him and through all the years his advice and sympathy have been of priceless value to use, while the

Brooks advised Endicott to consider carefully the possibility of becoming an Episcopalian minister and suggested that over the next couple of weeks, Peabody use "that time to place one's self in the position of the Apostles whose great desire after Jesus had left them was to tell the world about him."²²

Upon hearing the Rector's advice, Peabody's "heart leapt up" and he jubilantly returned home to discuss the matter with his father. The elder Peabody, a staunch Unitarian, was skeptical at first, but eventually gave his son permission to pursue a career in the ministry. Returning to the home of Phillips Brooks at the end of just one week, Endicott revealed his intention of devoting his life to Christ by assuring the Rector that "he could be certain that [the ministry] was his great desire."²³ Realizing Endicott had little theological training, Brooks suggested that he "must go to seminary school" and recommend the Episcopal Theological School located in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Recalling Endicott's decision to enter into the ministry, one of his family's close personal friends later remarked: "One day when all the good things of this material world seemed easily within his reach he announced to his family that he had decided to take orders and become a clergyman. . . . He was such a wonderful specimen of a young Christian, so big and strong and so well able to fight the battles of the Lord."²⁴

knowledge that he believed in the institution has doubtless turned a large number of pupils towards Groton." Endicott Peabody, "Headmaster's Report," June 26, 1893, 100, Peabody MSS.

²²Peabody, "Personal Recollections," 1944, Peabody MSS.

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴ Clara Endicott Sears to Frank Ashburn, 1944, Peabody MSS.

In 1879 at age twenty-three, Peabody entered Episcopal Theological School (ETS), a small institution founded in 1867 near Harvard College. ETS students had free access to Harvard facilities, and the seminary, which represented a Broad Church attitude, usually graduated six men per year.²⁵ Describing the aim of the seminary at the turn of the century, a graduate wrote: "Its purpose is to send out competent men, equipped with the best scholarship of our own day, and acquainted with present problems and manly men without ecclesiastical eccentricity, loyal to the church, loyal to the truth, sane, sensible and Christian."²⁶

The seminary's liberal theological position and Broad Church outlook was well suited for Peabody's own religious philosophy. A devoted follower of Charles Kingsley and advocate of Christian Socialism, Peabody adamantly disapproved of highly structured formalized rituals of the High Church. Writing to friend Julius Atwood in 1882, Peabody maintained he held little sympathy for "High Churchmen or Rituals," and furthermore claimed that "I may like them as men--but I do not see things as they can see them and never shall."²⁷

An Episcopal Theological School professor once exclaimed the school stood for "candid, advanced, unpartisan, manly preparation for the ministry of Christ. . . ."²⁸ Celebrating the school's outstanding contribution to furthering the Episcopal Church, Peabody recalled the

²⁵Peabody, "Personal Recollections," 1944, Peabody MSS.

²⁶George Hodges to Endicott Peabody, March 17, 1902, Peabody MSS.

²⁷Endicott Peabody to Julius Atwood, 1882, Peabody MSS.

²⁸Peabody, "Personal Recollections," 1944, Peabody, MSS.

words of one Phillips Brooks' speeches: "We may well be specially and profoundly thankful that we have in our great seminary at Cambridge a home and nursery of faith and learning . . . which no school of our Church has ever surpassed."²⁹

Impressed with the seminary's dedicated teachers and adherence to a rigid classical and theological curriculum, Peabody felt that he was blessed to have been exposed to such a positive religious environment. Fondly recalling his days at the seminary, Peabody wrote:

Its outstanding characteristic was manifested in the sympathy of its teachers, men of deep learning, understanding the movements of the times, encouraging the students to feel free to express their thoughts however mistaken they might seem, eager to lead them to that which had been revealed to them as truth.³⁰

Immersing himself in a arduous routine of studying, missionary work, and teaching Sunday school, Peabody found "peace and power, and central unity" in the ministry.³¹ "[Peabody] was deeply interested in his work," one of classmates recalled, "and 'I remember he graduated at the head of his class in Greek Testament. He took part in all student activities and was liked by everyone.'³² While an attentive student, Peabody was not an insightful scholar as he possessed the mind of a believer rather than a critical thinker.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Sherrand Billings, Notes on Groton, 1930, Peabody MSS.

Peabody captured the essence of his own scholastic talents in a speech honoring Bishop William Lawrence:

[Bishop Lawrence] does not call himself a scholar, that I am well aware of; for not long ago when we were talking of a likely candidate for the position of president of [Harvard] in which we were both interested I remarked that I hoped that they would choose a scholar. The Bishop demurred. 'You are not a scholar,' he said. I was silent, and silence is said to indicate consent.³³

Peabody was not interested in the Higher Criticism of the Bible. In kinship with many Victorians, Peabody had an unshakable faith in the literal interpretation of the Bible.³⁴ Once when asked why he was so confident of man's spiritual immortality, he replied, "why the Bible states clearly that Christ assures us of life immortal."³⁵ Peabody was by nature "a true believer rather than an inquirer."³⁶ Commenting on Peabody's lack of intellectual prowess, another historian noted that Peabody "was not so much of an original thinker as he was a determined practitioner of methods that dated back to the Italian Renaissance."³⁷

Tombstone, Arizona

After three months at Episcopal Theological School, Peabody received a letter from Grafton Abbott, a close family friend. Abbott had recently moved to Arizona to manage a mine, and inquired if

³³Endicott Peabody, "Speech at Symphony Hall: Anniversary for Bishop Lawrence," October 5, 1933, Peabody MSS.

³⁴Kintrea, "Old Peabo" and the School," American Heritage, 100.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid., 43. In a 1984 interview for Groton School's Oral History, Ashburn claimed that he was mistaken about the Rectors sub-standard intellectual ability. However as far as I am able to ascertain, Ashburn's original assertion that Peabody was not a contemplative scholar seems quite accurate.

³⁷Kintrea, "Old Peabo" and the School," American Heritage, 98.

young Endicott was interested in taking a leave of absence to build an Episcopal Church in Arizona. "I came to Tombstone because some one in the community had heard I was studying for the ministry and urged me to begin in his bailiwick," Peabody claimed of his decision to head west. ³⁸

Nestled in the Dragoon Mountains, Tombstone was a remote mining town located about seventy miles Southeast of Tucson and thirty miles from the Mexican border. The town, one observer claimed, was "the rottenest place you ever saw," and had become famous for its Boot Hill cemetery, barroom brawls and battles between the Earp brothers and lawless renegades.

Initially, Peabody was apprehensive about traveling to Tombstone for a variety of reasons. First, he did not want to interrupt his studies at Episcopal Theological School. Second, the isolated mining town was a far cry from the comforts of Boston. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, he was in the process of courting his cousin, Fannie Peabody.³⁹ Abbott eventually persuaded Peabody to make the journey, and in January of 1882, he left Boston to spend seven months in Tombstone.

After a long and arduous journey from Boston, Peabody finally arrived in Tombstone on January 30th. Describing his first impressions of his new surroundings, Peabody wrote to Julius Atwood:

³⁸ Peabody, "Personal Recollections," 1944, Peabody MSS.

³⁹ Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 43. Peabody eventually married his first cousin Fannie in 1884.

On the outskirts [of town] were tents and the usual adobe huts and shanties but as we came into the middle of the town I found it more of a place than I expected. The main street is long and has several two storied buildings in it and most of the others though small are well built although they are for the most part "gin mills" as they call saloons here.⁴⁰

Familiarizing himself with the Spartan surroundings, Peabody quickly went to work soliciting donations to build a church. Using a dilapidated shack as a temporary church, he held Sunday service and taught Sunday school. Rumors had drifted back to Boston that Peabody had convinced rowdy gamblers and many daily patrons of the local saloons to donate money toward the establishment of a church. However, commenting on his days at Tombstone, Peabody wrote:

May I say about . . . my Arizona experience that it is largely legendary. I did not go into the saloon to get contributions from the men at gambling tables and I did not perform any of the heroic deeds. I may say that all of those things were largely [exaggerated] and that my achievements in Tombstone were slight and for the most part commonplace.⁴¹

If not a "hero" as some would have it, Peabody nonetheless became a local favorite after organizing a baseball team that was the pride of the town. Announcing the arrival of the new minister, the local newspaper, Tombstone Epitaph, claimed, "well, we've got a parson who doesn't flirt with the girls, who doesn't drink beer behind the door, and when it comes to baseball, he's a daisy."⁴²

⁴⁰ Endicott Peabody to Julius Atwood, January 23, 1882, Peabody MSS.

⁴¹Endicott Peabody to Frank D. Ashburn, November 24, 1937.

⁴²Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 49.

Although successful at raising enough money to build and maintain an Episcopal Church, Peabody missed the companionship of Fannie and looked forward to returning to the more civilized lifestyle of Boston. Expressing his desire to return to New England, Peabody wrote Atwood: "I am feeling somewhat blue and depressed tonight and am going to vent it upon you. To tell you the truth I am homesick--homesick for my people, homesick for my cousin, homesick for you and for the East."⁴³ After only seven months in Tombstone, Peabody joyfully returned to the comfortable confines of the seminary and resumed his routine of studying, teaching, and missionary work.

A Future Career

In the winter of 1883, a fortuitous event occurred which profoundly altered Peabody's life forever. Reverend James Coolidge, headmaster of St. Mark's, resigned and William E. Peck, a master at St. Mark's, was hired as his temporary successor.⁴⁴ Peck was not a clergyman, and the school founded upon the traditions of the Episcopal Church needed an individual to conduct the school's religious services. Joseph Burnett, the school's founder and chairman of the Board of Trustees, extended an invitation to Peabody to speak to the students during the St. Mark's Holy Week.

Impressed by Peabody's speaking ability and his compassion for helping young boys, Burnett informally inquired whether

⁴³Endicott Peabody to Julius Atwood, February 24, 1882, Peabody MSS.

⁴⁴ St. Mark's was an Episcopal boarding school for boys located in Southborough, Massachusetts. For a history of the school, see Edward Tuck Hall, Saint Mark's School: A Centennial History, (Lunenburg, VT., 1967).

Peabody might be interested in becoming headmaster of the school. Unfortunately for Peabody, the school's charter explicitly stated that the headmaster must be an ordained minister. Peabody had not yet been ordained, but was now seized with the idea of becoming a headmaster. Peabody asked Episcopal Theological School faculty member Bishop Paddock whether it would be possible for him to be ordained early. To the shock and dismay of Peabody, Paddock indicated that he would not likely get the St. Mark's job regardless of his ordainment. Furthermore, Paddock asserted that it was important for Peabody to stay and complete his studies at Episcopal Theological School.

Dissatisfied with Paddock's counsel, several days later Peabody consulted with his mentor, Phillips Brooks. Equally apprehensive about Peabody's chances of being chosen as St. Mark's Headmaster, Brooks advised him to spend a year under the tutelage of Henry Augustus Coit of St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire. After careful deliberation, Peabody abandoned the idea of working at St. Paul's. However, from the moment that Burnett suggested to Peabody that he join St. Mark's faculty, Peabody became obsessed with the idea of combining teaching with the ministry.⁴⁵ For Peabody, a headmastership at a private boys secondary boarding school seemed the perfect institution in which to carry out his missionary zeal.

Following his conversations with Paddock and Brooks, a somewhat dejected Peabody discussed the idea of becoming a school

⁴⁵Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 65.

master with Dr. Leighton Parks of the Emmanuel Church in Boston. Impressed by Peabody's sincerity and enthusiasm for becoming a headmaster, Parks suggested that, "if you are not called to St. Mark's why not start a school yourself."⁴⁶ Parks's recommendation to Peabody had been timely and according to one Groton master, "was for Groton an epoch-making suggestion, for the idea of a new school of his own had never occurred to Peabody."⁴⁷ Shortly after their conversation, the Board of Trustees of St. Mark's ignored the Episcopalian traditions of the school charter and selected Peck as the headmaster. Commenting of why the St. Mark's trustees chose Peck, school historian Edward Tuck Hall wrote:

Mr. William Peck . . . had for eleven years served as senior tutor [at St. Mark's]. It is clear that [the board] intended to replace [Peck] with an ordained clergyman, but after interviewing three candidates they perceived that Mr. Peck was the man they wanted, and officially elected him although . . . he was a layman. From all accounts of those who knew [Peck] he was a man of strong conviction, deep interest in boys, and considerable energy.⁴⁸

Upon hearing the news of Peck's appointment, Peabody wrote Atwood of his plans to open his own school: "They have chosen Peck permanent headmaster of [St. Mark's] having set aside the bylaw which required an ordained minister. Thereby they have made it a

⁴⁶Billings, Notes on Groton, Peabody MSS.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Edward Tuck Hall, St. Mark's School: A Centennial History, (Lunenburg, VT., 1967), 7-8.

lay school and if it seems right for me to do so, I hope to start a church school."⁴⁹

The Plans for Groton School

Shortly after Peck's appointment, Peabody visited the Groton estate of his brother-in-law, James Lawrence. Caroline Estelle Lawrence, a devout Episcopalian Church supporter, spoke with Peabody and suggested that he start a church in Groton. Peabody responded that there were already four churches in Groton, but that he was interested in opening his own Church school for boys.⁵⁰ Agreeing with Peabody that a church school was needed, Caroline Estelle Lawrence indicated that both her husband and his brother might be interested in assisting Peabody with his project.

Following a more detailed discussion about his idea, Mr. Lawrence asked Peabody if he were interested in viewing a possible site for the school. Members of the Lawrence family and Endicott Peabody walked about one mile down Farmer's Row and came upon some meadows brimming with flowers and an apple orchard. This appeared to be an ideal spot on which to build a school and the Lawrence's contacted landscape architect, Fredrick Law Olmsted, to come and appraise the land.⁵¹ Olmsted traveled to Groton, surveyed

⁴⁹Endicott Peabody to Julius Atwood, May 10, 1883, Peabody MSS. After Mr. Peck's tenure as St. Mark's headmaster, he went on to found the Pomfret School, a boys boarding school in Pomfret, Connecticut. While there is no tangible evidence to suggest animosity on Peabody's part toward Mr. Burnett of St. Mark's for his not being chosen as the new headmaster, an intense athletic rivalry developed between the two schools which is continued today.

⁵⁰Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 66.

⁵¹Olmsted was perhaps the most influential landscape architect of his day. Considered the father of modern day landscape architecture, few metropolitan areas in this country, and the world, have been untouched by his ideas. His design philosophy was to make people feel at ease within urban environments. He designed Central Park, assisted with the master planning of Washington

the site, and pronounced it in good condition. Within weeks of Olmsted's visit, the Lawrence Family formally wrote to Peabody and offered the farm land of ninety acres as a gift in the memory of Gertrude Lawrence who had recently died. Gertrude was a sister of the Lawrence brothers, and the wife of Endicott's oldest brother, John.⁵² An enthusiastic Peabody wrote Atwood and described the land:

Yesterday, I went up to Groton taking my brother's little ones up to their Uncle's. Mrs. Lawrence drove me to a spot which has been selected for the school and surely a fairer place one seldom sees. It is a large plateau overlooking a glorious valley with great hills and mountains beyond. It would do one good to live there and it would surely be a fine thing for boys to grow up amid such scenery.⁵³

With plenty of beautiful acreage to begin his school, Peabody's next step was to solicit donations for the project. His Brahmin background and aggressive personality made this task easier than one might imagine. With the unconditional support of his family and close friends, Peabody raised an impressive sum of money within a brief period of time.

Paying his first visit to Arthur Carey, a family friend, Peabody was able to secure a donation of five thousand dollars.⁵⁴ Suggesting

D.C., and also helped plan urban projects in Detroit, Boston, San Francisco and Chicago. See Theodora Kimball, ed., Fredrick Law Olmsted, Landscape Architect, 1822-1903, 2 vols., (New York, 1922, 1928). See also Fredrick Law Olmsted, Dictionary of American Biography, VII (New York, 1959), 24-28.

⁵²Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 66.

⁵³ Endicott Peabody to Julius Atwood, June 6, 1883, Peabody, MSS.

⁵⁴Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 66.

that Peabody speak to his friend William Wells, Carey set Peabody up with another possible donor. Wells, whom Peabody had never met, seemed impressed with Peabody's demeanor and indicated he would gladly match Carey donation. Somewhat overwhelmed, Peabody accepted Well's contribution. He left Well's residence and upon walking home bumped into his father. Hearing of his son's good fortune, Mr. Peabody matched Well's and Carey's gift. Three quick visits had yielded Peabody fifteen thousand dollars. Several days later, Endicott's mother--formerly Marianne Cabot Lee--provided her son with an additional three thousand dollars. Within a few weeks of his initial fund-raising efforts, Peabody had accumulated thirty-four thousand dollars with several thousand more promised when Groton formally opened.⁵⁵

Once he had secured enough financial capital to begin construction of the school's first building, Peabody's next step was to assemble a competent group of masters. For his first selection Peabody turned to an Episcopal Theological School classmate, Sherrard Billings. Peabody had previously shared several informal discussions with Billings about the possibilities of teaching school. Billing's had initially planned a career of parish work, but Peabody had approached him about teaching at Groton. "I naturally was looking forward to parish work but I was interested in school

⁵⁵In addition to the large donations provided by his father, Mr. Carey, and Mr. Wells, Peabody also received contributions from the following individuals: J. Pierpont Morgan (\$4000); Fred L. Ames (\$3000); John L. Gardner (\$2000); Eugene V. R. Thayer (\$1000); Alexander Cochran (\$1000); Martin Brimmer (\$1000); Quincy A. Shaw (\$1000) and Reverend Phillips Brooks (\$500). For a complete listing of all the donors, see Groton School Donations 1884, Peabody MSS.

teaching," Billings later recalled. "I had been four years [a student] at Adams Academy in Quincy near Boston," and when "I met Peabody at Cambridge, he asked me to come to Groton with him."⁵⁶ A tentative Billings expressed interest but he also indicated that he was fearful of doing an unsatisfactory job. Believing Billings possessed outstanding moral character, Peabody remained persistent and informed his friend that he could resign if all did not go well. Billings finally agreed.

In addition to Billings, Peabody sought the service of another friend, Joseph Gardner. Gardner politely refused but suggested that Peabody approach his younger brother, William Amory Gardner. Having graduated summa cum laude from Harvard, Amory was a wealthy and eccentric character. He was delighted at Peabody's proposal and accepted the offer.⁵⁷ The triumvirate of Peabody, Billings, and Gardner would endure for the next forty-six years and according to one trustee member:

That was a triumvirate without a parallel--those three men the eldest not far from boyhood. As I look back upon the confident young faces I remember that they were called the 'Team,' but to me it seems that the three of them made up the sum of human divergence. To William Amory Gardner was given the scholar's mind,

⁵⁶Billings, Notes on Groton, Peabody, MSS.

⁵⁷Gardner would later donate a considerable amount of money for the building of Groton's St. John's Chapel in 1900. Moreover, after his death Groton inherited a rather large sum of money from his personal fortune. For example, the trustee's received \$100,000, \$200,000 went to the school's pension fund, \$25,000 went to the married masters fund and \$5000 went to the repair of the St. John's Chapel. In addition, Gardner left Harvard \$100,000, and the Lenox School in Lenox, Massachusetts, and the Brooks School in North Andover, Massachusetts, received \$50,000 each. "The Will of William Amory Gardner," February 8, 1930, Peabody, MSS.

imaginative and unpractical; to Sherrard Billings, the talent of the teacher and the preacher; to Endicott Peabody, the power of personality. Each was absolutely and utterly himself. We shall not look upon their like again.⁵⁸

Fifteen years after Groton had opened, Edward T. Sullivan, editor of The Church Militant, wrote of Peabody, Billings, and Gardner:

These men laid the foundation of the school. It is to their character, ability and unfaltering loyalty to the aim and ideal with which they set out that very remarkable success and great reputation of the school is due. To be sure they have been assisted by other masters, but other masters of their own choosing and upon whom they have impressed their own spirit and ideals. It is a noble achievement of these men in fifteen years.⁵⁹

Having selected the initial faculty, Peabody's final step was to assemble a Board of Trustees. Making good use of his Brahmin connections, Peabody enlisted the support of some of New England's most respected and well-established men. Phillips Brooks, Peabody's mentor, was nominated president of the Board. William Lawrence, soon to be Bishop of Massachusetts, accepted the position of secretary, while Endicott Peabody's father was the appointed treasurer. William C. Endicott, J. Pierpont Morgan Sr., James Lawrence, and Endicott Peabody rounded out the original seven member board. Dr. Leighton Parks of the Emmanuel Church of Boston was added to the Board within the year. Charles William Eliot, Samuel Morrison, and Robert C. Wintrop were among several men

⁵⁸Ellery Sedgwick, The Happy Profession, (Boston, 1946), 51. Sedgwick had graduated from Groton in 1890, and served as a trustee member from 1909 to 1940. Moreover, he was editor of The Atlantic Monthly from 1908 to 1938.

⁵⁹Edward T. Sullivan, "Editorial," The Church Militant, April, 1900, 7.

who allowed their names to be used as character references for the nascent school.

Meeting for the first time on February 23, 1884 at the house of Samuel Peabody, their first task was to select a headmaster.

Recalling the inaugural meeting's first order of business, Peabody fondly remembered: "At our first meeting, there was question as to the selection of headmaster. For a few minutes there was silence which was broken only by the loud beating of the heart of one of us; and then they made that appointment that I had hoped for."⁶⁰

The next item on the agenda was for the members of the trustees to set forth their reasons for founding a school:

It is our purpose to open a School for Boys next autumn at Groton, Massachusetts. Special attention will be paid to preparing boys for college, but the object of the school will be not the less to provide a thorough education for those who are to enter at once upon the active work of life. Every endeavor will be made to cultivate manly, Christian character, having regard to moral and physical as well as intellectual development. . . . A limited number of scholars will be taken at the opening of the school in the autumn. The charge for tuition and board will be \$500 per annum, payable half yearly in advance.⁶¹

From its conception, Groton was to be first and foremost a church school. Maintaining that proper Christian values could not be taught in a non-sectarian environment, Peabody held steadfast to his belief that Groton's primary objective was to interject religious and moral training into every aspect of the students' daily routine. One

⁶⁰Endicott Peabody, "Prize Day Speech at Groton School," July 14, 1940, Peabody MSS.

⁶¹"Preface" to Board of Trustee Records Groton School, vol. 1, Peabody MSS.

of his former classmates at seminary believed this was almost an impossible task and admonished Peabody that "schools are dens of iniquity." A confident Peabody replied that he knew such institutions existed but that he had "hoped that we might avoid such a result from our efforts." Moreover, the Rector remembered telling his doubtful companion that "it is true that the moral tone can sag very quickly unless it is kept up to a high point, and in sagging it may degenerate into serious evil."⁶²

Recognizing the invaluable contribution spiritual training could offer young boys, the members of the Board had confidence that Peabody could instill, even in the most recalcitrant youths, those moral, religious, and ethical values that they believed were so vital in producing manly Christian gentlemen. The Board deemed the religious mission of the school its most important objective and established as a By-Law of the Declaration of Trust that the headmaster "shall be a clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church."⁶³

The final order of business was to grant approval of the two Groton masters and set their annual salary. Peabody was to receive twelve hundred dollars, and after their appointments were conferred, Billings and Gardner were allocated eight hundred dollars each.

⁶²Peabody, "Personal Recollections," 1944, Peabody MSS.

⁶³By-Law in "Preface" to Board of Trustee Records Groton School, vol. 1, Peabody MSS. This amendment was to be enforced unless an unanimous vote of the Board approved otherwise.

The school was advertised in the Churchman and filled rather quickly with twenty-two boys. Groton's formal opening celebration was set for October 15th, 1884, but delays in the building construction pushed back the date three days and the ceremony occurred on October 18th. Reading his first semi-annual school report to the Board of Trustees, Peabody described the school's atmosphere during its first few weeks:

There was a general feeling of satisfaction with regard to the [school] house and its arrangement manifested by all and the day was a very suitable beginning of the school year. Since that time, all has been going with remarkable smoothness and the masters feel that the school has made a most satisfactory start. . . . We feel, therefore, that we have real cause for gratitude for so many blessings and good reason to hope that we may accomplish, in part at least, the object for which the school has been founded.⁶⁴

Social Connections

Historians and sociologists have often questioned the motivation of late-nineteenth century parents who invested large sums of money in a school where their sons would be "educated by three young and almost totally inexperienced schoolmasters."⁶⁵

Historian Edward Saveth has contemplated:

⁶⁴ Semi-annual Board of Trustee Meeting, Record of Board Trustees of Groton School, Vol. 1, 16-17.

⁶⁵Kintrea, "Old Peabo" and the School," American Heritage, 101. Peabody and Billings were both twenty seven, while Gardner was the youngest at age twenty-one.

One wonders why the reputedly strong fathers of the Victorian era surrendered their sons to headmasters serving in loco parentis. Why were both J.P. Morgan and Cornelius Vanderbilt impressed by the strong moral force that drove Henry Augustus Coit [and Endicott Peabody], headmaster[s] of St. Paul's [and Groton]?⁶⁶

Addressing this particular question, Peabody's biographer suggested that "a good guess as to why fathers sent their sons [to Groton] was that they had met [or heard of] Peabody, liked him, trusted him, and thought he had character."⁶⁷ Moreover, an observer of "proper Bostonian culture" wrote: "It was to Peabody that Boston fathers sent their sons, not just to Groton."⁶⁸

Peabody's social connections within the upper-crust of Brahmin society certainly aided the school's development. "We were not known at all," Peabody recounted of his early struggle to attract prospective students to his school, and "it was the Trustees and their names which enabled us to get the boys who came."⁶⁹ Recalling the amount of energy and time that went into organizing the plans for his school, Peabody wrote:

During the last year before [my] Ordination without wholly neglecting the duties of the work and the opportunities of the school I devoted some time to organizing a Church School to which one felt increasingly called. There were a good many preparations essential for the work, seeking out and securing a promising site for the school home, collecting funds for the building of it,

⁶⁶Edward Saveth, "Education of an Elite," History of Education Quarterly, vol. 28, no. 3, Fall 1988, 372.

⁶⁷Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 70.

⁶⁸Cleveland Amory, The Proper Bostonians, (New York, 1947), 314.

⁶⁹Peabody, "Personal Recollections," Peabody, MSS.

the gathering of a body of Trustees, the calling of those who were to teach the possible students, and the presentation of our prospectus to parents who might be willing to listen to our plan.⁷⁰

One historian observed of Peabody's remarkable accomplishment of opening a school in less than one year: "one has the impression that it was in no small measure of setting Cotty up. It was almost a family affair; practically anyone involved in the matter was closely related in one way or another to someone else."⁷¹

While the headmaster vacancy at St. Mark's had alerted Peabody to the possibilities of becoming a schoolmaster, his adolescent and young adult experiences had provided excellent training for such a position. Having attended a small English secondary boarding school and excellent English college, having taught in several Sunday schools, and having built his own church in a small western town, Peabody's decision to open a church affiliated boarding school can be seen as a logical extension of his early experience.⁷² Since Peabody had spent much of his life in small organic communities, serving as headmaster of a private school placed him in another environment where everyone shared common goals and were familiar with one another.⁷³

Perhaps more than any other boarding school headmaster past or present, Peabody was well connected socially. Hobnobbing with such political luminaries as the Roosevelts, Cabots, and Lowells, Peabody was able to make acquaintances with America's most

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹McLachlan, American Boarding School, 251.

⁷²Ibid., 252.

⁷³Ibid.

prominent politicians. More importantly, he had connections in two of America's most successful and prestigious investment banking firms, Lee, Higginson, and Company and the House of Morgan. Not surprisingly, status anxious parents often sent their sons to Groton because "Peabody was a Peabody, and not because he was a schoolmaster."⁷⁴

Conclusion

Peabody's position as founder and headmaster of Groton School provided him with a bully pulpit from which he could espouse his paternalistic "manly" and moral character-building philosophy to both secondary and university educators. Over the course of the next several decades, however, Peabody's paternalistic philosophy was challenged by various constituencies who believed his educational vision was too myopic for a nation emerging as an industrial, economic and political world power. Moreover, during the Progressive era, a new class of academic, scientific, and pedagogical experts arose to dispute aggressively Peabody's Romantic notion that classically educated and morally trained Christian gentlemen could effectively lead, govern, and reform this nation. By the time Groton School graduated its first student the battle lines between Peabody's Christian gentleman warrior and the scientifically armed academic expert had already been drawn.

Isolating children in well-protected environments may have seemed at odds with the survival of the fittest doctrine Social Darwinists like William Graham Sumner were advocating. "The law

⁷⁴Ibid., 251.

of the survival of the fittest," Sumner wrote, "was not made by man and cannot be abrogated by man. "We can only, by interfering with it," he continued, "produce the survival of the unfittest."⁷⁵ While many leading American philosophers, industrialists, and educators embraced the major tenets of Sumner's laissez-faire social and political theories, believing themselves surely among society's "fit," Peabody held that, as a Christian, he had a moral obligation to assist and reform those who were either in need or had adopted immoral habits. Sumner's assault on the charitable and voluntary assistance programs of Protestant moralists, however, served as a precursor to the type of opposition Peabody would face throughout the Progressive Movement. Never wavering in his belief that moral and spiritual nurture in an isolated and controlled community was far superior to any other pedagogical or scientific advances, Peabody remained a vociferous, and at times cantankerous, presence for those educators who embraced a more liberal and less regulated doctrine.

⁷⁵William Graham Sumner, "Sociology," in David A. Hollinger and Charles Capper eds., The American Intellectual Tradition A Sourcebook Volume II: 1865 to the Present, (New York, 1989), 23.

Chapter Three

Cultural Crisis and the Groton Ideal

The most imperious challenge which today confronts
us is the moral chaos of our generation.

Endicott Peabody, (1908)

Endicott Peabody's unique Boston Brahmin social, financial and family connections notwithstanding, how and why did Groton School blossom so rapidly into one of the country's most respected, and at the same time perhaps least understood, secondary educational institution. In retrospect, one observer attributed Groton's early prosperity largely to Peabody's powerful and pervasive personal influence. Endicott Peabody, Cleveland Amory recalled, "was probably the toughest [and most intimidating] physical specimen every produced by the proper Bostonian breed."¹ In his polished black shoes, pressed blue suit, starched white shirt and bow tie², the omnipresent Rector, in Amory's view at least, used the sheer force of his personality to will the successful establishment of his school.

In terms of his personal influence, in less than a decade after Groton had opened, Peabody had firmly established himself as a leading defender of the Romantic educational ideals of nurturing the moral and spiritual development of a child in a tightly regulated and controlled environment. Peabody once said that his motivation for founding Groton stemmed from the realization that "both St. Paul's

¹Cleveland Amory, The Proper Bostonians, (New York, 1947), 89.

²George Martin, "Preface to a Schoolmasters Biography," in Views From the Circle: Seventy-Five Years of Groton School, (Groton, MA, 1960), 133, Groton School Archives, Peabody MSS.

[School] and St. Mark's [School] were full to overflowing."³ However, much more was involved than a desire to create just another boarding school to absorb the overflow from other institutions.

Some historians and sociologists have argued that Peabody's motivation for founding Groton originated in his longing to create a unified national upper class. The rise of late-nineteenth century boarding schools in general and Groton School in particular, noted E. Digby Baltzell, was inextricably linked to concept "of differentiating the upper classes from the rest of the population."⁴

To be sure, there certainly are elements of veracity to both Amory's cult of personality thesis and Baltzell's single class theory. Nevertheless, a more richly detailed and complex explanation of the origination and subsequent development of Groton School exists. Groton, to a large degree, came into being as a direct result of a set of unique social, political, economic, and cultural forces.

Exploring the cultural and intellectual movements of late nineteenth century America reveals that the founding of Groton, the school's early success in filling its beds, and the outpouring of support for Peabody's message of teaching youth moral and civic responsibility were all manifestations of phenomena unique to this time period. Without the major changes taking place within America's social and economic infrastructure, Peabody's dream of opening his own school may not have been realized. Moreover, these late-nineteenth century movements, with varying degrees of

³Endicott Peabody, "Personal Recollections," Peabody MSS.

⁴E. Digby Baltzell, Philadelphia Gentlemen: The Making of A National Upper Class, (Glencoe, Ill., 1958), 293.

influence, provided stimulus and direction for the burgeoning of the American boarding school movement.⁵ These phenomena included 1) the influx of European and Asian immigrants whose endemic social traditions challenged the cultural and political hegemony of Anglo-Saxon Protestants; 2) the growing concern among the patrician class that their children were being spoiled, improperly raised by women, and exposed to the corrupting influences of the city; 3) the resurgence of the ideal of the Christian gentleman; Anglophilia, and the emergence of highbrow culture and institutions; 4) the call among the Christian Socialists and Social Gospellers for the "best men" to reform society; 5) the rise of urban school bureaucracies.

The Impact of Immigration

As of 1884, the Episcopalian church in America represented only a small fraction of churchgoers on the national scene.

Furthermore, whatever cultural and political hegemony the Episcopalians had was being challenged by the flood of European immigrants flocking to America in record numbers. In 1882, for example, 788,992 immigrants entered the country, a substantial increase from the 427,833 who came to America in 1854.⁶

Throughout the 1880's, an outpouring of Eastern Europeans from Italy, Greece, Poland, Russia and waves of Chinese and Japanese

⁵Between 1883 and 1901, for instance, the following boarding schools were founded: The Lawrenceville School (1883), Woodbury Forest School (1889), Taft School, (1890), Hotchkiss School (1892), Choate School, (1896), St. George's School, (1896), and Middlesex School, (1901). For a more detailed analysis of the emergence of American boarding schools see James McLachlan, American Boarding Schools: A Historical Study, (New York, 1970), 5-16.

⁶Thomas J. Schlereth, Victorian America: Transformations in Everyday Life, 1876-1915, (New York, 1991), 8.

immigrants introduced a cornucopia of new ethno-religious traditions into American society. Often segregating themselves from the mainstream of American society, these Buddhists, Roman Catholics, Jews, and Greek Orthodox established religious and education institutions to celebrate and perpetuate their indigenous cultural values. Challenging the traditional cultural hegemony of Anglo-Saxon Protestants, the newly arrived immigrants often resisted assimilation into an Americanized world.⁷ Concerned that the often poorly educated immigrants created cities filled with vice, several anti-immigrant groups organized themselves to thwart the perceived deleterious impact of these "alien" groups.

Especially within sprawling metropolitan areas, the continued surge of immigrants flowing into America sparked several nativist and racially motivated protests. Within northern cities, for instance, the Ku Klux Klan experienced an increase in their membership. Joining the Klan's anti-immigration activities was the newly organized Immigrant Restriction League. Moreover, concern over immigration manifested itself in the passage of federal legislation that restricted the access of some groups wishing to enter the United States.⁸

While neither Endicott Peabody nor the members of Groton's Board of Trustees publicly engaged in immigrant bashing, it was likely that they believed that the rise in immigration was partially

⁷Ibid., 9.

⁸Ibid., 11. Two important anti-immigration bills were passed during the 1880's. The first levied a fifty cent tax on all immigrants entering by water. The second banned the entry of a specific ethnic group [Chinese] for ten years. This represented the first time in the nation's history that America stymied the access to its shores of any ethnic group. See Ibid., 11-13

responsible for the turbulent nature and moral denigration of American cities. "Life in the city is not particularly beneficial at best," Peabody wrote to parents who might be interested in sending their sons to Groton. In fact, he continued "it frequently happens that it is actually demoralizing."⁹ The members of Groton's Board of Trustees concurred, and wrote in the school's charter that Groton was established in part due to the "rapid growth of large cities."¹⁰

Sequestering their sons in elite Episcopalian boarding schools, then, provided parents with reassurance that their children would be exposed to white Anglo-Saxon Protestant values. "As cities increase in size and the dangers in them grow great, parents are more and more sending their children from town to country for their education . . . and there is nothing of which our Church has more reason to be justly proud than its schools for boys and girls," Dr. Leighton Parks wrote to Peabody several decades after Groton had opened.¹¹ The boarding schools promised parents that they would continue the legacy of William Augustus Muhlenberg's concept of Christian nurture, and produce a stalwart generation of young Episcopalian Christian gentlemen. Recalling why many parents sent their children to religious affiliated boarding schools, one high ranking Episcopalian church member wrote:

From the day of Dr. Muhlenberg's School for boys on College Point and Bishop Doane's St. Mary's Hall at Burlington, parents have felt that they were giving their

⁹Endicott Peabody to Groton Parents, December 12, 1905, Peabody MSS.

¹⁰Frank D. Ashburn, , Peabody of Groton: A Portrait, (Cambridge, MA., [1944], 1967), 67.

¹¹Dr. Leighton Parks to Endicott Peabody, February 19, 1914, Peabody MSS.

children the best of all gifts when they sent them where they could be under the influence of the men and women who are giving their lives for a high ideal.¹²

Yet it is also true that many Brahmin parents and other social elites sent their sons to Groton so that they would emerge from its rigid Episcopalian regime prepared to resurrect the waning political and cultural influence of their patrician class in general and Episcopalians in particular. The importance of establishing an indigenous Episcopal tradition in America was heightened by the fact that the Episcopalians had a low church membership in comparison to more evangelical denominations. In Episcopal Vision/American Reality, Bruce Mullin maintained that the Anglican Church in antebellum America was neither well organized, nor possessed the appropriate political clout necessary to become an influential denomination.¹³

Due to the expansion of the business class after the Civil War, however, the Episcopal Church experienced phenomenal growth well into the early part of the twentieth century.¹⁴ The more refined and intellectual traditions of the Episcopal Church, compared to more evangelical groups, appealed to the rapidly expanding middle and upper-class.¹⁵ Moreover, as McLachlan has suggested, the influx of

¹²Ibid.

¹³Bruce Mullin, Episcopal Vision/American Reality, (Chapel Hill, NC., 1990), 1-15.

¹⁴ Konoldige, The Power of Their Glory, 64. As of 1865, there were 154,000 members of the Episcopal Church in America. The numbers of members expanded in the following manner: 1880, 346,00; 1900, 720,000; 1915, 1,000,000,000, 66.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 44.

¹⁵Ibid., 44.

Catholic and Jewish immigrants into the United States challenged the relatively minuscule political, religious, and cultural influence of Episcopalians in the United States. Therefore, it can be argued that the founding of Groton coupled with the expansion of the late nineteenth century Episcopal boarding school was in part due to the psychological and political concern that a new generation of church supporters needed to be educated in the Episcopalian tradition.

Immoral Temptations and Absentee Fathers

The proliferation of immigrant populations and the expansion of industry radically altered the urban environment. One manifestation of the fear produced by burgeoning cities was concern on the part of wealthy parents (and many not so wealthy ones) that their children, especially boys, would be exposed to a plethora of immoral temptations. "A sufficient reason for a boarding school is found in the large cities in which many of our people dwell," Peabody noted as one reason why he founded Groton. "There were no suitable places for adolescents, and for them it is wholly necessary that the boarding school should be built."¹⁶

Fearful that they could no longer adequately control their children's behavior, anxious parents willingly turned over the responsibility of raising their offspring to boarding school headmasters. "Your school has been recommended to me very highly, at various occasions, and I would very much like to place with you my ten year old son," a frustrated parent wrote to Peabody.

¹⁶Endicott Peabody, "Personal Recollections," 1940, Peabody MSS.

"He is now at Horace Mann School, however we live too far away to benefit [from] the companionship of other boys, and he needs such companionship badly, especially as we live in an apartment in a business section of [New York City], where he cannot associate with the boys of the neighborhood."¹⁷ Peabody fully understood this parent's dilemma as he held that a large city was a poor environment in which to raise a morally and physically sound youth. "I quite agree with you in thinking that boarding school life is not the best thing for all boys," the Rector wrote to another parent, but expressing the sentiment of his boarding school contemporaries, he continued, "it seems to me almost impossible to give a boy a proper education in New York City if one includes in that term the development of the [moral] and physical side of the boy."¹⁸ In writing about the importance of boarding schools during time of urban unrest, Peabody remarked: "So long as people dwell in great cities where the atmosphere, physical and moral, is in large measure unwholesome, at least for young people, so long the boarding school will continue to minister to the children of those who can afford to send them out of the towns."¹⁹

Parents raised during the rigid Victorian era were, according to one observer, "privately disgusted with the bringing up of well-to-

¹⁷J.S. Kempf to Endicott Peabody, March 28, 1907, Peabody MSS.

¹⁸Endicott Peabody to Mrs. George Zabriski, March 8, 1909, Peabody MSS.

¹⁹Endicott Peabody, "Academic Influence," The Education of the Modern Boy (Boston, 1925), 108. This book contained the educational theories of several distinguished private, secondary boarding school headmasters. The topics covered included moral character development, curriculum policies, athletics, and student missionary work.

do American boys" during the later part of the nineteenth century.²⁰ As a result of being engrossed in the details of running their corporations, many upper-class parents in the late nineteenth century abrogated their fatherhood responsibilities to the boarding school. Furthermore, most patrician fathers believed that their sons were often shielded from the strenuous lifestyle by a sympathetic mother or nanny and "heartily welcomed the chance to send their sons to a place where the boys had to stand on their own feet and play rough-and-tumble games."²¹ Writing to Peabody about why he was sending his sons to Groton, Charles Francis Adams Jr. expressed the views of his contemporaries.

I have been so much occupied of late years that I have been wholly unable to give that time and attention to my boys which every boy ought to receive from his father. This is one of my leading reasons for sending them to boarding school. They have been almost wholly under female control; and they have done pretty much as they pleased. I have been quite dissatisfied with the progress they have made at school, but have not seen my way to bettering it. There was a lack of discipline and correct method in their teaching which seemed to me to augur ill for the future. I hope this will be corrected at Groton.²²

Theodore Roosevelt, who sent four sons to Groton, believed that the boarding school would rescue spoiled boys who "at this moment find their most typical expression at Newport," where they engage in behavior that varies from "rotten frivolity to rotten

²⁰Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 71.

²¹Ibid.

²²Charles Francis Adams Jr. to Endicott Peabody, September 19, 1888, Peabody MSS.

vice."²³ Addressing this particular issue, Princeton's president Woodrow Wilson exhorted:

I think the saddest thing in the world in the realm of education is the thought of the boy who has no obligation laid on him to adjust himself to anything. You know that in this country wealth has ceased to confer distinction; there are so many rich persons and so many of them are not admirable. . . . Sometimes when I look upon batches of youngsters who I know have sprung from wealthy families, I look upon them with positive pity, because it is so unlikely that they will ever exert themselves to do anything in particular. The stimulation of life is necessity and the greatest necessity is that which is laid upon the underlying spirit.²⁴

Roosevelt's and Wilson's concern over the evils of inherited riches was echoed by conservative boarding school headmasters, and especially Peabody, who maintained that "the child of wealthy parents was usually a spoiled child."²⁵ "Our great difficulty," Peabody complained to a Groton parent who was having a difficult time raising his son, "is that parents have not sufficient moral courage to deny their children any wish they express."²⁶ Commenting on how raising a boy in an extravagant environment was detrimental to improving his character, one long-time Groton

²³Roosevelt quoted by Saveth, "Education of an Elite," History of Education Quarterly, 372, as cited in Elting E. Morrison, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, (Cambridge, 1951), 3. Roosevelt's first wife, a cousin of Endicott Peabody's, had died in February 1884 shortly after giving birth to their daughter. Roosevelt eventually remarried Edith Carow whom he had known since he was a young boy. Their four sons all graduated from Groton.

²⁴Woodrow Wilson, "Address at the Centennial of the Lawrenceville School," September 1910, in Roland J. Mulford, History of The Lawrenceville School 1810-1935, (Princeton, NJ., 1935), 132-33.

²⁵McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 270.

²⁶Endicott Peabody to E.D. Evan, November 8, 1908, Peabody MSS.

master admonished: "If people are rich, their money often brings together with many advantages, a deplorable softness of life that is enough to emasculate any boy--something it is hard for other influences [including Groton] to counteract."²⁷

In proper Victorian fashion, such men as Wilson, Roosevelt, Peabody, and members of Groton's Board of Trustees were convinced that irresponsible wealth led to luxury, immorality, vice, and to the destruction of the republic.²⁸ Complaining about the poor parenting skills of his contemporaries, Peabody proclaimed:

Many parents plume themselves upon never asking their sons where they have been or what they have been doing. It seems to me that we cannot emphasize too positively today the necessity of obedience on the part of children--a prompt unquestioned obedience to the expressed wish of the parent, [or faculty member] which no expostulation can alter.²⁹

The rich and their offspring were ready to be reformed.³⁰ Groton's Spartan regime, Peabody believed, was the ideal environment in which to teach future patricians that they had an obligation to serve the nation responsibly. " . . . The finest outcome of a man's financial success," extolled Peabody is "that it makes it easily possible for his children to give themselves to the service of others without being hampered by the limitations or fear of

²⁷Sherrard Billings, "A School-Boy's Salvation: A Sermon," February 9, 1896, Peabody MSS. Billings, an ordained minister, preached this sermon at St. George's Church in New York City.

²⁸Endicott Peabody to E.D. Evan, November 8, 1908, Peabody MSS.

²⁹Endicott Peabody, Speech to Groton Community entitled, "The Training and Responsibility of Parents" 7, 8, Peabody, MSS.

³⁰Saveth, "Education of an Elite," History of Education Quarterly, 372.

poverty."³¹ By upholding the republican virtue of disinterested public service, President Roosevelt was convinced that Peabody's and Groton's contribution to the nation was immeasurable: "I don't think you understand how much good you are doing. You are in the larger world, in the very highest and best service, and I can say quite conscientiously I don't know any one of our generation whom I think is making so permanent a mark for good."³²

Wealthy parents hoped that large doses of muscular Christianity sternly administered by Peabody would inspire their children to become more socially responsible. Groton's monastic lifestyle and rigid adherence to teaching Christian principles, to a large degree, mitigated the fears of worrisome parents who believed the conspicuous consumption of the Gilded Age's aristocratic class severed as an inappropriate example for the next generation of social elites. Criticizing late-nineteenth century Americans' preoccupation with wealth and materialism, the sardonic Henry Adams complained to a friend that "my generation has been cleaned out. . . . I detest it, and everything that belongs to it," and, moreover, he yearned desperately "to put every money-lender to death, and to sink Lombard Street and Wall Street under the ocean."³³ Although he had deep family ties to these financial establishments, Peabody certainly would have approved.

³¹Endicott Peabody, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God: A Sermon," 1930, Peabody MSS.

³²Theodore Roosevelt to Endicott Peabody, November 16, 1894, Peabody MSS.

³³Henry Adams to Charles Milnes Gaskell, 1894 in Worthington Chauncey Ford ed., Letters of Henry Adams, 1892-1918, (Boston, [1938], 1969), 34-35.

Reflecting the concern of most adults who had to raise children surrounded in money and luxury, one frustrated adult wrote to Peabody:

I have a young relative who will inherit a good deal of money and he is self-indulgent and his surroundings are not good. I might even say that he has some inherited tendencies toward a useless life which are now developing in his character.³⁴

Peabody fully understood this dilemma and specifically designed his school to reverse the tendencies of most youths who would inherit large fortunes and perhaps coast through life without making any significant contributions toward bettering society. "Saving human character is our work," maintained one Groton master, and "the one business of the school is dealing with boys . . . [and turning] them into young men [who] will go out like Knights of old, the fearless, fighting champions of the good, and stalwart foes of the bad wherever they find it."³⁵

Anglophilia and Highbrow Culture

Stressing character development and moral education, Peabody's mission to teach social and fiscal responsibility to those boys who would undoubtedly inherit large fortunes was embraced by upper-crust parents who were cognizant of the accomplishments of English public school headmaster, Thomas Arnold. Hughes' fictional account of Arnold's resurrection of the Christian gentlemen in Tom Brown School Days (1857) captivated an American audience

³⁴Francis Rawle to Endicott Peabody, January 26, 1901, Peabody MSS.

³⁵Sherrard Billings, "Speech to Groton Community," October 16, 1910, Peabody MSS.

labeled by cultural critics as a nation of Philistines. Henry Adams and a host of America's "best men" called for a resurrection of the pre-Jeffersonian gentleman and rallied behind Matthew Arnold's call for ameliorating society by establishing institutions of high culture.

Although the English public school influence on Groton has been exaggerated, Peabody founded his school during a period of intense Anglophilia in America.³⁶ Adhering to Arnold's philosophy of teaching civic responsibility to privileged youths, Peabody's Groton was viewed by most Americans as an exact replica of the English public school. Unlike its predecessors of Round Hill, Flushing Institute, and St. Paul's, Groton evolved during a decade that celebrated the concept of the Christian gentlemen. Late nineteenth century boarding school headmasters, as one historian has noted, called for the return to the "pre-Jeffersonian conception of republican virtue insofar as they stressed public service as a career goal for students rather than business with its greater opportunities for personal gain."³⁷

Endicott Peabody was a paragon of virtue and the fact that parents, educators and members of the social elite perceived him as "a gentleman and supported by gentlemen," contributed significantly to the school's initial success.³⁸ "There is no one in our country who could so effectively help on the rising wave of interest in [manly] education of boys, as yourself," John S. Phillips, owner of The American Magazine, expressed to Peabody in a letter requesting that

³⁶McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 203-204.

³⁷Saveth, "Education of an Elite," History of Education Quarterly, 373.

³⁸McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 225.

he write a book detailing his moral education philosophy.³⁹

Appealing to the widespread enthusiasm for Anglophile culture, even the Groton trustees claimed that their school was to be modeled somewhat after the public schools of England: "As these schools, under the influence of the Church of England, have developed a type of manly Christian character, [we] believed that a school, under the influence of the Protestant Episcopal Church would do similar work in this country."⁴⁰

For the most part, parents who sent their sons to Groton longed for the type of "manly" character-building training the English public school offered. One parent interested in sending his boy to Groton wrote to Peabody:

It is obvious that the English nobility have exercised very sound judgment in separating their children, at an early age, from the association of luxurious household, with the attendant flattery, and subjected them to the harsh discipline of an English boarding school.⁴¹

Indeed, most parents readily believed that since Peabody had graduated from Cheltenham, and later Trinity College, he must have replicated the British public school system within his institution.

³⁹John S. Phillips to Endicott Peabody, December 11, 1908, Peabody MSS. This would be one of the many such book offers Peabody received. Although Peabody started many book length projects, he never completed an end product. "I hardly think that I could write a book at all," Peabody once claimed. "If I should succeed in compiling a sufficient number of words, they would probably be a repetition of the things that I have said and written during the last twenty years." Peabody to Nutter, October 7, 1908, Peabody MSS. Peabody's assessment of himself, in my view, was completely accurate. Many of his sermons and speeches borrowed heavily from notes, quotes, and comments he collected throughout his life.

⁴⁰Preface to the Records, Board of Trustees Groton School, Peabody MSS.

⁴¹Blair Lee to George Jefferson, February 14, 1907, Peabody MSS. Jefferson was in charge of sending and receiving Groton School applications.

This perception was heightened due to the fact that Peabody overtly expressed his desire to emulate the British boarding schools success at producing future political leaders. "I want to tell you how pleased I was with my son's whole conduct this summer," an enthusiastic Groton parent wrote to Peabody. "I had many opportunities of appreciating how much he owes this to the atmosphere of Groton, and I congratulate you upon having reproduced in America some of the best features which characterize Dr. Arnold's management of Rugby."⁴²

Although parents and some trustee members might have longed for the English public school ethos, the main things Peabody learned about boarding schools from his experience at Cheltenham were "things to be avoided and not to do."⁴³ Peabody, in fact, never cared for the fagging system, or floggings, and he was deeply bothered by the lack of cohesiveness between schools masters and the students. "[Groton] was not," noted one faculty member, "an imitation of English schools, for Peabody was a 'bred-in-the-bone' New Englander, a Salem Puritan, and he disapproved strongly of many features of the English schools."⁴⁴

While the Rector embraced the character-building and public service mission of English public schools, he purposefully avoided organizing Groton to resemble the ethos of Rugby, Eton, or any other British school. "Many people, no doubt, think of Groton School as an English School," Peabody said in an interview conducted during the

⁴²Emond Kelly to Endicott Peabody, September 11, 1900, Peabody MSS.

⁴³Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 20.

⁴⁴Walter Hichman, "My Groton Years," in Views From the Circle: Seventy-Five Years of Groton School, (Groton, MA., 1960), 157.

last years of his life, and "perhaps they have thought of us as something apart from American institutions. That is not the fact."⁴⁵ Peabody loathed many aspects his English public school education and complained to his brother Francis: "In the English School . . . there are a good many evils which are not found [at Groton], and my experience leads me to think that the manners of Englishmen, especially, of young Englishmen are shockingly bad."⁴⁶ Echoing Peabody's sentiments on English school, St. Paul's headmaster Henry Coit declared:

We cannot have Rugby, or Eton, or Harrow [in America], if we could. And certainly no one who understands our society, and the special character of our civilization would wish for such transplanting. . . . [In my view], neither the great English public school nor the German gymnasium would suit us here.⁴⁷

Nonetheless, despite his aversion toward the ethos of English public schools, in some respects Peabody borrowed some traditions from these institutions. Groton students, for instance, had to wear starched white collared shirts, live in Spartan conditions, take cold showers, and listen to the virtues of public service. In spite of these few British importations, historian James McLachlan argued that Groton owed its organization more to "St. Mark's--and thus to the College of St. James, Muhlenberg's Flushing, and indirectly to Round

⁴⁵ Carol Warton, "The Masters and the Boys Have Made Groton School," Boston Herald, Sunday March 5, 1939, 5, Peabody MSS. The article was comprised of transcripts from Warton's personal interview with the Rector.

⁴⁶ Endicott Peabody to Francis Peabody, October 9, 1908, Peabody MSS.

⁴⁷ Henry Augustus Coit, "American School," 2.

Hill, Fellenberg's Hofwyl, and the early nineteenth century American college. . . ."48

The American boarding school flourished in a decade which gave rise to such highbrow institutions as the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Boston Symphony Hall.⁴⁹ To a certain degree, the founding of Groton corresponded with an intense period of institution building out of which evolved "a vigorous and truly American structure of high culture."⁵⁰ Victorian culture had been previously centered around strong institutions, (i.e., the family and the church), and strict moral standards. Those individuals raised in the Anglo-Saxon world of Victorian America wanted to make late nineteenth century public and private life more ethical.

A common aristocratic perception deemed the United States a shallow and corrupt nation where the taste of the average citizen had been reduced to the lowest common denominator. Philanthropic donations from the Vanderbilts, Rockerfellers, and the Peabody's helped to establish institutions for the purpose of enhancing moral character and elevating cultural standards. The movement toward the secularization of culture, maintained historian Lawrence Levine, inspired Americans to reproduce:

⁴⁸McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 255. McLachlan has noted that "an extremely careful comparison has revealed only one completely unmistakable direct borrowing from Cheltenham at Groton: in typography and layout the two school journals--The Cheltonian and The Grotonian--are identical." *Ibid.*, fn. 41, 348.

⁴⁹For a more detailed account of the rise of these institutions, see Lawrence W. Levine, Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America, (Cambridge, MA., 1988).

⁵⁰McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 257.

the Eurocentric products of the symphonic hall, the opera house, the museum, and the library, all of which, the American people were taught, must be approached with a disciplined, knowledgeable seriousness of purpose, and--most important of all--with a feeling of reverence.⁵¹

In this tradition, Groton was organized and supported by men who believed it was their Christian duty to improve the condition of society. The role of the cultured gentleman in society, according to Harvard professor Charles Eliot Norton, had become elusive and rather ill-defined over time. Attending his first Norton lecture at Harvard, one student recalled that the venerated intellectual gazed sternly over the audience filled with arrogant young men and declared acerbically: "Young gentlemen--and as I speak these words the realization comes over me that no one here has ever seen a gentleman."⁵²

While mindful of Norton's often extreme rhetoric, such prominent and well-respected men as Charles Francis Adams Jr., Theodore Roosevelt, Charles Eliot, Phillips Brooks, and William Lawrence--all of whom had established strong personal connections with Peabody and Groton--came to believe that many of the Harvard professor's criticisms of American society were quite valid. An institution such as Groton, many of these men held, might be able to at least help preserve the role of the Christian gentleman in an amoral society. Immersed in a tightly structured manly Christian regime, Peabody hoped that young Groton boys would emerge from

⁵¹ Levine, Highbrow/Lowbrow, 146.

⁵² Ellery Sedgwick, The Happy Profession, (Boston, 1946), 71.

a well rounded education to lead the struggle against the moral denigration of society. For many of Boston's most dignified personalities and widely admired minds, Peabody's general concept of molding wealthy and often lethargic youth into civic minded Christian gentlemen was, at the time, too invaluable a mission either to ignore or criticize.

Christian Socialists and Social Gospellers

Rejecting the materialistic and gaudy lifestyle enjoyed by many of his contemporaries, Peabody was deeply committed to inculcating patrician youths with the idea of dedicating their lives to public service. Peabody once claimed, "If some Groton boys do not enter political life and do something for our land it won't be because they have not been urged."⁵³ By the time Groton was established, the economic operations of capitalist industrialization had resulted in a deepening of the division between the social classes. Inhumane factory conditions, the use of child labor, and a host of other abuses in the industrial world augmented the rising tensions between capital and labor. Searching for spiritual avenues to ameliorate social ills, some Protestant clergymen turned to preaching a doctrine of Christian Socialism. These men called for the Christianization of the social order and responded to the challenges of industrialism by forming such Christian organizations and institutions as the Salvation Army, Settlement Houses, the Young Mens Christian

⁵³Endicott Peabody to Julius Atwood December 16, 1894, Peabody MSS.

Association, and boarding schools.⁵⁴ These overtly Christian institutions, and especially Groton, were designed to create a better world by convincing individuals to do Christ's work in areas of abject poverty. Groton was thus intended to promote social change by strengthening the moral fiber of young boys in its care who in turn would pursue lives of service. In the words of Peabody's mentor Phillips Brooks, Groton faculty told students each day to "Go and undertake some duty. Go and be moral. Go and be good."⁵⁵

Peabody incorporated into Groton several fundamental ideals of Charles Kingsley's and F.D. Maurice's idealistic Christian Socialist movement. Although Peabody never met either Kingsley or Maurice, he once claimed that "their influence was felt upon my philosophy."⁵⁶ Preaching his gospel of Christian Socialism, one of Kingsley's major objectives was to ignite a political and social movement in England that would encourage the active participation of the governing classes in reforming society. Kingsley advocated that the wealthy classes needed to adopt selfless Christian practices and help close the widening gap between the haves and have-nots. Noting the rationale of those clergymen who were committed to reforming the wealthy classes, historian Robert Crunden wrote:

⁵⁴For a more detailed account of the Social Gospel Movement and the institutions it spawned, see Robert T. Handy, ed., The Social Gospel in America 1870-1920, Gladden, Ely, Rauschenbusch, (New York, 1966); C. Howard Hopkins, The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915, (New Haven, CT., 1940) and Ralph E Luker, The Social Gospel in Black and White, American Racial Reform, 1885-1912, (Chapel Hill, NC., 1991).

⁵⁵Phillips Brooks, "The Law of Growth," in William G. McLoughlin, ed., The American Evangelicals, 1800-1900, (Gloucester, MA., 1976), 166.

⁵⁶Endicott Peabody, "Personal Recollections," 1940, Peabody MSS.

Thus, the message of Jesus to every man, regardless of financial circumstances, was to sacrifice by doing service to others. The man who did not do this was not living a moral or Christian life. This message had peculiar relevance to the lives of the rich because they had so much more to sacrifice. If the wealthy men in America chose to follow Christ's example, then social problems would disappear. If they did not do so, they were immoral and ungodly.⁵⁷

An ardent supporter of Kingsley's doctrine of Christian Socialism, Peabody was tremendously influenced by his call for the "best men" to serve the nation. "I cannot help feeling that our social organization is far from perfect in its organization, and I believe that we shall have to find some way of applying the principles of Christianity to it more fully," Peabody wrote in Kingsleyian fashion to a Groton parent concerned about the vice and corruption that had seeped into American metropolitan centers.⁵⁸ Quoting from a Kingsley sermon delivered during his brief visit to America, Peabody remarked: "He hath showed thee, O Man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God." Peabody continued, "this was the foundation of Kingsley own life, and I wished to make it mine."⁵⁹

Throughout his life, Peabody's letters and sermons were replete with references to Kingsley. Recalling Kingsley's influence upon both his life and the philosophy of his school, Peabody wrote:

⁵⁷Robert M. Crunden, Ministers of Reform: The Progressives' Achievement in American Civilization, 1889-1920, (Chicago, 1984), 43.

⁵⁸Endicott Peabody to Hugh Auchincloss, October 10, 1908, Peabody MSS.

⁵⁹Endicott Peabody, "Personal Recollections," 1940, Peabody MSS.

The ministry was suggested, I think, especially by the life of Charles Kingsley, which I had read early in my college career. His biographer set forth his subject's enthusiasm in connection with social problems, which were new at the time, and introduced me to a man of vigorous, virile, enthusiastic character; a gentle, sympathetic and unafraid example of muscular Christianity, a very gentle Knight.⁶⁰

Like Kingsley, Peabody advocated a spiritual solution for curing the problems of society.⁶¹ However, both men preached the message of social amelioration through public service from the pulpit of their own financial security. A product of Brahmin ancestry and heir to a rather substantial family fortune, Peabody was always protected from the terrors of the real world that laid awaiting beyond the ivy covered walls of Groton.

Neither Peabody nor Kingsley advocated radical reform or revolution. Clergymen such as Peabody, noted one historian, desired to achieve "a compromise between the harsh individualism of the competitive order and the possible dangers of socialism."⁶² The Rector, indeed, rejected the socialist tendencies of the more reactionary wing of the Social Gospel movement by asserting that "there are great perils in socialism." Peabody advocated change based on moral Christian duty. Peabody's relatively non-confrontational social philosophy of noblesse oblige lent support to honest men who advocated "ameliorative reforms rather than drastic changes."⁶³ The acrimonious social commentary offered by Henry

⁶⁰Ibid. In addition to Endicott Peabody's admiration of Kingsley, his father's life was also heavily influenced this British reformer.

⁶¹McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 247.

⁶²Crunden, Ministers of Reform, 106.

⁶³McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 292.

George in Progress and Poverty or Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward, contrasted sharply with Peabody's belief that "capitalism was not organically evil or unworkable, but rather a good economic system suffering from exploding yet easily removable unchristian practices."⁶⁴

Peabody, as with other Social Gospellers, promulgated that Christianity and service to Christ could humanize and redeem mankind from a society that was growing more confused, materialistic, and cynical. Addressing the lack of morality and spirituality in American society during one lengthy sermon, Peabody asserted in typical Kingsleyian fashion:

The vulgarity of wealth is obvious to any observer. Nothing too costly to be denied one--the very nadir of materialism--with its attendant dissipation and degeneracy and its inevitable results the threatened destruction of the home. Why do I mention these things? Because they come from the neglect of Jesus' teaching and because they strike at the very foundation of the life of the nation which we love.⁶⁵

Believing that Americans were intellectually competent, Peabody argued that his countrymen were lacking in moral integrity and in a commitment to serve the public welfare. Groton's mission, Peabody maintained, was to create a new breed of socially responsible men: "We Americans are shrewd enough and intellectually competent, what we want to do is raise up a race of men--they may be dull men,

⁶⁴Ibid. See also Edward Bellamy, Looking Backward, (Boston, 1889) and Henry George, Progress and Poverty, (New York, 1879).

⁶⁵Endicott Peabody, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God: A Sermon," 1930, Peabody MSS.

but men who see their duty ahead of them and are determined at any cost to achieve that duty."⁶⁶

The Rise of the Urban School Bureaucracy

In an increasingly complex and industrialized America, the burden for social control and reform was placed squarely upon the shoulders of the public schools. As of 1870, 80,00 students attended secondary schools, mostly academies, but by 1910 that number had increased to over one million.⁶⁷ By the early twentieth century, the public high school had replaced the academy as the most popular secondary educational institution.⁶⁸ The decline of the academy coupled with the burgeoning of the public high school during the years between 1880 and 1910 in part paved the way for Groton's and Peabody's accomplishments.

In either establishing or reforming existing urban public schools, the professional educators believed their task of diffusing knowledge was made more difficult by the variegated collection of ethno-religious cultures that increasingly altered the American experience. Moreover, the growing organizational power of a professional teaching force contributed to the numerous political struggles over what role the school should play in society. At times, the secularized educational paideia put forth by the professional educators was in direct conflict with the ideas of lay people who paid the taxes and controlled the school boards.

⁶⁶Endicott Peabody, "The Continuous Moral Influence of the School and the College Through Life," School Review, VII (1899), 621-622.

⁶⁷Ibid., 193.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

In examining the early progressive school reform movements, David Tyack argued that the tumultuous battles between educational professionals and lay people for the soul of the urban school were part of a moral war waged by progressive elites to cleanse society.⁶⁹ In an era marked by graft and political corruption that reached from the American presidency down to the local wards, public school educators attempted to enervate the deleterious influence of the politically corrupt public school ward bosses. The venal practices of urban political kingpins convinced an 1874 Committee of the National Education Association to report that the public schools suffered from:

. . . the interference of gutter politicians with these matters, about which they know nothing at all. Pandering to the prejudices of the rabble, for the sake of voters they perpetually criticize and quarrel with every effort to elevate our schools and so annoy able and sensitive teachers that they are driven out of the field, and its is then confined to such incompetent hands that its course of study must be lowered or they cannot teach it.⁷⁰

In responding to the call for reform, the education experts attempted to remove "politics from education" by introducing the principles of a corporate bureaucracy. This new organizational paradigm had successfully transformed American industry into a perennial juggernaut, and the educational reformers believed that its implementation into the fledgling urban schools could produce similar results.

⁶⁹Tyack, One Best System, 6-7.

⁷⁰"Report on Intermediate (or Upper) Schools," NEA Proceedings, 1874, 15, cf., McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 214.

In 1875, educational reformers claimed that children attending Boston public schools "learned too little and that not well; the atmosphere of the schools was too rigid and mechanical; the key personnel of the system exerted too strong a hold on its operation."⁷¹ Three years later, Charles Francis Adams Jr., a Mugwump reformer, rescued the Quincy school system from the bureaucracy. In 1884, Adams was called upon to introduce his "Quincy System" reform initiative into the Boston public schools.⁷² Adams, a former school board member of the Quincy schools, declared that the average Boston public school administrator was a "drill Sergeant" and the typical public school bureaucracy was "a combination of the cotton mill and the railroad system with the model State-prison."⁷³ Adams, Katz has argued, desperately wanted to reduce the "mechanical, formalistic tone of the [Boston school] structure by infusing it with vigor and life."⁷⁴ However, a powerful and well connected cadre of public school educators eventually thwarted Adams efforts to reform the schools. Ultimately, Adams

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷² Adams' reorganization of the Quincy school system attracted national attention. His "Quincy System" emphasized student individuality by promoting a non-structured curriculum: "The set curriculum was abandoned, and with it the speller, the reader, the grammar, and the copybook. Children were started on simple words and sentences, rather than the alphabet learned by rote. In the place of time-honored text, magazine, newspapers, and material devised by the teachers themselves were introduced into the classroom." Lawrence A. Cremin, The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education 1876-1957, (New York, 1961), 130-133. See also Edward Chase Kirkland, Charles Francis Adams, Jr.: The Patrician at Bay, (Cambridge, MA., 1965).

⁷³Charles Francis Adams, Jr., The New Departure in the Common Schools of Quincy and Other Papers on Educational Topics, (Boston, 1881), 60-63.

⁷⁴Katz, Class, Schools, and Bureaucracy, 85.

disillusionment with the urban public schools prompted him to send his two sons to Groton School.⁷⁵

As public school educators eventually came to embrace the organizational philosophy of the bureaucracy, boarding schools, and especially Groton, provided an attractive alternative to those who disliked the factory-like environments of the public schools. For such well educated men as Charles Francis Adams Jr., Groton offered a small, nurturing, family-like environment. "The radical error in my case," Adams wrote in his autobiography, "was that I was kept at home, and brought up in an uncongenial day-school. I do not hesitate to say that these mistakes have gravely prejudiced my entire life."⁷⁶ The boarding school ethos was a sharp contrast to a public school system which in 1880 was viewed by most wealthy Bostonians with "disgust" and encouraged them to seek "alternative [educational] institutions for their sons."⁷⁷ Clearly, sending their children to Groton was not an option available to most families. Unlike the preindustrial days of Round Hill and Flushing Institute, however, the advent of the industrial revolution created a more powerful wealthy class that could readily afford the high tuition price Groton demanded.

American educational institutions have often been products of change that reflect the momentum of new movements in American society. Michael Katz has asserted that the establishment of boarding

⁷⁵McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 252.

⁷⁶Charles Francis Adams, Jr., Charles Francis Adams, 1835-1915: An Autobiography, (Boston, 1916), 21, 20, cf. McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 5.

⁷⁷McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 195.

schools in the late nineteenth century was in part a revolt against the rigid, bureaucratic regimes of the urban public schools.⁷⁸ The majority of members of the new patrician class believed in improving public education. They were, however, unwilling to sacrifice their children on behalf of a public school system which was confronted with the ugly realities of urban and industrial life.⁷⁹ Although some progressive minded social reformers presented public education as a social and economic panacea, these change agents routinely squabbled with one another over the implementation of a new educational paideia.

Groton and Peabody, to some extent, capitalized on the disorganization of the urban public schools. Groton offered, to those who could afford their high tuition, a bucolic educational setting, an organization run on the principles of a large family, and mandatory religious services. As the public schools moved towards adopting a more secularized paideia, albeit a generalized Protestant one, Peabody extolled the virtues of Groton's more focused religious education. When compared to the classical curriculum, paternalistic organization, and "manly" Christian oriented regime of Groton--and other Episcopal boarding schools as well--the typical public school, in the eyes of religious boarding school supporters at least, failed to provide an adequate environment for nurturing a new generation of Christian gentlemen.

Conclusion

⁷⁸Michael B. Katz, review of McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, in Journal of American History, 1971.

⁷⁹McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 211.

During the antebellum era, the American boarding school had emerged as an anomaly in America's educational landscape and of the earliest foundations, only St. Paul's survived beyond the Civil War. In postbellum America, however, the boarding school surpassed the academy in prestige and influence and during this period these schools, for the most part, shed their European coats and developed into a truly indigenous American institution. Although the reasons for the founding of each institution varied, the prolific growth of boarding schools in the late-nineteenth century can be largely attributed to a wide variety of forces: immigration, the steady movement of families from rural to metropolitan centers, urban unrest, industrialization, Anglophillia, a sense of spiritual, moral, and cultural crisis, and the rise of urban school bureaucracies. While no single movement overtly influenced his decision to open an Episcopal Church boarding school, the combination of these unique social, cultural, political, and religious forces, to a large extent, provide an explanation as to why Peabody felt compelled to devote his time and energy toward building a school. Moreover, such a interpretation also sheds some light of why many wealthy parents enthusiastically embraced his message of developing "manly Christian character."

Solely establishing a safe and luxurious resort for the sons of the elite was not, contrary to what many historians and sociologists have suggested, Peabody's original intention when he opened his school. Addressing the charges of elitism, one boarding school historian claimed, "Groton has always been a class school," but he noted further that "this has probably not been the result of conscious

effort on Dr. Peabody's part."⁸⁰ Although undeniably some patrician parents sent their children to Groton primarily because of its high standing amongst the Eastern aristocracy, the Rector held steadfast to a moral vision which emphasized such Victorian middle-class values as self-control, parsimony, self-sacrifice, and self-discipline.

⁸⁰Porter Sargent, The Handbook of Private Schools, (Boston, 1916), 105.

Section Two

Forming the Groton Ideal

Divided into two chapters, Part Two outlines in more detail Endicott Peabody's educational philosophy. Chapter Five examines how Peabody incorporated the concept of the boarding school as an ideal Christian surrogate family into Groton's ethos. Specific attention is paid to analyzing his philosophy of moral and spiritual nurture. Among the questions addressed, for example, is the degree to which faculty and students were responsible for insuring that Peabody's philosophy of Christian nurture permeated every aspect of daily life at Groton.

The making of the ideal Christian gentleman, in Peabody's view, was not simply limited to religious worship, proper moral rectitude, or memorizing ancient Greek and Latin texts. True character development, Peabody held, involved dedicating one's life to helping the less fortunate. Chapter six reveals how and why Peabody felt compelled to teach patrician youth about the plight of the disadvantaged. Indeed, the notion of many Grotonians becoming virtuous public servants was part and parcel of the Rector's overall mission for his school: to produce a stalwart breed of morally trained and God fearing American leaders.

In addition to delineating his educational philosophy, an overarching theme of both chapters involves chronicling the extent to which the goals and objectives that Peabody established for Groton differed from or were similar to those of other late-nineteenth century educators.

Chapter Four

Groton as the Ideal Christian Family

The rise of the Episcopal Church School was due to the fact that . . . Episcopalians have wanted religious education to be a part of the curriculum in the institutions which their children attended.
(Sherrard Billings, 1930)

Endicott Peabody was born and raised in an atmosphere of moral and religious sensitivity, and upon reaching adulthood he found it increasingly difficult to make sense of the emerging new industrial and social order. On the one hand, Peabody would have agreed with journalist Hutchins Hapgood who wrote in his autobiography that "if it hadn't been for the crystallized background of Victorian time, I would have been like a rudderless ship in a stormy sea, with the winds blowing in all directions at once."¹ At the same time, however, unlike Hapgood who as an adult had rejected his Victorian upbringing, Peabody remained deeply convinced that proper moral restraint and daily religious worship were fundamental to maintaining a healthy Christian lifestyle.

By the time Peabody founded Groton in 1884, many of his contemporaries had come to the rather foreboding conclusion that the moral and spiritual fiber of American society was slowly decaying. Josiah Strong, for instance, argued in 1885 that the perils of urban life significantly contributed to the denigration of American society.² In a similar vein, Brooks Adams in The Law of Civilization

¹Hutchins Hapgood, A Victorian in the Modern World, (New York, 1939), vii.

²Ralph Luker, The Social Gospel in Black and White, (Chapel Hill, NC., 1991), 160.

and Decay admonished that the lust, greed, and corruption of the Gilded Age had enervated American society. The resurrection of America, these men held, depended upon producing morally and spiritually fit individuals. To Endicott Peabody at least, there existed no more important mission than educating a new and stalwart breed of Christian warriors who could successfully crusade against the evils of society.

Yet in the minds of some prominent intellectuals and educators, Peabody's vision of producing morally righteous and "manly" Christian gentlemen simply represented the pipe dreams of an ingenuous clergyman. A disillusioned Henry Adams, for instance, wrote about the deterioration of late-nineteenth century American culture and society by noting:

The object of education, therefore, was changed. For many years it had lost itself in studying what the world had ceased to care for; if it were to begin again, it must try to find out what the mass of mankind did care for, and why. Religion, politics, statistics, travel had thus far led to nothing.³

Adams held a pessimistic, and at times fatalistic, outlook on late nineteenth century American life. The Credit Mobilier scandal, the corruption of the Grant Administration, and the robber barons' total disregard for ethical business practices persuaded Adams and others that it was futile, especially for an individual such as Peabody, to try

³Henry Adams, The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography, 4th edition. (Boston, 1971), 352-353.

to reform the modern world.⁴ Yale sociologist and grand debunker William Graham Sumner, shared many of Adams's cynical viewpoints regarding progress and reform. Arguing in Folkways that only a few men were capable of rising above the layers of customs that governed society, Sumner placed little faith in the humanitarian efforts to ameliorate and reform society.⁵

In stark contrast to the despairing beliefs of Adams and Sumner, Peabody was, by nature, an optimist. Enthusiastically embracing religion when many of his contemporaries asserted that theological dogma was anathema to social progress, Peabody inexhaustibly confronted the challenges of a new industrial order. Peabody believed, somewhat naively, that a new generation of Christian gentlemen, armed with a Groton education and a firm Christian conviction, could reform society.

Yet in order for Peabody's ambitious goals for Groton School to be realized, he had to overcome several obstacles. First, with practically no educational experience among them, Peabody and his two masters had to construct a daily routine and academic curriculum to address effectively the spiritual, intellectual, and physical needs of young adolescents. Second, during the school's early years Peabody worried constantly about Groton's fiscal stability. Specifically, he often wondered if he could generate enough interest among parents to fill Groton's available spaces. Moreover,

⁴Van Wyck Brooks, New England Indian Summer 1865- 1915, (Boston, 1940), 93-94.

⁵Ibid., 477. See William Graham Sumner, Folkways: A Study of the Sociological Importance of Usage's, Manners, Customs, Mores, and Morals, (New York, [1906], 1940).

he remained extremely dedicated toward increasing the size of the school's endowment in order to pay off the large debt he accrued.

Despite these formidable challenges, in many respects, Peabody's most overarching concern involved organizing his school to simulate the caring nature of a cohesive family. In essence, this concept was cornerstone of his educational philosophy and therefore warrants considerable attention. Such an examination, moreover, reveals the "massive simplicity" of his educational ideals that remained, for the most part, essentially unchanged throughout his years at Groton.⁶

Christian Nurture

In the early years of the Republic, the strength of the preindustrial economy was linked to the productivity of small agrarian farms and coastal merchants. Families were often quite large and some children left home at an early age. As children matured into their teen-years, they were as likely to be viewed by their parents as an economic liability as well as potential assets: more mouths to feed and clothe that may or may not contribute to the overall financial well-being of the family. In Rites of Passage, historian Joseph Kett argued that as America evolved into a more industrial based society, the availability of apprenticeships and manual labor jobs disappeared for most youths.⁷ In addition, late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century educational

⁶James McLachlan, American Boarding Schools: A Historical Study, (New York, 1970), 252.

⁷Kett, Rites of Passage, 58-61.

opportunities for children were either limited or quite random. Kett observed:

The tendency of young people to shift from apprenticeship to apprenticeship, the sporadic home leaving and returns, the loose routine of the district schools, the disposition of students to shift academies every few years, and the ability of college students to defy authority were all part of a pattern of slack control over youth tempered only by occasional obtrusions of overbearing authority.⁸

As has been noted, during the antebellum period, adult anxieties over the daily routines of youth manifested themselves in the creation of "educational" institutions such as Sunday schools, academies, voluntary church organizations, and boarding schools. The boarding schools that emerged during the antebellum era had established close ties with the Episcopal church. Indeed, the Episcopalians took to founding and supporting boarding schools with the same zeal and enthusiasm that college and academy boosters launched their institutions. Unlike schools established by evangelical groups that emphasized instant conversion through revivals, "Episcopalians typically founded institutions that drew individuals together in organic units which allowed for the gradual Christian nurture of the child."⁹

Muhlenberg's idea of creating a nurturing Christian community at Flushing was enhanced by the 1861 publication of Horace Bushnell's influential work, Christian Nurture. Bushnell thought that the family was the ideal environment for nurturing and regulating a

⁸Ibid., 60.

⁹McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 141.

child's religious development. "The [family] house having a domestic Spirit of grace dwelling in it," wrote Bushnell, "should become the church of childhood, the table and hearth a holy rite, and life an element of saving power. . . . The child is to grow up in the life of the parent, and be a Christian in Principle, from his earliest years."¹⁰

As a youth, Bushnell had several religious conversion experiences that had left him spiritually void and emotionally dissatisfied. Christian Nurture reflected his disapproval of the religious revivals of the Second Great Awakening. He believed these staged events were exceedingly emotional, overly concerned with immediate conversion, and placed an inordinate emphasis on individualism. Instead of waiting until the teenage years to have a religious experience, Bushnell argued that the child was capable of comprehending Christian ideals at an early age. He stated: "There could not be a worse or more baleful implication given to a child, than that he is to reject God and all holy principle, till he has come to a mature age."¹¹

Bushnell's ideas about moral and religious development came at a time when Americans were moving to urban centers.¹²

¹⁰Horace Bushnell, Christian Nurture (Grand Rapids, MI., [1861], 1991), 19-20, 32.

¹¹Bushnell, Christian Nurture, 15.

¹²TheodoreSizer has argued that "the growth of the cities and the shifting sources of intellectual authority are the two most significant factors explaining the rise in the importance of formal education." Sizer, Secondary Schools at the Turn of the Century, 6. In 1860 the total American population was 31,443,321 with over six million living in urban environments; an urban environment was defined as a town with a population over 2500. By 1890 the total population had grown to 62,947,714 with over twenty-two million living in urban environments. United States Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States Colonial Times to 1957, (Washington, 1960), as cited in Ibid.

Moreover, social disorder was prevalent. In the early 1860s, then, Bushnell was in part responding to the growing concern among parents over how to protect children from the perceived dangers of city life. A little more than two decades later Peabody and many other late-nineteenth century boarding school headmasters had come to share many of Bushnell's viewpoints.

The character of a child, Bushnell argued, should not be left to chance. Many of the revivalists, however, contended that an individual had to be mature enough to undergo the conversion experience. Bushnell disagreed; he asserted that the idea of "character building" needed to happen as an evenly-paced, gradual process rather than as a radical change.¹³ Bushnell wrote that "God does expressly lay it upon us to expect that our children will grow up in piety, under the parental nurture, and assumes the possibility that such a result may ordinarily be realized."¹⁴ Therefore, the family played the pivotal role--for better or for worse--in developing and molding the Christian nature of the child.

In many ways Bushnell's philosophy was an outgrowth of what Muhlenberg had attempted at the Flushing Institute. Both men believed in establishing the "family" as the ideal "nesting" place for nurturing the religious development of the child. Yet, while Bushnell addressed the nuclear family, Muhlenberg upheld the Episcopal Church and the boarding school as the proper instruments in which to inculcate youth with a proper dose of religious and moral values:

¹³ Kett, Rites of Passage, 184.

¹⁴ Bushnell, Christian Nurture, 35.

While most of Muhlenberg's values and goals paralleled Bushnell's the former went one step further in his thought. For him, Christian nurture could be carried out not just in a Christian home, but in an institution modeled on the Christian home. Muhlenberg's institutionalization of Christian nurture allowed him--and other Episcopalians--to succeed where Bushnell's hopes remained simply rhetoric.¹⁵

Reminiscent of Horace Bushnell, Peabody held that a nurturing family provided the ideal environment for children to attain proper moral and spiritual values. Groton School, Peabody emphasized, developed Christian character and turned young adolescents into "manly" Christian gentlemen. Peabody's assertions about the character building mission of Groton School, to a large degree, fixated in the minds of late-nineteenth Americans the idea that the Episcopalian boarding school was to be the ideal surrogate Christian family.

Peabody's simplistic educational system revolved around Christian principles, moral character development, and Spartan accommodations.¹⁶ In order to produce morally righteous Christian gentlemen, Peabody, in typical Victorian fashion, promoted the Puritan values of parsimony, hard work, and self-abnegation. From all accounts, freedom was certainly an unfamiliar notion to a Grotonian.

Similar to his antebellum predecessors, Peabody maintained that the deleterious conditions of the cities often precluded parents

¹⁵McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 134.

¹⁶ Frank Kintrea, "Old Peabo and the School," American Heritage, 98.

from properly raising their children. Addressing why he embraced the concept of the boarding school as a surrogate for the family, Peabody declared in 1916:

A boarding school is not the ideal place for a boy. The ideal place for a boy is his home. But many boys are obliged for one reason or another, to be sent away from home. . . . The boarding school gives a boy an opportunity to relate himself at an early age to people his own age, and that is a very great benefit. The boys who come from boarding schools are in comparatively small numbers at the universities, and yet one is struck again and again by the positions which they take and by the way in which the authorities of the universities are apt to send for some graduates of these schools if they want help in influencing [the moral character] of other boys.¹⁷

Peabody's biographer wrote, "to understand Groton one must understand the importance of the family idea. It was the most natural thing in the world for [Peabody] to think of his school as being simply a large family."¹⁸ After spending a considerable amount of time visiting the Groton campus in 1893, one visitor commented: "The general atmosphere of the school is delightful. The headmaster is the head of a great family of which the other masters and--in a modified sense--the sixth form are the older members."¹⁹ To a certain degree, both Peabody's role as headmaster and the historical evolution of the school can be best understood when examined from the perspective that Peabody, at all times, never wavered from his commitment to provide for both masters and

¹⁷Endicott Peabody, "Speech at Fay School 50th Anniversary," June 14, 1916, Peabody MSS.

¹⁸Frank D. Ashburn, Peabody of Groton: A Portrait, (Cambridge, MA., 1947), 71.

¹⁹Paul Hanus, "Mathematics at Groton," School Examination Board, 1893, 1, Groton Folder, Harvard SEB MSS.

students an institutionalized setting which embraced the Christian family ideal.

Admissions

In order to maintain Groton's family-like atmosphere, then, Peabody and the Board of Trustees were deeply committed to keeping Groton small. During Groton's first two years, admission standards remained quite informal as Peabody had to seek out possible candidates from his close friends and relatives. His early difficulty in attracting students was exacerbated by the fact that parents were at first somewhat reluctant to send their sons to a school where the headmaster and faculty had no prior teaching experience. Groton benefited greatly, however, from both Peabody's emphasis on "manly character" development and perhaps even more importantly, his social connections. By 1887 the Rector was besieged with so many requests from prospective parents that members of the Board of Trustees urged Peabody to adopt a specific admissions policy.

From the outset of Groton's opening trustee member Phillips Brooks pleaded with Peabody to keep the school's enrollment small. "I beg of you," Brooks wrote to Peabody in 1885, "not to let the school get too large in its second year."²⁰ Mindful of this advice, Peabody turned to other members of the board for guidance. Unlike other American boarding schools which employed variety of different admissions practices, Groton's trustees wanted to establish and abide by a set of specific rules that would ultimately prevent the

²⁰Phillips Brooks to Endicott Peabody, March 21, 1885, Peabody MSS.

school from expanding too rapidly. "St. Paul's and St. Mark's seem to be so varied in their application methods that Groton will have to create its own rules," William Lawrence suggested to Peabody in 1888. Moreover, he advised, "I do not think it makes so much difference what the rules are provided the parents of every boy understands (or at least is provided with) the rules so that they may know just what to expect."²¹

As of 1889, providing they passed Groton's entrance exam, boys were admitted according to their numerical order on a list kept by Groton's admission and application officer, George Jefferson. Parents who wished to enter their sons at Groton had to write to either Peabody or Jefferson and request that their son's name be placed on the list. Typical of most letters, one prospective parent wrote: "I take this early opportunity to ask you if I may now have you put down my son's name for Groton, when he has attained suitable age: (He is at present five days old)."²² When a boy reached the age that he could enter Groton, (11-12 years old), his parents would write to Peabody again and indicate whether or not they were still interested in sending their son to school. In the new admission system, a prospective student also had to pass a physical, a series of entrance exams testing his knowledge in the classics, secure a solid recommendation from both past teachers and his minister, and

²¹William Lawrence to Endicott Peabody, September 12, 1888, Peabody MSS. By 1906, St Paul's had 349 students compared to Groton which had only 158. Moreover, twenty years later St. Paul's had grown to accommodate 414 students while Groton only allowed 177. See, Steven B. Levine, "The Rise of American Boarding Schools and the Development of a National Upper Class," Social Problems, vol. 28, no.1, October 1980, 64.

²²Roger Bigelow Merrinnan to Endicott Peabody, May 4, 1905, Peabody MSS.

finally have a personal interview with the Rector. "Boys have always been admitted by order of application, that is, if they pass the entrance requirements," Peabody insisted, and dismissing the charges of social exclusivity, he affirmed vigorously that "never, in all my years here, has a boy been admitted on social grounds."²³

Yet Groton's small size, in comparison to other American and European boarding schools, led many outsiders to conclude that Peabody's school was elitist and only accepted students based their parents' social standing. "I am aware of what a great many persons think about us," the Rector revealed in an interview one year before his retirement, and troubled by this misconception he concluded, "if I were to think of anything in my years with this school had been in the nature of a disappointment, perhaps it would be that very thing; I had hoped that we might be somewhat more broadly understood."²⁴

Nevertheless, the fact that the majority of Groton students came from families listed in the Social Register contributed to the perception that Groton, and many other boarding schools, were bastions of elitism and snobbery.²⁵ Moreover, the widely held belief

²³Carl Warton, "The Masters and the Boys Have Made Groton School, Boston Herald, March 5, 1939, 5.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵ The use of the Social Register by scholars to prove charges of elitism has, according to historian James McLachlan, led to many misleading conclusions. Claiming that sociologists such as E. Digby Baltzell, C. Wright Mills, and G. William Domhoff relied too heavily on this document in their various critiques of boarding schools, McLachlan wrote: "However, criteria for such [Social Register] listings are and were so eccentric that they strike me as being of extremely limited usefulness. I would suggest that the existence or non-existence of an American upper class in the nineteenth century must begin with an empirical analysis of tax lists, wills, and so forth, along the lines followed by Jackson Turner Main in his Social Structure of Revolutionary

that names and dates could be altered on Groton's numerical admissions list exacerbated these claims. Addressing the charge of Groton's elitism in 1898, one individual admonished Peabody:

There is an impression in New York which I am sure you will want to clear up when you talk to New York people, that entrance to Groton is a matter of favoritism. This has been told to me several times and seems to have caused a good deal of bitterness. I have replied that there is no favoritism in the selection to boys to be admitted to the school. . . .²⁶

Despite Peabody's continued insistence that no prospective applicants had been accorded special treatment, when Groton entered its fourth decade nearly two-thirds of the student body were sons of alumni.²⁷ Moreover, Groton's admission system distinctly favored boys whose parents had access to tutors who could help their sons prepare for the school's entrance exams which required rudimentary knowledge of Latin, Greek, and arithmetic.

For many Americans living at the time Groton was founded, however, the most insurmountable barrier remained the school's hefty tuition. "The rates of the [boarding] school are so high that only the very rich can patronize it," noted one critic of these institutions in 1902 and he added sardonically, "the inevitable tendency is that the boy whose sole claim to this skilled and expensive [education] is that

America (Princeton, 1965). My suspicion is that one would eventually find not a single 'upper class,' but several different 'sub-cultures of the rich,' often in conflict with one another, or even ignorant of each other's existence." McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, fn. 19, 300.

²⁶Percy S. Grant to Endicott Peabody, January 29, 1898, Peabody MSS.

²⁷Groton School Address and Record Book 1992, (Groton, MA., 1992), 77, Peabody MSS.

he . . . shall regard himself as entirely worth it all."²⁸ In 1893, for example, a Groton education cost \$600 annually. "As recently as 1904-05," argued historian James McLachlan, "two-thirds of the adult male workers in the United States did not make even \$600 a year. . . . And tuition was only the beginning of the expenses involved in sending a boy to one of these schools."²⁹

In all fairness to Peabody and the Groton trustees, it must also be noted that their philosophy to keep the school small was in part due to their desire to maintain a family ethos. When asked why he limited the school's enrollment to so few students, Peabody responded: "As I have said from the outset our purpose was to create a [family] atmosphere which should be the right kind of living. That was a fundamental aspect from which we have never deviated."³⁰ On another occasion, he suggested that having a small number of boys made it easier to enforce a strict discipline code and prevent students from engaging in nefarious activities: "In a small school like this, with so many men to share the responsibilities, it is almost inexcusable that moral evil should exist at all without our knowing it."³¹ With a waiting list of more than one hundred students by the school's tenth anniversary, Peabody also resisted the temptation to emulate the substantially larger English public schools. While Eton and Rugby enrolled over a thousand students, the number of boys at

²⁸George C. Edwards, "The Private School in American Life," Educational Review, vol. 23, January-May, 1902, 264.

²⁹McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 11.

³⁰Warton, "The Masters and the Boys Have Made Groton School," Boston Globe, 5.

³¹Endicott Peabody, "Speech to the Groton Masters," April 12, 1910, Peabody MSS.

Groton never climbed over two hundred during the Rector's fifty-six years.

Peabody's requirement that students enroll in the first or second form also heightened Groton's sense of exclusivity. Several years after Peabody had retired, he wrote:

In the education of a boy, then, our pleas have been for a Church School comparatively small if it is to retain the family aspect, where all members, old and young, may know each other intimately, and where the boys remain for five or six years, the normal period of secondary education.³²

While some families may have been able to afford one or two years of Groton's exorbitant tuition, only a comparatively few had the financial resources to invest in the five or six year commitment Peabody required. Clearly, this policy prevented most families from even considering sending their sons to Groton. "[Fathers] who sent their sons to Groton," claimed McLachlan, "were men of the 'Mugwump' type--of established families with traditions of public service, financially secure though not necessarily very rich, and perhaps most important, well educated."³³ In retrospect, while Peabody may have been convinced Groton's admission system was thoroughly democratic, the school's policies distinctly favored those who realized the importance of sending a telegram once their children had been born, whose children had the time and access to a

³²Endicott Peabody "Personal Recollections," 1944, Peabody, MSS, cf. Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 76.

³³McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 260.

personal tutor to learn Latin and Greek, and most importantly who had over \$3000 to invest in a secondary education.

Prefect System

From the first day Groton opened, Peabody argued that there were two basic philosophies which governed schools. The first, he claimed, was the laissez-faire approach. The second paralleled the cohesiveness and organization of a large family. Of the former, Peabody proclaimed that providing boys with unrestricted amounts of freedom resulted in creating a deleterious moral and educational environment. The laissez-faire approach, Peabody declared:

fails to take into account the fact that parents, teachers, tutors, and governors are placed in authority in order that they may give to those who are under them the benefit of the wisdom of ages and of their own mistakes and discoveries, in order that the child may, by and by, be able to form a sound judgment.³⁴

Believing that without proper guidance some students would abuse freedom, Peabody endeavored to insure that at Groton, those who were more experienced and mature would guide those whose moral compasses were not yet properly set.³⁵

Peabody implemented a system where the older students were largely responsible for maintaining order. Describing what he referred to as the "prefect system" to a group of educators, Peabody

³⁴Endicott Peabody, "The Training and Responsibility of Parents," June 1908, 5-6, Peabody MSS.

³⁵Peabody, "The Continuous Moral Influence," School Review, VII (1899), 625.

outlined the benefits of this philosophy. The preferred mode of discipline, he said, is:

to use the boys as fellow workers with the masters to prevent evil rising, not the nursery system, but the scientific system, to keep the whole body thoroughly sound, to prevent rather than to cure. To do that you establish what is called the monitor system, or the prefect system. . . . It seems to me such a great thing to get older boys to cooperate with the school, to become fellow workers with the masters. The authority that is given to them is practically the same authority that is given to the masters, and their relation with the masters, and with the head master, perhaps, especially, is that of entire confidence. . . . The prefect takes the position of older brother in the family.³⁶

Convinced that older boys should learn the characteristics of trustworthiness and accountability, Peabody allowed the upper forms the opportunity to assert leadership within the school.³⁷ The attitude of the boys in fifth and sixth form, Peabody insisted, was crucial for maintaining the proper moral, spiritual, and family tone of the school. Thus, to a certain extent, the Rector delegated the responsibility of enforcing school rules to the older students. "The so-called prefect system looks after both discipline and morals," the Rector explained to group of new Groton masters in 1933, and the idea behind its implementation, he continued, was that "the older and more positive leaders are given the responsibility and the

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷ Peabody used the term "form" to describe grade placement. There were six forms at Groton. The first form consisted of the youngest students. The sixth form was the equivalent of high school senior.

authority of masters, and they generally play up to it satisfactorily."³⁸

Each year Peabody recognized several individuals (i.e., three to seven boys) from the sixth form who exhibited the most outstanding leadership qualities. These students were given the responsibility of setting the proper moral tone for the entire school. Within this group, the boy who demonstrated the greatest overall potential was given the title of Senior Prefect. This honor reflected the highest and most prestigious position in the school, and accordingly, this student was given a large study with an adjoining bedroom. Moreover, each day the Senior Prefect consulted with the Rector personally about the tone of the student body.³⁹ Invariably, not all students supported the Rector's choices. Writing to his parents about the prefect selections, young Franklin Roosevelt wrote, "Three more prefects made today, but I'm glad not be one after the choice! . . . Everyone is wild at the Rector for his favoritism, but the honor is no longer an honor and makes no difference to one's standing."⁴⁰

Peabody used the prefects as an additional administrative body to help himself, and other masters, pass the traditions of the school from one form to the next. Most prefects handled the extra responsibility with a sense of pride and dignity. "I feel very deeply the honor you have conferred upon me by appointing me to Senior Prefect," Groton student Arthur Blagden wrote to Peabody in the summer of 1901 after receiving the news that he had been chosen

³⁸Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Masters," September, 1933, Peabody MSS.

³⁹Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 98.

⁴⁰Franklin Roosevelt to Parents, March 25, 1900 in FDR His Personal Letters: The Early Years, ed., Elliott Roosevelt (New York, 1947), 392.

for the venerated position. Reflecting the seriousness of his assignment, Blagden continued, "I understand that the position is one of great possibility as well as of great responsibility, and I shall do my best to make it as effective as it ought to be; I shall do my best to prove myself worthy of the trust you have given me."⁴¹

Boot-boxing and Pumping

"Perhaps the most noticeable feature of Groton," wrote longtime master Reverend Sherrard Billings in 1900, "is that [the school day] is very busy." Moreover, he added, "the day follows a fairly hard and fast plan the year through. Boys get in the habit of doing things in the order of [a rigid] routine, often without much idea of [freedom or] time."⁴² One might also add that in order to avoid the prospect of being humiliated by their peers, boys had to conform to the school's inflexible and monastic routine. In fact, Peabody's decision to allow sixth formers to run the school created a rather harsh and at times, an unruly sub-culture wherein older and more experienced Grotonians wielded their influence and power often with little or no regard to the feelings of younger students. Within boarding school dormitories, argued one historian, "the student was . . . confined with a large number of other boys . . . [where] he encountered competition, shifting hierarchies, cruelties, loyalties, and pranks. . . . This heroic dose of boyhood, [headmasters believed], would cure over civilized lads and turn them into men, or so the thinking went."⁴³

⁴¹Arthur Blagden to Endicott Peabody, August 12, 1901, Peabody MSS.

⁴²Sherrard Billings, "A Day's Work," The Church Militant, vol. 3, no. 3, April 1900, 4.

⁴³E. Anthony Rotundo, American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era, (New York, 1993), 258.

The Rector, however, opposed the English public school rituals of fagging or flogging. "I never administered a flogging because I realize how much that form of punishment is disliked by Americans," Peabody wrote in 1908.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, there existed within Groton several tactics specifically designed to serve as substitutes for the feelings of shame and humiliation associated with corporal punishment. These "moral suasion" devices had a similar debilitating effect on those students who were targeted for their disciplinary attention and contributed to an atmosphere of conformity and repressiveness.⁴⁵ During Groton's first three decades the Senior Prefect and members of the sixth form employed two moral suasion customs to insure that the entire school was cognizant of what group dictated the tone of the school. Students who routinely violated school customs and rules, or displayed tendencies of being fresh or swell-headed, were either boot-boxed or pumped. When a student was accused of violating a minor school rule the offender would likely be boot-boxed. This rather mild form of hazing, of which the Rector and many other members of the faculty approved, involved placing a student in his storage trunk located in the basement of the dormitory. Although the trunks were relatively small, they could easily accommodate a young boy of improper disposition.

The second corrective tactic used by Grotonians was far more severe. The pumping of a student was reserved for those occasions when members of the upper forms believed that a student's conduct

⁴⁴Endicott Peabody to Sidney Tabor, January 6, 1908, Peabody MSS.

⁴⁵Joseph Kett, "On Revisionism," History of Education Quarterly, Summer 1979, 231.

was detrimental to the moral ethos of the school. While never publicly endorsing this ritual, Peabody was fully cognizant of its existence. Pumping helped to maintain, Peabody insisted, the morale of the school because "the possibility of being subjected to this discipline deterred boys from being rowdy or fresh."⁴⁶ Even those Grotonians whose parents held the most influential and powerful positions in the country were not exempt from this cruel punishment. Theodore Roosevelt's son Teddy was pumped just three weeks before his father's vice-presidential inauguration. Peabody's own son, Malcom, suffered a similar fate for appearing swell headed and fresh.

The decision to pump a student was made in the presence of the entire school. The sixth form would hold a meeting in the Senior Prefect's study to discuss a particular student's offense, and whether or not his behavior merited a pumping. After dismissing the students from the compulsory evening prayers, the Senior Prefect would ring a gong which signaled that all students must remain seated. As Peabody left the school room, some students would follow him out, and then close the door behind him. Announcing that he wanted to see a specific student in his study, the Senior Prefect confronted the trembling individual by listing the charges that were being brought against him. If the student seemed unremorseful or displayed arrogant tendencies, he was quickly hauled off to the shower room.

⁴⁶Endicott Peabody to Sidney Tabor, January 16, 1908, Peabody MSS.

Placing his mouth underneath the faucet for a period of eight to ten seconds, one student would forcefully turn the water tap to its highest setting. Water rapidly spilled into the mouth of the struggling individual which created a sensation and condition similar to that of a person drowning. After being pumped once or twice, the dazed student was uprighted, and asked if he knew why he was being disciplined. If he seemed hesitant to answer, he was placed back underneath the faucet. Writing to his parents about the unfortunate experience of one of his classmates, young F.D.R. declared, "the Biddle boy is quite crazy, fresh, and stupid, he has been boot-boxed once and threatened to be pumped several times.⁴⁷

In one instance, an irate parent whose son suffered through this humiliating experience wrote to Peabody and suggested that such practices be immediately eradicated from the school:

I learned that there exists a regular custom by which the sixth form undertakes to discipline any member of a lower form who is, in their judgment, guilty of freshness. . . . I am told that on an evening of last November, in pursuance of this custom, the sixth form boys marshaled all the other boys into the school-room, where upon the prefect, Roosevelt, announced that Opdyche was "wanted" in the lavatory. The later obeyed the summons, and on his return to the school-room it was evident that he had been subject to this [pumping]. I assume of course, that it would not be tolerated if the facts were known. Probably a mistaken esprit de corps and a reluctance, on the part of the boys to "tell tales" on fellow Grotonians have

⁴⁷Franklin Roosevelt to Parents, September 27, 1896. in FDR: His Personal Letters, 317. Although at times believed to be fresh and swell headed, Franklin Roosevelt escaped being boot-boxed or pumped.

resulted in keeping you and your assistants in ignorance.⁴⁸

Although Peabody certainly endorsed this form of punishment, it is clear from his response to this concerned parent that he was either naive or unaware about how students actually administered this brutal ritual:

It is a help to have the custom to which you refer called to one's attention even though the account of it which has been given you be not altogether accurate. As a matter of fact, this is the kind of thing that happens: A boy who is generally troublesome and fails, in the opinion of the sixth form to catch the spirit of the school is summoned by the senior prefect and warned that he must mend his ways. If he should continue to be unsatisfactory, he is then summoned from the school room in the presence of the other boys, taken to the lavatory, and two basins of water are thrown over his head. A good many years ago, it was the custom of the boys to ruse in the offender and put him under the tap. This was found to be too rough, and possibly dangerous; and in its place this form was substituted. I do not know that it can fairly be looked upon as an act of bullying. In the judgment of the boys, it is a manifestation of the displeasure of the upper school in reference to the character or the conduct of an individual, expressed in a physical way unattained by pain.⁴⁹

Peabody justified the enforcement of "pumping" as an appropriate moral corrective device. Informing the complaining parent that his son deserved to be pumped, Peabody wrote: "In the case of Odpycke, he had been disagreeable to people of his own age,

⁴⁸Sidney R. Tabor to Endicott Peabody, January 2, 1908, Peabody MSS.

⁴⁹Endicott Peabody to Sidney Tabor, January 4, 1908, Peabody MSS.

generally anti-social, and unwilling to carry out the order of the leader of his group in regard to exercise."⁵⁰

By the conclusion of World War I, Peabody may have determined that the public humiliation and brutality associated with pumping was actually detrimental to the ethos of the school. While members of the sixth form may have designed other methods and penalties to insure they controlled the tone of the school, from all available accounts, references to students being either pumped or boot-boxed disappeared after 1920.⁵¹

The Faculty

The Rector's overt paternalism was readily apparent in his interaction with the faculty as well. Limiting the faculty's involvement in most of the important institutional decisions, Peabody delegated power gingerly. Moreover, he always demanded that they be completely dedicated to their jobs often at the expense of their own privacy and personal development. If a faculty member left the campus for any reason, the Rector wanted to know where he was going and when he was going to return.⁵²

His stern and unyielding disposition often created some tension among the more liberal members of the faculty. "There [were] . . . many men who could not abide what they call[ed] the Rector's paternalism," his biographer recalled.⁵³ Muscular, vivacious, and

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹I have come to this conclusion based on two investigations. First, most alumni interviewed for Groton's Oral History Project who had graduated after 1920 mention that "pumping" did not exist. Second, there is no mention of this ritual in any of Peabody's speeches or letters after 1920.

⁵²Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 139.

⁵³Ibid.

seemingly untiring, Peabody expected that his masters would abide by his personal example and rarely, if ever, directly challenge his authority. He insisted that they be involved in every aspect of the boys' lives and assume the role of both a parent and an older brother. When a faculty member was unwilling to be devoted completely to the school or endure the long list of rules, responsibilities, and duties Peabody expected him to carry out, then he usually left Groton to teach at more flexible institution or pursue another career. "The Rector's reply to the [faculty] resentment," Ashburn wrote, "was simply that masters got long vacations, that while school was [in session] they were expected to work and work hard and their first responsibility . . . was to see to it that the boys were taken care of."⁵⁴

The faculty, Peabody believed, had the most profound impact upon the moral and religious development of students, and he selected masters with care. "I am anxious to get a man who will understand boys and be liked by them, a person of high character, good scholarship, and if possible, athletic prowess," Peabody wrote to friend at Yale in hopes that he might know someone who met these qualifications.⁵⁵ When Peabody discovered he had made a poor selection, he was quick to make a change, usually within a year's time. Stressing that the most important characteristic of a successful boarding school teacher was having the capacity to care deeply for young boys, Peabody described the ideal master:

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Endicott Peabody to Seymour Blair, May 12, 1902, Peabody MSS.

What is it that we ask for in a teacher? He ought to be a good scholar. That goes without saying. And yet scholarship is not the first thing. . . . One has known great scholars who are complete failures as teachers in a school. . . . A man must have a lively manner, he must be a man of fine character, and he must be a man who loves boys. That is the essence of the whole thing--a man who takes up the work at school because he cares for boys, and they know it; they know it within an hour or two of the time that the man arrives at the school.⁵⁶

From the outset of Groton's opening, Peabody's ultimate aim was to create a cohesiveness between the masters and students that was literally nonexistent within the English public schools. In this regard, Peabody hoped to replicate the legacy of warmth and compassion set by Muhlenberg at Flushing Institute. "I received [a] most satisfactory impression in the wholesome relations between the boys and masters," a distinguished visitor, Abraham Flexner, wrote to Peabody in 1913.⁵⁷ Speaking to the Groton masters before each school year began, Peabody usually reminded them of the spirit of respect and friendship that he believed should characterize the school. Groton's success, Peabody stressed, was inextricably linked to cohesiveness between faculty and students. In a 1931 address to the Groton faculty, for example, he stated: "The purpose which inspired us to begin work in Groton was that we might establish a school where masters and boys should meet on terms of intimate friendship and cooperation, and should derive benefits from a religious atmosphere which is created by our church."⁵⁸

⁵⁶Peabody, "The Continuous Moral Influence," School Review, 623.

⁵⁷Abraham Flexner, "The Flexner Report 1913," 13, Peabody MSS.

⁵⁸Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Masters," September 19, 1931, Peabody MSS.

From Groton's inception, both Endicott's wife and father played integral roles in maintaining a warm and friendly family atmosphere. The former consoled homesick boys and frequently opened her parlor for teas, board games, and held other informal gatherings. "[Mrs. Peabody] was marvelous with the boys and I was utterly devoted to her," recalled Groton graduate Averell Harriman. Moreover, he added, "She was a charming and lovely person and she gave us tea and she would serve the tea and be so gracious and it was quite a thrill. It was almost like being home. She had a real influence on me at school."⁵⁹

The elder Peabody participated in almost every celebration or festive occasion at school. To the delight of Grotonians, during the Christmas holiday season, he would annually read Dickens' Christmas Carol to the entire school. Recalling the sincere family atmosphere at Groton, one faculty member noted: "What Mr. [Endicott] Peabody did contribute to American education was the family idea of a school as opposed to an institutional or scholastic conception, and the practice of friendly relations between master and boys."⁶⁰ Indeed, Peabody's insistence that Groton retain the warmth and friendliness of a large family was perhaps his most enduring legacy. From the first day Peabody opened Groton, Phillips Exeter headmaster Lewis Perry recalled, "he brought a new idea--the school as a family; and this new idea was so clearly crystallized in his mind that he could put it

⁵⁹Averell Harriman, interviewed by Bill Polk, Washington, DC. November 2, 1983. Groton School Oral History Program, Groton School, Groton, MA., Peabody MSS.

⁶⁰Walter S. Hinchman, "My Groton Years: The First Period 1901-1903," in Views from the Circle, (Groton, MA., 1960), 157.

at once into practice." "That was the genius of the place," he continued, and Peabody's firm resolve to make Groton a "family school" where each boy would feel as if he was at home "was a great contribution to American education."⁶¹

Peabody expected all masters to eat meals with the students and either coach or participate in athletic contests with them.⁶² He also initiated the tradition of the faculty supper in order to create another environment in which masters and students gathered informally. At nine o'clock, at least three to four times a week, Peabody and his wife would invite various faculty members, students, and out of town guests to join them in their dining room for a light snack. The session typically lasted one hour and generally helped ease the natural tensions between the students and their masters.

Paternalism Toward Graduates

The small size of Groton coupled with Peabody's uncanny ability to remember the names of each student and the details of his life made the presence of the paternalistic Rector seem ubiquitous.

⁶¹Lewis Perry, "In Memoriam: Endicott Peabody," Speech delivered at The Headmasters Association, Boston, MA., May, 1945, Peabody MSS. Perry was given the responsibility of eulogizing Peabody, a charter member of The Headmaster Association, several months after the Rector had died of a heart attack on November 17, 1944.

⁶² Prior to the twentieth century, school faculty members could compete on Groton's competitive athletic teams. Peabody himself was a terrific football and baseball player. However, in 1887, St. Mark's, a rival boarding school, refused to play Groton unless the masters did not play. The following year a rule was instituted which dictated that a master over 165 pounds could not play. Moreover, teams were limited to two masters per squad. Finally, no master could pitch in a baseball game. For a more detailed account of this development, see The Grotonian, November and December 1887 issues, Peabody MSS.

To the amazement of graduates, Peabody remained interested in their lives long after they had departed his fiefdom. He routinely sent each graduate a birthday card and often acknowledged by mail the birth of a child, an engagement, or job promotion. Upon receiving a birthday card from the Rector, one graduate wrote to Peabody, "It was a great pleasure to receive your card on the occasion of my birthday. It is always amazing to me how you manage to keep up with your boys in this way."⁶³ Throughout his career, Peabody also received several requests to perform marriages for former students. Informing Peabody of his engagement to Eleanor Roosevelt, Franklin wrote, "we both hope that you will be able to help us in the ceremony--it wouldn't be the same without you."⁶⁴

"Above all," asserted Peabody, "a [master] must care profoundly for boys in all the phases of adolescence and in various departments of their lives."⁶⁵ Thus, Peabody organized his school to insure that "masters and boys shared together, worked together, they ate together, and came together in daily worship."⁶⁶ To evoke a sense of family cohesion within the school, the Rector insisted that the masters and students participate in certain traditions and rituals. "The moral tone of a church school is created and encouraged by cooperation of masters and boys who no longer stand toward each other in a spirit of aloofness but of good fellowship," declared

⁶³ Lincoln Macveah to Endicott Peabody, October 16, 1935, Peabody MSS.

⁶⁴ Franklin Roosevelt to Endicott Peabody, November 29, 1904, Peabody MSS.

⁶⁵ Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Masters," September 20, 1926, 2, Peabody MSS.

⁶⁶ Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Masters," September 17, 1927, 1, Peabody MSS.

Peabody.⁶⁷ Continuing he said, "[A master] should have a pretty accurate knowledge of the work of every boy, and he should most of all hold himself accountable for the moral and spiritual condition of the boys collectively and individually."⁶⁸

Peabody was a stern disciplinarian rather than an educational innovator. Seeing the world from a narrow, moralistic viewpoint, Peabody had very few theories about how a child should be educated. And despite numerous critics, he never retreated from his conviction that moral and religious training were preeminent, even at the expense of intellectual growth. "The experts came [to Groton] and talked about Freud and Jung," recalled one graduate, "and [they] looked for hidden significance, and neurotic parents moaned and chattered; but nothing was ever done to change [Peabody's system]."⁶⁹ Groton's monolithic brick gates, Gothic chapel, and formidable red brick buildings seemed to serve as an insurmountable barrier from which modern educational theories were simply deflected back into the outside world from whence they had come.

Peabody was stern and strictly adhered to certain principles that some people claimed dated back to the Middle Ages. When his point of view was challenged, Peabody often remained inflexible and stubbornly refused to yield to more modern opinions. The Rector rather enjoyed his reputation of being an inflexible and unyielding headmaster. "The epithet "old-fashioned," Peabody proclaimed as

⁶⁷Endicott Peabody, "The Diocesan Report," April 10, 1940, Peabody MSS.

⁶⁸Endicott Peabody, "Speech to the Groton Masters," April 12, 1910, 2, Peabody MSS.

⁶⁹Martin, "Preface to a Schoolmaster's Biography," Views From the Circle, 134.

late as 1932, "is I think a valuable weapon in a school-master's repertoire."⁷⁰ Borrowing one of his favorite sayings from Harvard's president, Charles W. Eliot, Peabody claimed that a "successful headmaster, like a college president, had to be a bit of a bully."⁷¹ One young Grotonian described the Rector to his father by exclaiming that "he could have been an awful bully if he wasn't such a terrible Christian."⁷²

Peabody's uncomplicated view of education and human nature was summarized by his biographer who wrote that, "If a boy learned to work hard, think clearly, know fundamentals, and to be disciplined in body, mind, and soul, [Peabody] would presume [him to] be an educated person. . . ."⁷³ Commenting on Peabody's career as an educator, Groton graduate George Martin wrote soon after the Rector retired:

There is a challenging mystery about the career of Endicott Peabody. For more than fifty years he was Headmaster of Groton, and during this period it became a matter of great and increasing interest how he did it. Intelligent and expert persons repaired to the school and examined the process and made reports. Mr. Peabody himself wrote a piece, which was duly published, explaining the system: with the result that everyone agreed that he himself did not understand his own technique.⁷⁴

⁷⁰Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Masters," September, 1932, Peabody MSS.

⁷¹Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 86.

⁷²Biddle, "As I Remember Groton School," in Views From the Circle, 117.

⁷³Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 102-3.

⁷⁴Martin, "Perfect to a Schoolmaster's Biography," Views From the Circle, 131.

Over time protestations came from some parents, faculty, students, and university educators who believed that Groton's traditions were antiquated, boring, rigid, and conformist. Peabody, however, rarely compromised the "family-like" and neo-Spartan components of his school. Undaunted by criticism from various individuals, Peabody passionately opposed any institutional changes that threatened to abolish the "family" and "moral" tone of the school. He cared little for the "complicated" and more secular educational theories of the emerging social sciences. Education, he believed, should be centered on teaching students the importance of being disciplined, honest, and moral. Describing Peabody's educational philosophy, the historian James MacGregor Burns wrote: "Peabody believed in religion, character, athletics, and scholarship, seemingly in that order."⁷⁵ It was through emphasizing the minor details, Peabody held, that students learned how to become Christian gentlemen. One of the most important school details, one which Peabody continued throughout his career, was called the "go-by." Every night as the students went to bed, the Rector would shake the hand of every Grotonian and say, "good-night my boy." To the young, awkward adolescents, the image of the Rector may have never seemed larger.

Religious Worship

Another significant component of Peabody's effort to maintain a proper Christian family atmosphere involved incorporating religious worship into the daily lives of all Grotonians. "The

⁷⁵James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, (New York, 1956), 12.

foundation of it all, and that which is absolutely necessary, without which you cannot have any moral life in the school, is religion," said Peabody. Groton, he proclaimed, was first and foremost a church school which meant "that it depends first of all upon worship and as a result of worship power and enthusiasm in establishing Christian standards of life."⁷⁶ Peabody deemed one of his primary duties to be the creation of a "spiritual atmosphere which would have a conscious or unconscious effect upon all who entered into the life of the School."⁷⁷

In order to facilitate the religious development of students, all Grotonians were required to attend morning chapel service. "We have been greatly blessed by the gift of a beautiful place of worship. It occupies the center of our grounds. We may hope to make it the center of the life of each individual," Peabody reminded his faculty in 1930.⁷⁸ In another talk with the Groton masters, Peabody explained the religious significance of the chapel: "The chapel and its service creates the spiritual atmosphere which we hope may permeate the whole of the life of the school."⁷⁹

In addition to chapel service, students attended an evening prayer session, and two worship services on Sunday. According to Peabody, compulsory attendance at religious service was the best

⁷⁶Peabody, "The Continuous Moral Influence," School Review, 624.

⁷⁷Endicott Peabody, "Personal Recollections," 1944, cf. Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 72.

⁷⁸Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Masters," September 15, 1930, 13, Peabody MSS.

⁷⁹Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Masters," September 21, 1931, 16, Peabody MSS.

way introduce young adolescents to the teachings of Christ.

Religious services, he said,

. . . contribute greatly to the up building of religious enthusiasm if the boys enter into them heartily as they can be led to do. Boys delight in singing hymns together and they enjoy taking part in the chanting and responsive reading when they are educated thereto. There must be continuous, active participation in the service in order to inspire them.⁸⁰

In addition to compulsory chapel, Peabody taught a class in Sacred Studies throughout his career at Groton. He often used this time to instruct sixth formers about the history of Christianity, and inveigh against the evils of licentious behavior. "The Rector spoke about gambling, drinking and impurity," a student recalled of one Sacred Studies class, and he admonished that one should "never tell an unclean story or allow one to be told in your presence."⁸¹

Peabody was neither an exciting teacher nor a electrifying preacher and most students recalled that his classes and sermons were dry and soporific. In all likelihood, his Victorian homilies that encouraged boys to be morally and spiritually clean failed to resonate in the minds of many of his students. "[Peabody] was not unkind, but the [students] were ill at ease. The class never seemed to get going. . . . The Rector's sermons were stuffy. For some reason the boys did not seem to believe them," recalled one graduate.⁸² Far removed from the hostile environment of urban centers and

⁸⁰Endicott Peabody, "The Relation of Religion and Life in Boarding School," in Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 194.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²George W. Martin, "Preface to a Schoolmaster's Biography," in Views From The Circle, 136.

constantly surrounded by the most influential members of Boston's upper-class, Peabody's sermons and advice to his students often had no correlation to the harsh realities of the real world.

Although he remained naive about how the "real" world operated, students partaking in two Episcopal religious ceremonies, the Holy Communion and Confirmation, afforded Peabody the opportunity to "talk to them very frankly" about the importance of being honest, moral, and self-disciplined citizens. "In the service of the Holy Communion, there is an opportunity for more spiritual inspiration than we have yet realized," Peabody said to his faculty in 1920. Continuing he asserted, "the services on Sunday mornings are calculated to make a deep impression upon the minds and characters of our boys."⁸³

He was deeply bothered that many of his boys did not go into the ministry. Dedicating his own life to serving Christ, Peabody encouraged his students to do the same. "He urged the boys to go into the professions and keep away from Wall Street," claimed a graduate.⁸⁴ Only a small minority of boys, however, answered the Rector's calls for them to enter the ministry. "I am awfully oppressed with the wholesale falling away from Church of our boys as soon as they leave college," a close personal friend and Episcopal clergyman wrote the Peabody. "You, of course, will know enough not to quote me. . . . It simply amounts to refusing to retain God in their

⁸³Peabody, "Relation of Religion and Life in Boarding Schools," in Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 192.

⁸⁴Martin, "Preface to a Schoolmaster's Biography," in Views From the Circle, 142.

knowledge, and the result will be inevitable."⁸⁵ Peabody's task of persuading students to join the ministry was often hindered by the fact that most Grotonians wanted to pursue lucrative occupations where "they were going to make money enough to be able to send their sons to Groton."⁸⁶

Nonetheless, for those few who entered the ministry, Peabody kept up with their careers and often lent them encouragement during difficult times. Thanking the Rector for his continuous support after he graduated from Groton, Jack Crocker, who later replaced Peabody as headmaster in 1940, wrote in 1927:

It is a stimulating thing for me, I can tell you, to have such continuous encouragement from you. I'm beginning to understand what too few young men seem to appreciate, that the minister is the happiest of men. I can't thank you enough for helping me to see this truth. Certainly I owe you more than anyone in this matter and it would be strange if I did not feel grateful.⁸⁷

"The difficulty of developing the religious life of the boys is so great that we cannot hope to carry it on successfully unless we all work together in detail as well as in purpose," declared Peabody at a faculty meeting in 1921.⁸⁸ He demanded that both students and masters adhere to a rigid Christian code of high ethical and moral standards.⁸⁹ Teaching the sons of the well-to-do to adopt simple

⁸⁵N.J. Rausford to Endicott Peabody, December 18, 1899.

⁸⁶Martin, "Preface to a Schoolmaster's Biography," in Views From the Circle, 142.

⁸⁷Jack Crocker to Endicott Peabody, January 17, 1927. Peabody MSS.

⁸⁸Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Masters," Winter 1921, 1, Peabody MSS.

⁸⁹Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Masters," September 20, 1926, 1-2, Peabody MSS.

and religious lifestyles, Peabody believed, was the most important task of Groton School.⁹⁰ "We are not aiming first of all to produce outstanding scholars in mathematics or languages or science," Peabody proclaimed more than four decades after he founded Groton. "We aim at development of character and for this the great landmarks of morality stand unshaken."⁹¹

Throughout his fifty six years of service, Peabody contended that the scientists and intellectuals who debunked religion and the Bible had a deleterious impact on the moral and ethical behavior of Americans. Society, he argued, was morally chaotic and spiritually bankrupt. He believed somewhat naively that the religious education students received would plant the seed of morality, and if properly nurtured, Grotonians could blossom into crusading social reformers. "The cure for this [immorality] is found, we believe in religion," declared Peabody and he reminded his faculty that "if we did not believe this we should not be working in a Church School."⁹²

Conclusion

By the beginning of the twentieth century, America had been transformed from a rural to a largely urban society. The advent of science and technology fueled the growth of new industries and created sprawling metropolitan centers. Moreover, the expanding industrial economy coupled with the booming immigrant population radically altered the composition of American society, culture, and values. The mythological "rugged frontiersman" was replaced by the

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Masters," September 21, 1931, 13, Peabody MSS.

⁹²Ibid., 10.

sly and mischievous "confidence man." If American society was to progress, argued historian Frederick Jackson Turner, its citizens had to reject the surreptitious and indolent disposition of "confidence man" and continue to emulate the rigorous lifestyle of the stalwart pioneer.⁹³

To a certain degree Peabody organized Groton to duplicate the rugged and less morally disordered life of the rapidly disappearing frontier.⁹⁴ In order to provide a sense of stability in a chaotic social and industrial environment, Peabody believed somewhat naively that the new combatant for urban and social reform could come from the wealthy class. Immersing students in an idealized Christian family setting, Peabody taught patrician youths that it was their duty and obligation to address the problems of society. His aim, throughout his career, was not to create a new generation of academic experts, but rather to produce a class of socially responsible Christian, gentlemen.

A pupil's education, argued Peabody, needed to be laced with moral discipline, even if it dampened his intellectual enthusiasm.⁹⁵ To accomplish this aim he advocated that every waking moment of a boy's life should be filled with rigorous exercise, religious devotions and study of the classics. "In practical ways, discipline is a foundation stone," Peabody routinely reminded his faculty, and

⁹³Green, Fit for America, 215.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Hinchman, "My Groton Years," in Views From the Circle, 159. Although intellectual training comprised a healthy portion of a student's life, the curriculum at Groton will not be discussed in this chapter. One may find reference to the issue of scholarship in chapter 7.

"obedience must be prompt and unquestioned at the moment."⁹⁶ In his chapel talks, Sunday sermons, or Sacred Studies lectures, Peabody addressed the social and ethical problems of contemporary society from a Biblical perspective. Inveighing against the evils of divorce, drinking, materialism, and licentiousness, the Rector's homilies stressed that society's survival was predicated upon a new generation of Christian gentlemen assiduously dedicating themselves to ameliorating the problems of society. Although Peabody's grandiose vision would never truly materialize, his dedication to moral reform through education, in the eyes of many of his peers at least, seemed indefatigable.

⁹⁶Endicott Peabody, Speech to Groton Masters, September 1932, Peabody MSS.

Chapter Five

Progressive Nurture

You [Peabody] meant to give your boys sound scholarship, but even more you wanted, I believe, to develop in them elevation and simplicity of character so that when they left you they would not be content with ambition to get on in the world, but would care to be of use to their fellow men and their country.

George Rublee, Groton's first graduate, (1908)

In a critique of a book that investigated the social settlement movement in two Indiana cities, a reviewer asserted that the historian's task is to "stand back and analyze the difference between social control and social reform."¹ As contemporary historians continue to reevaluate and reshape our understanding of the contributions and achievements of Progressive Era reformers, particular attention should be paid to analyzing how and why these individuals constructed and promoted their own worldview. More specifically, one needs to consider the degree to which reformers sought to impose their values and agenda on others out of a conscious and selfish longing for power or social control versus the desire to promote change or reform out of a genuine concern for and belief in social betterment and increased happiness of all. Although this task is seldom an easy one, it is within this framework that

¹Victoria Bissel Brown, Review of Ruth Hutchinson Crocker, Social Work and Social Order: The Settlement Movement in Two Industrial Cities, 1889-1930, in History of Education Quarterly Fall 1993 vol. 33 # 3, 454-56. By using the word reformer to describe Peabody I am making a clear distinction between "radicals" and reformers. Reformers attempted to improve the conditions within the existing social, economic, and political establishment, while radicals wanted to overthrow the system. See Ronald G. Walters, American Reformers 1815-1860, (New York, 1978), xi-xii.

Peabody's contributions and motivations as a social reformer will now be assessed.

Examining the various components of his social reform vision will reveal yet another aspect of Peabody's character-building philosophy and his struggle to instill a sense of moral purpose and social responsibility within an often apathetic and insulated patrician community.² Furthermore, analysis of Peabody's fervent commitment to reforming bourgeois youth is tantamount in understanding the degree to which Peabody was a well-intentioned idealist and a social preservationist. An exploration of the concerns that compelled Peabody to dedicate his life to educating patrician youth to become actively engaged in all aspects of community service, in part, provides some insight into determining Peabody's role as a social reformer.

The Social Question

Depressed about the lack of moral and intellectual progress of his fellow Americans, Henry Adams wrote his brother during the Civil War: "We want a nation of young men, like ourselves or better, to start new influences not only in politics, but in literature, in law, in

²Most scholars have analyzed Peabody's career through the perspective of two secondary sources: Frank D. Ashburn, Peabody of Groton: A Portrait, (Cambridge, MA., 1945) and Views From the Circle: Seventy-Five Years of Groton School, (Privately Printed, 1960). Although both sources are indispensable for understanding Peabody's life and the founding of Groton School, neither connects his exploits to the various strands of American Progressivism. Ashburn's book is the most widely quoted source on Peabody. However, he includes only a few references to Peabody's Chapel Sermons, Headmaster Reports, and Speeches to Groton faculty. The content of these primary sources and those of the countless letters he received and wrote, reveal an understanding and commitment to various social reform movements significantly richer than previous scholars have suggested.

society, and throughout the whole social organism of the country--a national school of our own generation."³ A little more than two decades later, Peabody opened an Episcopal secondary boarding school in Groton, Massachusetts with the somewhat naive intention of satisfying Adams's pronouncement. Although Peabody seemed impervious to improving literature, art, or the law, he was assiduously dedicated to reversing the traditional New England Mugwump's aversion toward politics.⁴

Groton was by no means a "national school," as the majority of students came from the wealthiest Boston and New York metropolitan and suburban neighborhoods. Nevertheless, perhaps no secondary school headmaster, past or present, subjected his student body to a daily routine that reaffirmed and revitalized the ameliorative benefits of munificent public service more than Peabody. A fact that historians and sociologists have sometimes overlooked is that the Rector's exhortations were not simply aimed at generating a new class of morally superior politicians. Rather, he held the belief that a new generation of morally reinvigorated youth would emerge from his school and purge the Wall Street, industrial, and political establishment of their immoral practices.

Reflecting upon Peabody's dedication to the education of privileged youth, his biographer wrote:

³Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., November 21, 1862 in A Cycle of Adams Letters, ed. W.C. Ford (Boston, 1920), I, 195-97.

⁴Charles Francis Adams Jr., was impressed with Peabody's school. Charles sent his son to Groton after an enervating experience attempting to reform the Quincy and Boston public school system.

Endicott Peabody lived in an age which steadily tended toward the exaltation of the average; the unlimited extension of credit; the recognition of happiness as a goal in itself; in the faith that man can be legislated into goodness and endeavor. All his life, by the manner of it, Peabody denied these things. Profoundly sympathetic with the average man and desirous to help him, Peabody denied that the average can ever be as good as what is better than the average. When all mankind (it seemed) rushed into installment buying, Peabody held it was better to do one's duty than to gather possessions. He held that happiness can never be obtained in itself; it must be a by-product, the fruit of discipline, humility, and duty done.⁵

When Peabody decided to open his school in 1884, many Americans believed that the nation's political establishment was corrupt, concluded that the deluge of newly arriving immigrants were morally rudderless, and believed that the growing economic disparity between the rich and poor was threatening the existence of free-enterprise and capitalism. Indeed, many citizens held the gloomy assumption that America was abruptly falling into an amoral maelstrom.

The seemingly lackadaisical efforts of the upper-class to provide assistance in solving these dire problems compelled Peabody to assume a leadership role in informing the wealthy about the rifts in American society. Peabody was especially concerned about the growing economic disparity between the rich and poor. Often his diatribes leveled against morally, flabby patrician youth addressed the complexities of this fiscal issue that Gilded Age reformers labeled "the Social Question."

⁵ Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, xiii-xiv.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, social commentators such as Henry George in Progress and Poverty (1879) and Edward Bellamy in Looking Backward, 2000 (1877) proclaimed America had lost its moral and spiritual bearing. Both men blamed the moral squalor of society on the inherent inequities of America's capitalist system. If society were to progress, George and Bellamy argued, then all men must have an equal chance to excel monetarily.⁶ The prevalent inequalities of America's economic, political, and real estate systems provoked these men, and a host of others, to assume that society would continue to regress unless the disparities in socio-economic achievement were largely reversed. The resolution of this fiscal conflict, indeed, emerged as one of the most fervently discussed issues of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era.

Americans' concern over the Social Question had been less widespread in antebellum society. Prior to the Civil War, subsistence farmers and local merchants had comprised the financial backbone of America. Although the reality of poverty had existed since the nation's conception, most destitute individuals could at least afford basic shelter, food, and clothing for themselves and their families. For those individuals unable to maintain even a paltry standard of living, Christian charity organizations or a friendly neighbor often came to the rescue. Those in need of welfare assistance were not viewed as a permanent underprivileged class, but rather as individuals or families with a temporary problem. This was

⁶Ray Ginger, Age of Excess: The United States from 1877 to 1914, (New York, 1965), 148-152.

especially the case for orphans, widows, and unlucky businessmen. Moreover, it was widely held that by dint of hard work, pluck, and frugality, most individuals could rise above their particular station in due course.

Between 1870 and 1900, however, the consolidation and standardization of factories, steel mills, banks, railroads, and other industries engendered a deepening hostility between capital and labor. To help mitigate these rising tensions, many postbellum Protestant clergymen such as Walter Rauschenbusch energized a Social Gospel movement and began to voice concern over the economic disparity that existed between their Sunday congregations and the slum dwellers residing nearby. To promote social change, some Social Gospellers began to familiarize the patrician community with the appalling circumstances of the urban poor. Others, however, out of concern for their jobs or insensitivity, shied away from condemning their affluent congregations for ignoring the wretched conditions of the impoverished living in the very shadow of their churches.⁷

The rousing debate over the moral and political implications of the Social Question reached such a fevered state in 1880 that first year Harvard divinity instructor and Social Gospeler, Francis Greenwood Peabody, initiated a course entitled "Ethics of the Social Question."⁸ However, Protestant clergyman such as Francis Peabody,

⁷Robert Crunden, Ministers of Reform: Achievement in American Civilization 1889-1920, (New York, 1984), 40-42.

⁸David Potts, "Social Ethics at Harvard, 1881-1931: A Study in Academic Activism," in Paul Buck, ed., Social Sciences at Harvard, 1860-1920: From Inculcation to the Open Mind, (Cambridge, MA., 1965), 91-128.

a distant relative of Endicott's, were by no means the only active participants in the movements to reform the masses. A plethora of laypeople produced articles, brochures, and pamphlets that admonished Americans to avoid the nefarious temptations of drinking, gambling, prostitution, materialism and other such acts of debauchery. One historian of this period claimed that many of these advice peddlers were thinly disguised moralists who were:

anxious over the noisy lower orders, the abyss of immorality that the decline of religion appeared to be opening, the increase of bodily comforts that threatened to turn them into a race of ineffectual and effete epigones--anxious in short over whether they could manage a world apparently spinning out of control.⁹

Theodore Dreiser's graphic portrayal of protagonist's Frank Cowperwood's abysmal attempt to overcome the brutal savagery of urban life in The Financier (1912), for instance, reflected a common theme that permeated the novels and short stories of the Gilded Age. Writers such as Dreiser, Frank Norris and Jack London rejected the pervasive romanticism of their antebellum predecessors and authentically described the plight of the disposed in the early twentieth century. Man, these writers concluded, was no longer the master of his universe. Reminiscent of the secular Puritan hallmarks promulgated by Benjamin Franklin in his Autobiography, these Gilded Age authors all held the belief that the survival of man

⁹Peter Gay, The Cultivation of Hatred: The Bourgeois Experience Victoria to Freud, (New York, 1993), 491.

depended upon his adherence to such values as humbleness, industriousness, self-improvement, and self-control.¹⁰

Peabody as Self-Appointed Reformer of the Wealthy

Whereas Social Gospelers and reformers directed their attention to the underclass, by erecting his own religiously affiliated boarding school, Endicott Peabody emerged as the self-appointed reformer of the wealthy class. Moreover, unlike many of his secular progressive counterparts, Peabody drew from his religious faith to propagate the doctrine of muscular Christianity as the saving grace of the patrician establishment. Coming from one of New England's most prominent and wealthiest families, Peabody could criticize his Brahmin contemporaries for their lack of compassion for Boston's indigent population without fearing dire social or fiscal repercussions.

Commenting on Peabody's unflagging devotion to Victorian moralist crusades, the historian James MacGregor Burns concluded that "the Rector's humanitarianism never went much beyond a concern for the cleanliness and morals of the masses," and "his artless homilies were simply irrelevant to the harsh lesson of American politics."¹¹ Burns's conclusions are certainly not unfounded. Another critic of Peabody's attempt to introduce patrician youth to the virtues of public service, for example, noted in 1987 that "for the great majority of Groton's graduates, the urgings

¹⁰Tom Lutz, American Nervousness, 1903: An Anecdotal History, (Ithaca, NY., 1991), 38-55.

¹¹James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, (New York, 1956), 15.

of the Rector and the leaders of the community who he imported as lecturers fell on deaf ears."¹²

Naturally, the Rector would have been content to see more Grotonians embark upon careers in public service. "I am so tired of having boys think Wall Street and the law are the only two branches of activity into which they may enter," an exasperated Peabody wrote some two decades after Groton opened.¹³ Peabody was acutely aware that most students preferred business-related professions. At every opportunity however, Peabody inveighed against the evils of dishonest and selfish competitiveness. "He expected [Grotonians] to toe the mark," declared his daughter Margery, who also recalled: "religion was the center of his life and he believed in discipline. He advocated competition but dishonesty made him hit the roof."¹⁴

¹²Stephen Birmingham, America's Secret Aristocracy (Boston, 1987), 243. Birmingham is an acrimonious critic of the "elitist" tradition of American boarding schools, and particularly Groton School. Unfortunately, Birmingham's historical analysis of Groton is somewhat misleading. His most egregious error is claiming that Theodore Roosevelt was Peabody's "shining example of a flagship Groton student." Moreover, he argued that the Rector specifically modeled Groton after the English public schools of Eton, Harrow, or Peabody's own Cheltenham. Finally, Birmingham held that Groton was America's only secondary school to produce two presidents. All of these assertions are inaccurate. Groton was founded in 1884 when Theodore Roosevelt was twenty six years old. Roosevelt had already graduated from Harvard, and was well on his way to a political career before Peabody opened his school. Furthermore, McLachlan's 1970 analysis of American boarding schools disabused the notion that Groton and other boarding schools were exact replicas of English public schools. In fact, Peabody stated several times that the only thing he learned from his Cheltenham experience was to avoid what to do when running a school. Although some of Birmingham's criticisms of boarding school are well founded, he might have profited from examining all the available sources in a more perspicacious manner.

¹³Endicott Peabody to Col. H.D. Borup, March 8, 1909, Peabody MSS.

¹⁴Patricia Giragosian, "A Legacy of Service: From Groton to Young Roosevelt," Sunday Sun Lowell, Massachusetts June 29, 1980 : B2

The Rector's sermons and personal letters were replete with the themes of rejecting materialism, purging public immorality, and purifying American politics. "I have had a satisfactory talk with the graduates here and my heart is filled with deep joy at finding some of them dead in earnest about life and eager to do all they can do to purify politics and to be of service to their fellow man," wrote Peabody. "It is this and not new buildings or long waiting lists which brings abiding pleasure--and I thank God for it all."¹⁵

Admittedly, Peabody knew little about economic or political theory and he never articulated a coherent social philosophy. Comfortably situated in a small town and far removed from the complexities of the modern world, Peabody himself lacked meaningful understanding of the often partisan and corrupt nature of American politics. Peabody, in essence, wanted to Christianize capitalism and politics rather than promote radical change or socialistic remedies that more liberal Social Gospellers such as Walter Rauschenbusch advocated.¹⁶ Peabody's simple-minded reform vision was reduced to one absolute rule: the existence of capitalism could be reconciled with religion if businessmen only adopted self-imposed moral guidelines.¹⁷

Human progress, Peabody held, was directly related to moral progress. Believing that egregious social conditions engendered individual sin, the Rector took every opportunity in his Sacred

¹⁵ Endicott Peabody to Julius Atwood November 15, 1894, Peabody MSS.

¹⁶For an insightful biography of Walter Rauschenbusch, see Paul M. Minus, Walter Rauschenbusch: American Reformer, (New York, 1988).

¹⁷Patricia Giragioson, "A Legacy of Service: From Groton to Young Roosevelt," Sunday Sun Lowell, Massachusetts June 29, 1980 : B2

Studies class and daily chapel sermons to enlighten both students and faculty about the deep spiritual gratification that came from living a morally pure and honest life. Theodore Roosevelt, the pugnacious politician and parent of four Groton students, visited the school several times at the request of the Rector and reminded the wide-eyed, attentive student body that they must abstain from adopting poor physical and moral habits. Similar to Peabody's daily homilies, Roosevelt told Grotonians that to improve their "manly" Christian character they must pursue a virtuous lifestyle. In an 1908 graduation address, Roosevelt, then president of the United States, sermonized to the boys that they must be the role models for all of society to emulate:

The salvation of the Republic depends--the salvation of the whole social system depends--upon the production year by year of a sufficient number of citizens who will possess high ideals combined with the practical power to realize them. Our public life depends primarily not upon the men who occupy public position for the moment, because they are but an infinitesimal fraction of the whole. Our public life depends upon men who take active interest in that public life; who are bound to see public affairs honestly and completely managed; but who have the good sense to know what honesty and competency actually mean.¹⁸

As Groton School evolved from a small Episcopalian school into one of the premier American church schools, the Rector achieved the rank of general in the great army of Victorian educational moralists. His status as headmaster at a flagship boarding school provided him

¹⁸Theodore Roosevelt, "The Address of the President on Prize Day," The Grotonian, May 1908, 216-217.

with a bully pulpit that enabled his Victorian homilies to resonate in the homes and minds of morally soft elite youth. Preaching a doctrine of strenuosity and manliness, Peabody held that the development of "manly Christian character" should be preeminent if young boys were to avoid becoming morally and physically enervated as adults. "The stooping, hollow chested, downward gazing boy is still among us," Peabody warned his Groton masters in 1921 and, the Rector added with emphasis, "he cannot be spoken of in a singular number at [Groton School]."¹⁹

Throughout Peabody's career he was offered several prominent positions in the Episcopalian hierarchy including Dean of the Episcopal Theological Seminary, Bishop of the state of Washington, and President of Columbia College. Entirely conscious of his limitations, Peabody realized that his position at Groton afforded him greater opportunities to reform the bourgeois establishment. He did not have the wisdom or extraordinary vision that his friend, and sometimes rival, Charles William Eliot of Harvard possessed. Peabody's conservative educational ideals, to a large degree, were simple and static and he had neither the intellect nor disposition for university or church related politics.

Most importantly, from the day Groton opened, Peabody realized that he had discovered an occupation to which he could remain assiduously dedicated throughout his life. While personally touched and flattered that members outside the Groton community valued his services, he politely refused those who offered him other

¹⁹Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Masters," September 1921, Peabody MSS.

educational and church leadership positions. Summarizing his views on the importance of his job to an audience of educators in 1909, Peabody exclaimed:

When everything that concerns the fabric of the school and all things that have a bearing upon the development of boys in any part of their nature appeal to a man, then he cannot ask for a happier lot than to be a head-master of a boarding school.²⁰

Peabody's Version of Progressive Nurture

Peabody's reform ideal at Groton was to take the concept of Christian nurture and mold it into a form of Progressive nurture. In this regard, Peabody appropriated the fundamental tenets of Muhlenberg's and Bushnell's philosophy and transformed them into his own conception of Progressive nurture. While Muhlenberg and Bushnell were more concerned with instilling a religious sense within youths, Peabody desired from the outset of Groton's founding to stimulate in Groton boys a Christian interest in public service.²¹

Peabody was not alone in this work. In 1923, for instance, Samuel Drury, the Rector at nearby St. Paul's School, captured the essence of Peabody's notion of Progressive nurture when he claimed that, "the church boarding school should be a sort of social settlement among the prosperous."²²

Peabody made every effort to expose Grotonians to the tensions and conflicts that resulted from the deepening economic

²⁰Endicott Peabody, "The Aims, Duties, and Opportunities of the Head-Master of an Endowed Secondary School," The School Review, October 1909, 522.

²¹James McLachlan, American Boarding Schools: A Historical Study, (New York, 1970), 289.

²²Samuel Drury in St. Paul's School Report 1923, 4, in Ibid., 289-290.

disparity between the haves and have-nots. The primary objective of Peabody's message was to arouse a sense of duty in his students to undertake the mission of transforming and reforming society along moral lines. Recalling the essence of Peabody's message of Progressive nurture three quarters of a century later, Averell Harriman of the class of 1909 asserted:

It was something that you had this great privilege of being a Groton undergraduate and that gave you an obligation to serve your country and to do more than the ordinary boy or young man would do when you grew up and you had to do something for the benefit of your country and for the benefit of humankind. It was a real obligation for you to serve and I think Groton gave that. It certainly gave it to me. I think perhaps the inspiration of my life came from Groton.²³

Not all Grotonians, however, embraced the message of social uplift that Peabody advocated so vociferously. Perhaps his invectives about uncontrolled consumerism and materialism were somewhat softened, in part, by the students' knowledge that the Rector had seven servants at this house, or that he came from one of New England's wealthiest families. "He had little conception the strains men are subjected to in the modern world," recalled one disgruntled graduate, and as for his sermonizing about assisting the less fortunate, the Rector "might have saved his breath."²⁴

²³Averell Harriman, Interview by Groton School, Washington D.C. November 2, 1983. Groton School Oral History Project, Groton School, Groton, MA. Harriman graduated from Groton in 1909. He became an American minister in London and later served as ambassador to Russia. For a more detailed analysis of Harriman's political life see, David Halberstam, The Best and the Brightest, (New York, 1969).

²⁴George Martin, "Preface to a Schoolmaster's Biography," in Views From the Circle, 142.

Moreover, historians and sociologists have long challenged the effectiveness of Peabody's social reform message. His critics labeled him an arrogant and ignorant member of the socio-economic elite. The Rector's pronouncements, these critics claimed, were widely ignored by his students as is evidenced by the fact that only a handful of Groton graduates embarked upon careers as public servants.²⁵

It is difficult to measure quantitatively the effectiveness of Peabody's message of moral and social uplift. However, judging the success of Peabody's mission based solely on the fact that more graduates earned their living in financial rather than public institutions, to a certain degree discounts the positive contributions many Grotonians made outside the realm of politics. "We should not, of course, hold out before each [student] the hope of becoming President of the United States," Peabody claimed in 1901. Still, he did hope to "arouse sufficient earnestness and enthusiasm to compel a great majority of [Grotonians] to work in their local [communities]."²⁶

Progressive Nurture Exemplified: The Lectures of Jacob Riis and Theodore Roosevelt

²⁵For a more detailed version of this argument see E. Digby Baltzell, Philadelphia Gentlemen: The Making of a National Upper Class, (Glencoe, Ill., 1958); C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite, (New York, 1956); Dixon Wecter, The Saga of American Society: A Record of Social Aspiration, 1607-1937, (New York, 1937); and G. William Domhoff, Who Rules America? (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1967).

²⁶Endicott Peabody to Theodore Roosevelt, April 8, 1901, Peabody MSS.

In addition to his personal pleas for students to engage in public service, Peabody often invited outside social reformers to visit the school. The parade of missionaries and reformers who came to Groton as early as 1885 was a virtual compendium of who was who in the New England Progressive Era movement. Among other notables, the guest list included: Jacob Riis, author and journalist; Theodore Roosevelt, author and politician; Rev. Stanley Searing, founder of a Boston mission for deaf children; Booker T. Washington, principal of Tuskegee Institute; Rev. Frederick Balis Allen, superintendent of Episcopal City Mission in Boston; Phillips Brooks, Bishop of Massachusetts and his successor, William Lawrence. These and other reformers visited the Groton campus at various times during Peabody's career, and spoke to students about their obligation to assist the financially underprivileged.

Among those speakers who came to Groton before 1900, students favored Roosevelt and Riis the most. The former visited the school several times throughout his adult life, and the latter came shortly after he had completed his expose of New York City slums entitled How the Other Half Lives (1890). Both individuals utilized Peabody's conception of Progressive nurture in their social reform ventures, and the Rector hoped that familiarizing students with the lives of these reformers might inspire them to emulate their careers.

Riis, a Danish immigrant, came to America in 1870 and remained unemployed for the next seven years. He finally secured a job as a journalist at the New York Tribune and was assigned to

cover the city's Police Headquarters.²⁷ In addition to a journalism career, Riis was a skillful photographer. Combining his writing and photographic talents, he eventually put together a slide "exhibition" documenting the lives of New York City's indigent population. A compelling graphic and descriptive narrative accompanied his lantern slide exhibition.

This ensemble often prompted his contemporaries to comment that his show consisted of "pictures of reeking, murder stained, god-forsaken alley and poverty-stricken tenements."²⁸ After completing his first book, Riis traveled the country, and made several stops at New England boarding schools where he displayed his work. Peabody was impressed with Riis's dedication to exposing Americans to the horrors of inner-city life and invited him to speak at Groton. Optimistic about his chances of instilling a sense of noblesse oblige in Grotonians, Riis enthusiastically excepted the offer writing that, "I am sure I shall enjoy speaking to your boys and I trust I shall be able to sow the seed that will spring up and bear a hundred-fold."²⁹

Although many students felt enlightened after viewing Riis's graphic portrayal of slum life, they delighted in the bellicose stories of Theodore Roosevelt. "After supper tonight," wrote young Franklin to his parents, "Cousin Theodore gave us a splendid talk on his

²⁷Maren Stange, "Jacob Riis and Urban Visual Cultural: the Lantern Slide Exhibition as Entertainment and Ideology," Journal of Urban History, May 1989 vol. 15 : 274.

²⁸Ibid., 275. For a further discussion of Riis's life and photographic techniques see his autobiography The Making of an American, (1901, rpt. New York, 1966) and Robert S. Doherty ed., The Complete Photographic Work of Jacob A. Riis, (New York, 1981).

²⁹Jacob Riis to Endicott Peabody, April, 12 1893, Peabody MSS.

adventures when he was on the Police Board. He kept the whole room in an uproar for over an hour, by telling us killing stories about policemen and their doings in New York."³⁰ Another student recalled that:

the Vice-President came up today and our drum and fife corps gave him a reception. At half-past five he gave us a bully talk about . . . shooting panthers in the Rockies. Among other episodes were the stories of the fellow who shot the editor and got off for thirty days; the man who missed his wife and shot the lady . . . the man who was accused by his mother-in-law of polygamy."³¹

Theodore Roosevelt was certainly a long-time admirer of Groton School. Fully supportive and appreciative of Peabody's uncompromising commitment toward educating patrician youths to become respectable Christian gentlemen and productive members of their respective communities, he wrote to the Rector days before Peabody began his nineteenth year as the school's headmaster:

I feel that Groton stands for the hopes and beliefs and aspirations, and above all for the sturdy, resolute purposes which represent all that is loftiest and truest in our American life: and moreover I feel that all who are giving their best there is in them to the training of our boys in boy and mind, and above all soul and character, make the whole people their debtors.³²

Peabody's idea of Progressive nurture capitalized on the fear by parents who worried incessantly that their children reached

³⁰Franklin D. Roosevelt to his Parents, June 4, 1897 in F.D.R. His Personal Letters: The Early Years, Elliot Roosevelt ed., (New York, 1947).

³¹George Biddle to his Parents, May 2, 1901 in "As I Remember Groton School," Views From the Circle: Seventy-Five Years of Groton School, (Privately printed, 1960), 124.

³² Theodore Roosevelt to Endicott Peabody, September 1, 1903, Peabody MSS.

adulthood they would be inadequately prepared to meet the new challenges of a secularized and industrialized society. To those parents who could afford Groton's tuition, Peabody promised that their sons would be immersed in "manly" Christian environment where not only were traditional Protestant values highly regarded but the notion of munificent public service was rigorously instilled within them as well.

Conclusion

In the nineteen sixties and seventies scholars argued that progressive reformers were myopic, social elites whose racist agenda involved inculcating the lower classes with a proper dosage of white, Protestant, middle class values. Recently, however, many historians have challenged this view. The "social control" theories of the revisionists, historian Anne Boylan proclaimed recently, "discounted the dynamic, modernizing drive behind the reformers' program and lives."³³ Moreover, she asserted that the nineteenth century reformers who erected ameliorative institutions were "not merely an old elite struggling to keep alive in a dying social order; they were themselves part of an emerging leadership class with close ties to the urban mercantile and manufacturing economy."³⁴

Molded in this fashion, Peabody was a tireless social reformer who crusaded against baleful influences of unmitigated industrial capitalism. Typical of other cultural and social reformers of his day,

³³Anne Boylan, Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution 1790- 1880, (New Haven, CT., 1988), 3.

³⁴Ibid., 2.

Peabody believed that personal qualities and values such as hard work, parsimony, self-improvement, and delayed gratification were paramount to individual and national progress and he implemented these values within his school.³⁵

In retrospect, while Peabody's reform vision was often myopic, morally ethnocentric, patronizing and self-righteous, he made an honest effort to expose members the affluent establishment to the calamity and misfortune of urban America.³⁶ Moreover, he introduced his privileged students to complex social problems that many were simply unaware of when they first entered his school. Although his conservative social message cannot be said to have generated any significant changes in society, many graduates left Groton more acutely aware of how the other half lived. "More than forty years ago," Franklin Roosevelt wrote to Peabody one month before the Rector retired, "you said in a sermon in the old Chapel something about not losing [our] ideals in later life. Those . . . Groton ideals, [honesty, public service, morality]--taught by you--I try not to forget--and your [teachings] are still with me and with hundreds of others of us boys."³⁷

³⁵*Ibid.*, 3.

³⁶The moral superiority and ethnocentricity of Peabody's message was reminiscent of the Yankee Protestant culture of the Whigs. As with John Quincy Adams, Lyman Beecher, and Abraham Lincoln, Peabody held that social progress must be guided by a moral compass. For a further discussion of the Whigs' reform proclamations see Daniel Walker Howe, The Political Culture of the American Whigs, (Chicago, 1979).

³⁷Franklin D. Roosevelt to Endicott Peabody, April 25, 1940, Peabody MSS.

Section Three

A Victorian Moralist Under Siege

With the foundation of Groton School firmly rooted in Peabody's conception of Christian nurture, progressive nurture and "manly" character development, it becomes important to ask to what extent, over time, were these ideals challenged, reshaped, or redefined? The chapters in this section, then, address Peabody's responses to pressures from higher education authorities, progressive educators, social reformers and other individuals who, to varying degrees, challenged his educational ideals.

These four chapters that follow, in effect, explore the extent to which the ideas of progressivism, the Social Gospel Movement, "muscular Christianity," the emergence of the modern American university, and the rise of the academic expert influenced the mission of Groton, Peabody's educational ideals, and the daily lives of students.

Chapter Seven examines how the Rector incorporated his ideal of progressive nurture within the Groton community by creating and maintaining the Groton School Missionary Society, including its Sunday school missions and summer camp. Continuing in the same vein, Chapter Eight explores Peabody's involvement in the moral reform of secondary and college football. Both of these chapters, in essence, seek to shed new light on the role that the internal and external constituents of Groton played in the implementation and alteration of Peabody's educational and social agenda.¹ Moreover, they are also intended to reveal factors that stimulated and directed Peabody's social reform impulse.

¹Internal is defined as those individuals having daily contact or exposure to Peabody; this includes the role of students, faculty, and parents, trustee members, and alumni. External is defined as those individuals who were

The subsequent two chapters, Nine, and Ten, chronicle the concerns and objections that specific groups or individuals raised in opposition to Peabody's strict reliance on traditional, "manly" character-building techniques. It is the author's contention that those university authorities who came to embrace a more secular and scientifically oriented worldview posed the greatest challenge to Peabody's mission. Moreover, in due time, many of these individuals expressed overt concern that Peabody's paternalistic educational philosophy was simply outdated in a nation fast becoming a first-class world power. To what extent, then, did Peabody either modify or remain steadfast in his belief that Christian gentlemen could be properly trained in a rigid and openly traditional Christian regime for positions of service and leadership.

The beginning of Chapter Nine sets the stage for Peabody's repeated clashes with modern university officials as the contents of the Harvard University School Examination Board Report of 1893 are examined. The remainder of the chapter compares Peabody's and Harvard president Charles William Eliot's educational ideals. Such an examination provides yet another perspective regarding the degree to which some members outside the immediate Groton community remained, at least in part, opposed to Peabody's paternalistic approach. Pursuing this theme through the eyes of the prominent education reformer, Abraham Flexner, in

concerned over the development of Groton students and had reservations about Peabody's definition of a properly educated Christian gentleman; this includes higher education authorities, progressive educators, the emerging scientifically oriented academic expert, and other individuals who believed Peabody's emphasis on moral and spiritual character building was no longer relevant in regards to the technological and scientific innovations of a modern society.

Chapter Ten, we examine the impact of progressive education on boarding schools in general and Groton in particular.

Chapter Six

Progressive Nurture in Practice: The Creation of Groton School Missionary Society, Sunday School and School Camp

It is because Groton School was conscious of these two facts--that every man has work to do for humanity and that in order to be democratic one must learn to know one's fellow--that the [missionary society] was undertaken.
Groton School Camp Brochure (March, 1901)

Three years after founding Groton, Peabody realized that neither his Sacred Studies classes nor his chapel sermons provided students with ample opportunity to address the Social Question directly. In an effort to enlighten Grotonians further about the worthwhile merits of Progressive nurture, in 1887 the Rector organized a Missionary Society "with a view to serving the community and to developing the spiritual life of the boys of the school." The major objective of the Missionary Society, asserted Peabody, was to bring its "members into touch with such social movements as the reform of prisons and the children's court."¹

The Episcopal Missionary Movement

The inception of Groton's Missionary Society coincided with a broader nineteenth-century social ameliorative movement within the Protestant Episcopal Church. Responding to the needs of impoverished urban residents, the Episcopal Church emerged as one of the most active and influential post-Reconstruction social reform agencies.

The first Episcopal mission in Boston appeared in 1829 and five years later, the Boston Episcopal Missionary Society was founded

¹Endicott Peabody, Report to Massachusetts Diocesan Committee, April 14, 1937, Peabody MSS.

to "serve as a voice and advocate for the poor."² By the 1880's, the Episcopal Church had established urban missionary outposts in Philadelphia, New York, and London. Despite the sedulous efforts of the Boston clergy to develop and maintain its missions, a report to the Diocesan Committee revealed that this movement lacked visionary leadership. "It is evident that in spite of a great deal of earnest labor, our methods of Church work are not equal to the emergence of our time and place," an Episcopal minister reported.³

The concerns addressed at this meeting prompted the Episcopal Church to refocus its energies and channel more resources into restructuring the Missionary Society. Frederick B. Allen, a former assistant to Phillips Brooks at Boston's Trinity Church, was appointed as the new Superintendent of the Episcopal City Mission in 1888. Allen created an extensive missionary program that targeted prisoners, sailors, immigrants, and newcomers to the city and, according to one church historian, "infused in the Episcopal City Mission a spirit that remains a vital force even today."⁴

Allen wasted little time enlisting the support of Peabody and Groton students. A frequent visitor to the Groton campus, Allen lectured students on the harsh lifestyles that many of the Episcopal City Mission beneficiaries experienced. He encouraged the students to become actively involved in missionary work. Peabody and his

²David Dillion, "Mission in Urban Diocese," in M.J. Duffy, ed., The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts 1784-1984: A Mission to Remember, Proclaim and Fulfill (The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, 1984), 28.

³Ibid., 30.

⁴Ibid., 34.

students responded to Allen's suggestion by donating money and occasionally visiting the Episcopal City Mission to help teach Sunday school or deliver food and clothing to needy individuals. "This [missionary] work, carried on as it is by members of the community is just what is needed for it will make the school take more interest in the doings of this activity," an editor of the Grotonian wrote in 1892.⁵

Grotonians work in the Episcopal City Mission, coupled with the urgings of Peabody, inspired students to form their own Missionary Society in 1887. At first, their activities were mostly limited to the town of Groton. The society's members met several times a month and discussed which individuals in the neighboring community needed welfare assistance. The students often received updates from the Rector's wife, Fannie Peabody. She kept them abreast of who needed more firewood, a porch shoveled, or other odd jobs done that required hours of manual labor.⁶ "We paid our first visit to [Mrs. Freeman] today, right after church, and talked and gave her the latest news, for nearly an hour. . . . [Return visits] will be very pleasant as she is a dear old thing, and it will be a good occupation for us," Franklin Roosevelt wrote in regards to his Missionary Society responsibilities.⁷

⁵The Grotonian, January 1892 : 74. The Grotonian was the school paper. The articles in The Grotonian were written by students and they also printed the editions.

⁶In one instance, the students donated sixty dollars to cover the funeral expenses of an impoverished woman.

⁷Franklin D. Roosevelt to his Parents, January 29, 1899. Mrs. Freeman was an 84 year old black women whose husband, a Civil War drummer, had died and left her virtually penniless. She was unable to support herself and the

The Founding of a Sunday School

Despite the early efforts of the Missionary Society in assisting both the Episcopal City Mission and local townspeople, the school newspaper criticized the organization for its lack of significant accomplishments:

Two years ago a Missionary Society was started in the school, its objects being to give its members knowledge of missionary work in general, and to help any such work as they might be interested in. It was found, however, that there was not much for it to do, beyond the sending away of small sums of money. So it was allowed to sleep, as it were, being a tacit understanding that it would be re-organized as soon as there was an opportunity for it to do some tangible good."⁸

Peabody was cognizant that the Missionary Society had struggled to define and implement an effective assistance strategy. Therefore, he held a meeting to reorganize its efforts in the spring of 1888.

To revive the interest in the society's undertakings, he suggested that the students and faculty concentrate their efforts on erecting and supporting a Sunday school for local residents. The establishment of a local Sunday School, Peabody believed, provided an excellent opportunity for students to become engaged in a Progressive nurture reform activity. Groton's involvement in Sunday school missionary work paralleled a much broader nineteenth-century American religious missionary movement that encouraged the establishment and maintenance of these institutions.

Missionary Society members routinely brought her coal, shoveled her porch, and when she later died, paid for her funeral.

⁸The Grotonian, November 1889, 19, Peabody MSS.

The Sunday school originated in England and first appeared on the American educational landscape in the 1790's.⁹ However, as historian Anne Boylan has argued, American Sunday schools developed along separate from than the British model. These establishments remained a "relatively autonomous, working-class institution" in England but evolved into "both a church and missionary institution that enrolled children from a variety of social backgrounds" in America.¹⁰ By the 1880's, American Sunday schools had emerged as important and permanent fixtures of many church organizations. Church members used this organization as a creative and productive vehicle both to recruit new members and help reform society.¹¹

Five years after Groton's initial efforts to start a Sunday School in the local community, Peabody reported to the Board of Trustees that "a good deal of earnest work is being done by the school Missionary Society." In particular, he continued, "a master and two boys have established a Sunday School at Groton [School] and two others devote their Sunday afternoons to a small village two miles from the school."¹² Moreover, less than a decade after Groton had erected a Sunday school, the Missionary Society established a formal affiliation with the broader Sunday school movement by sending delegates to a national Sunday school convention in 1901.

⁹For a more detailed discussion of the evolution of this institution in America see Anne M. Boylan, Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution 1790-1880, (New Haven, CT., 1988).

¹⁰Boylan, Sunday Schools, 166.

¹¹Ibid., 169.

¹²Endicott Peabody, Headmaster Report, December 12, 1892, Peabody MSS.

Summarizing the details of the meeting held in Boston, one Groton student reported that the:

main purpose of the convention was to initiate a Sunday School Association which should support a minister regularly to devote his caring for the Sunday school in the Association. It was hoped that many small towns would join and thereby obtain a more efficient management of their Sunday school.¹³

In subsequent years, The American Church Sunday School Institute recognized the efforts of Groton's Missionary Society's Sunday School. "Of course you know your school stands next to none amongst the schools in your Diocese in the amount of its offering for [Sunday Schools] and missions," Rev. Herman Duhring, Secretary of the Sunday School Institute, wrote to Peabody expressing his gratitude for Groton's involvement in this movement.¹⁴

Prior to his work at Groton, Peabody had participated in organizing Sunday schools in both England and America. The Rector realized that this institution afforded his students an opportunity to partake in a religiously affiliated reform activity that exposed them to the realities of the Social Question and thereby fostered Progressive nurture.¹⁵ He also encouraged his faculty to support the

¹³Minutes of the Groton Missionary Society Meeting, June 19, 1901, Peabody MSS.

¹⁴Rev. Hermann L. Duhring to Endicott Peabody, October 22, 1908. This institute was located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Peabody MSS.

¹⁵As a student at Trinity College, Cambridge, Peabody helped to teach Sunday school classes in the working-class neighborhoods of London. He continued his missionary activity when he returned to America; he devoted his Sunday's at Episcopal Theological Seminary to teaching Sunday school classes, and when he began his seven month stint as a minister in Tombstone, Arizona he also erected a Sunday school.

society's efforts to initiate a Sunday school. Addressing the faculty in 1909, he said: "The missionary work of the school is an important feature of [Groton] life and to maintain it on a high plane we need all the enthusiasm we can gather."¹⁶

From Sunday school to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

Although hampered by the responsibilities and problems associated with running a boarding school, the Rector dedicated himself to transforming Groton's Sunday school into a church with a substantial congregation. Decades before the opening of Groton School, the Massachusetts Diocesan Society had extended their missionary efforts into Groton, Ayer and the surrounding communities. However, they had failed to build an Episcopal Church.¹⁷ Yet only three years after Groton's Sunday school venture in Ayer, the members of the local community believed that the high attendance at these meetings warranted the building of a new church. With great delight Peabody announced to his board of trustees that Groton master Rev. William Thayer's Sunday school project in Ayer had culminated into the building of an Episcopal Church. "For this we not only supply his services as a minister, but also the services of two other masters and boys for Sunday School," Peabody said.¹⁸

On August 29 1892, Peabody, faculty, Groton students, and other community leaders helped break the ground for the establishment of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. Peabody raised two

¹⁶Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Masters," September 1909, Peabody MSS.

¹⁷Prior to the founding of Groton School, the closest Episcopal church to Groton was in Fitchburg located fourteen miles to the west.

¹⁸Ibid.

thousand dollars to help the nascent church overcome its financial debts. Two months later, a celebration was held to commemorate the laying of the St. Andrew's cornerstone. Describing the context of Peabody's honorary sermon, a reporter wrote: "Dr. Peabody said that the services of the day had a particular interest for him in as much as he felt from the beginning of the [Groton] School there ought to be sent something to brighten the lives of those who are less free to care."¹⁹

In 1895 St. Andrew's was officially consecrated by the Right Reverend William Lawrence, and Peabody accepted the position of Rector and Vicar. He held that title for the next forty-two years.²⁰ Throughout Peabody's tenure as St. Andrew's Vicar, the Groton School Missionary Society furthered its commitment to teaching Sunday school classes and assisting parishioners in a variety of ways. In 1900 Groton master William Amory Gardner, for instance, donated enough money for the church to purchase a permanent home for the minister. Another Groton master, Edwin Higley, started the first choir and "he came in fair and foul weather, sometimes walking from Groton School to assist with the training of the choir."²¹ Groton boys also organized the Sir Galahad Club for the purpose of providing tutorial services to Church youth, and delivered Christmas trees and presents to various members of the community.²²

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Sarah Hamill, History of St. Andrew's Church: 100th Anniversary 1892-1992, (Pamphlet published by St. Andrew's Church, 1992), 4, Peabody MSS.

²¹Ibid., 5.

²²The Sir Galahad Club was comprised of members of the Groton School Missionary Society.

During the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of St. Andrew's, Rev. William Thayer, then headmaster at St. Mark's School, reminded the congregation that:

it is to the priest and laymen of Groton School that we give our most appreciative gratitude and thankfulness, they have given freely of their time, their means, and their service for St. Andrew's Church. Dr. Peabody was the father of the thought, and his support and co-operation through all these years are responsible for the existence and continuance of church life.²³

St. Andrew's parishioners were grateful for the Rector's and his students' dedicated commitment toward serving their needs. "As we look back fifty years we realize more than ever the unbounded appreciation and gratitude we owe to Dr. Peabody and Mrs. Endicott Peabody and their faithful associates at Groton School for all they have done for the Parish," a church member wrote a half a century later.²⁴

Groton's involvement in erecting an Episcopal church and supporting various Sunday schools, Peabody believed, served two purposes. First, students unselfish and dedicated commitment toward helping the economically underprivileged Groton and Ayer populations elevated their moral and religious character. Second, the benevolent work of the society also exposed students to the often deplorable conditions that their various Sunday school attendees and St. Andrew's members lived in. Furthermore, students who

²³Rev. William Thayer Speech to St. Andrew's Congregation in Bennett, St. Andrew's Church 50th Anniversary, 17-18, Peabody MSS.

²⁴Bennett, St. Andrew's 50th Anniversary, 20.

participated in these activities broadened their perspective regarding the complexities of the Social Question, and put into practice the Rector's ideal of Progressive nurture.

Peabody hoped his rigid adherence to the doctrine of Progressive nurture would culminate in the creation of virtuous public servants, men dedicated to eradicating vice, greed, dishonesty and corruption from society, the business world, and politics.²⁵ The Rector summarized his conception of Progressive nurture simply as helping "his pupils to become citizens of the commonwealth of Christ."²⁶ At least one social commentator, John Jay Chapman, himself a graduate of St. Paul's School, believed Grotonians were too financially isolated and socially insulated to comprehend the plight of the economically disadvantaged. "The Episcopal minister inherits a tradition of subservience to [wealthy] families and lives up to it," Chapman wrote to an acquaintance in 1928. "I know the people behind St. Paul's and Groton and St. Mark's. They are the stupidest, the nicest and about the most protected and safely rich people in the land."²⁷ A little over a quarter of a century earlier, George C. Edwards had expressed sincere reservations as to whether schools such as Groton were capable of producing democratic citizens. Boarding schools, asserted Edwards in a 1902 article published in Educational Review, do not "produce democrats nor men in touch

²⁵McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 296.

²⁶Endicott Peabody, "The Aims, Duties, and Opportunities of the Head-Master of an Endowed Secondary School," The School Review, October 1909 : 528, in McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 289.

²⁷John Jay Chapman to William Greenough Thayer, September 30, 1928. Carbon copy of letter in Peabody MSS.

with American life," but rather "a small class of individuals who regard themselves as being . . . a well-bred un-American."²⁸

Indeed, Peabody's righteous attacks leveled at the partisan demagogues who controlled local, state and national affairs had an air of simplicity about them. Moreover, Peabody's naive perspective about how the other half lived or the sleazy and unethical methods the business establishment often employed routinely surfaced during his homilies. Lecturing to his students about Christianizing the corrupt practices of the business world in 1900, Peabody proclaimed:

I can picture to myself one so trained starting with a lofty expectation of the natural course of events. Then he meets, before his business career has fairly begun, men who are unfair in their method of business. He finds intolerance to truth and honesty so long as there is profit in some bargain. He learns gradually to think that the great thing is to get rich, and so long as you yourself do not actually steal, you need not inquire with care into the methods of those who represent you. Most men, he thinks, are made on these lines, let us follow the crowd. He loses two things, his ideal, and his belief in man.²⁹

Desirous of turning his boys into virtuous citizens, Peabody routinely reminded them, "Never tell a lie!" Despite the advent of modernism, Peabody remained firmly convinced that the attainment of moral character could only be achieved if students adhered to a strict Puritanical moral and ethical code. Deeply suspicious of those individuals who debunked religion, throughout

²⁸George C. Edwards, "The Private School in American Life," Educational Review, vol. 23, January-May, 1902, 273.

²⁹Endicott Peabody, Sermon in Groton Chapel, October 14, 1900, Peabody MSS.

his life, Peabody held that teaching students the "time-tested" moral lessons of the Bible comprised the best method of character-training.

Groton School Camp

Although the Groton Missionary Society contributed to the well-being of the Episcopal City Mission, local community residents, St. Andrew's Church, and two other local Sunday school missions, the most significant and successful missionary project, maintained Peabody, was the founding of the Groton School Summer Camp in 1893. In Peabody's view, no other organization or school activity better illustrated his concern for both exposing Grotonians to the tremendous problems and complexities of the Social Question and instilling within them a sense of Progressive nurture. "It is a great problem as you say, that of the relations between the rich and the poor," Peabody wrote to his friend Julius Atwood. Believing that opening a summer charity camp might awaken the missionary impulse in Groton students, Peabody continued by claiming that, "the effect of this camp I hope may be to show our boys that they can do something for others who are not as fortunate as them."³⁰

With the success of Groton's Sunday school ventures fresh in his mind, Peabody organized a meeting of the Missionary Society in the fall of 1892 and suggested the society initiate a summer charity camp. The camp, in Peabody's view, was to be a semaphore of hope for underprivileged youths. The project's primary objective was to "take away from the cities, during the summer months, the poor class of boys, who even in the hottest weather never get a change to leave

³⁰Endicott Peabody to Julius Atwood, July 17, 1893, Peabody MSS.

the slums . . . and give them two weeks of pure country air."³¹ Peabody and some Groton masters visited several potential camp sites over the next several months. They finally decided to rent an offshore island on Lake Asquam near Holderness, New Hampshire.

In December of 1892, the Missionary Society members formally announced their plans to run a summer camp declaring that "the good that such a place can do is obvious and needs the help and hearty support of all those who are interested in the wretched condition of the poor boys in our large cities."³² The students held various fund-raising activities on the school campus and mailed flyers to solicit donations from parents and supporters of the school. By January they had procured over 1,500 dollars, and the society formally announced the plans for beginning a charity camp during the coming summer. Although Ernest Balch was the first American to open a for-profit summer camp for boys in 1888, the Groton (charity) Camp "was the first school camp which enabled what are sometimes called underprivileged boys to enjoy this sort of outdoor life equally with the more fortunate."³³

Inviting the young boys of the Boston Episcopal City Mission to attend the camp, the Groton Missionary Society quickly filled all the camp's available spaces. Groton organized its camp to accommodate between 15-30 boys for five, two week cycles. At the conclusion of a

³¹The Grotonian, December 1892, 37, Peabody MSS.

³²Ibid.

³³Endicott Peabody and Acosta Nichols Jr., Groton School Camp Brochure, March 1942, 12. Peabody claimed that Groton's camp was the first school charity camp in the country. After an extensive search of relevant materials and sources on the history of summer, church, and school camps, the author has found no information to dispute Peabody's assertion. Balch's camp was the first for-profit summer camp venture.

two week stay, a new group was ready to invade the island. "These one hundred boys, many of them from demoralizing surroundings, not only have a healthful and happy visit in one of the most picturesque spots in the land," reported Episcopal City Mission superintendent Frederick B. Allen, but "they are sure from the manly earnest spirit of the camp, and the personal influence of the young men in charge, to get some new impressions of an ideal Christian manhood."³⁴

Peabody hoped that Allen's pronouncement would materialize for both the campers and Groton students. "The [camp] project has been taken up with a great deal of enthusiasm by the boys and we have hope that it will be of great benefit not only to the strangers who are cared for there, but also, and still more, to the members of the school," said Peabody shortly before the camp opened.³⁵ For Peabody the camp was the ideal embodiment of his social reform philosophy; it exposed students to the realities of the poor, instilled within them deeper sense of Progressive nurture, and taught them that social and moral uplift was attainable through benevolent service. "[The camp] is a valuable lesson in philanthropy and Groton parents must realize what an opportunity their boys have to learn, under favorable circumstances, the first steps in the road to higher service," Peabody wrote in 1901.³⁶

³⁴Frederick B. Allen, My Neighbor, September 1894, No. II, Vol. III., 1. This publication was a monthly pamphlet put out by the Boston Episcopal City Mission, Peabody MSS.

³⁵Endicott Peabody, Headmaster Report, December 1892, Peabody MSS.

³⁶Groton School Camp Brochure, March 1901, Peabody MSS.

If students were constantly exposed to the deleterious condition of urban centers and the abject poverty that many camp residents endured, Peabody contended, his students might be encouraged to take up what historian Arthur Mann called, "the gentlemen's burden."³⁷ "One of the aims of Progressive nurture was to create a new relationship between the rich and the poor," noted historian James McLachlan, and "Groton students probably learned more about and saw more about the urban poor at the school [and camp] than they would have if they lived in a silk-stockings city district or in a suburb."³⁸ Peabody's belief apparently had at least some validity. "I was inspired to look forward to . . . doing things for other people, Groton graduate Douglas Dillon recalled:

The idea of [public service] was in the air and it was sort of noblesse oblige. You had gotten in [Groton] and you are lucky to be here; you are getting the best sort of education, you must not use it all selfishly. It's your job to help your fellow people. . . . There was a feeling of obligation to your fellow man that was instilled in you the whole time you were there."³⁹

Yet there was a distinctive element of racial and cultural superiority in Peabody's reform vision. Peabody, for example, strongly believed that members of his social class should assume the predominant role in shaping the course of America's and the world's political and social reforms. While not a robust nativist or racist,

³⁷McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 288. For an insightful analysis of the Social Gospel Movement and the "gentlemen's burden," see Arthur Mann, Yankee Reformers.

³⁸Ibid., 291-292.

³⁹Douglass Dillon, Interview by Groton School, Groton, MA. Groton School Oral History Project, Groton School, Groton, MA., 1983.

he held that his worldview was superior to those of other cultures and nations. A letter which Peabody's received from his good friend Walter Lawrence in 1923 sheds some light on Peabody's conservative social and political philosophy. "I agree with you," began Lawrence, "that America, in spite of every effort to avoid European entanglements, must come in to share in the white man's burden." Continuing, Lawrence added,

after some amount of traveling and a great deal of thinking and reading, I have come to the conclusion that the only two white countries are America and Great Britain. I have no use no for Dagoes, either the Dagoes of Europe or the Dagoes of South America. The mission ahead for your people and my people is a clear mission, full of perils and doubts, and possibly losses, but it is a mission that cannot be shirked.⁴⁰

A letter from Taft School founder and headmaster Horace Dutton Taft--brother of President William H. Taft--also clearly demonstrates that Peabody and several of his private school contemporaries shared many of the racial views and stereotypes of the times. Taft, for example wrote:

Dr. Fuess of [Phillips] Andover tells a story of an old farmer in South Carolina, who started on his way to Charleston with a load of manure. On the way, a darky crawled up in back. A man stopped him and said: "What you got there, captain?" The captain replied: "I got a load of manure and a darky." He went farther along, was asked the same question and replied: "I got a load of manure and a darky." They came in sight of a little group

⁴⁰Walter Lawrence to Endicott Peabody, January 24, 1923.

and the darky stuck his head up and said: "Next time, captain, would you mind mentioning me first.?" [This joke is] probably old to you.⁴¹

Typical of many wealthy, white Anglo Saxon Protestant males of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century, Peabody held a simplistic view of the problems and hardships which many of urban poor, including the Groton School campers, endured. The urban poor, Peabody believed, could improve their social station simply by strengthening their manly resolve and moral character. Stressing morality, cleanliness, self-discipline, and self-control, members of the Groton community naively assumed that campers "will have a chance for improving their minds and strengthening their characters." "It seems doubtful," they concluded in language that evoked a sense of self-righteousness, "if they return to their poor, squalid homes after having two weeks of pure healthful country life, they will be recognized by their relatives and former associates."⁴²

The Groton Camp Begins

On July 3rd, 1893 the initial wave of Groton students and masters arrived on the island and prepared the campsite for the arrival of the first campers.⁴³ Two days later, the Groton Camp staff awoke to "a glorious day fit for the opening of a campaign which is

⁴¹Horace D. Taft to Endicott Peabody, January 21, 1941.

⁴²The Grotonian, December 1892, 37.

⁴³For many years the only outside help Groton hired was the cook, "Merry" Andrew. Faculty and students were expected to donate some part of their summer to helping run the camp. Similar to the rotation system used to shuttle boys in and out for two week period, Groton students, graduates, and faculty came during the summer at different intervals and helped run the camp. One Gorton graduate,--permanent resident--was hired to stay for the duration of the summer.

full of promise."⁴⁴ Commenting on the camp's first full day of activity a Groton student wrote:

Took all of them in two boats for a row around the island. Heavy thunderstorms came up just before we landed. Boys rather lively in dormitory just before bed time. Quieted down at prayers. Faculty sat up till ten played dominoes and read in quiet room.⁴⁵

During the remainder of the first session a daily routine was established that endured as the normal pattern of activity for the next eighty years. Beginning at 6:15 in the morning a blaring horn sounded, and for those not partaking in piscatorial adventures, the camp turned into a beehive of activity with "swarming nudities hurrying down to the lake for a morning dip."⁴⁶ After breakfast consisting of "oatmeal or mush, stew, fish or Johnnycake, with plenty of fresh milk to wash it all down," the boys worked clearing fields, building docks, scrubbing row boats and collecting rubbish. Around eleven the boys went for a quick swim followed by a hearty lunch. During the afternoon the campers played baseball, rowed, swam, fished, or traveled into nearby Holderness to visit the local candy and soda water shop. At six o'clock the entire camp gathered for dinner, and two hours later the evening prayer session began. Finally

⁴⁴Groton Camp Log, July 5th 1893, Peabody MSS.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Groton School Camp Brochure, March 1901, Peabody MSS. From the descriptions of morning rituals in the Groton Camp log book, it seems that some individuals chose to rise even earlier in the morning to chase after the legendary size lunkers supposedly lurking deep within the lake's waters. However, these avid fishermen would always return before breakfast with "a fine string of stories of the fine bass that [they] would have caught if the line, hook, or bait had been different." Groton Camp Log 1894 July 16th and Groton Camp Brochure March 1901, Peabody MSS.

around ten o'clock, a counselor would bark: "Lights out! Good Night! No more talking."⁴⁷

According to the camp log books, the first summer passed without major incidents and those who worked there considered the summer a major success. "With this day the records of the writer come to an end and who testifies to his great enjoyment of the faith in Groton School Camp. His task has been rendered easy and pleasant by the great efficiency and unvarying fidelity and enthusiasm of all his assistants" a camp staff member wrote.⁴⁸ Moreover, a columnist in the first edition of the 1893-1894 Grotonian wrote that "our summer camp was certainly the greatest success and we certainly hope that our friends may help us with contributions to repeat next summer what has this year given two weeks of pleasure to each of nearly two hundred boys."⁴⁹

The Camp Expands

During the summer of 1895 Groton School Camp expanded its horizons by offering a New York City mission the opportunity to send a group of boys to their island. The youths' expenses were paid for by the New York Tribune Fresh Air Fund, and as was recorded in the camp log, "one happy lot of boys left New York on Monday July 24, at 5:30 PM by the Norwich Steamer of Worcester. The party numbered twenty and ages ranged from 11 to 15."⁵⁰ The campers arrived in New London, Connecticut at 5:35, and picked up a train that brought

⁴⁷Groton Camp Log, September 1st, 1893, Peabody MSS.

⁴⁸Groton Camp Log, September 8th, 1893, Peabody MSS.

⁴⁹The Grotonian, October 1893, 7, Peabody MSS.

⁵⁰Groton Camp Log, July 31, 1895, Peabody MSS.

them through Worcester, Nashua, Concord, and then finally arrived in Ashland shortly after one in the afternoon. Boarding a small steamer, the boys completed the last eight mile leg of their journey to the island in "complete happiness." "Their arrival at camp," wrote an observer,

was the signal for a big shout from the shore, which was taken up at once by those on board the launch, and to this din was added the shrill whistle of the steamer, and the effect was--well, the boys were all the happier for it, and they feel that they had been welcomed properly.⁵¹

According to one Groton counselor, this "group of New York boys seemed a fine well behaved lot," and at the conclusion of their two week stay, he recorded his impression that the boys were "given more pleasure and happiness," than they could stand.⁵²

The Rector encouraged the Missionary Society to expand the camp's enrollment to include a greater number of youths from boys clubs, reform schools, charity houses and church missions. By the 1920's the camp had evolved from a relatively deserted island housing a few boys and men in platform tents, to an operation whose budget totaled over \$3500 and whose physical plant included an ice house, comfortable cabins, a dining hall, and grassy playing fields.

As the area around the original camp site developed into a wealthy resort town for Bostonians, vacationing lake dwellers urged Peabody to relocate his camp to an area that would remain relatively undisturbed by the campers' boisterous play. Surprisingly, the Rector put up little resistance to these charges, and instead of

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid., August 1, 1895.

engaging in a lengthily battle over the noise issue, he simply decided to look for another spot.

Peabody's reticence, in part, was perhaps motivated by the fact that one of Lake Asquam's residents offered the Missionary Society an option to purchase a more remote camp site located on New Found Lake near Bristol, New Hampshire. The slightly used and more capacious offshore island came equipped with such camping amenities as a large dining room/kitchen, several bunkhouses, an ice house, and a rainy day playhouse. This particular island continued to provide economically disadvantaged urban youths with a fine two week adventure for over the next fifty years.

Progressive Nurture Assessed

As with Groton's involvement in the Sunday school movement, the success of the Groton Summer Camp prompted Peabody and the Missionary Society to extend their efforts beyond the original scope and expectation of the project. Although the camp was founded out of a genuine concern to assist economically disadvantaged youth, the rigors of American politics and the ills of society seemed far removed from the remote New Hampshire wilderness.

In many respects, Peabody simply placed too much emphasis on moral and spiritual uplift. With little understanding of where the campers came from or how they lived, Peabody maintained he could improve their lives simply by strengthening their moral resolve. His sense of noblesse oblique was similar to that of his long-time friend, Theodore Roosevelt. The Rector believed that if Grotonians dedicated themselves to assisting the less fortunate, then in the words of Roosevelt, they "must use aright the gifts given them and that they

must render service to the state of a non-remunerative kind. Of course by service to state I not only mean politics, but I mean work to raise the condition of the people of our great cities: work for decency and cleanliness of mind and body generally."⁵³

The contributions of the Groton School Camp, indeed, might seem inconsequential when juxtaposed against the accomplishments of larger and more diverse Progressive Era missionary organizations. Although neither Peabody's Anglo-Saxon worldview, nor the morally ethnocentric mission of the camp can be dismissed, two important developments emanated from the initiation and subsequent evolution of the camp.

First, Peabody's example of opening and fully supporting a charity camp inspired other boarding schools to initiate their own munificent summer camps. St. Paul's School, an Episcopal secondary boys boarding school in Concord, New Hampshire had started a missionary society five years after it opened in 1855. However, the school did not open a summer camp until 1908. Peabody's example inspired the St. Paul's Missionary Society to purchase a tract of land near Danbury, New Hampshire for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a summer camp modeled after Groton's.⁵⁴

Twelve years after St. Paul's began its camp, and twenty-seven years after Groton was founded, Rev. William Thayer of St. Mark's School bought a summer camp in Peterborough, New Hampshire. Similar to Peabody's enterprise, Thayer, a former Groton master, argued that this philanthropic venture offered "an opportunity for

⁵³Theodore Roosevelt to Endicott Peabody, October 10, 1894, Peabody MSS.

⁵⁴Arthur Pier, St. Paul's School, (New York, 1934), 291.

St. Mark's boys and young alumni to furnish a summer camping experience to disadvantaged boys from New York and Boston."⁵⁵

By the 1970's the Massachusetts (Episcopal) Diocesan Organization had purchased the St. Mark's and Groton School charity camps. The complexities of running a modern boarding school had convinced each school's headmaster to allow the Episcopal Diocesan to assume the responsibility for operating the camps. Moreover, as boarding schools began to compete against an improved public school system for students, the mission of Progressive nurture was supplanted by a much greater emphasis on academic and intellectual training. However, during the existence of Groton School Camp, Peabody asserted, thousands of boys "whose parents [could not] afford to send them to more expensive camps," were provided with an eventful two-week experience.⁵⁶

The second, and perhaps the most important contribution of the Groton School Camp was that students had the opportunity to work closely with urban youths. Peabody hoped that the pupils who worked at the camp would develop a new perspective on the lives and problems of the economically disadvantaged population. America would benefit greatly, Peabody believed, if as adults, his students continued to volunteer their time and energy to assist those

⁵⁵Edward Tuck Hall, Saint Mark's School: A Centennial History, (Stinehour Press, Lunenburg, VT., 1967), 21. Thayer was a former Groton master. He had not only worked at the Groton Camp but he also became involved in almost every project of the Groton Missionary Society.

⁵⁶Our Diocesan Summer Camp Brochure 1938, Peabody MSS. Groton and St. Mark's held an annual Christmas Holiday dance to raise money for their respective camps.

in need. Peabody argued that it was the little contributions that made the most significant impact:

During the camp's life of about thirty years it has brought strength and joy to a great multitude of little boys who are shut up in stifling city slums: it has also given many of our boys an insight into the lives and characters of those whose experiences are wholly different from theirs. It has also set a lead which has been followed by many other schools, so that there are in this part of the country and in the middle states a good number of such institutions. It is this kind of learning by doing which teaches people of all ages the making of Jesus' word, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me."⁵⁷

Maintaining that the essence of the camp centered on introducing students to the merits of philanthropic work, Peabody wanted his pupils "to realize that no work is too small or too insignificant and that the only way to accomplish great result is to do thoroughly small work. . . . "⁵⁸

Throughout his years as headmaster, Peabody addressed the issue of the Social Question by sermonizing to his boys that they should emulate the life of Christ. Peabody encouraged Grotonians to dedicate themselves to serving others in a self-sacrificing and morally upright fashion. Moreover, he affirmed that boys could emulate the simple and unselfish life of Christ by working in "summer camps for boys who would otherwise be unable to escape from the discomforts of the cities, or in Boy's Clubs in the vicinity of

⁵⁷Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Masters," September, 1921, Peabody MSS.

⁵⁸Peabody and Nichols, Groton Camp Brochure 1942, Peabody MSS.

the School, and in ministering to the physical needs of the neighbors in increasing numbers in these days."⁵⁹

Commenting on Peabody's social reform mission, James MacGregor Burns wrote:

In one way, at least, Groton failed the future politician completely. Politics to Peabody was a kind of crusade in which Grotonian knight-errants . . . would charge eagerly into the political arena and clash noisily with the forces of evil. . . . But his exhortation ignored the cruel question facing the American politician bent on success. Never lie, the Rector said--without taking up the further question whether in politics lies are sometimes necessary to reach "good" ends. Never compromise with evil, the Rector said--without arguing whether politicians must work with corrupt forces to carry out popular mandates.⁶⁰

While MacGregor Burns's observations are poignant, the personal accounts of many Groton graduates suggest that some students, at least, reacted quite positively to the Rector's program of Progressive nurture. Perhaps typical of most Grotonians was graduate Henry Mali, who said:

I think the Rector gave us the idea of service. [Peabody] said much was expected of us, and that we should not just sit back and enjoy life. We were well off, we should try to do something. I think it's affected my life, I mean I worked for the YMCA and I do some work for the Church."⁶¹

Several years after Peabody founded Groton, Theodore Roosevelt, the personification of Peabody's Progressive nurture ideal,

⁵⁹Endicott Peabody, Speech at St. Mark's School, 1940, Peabody MSS.

⁶⁰MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, 15.

⁶¹Interview with Henry Mali October 17, 1983 New York City, Groton School

seemed optimistic that by 1899 the Rector had made a valuable contribution toward reforming society in general, and Groton patricians in particular. "I doubt if you know how keenly I have watched and sympathized with your success," Roosevelt wrote. "I think you are doing a most genuine service to America and by the way, from baseball down and up."⁶²

Conclusion

During the period when Peabody founded Groton, the deleterious conditions of urban environments inspired a plethora of religiously oriented organizations to establish and maintain missionary societies, Sunday schools, home missions, and settlement houses.⁶³ Although Peabody had previously worked in these institutions, he maintained that his position at Groton allowed him to cajole, admonish, and sermonize his upper class contemporaries, and especially their children, to resist the natural temptation of ignoring the denigrated condition of urban America.

Theodore Roosevelt believed with Peabody that privileged children could be lead to develop an interest in assisting the economically disadvantaged. Speaking to the Groton students, Roosevelt claimed: "Remember your ideals, and strive to reach them, try to see the good in men,--take them for what they are worth, not for what them seem. But above all be brave, manly and resolute."⁶⁴

Over fifty years later, Congressman John Kennedy told a boarding school audience that, "the success of any school can be

⁶²Theodore Roosevelt to Endicott Peabody, March 20, 1899, Peabody MSS.

⁶³Thomas J. Schlereth, Victorian America: Transformation in Everyday Life 1876-1915, (New York, 1991), 261.

⁶⁴The Grotonian #2 November, 1894, 27.

measured by the contribution the alumni make to our national life."⁶⁵ Unfortunately, Kennedy's pronouncement discounted the involvement of those graduates who attempted to improve the quality of life for members of their local communities.

Typical of many social reformers of the Progressive era, Peabody placed far too much faith in the ameliorative potential of his vision. Groton, to a large degree, ultimately failed to produce legions of unselfish Christian gentleman who never ceased to battle against the unmitigated graft, greed, and corruption that permeated American society.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, many Grotonians found that their experiences at school, and especially their involvement in the Missionary Society's various activities, inspired them to become more active in local and national community affairs once they graduated. Commenting on how Peabody and his ideals had influenced his life, Franklin Roosevelt, then president, wrote in 1941: "I count it among the blessings of my life that it was given to me in formative years to have the privilege of your guiding hand and the benefit of your inspiring example. . . . For all that you have been and are to me I owe a debt of gratitude which I love to acknowledge."⁶⁷

⁶⁵The Choate Alumni Bulletin, VIII (November 1946), 74. Kennedy was a graduate of Choate.

⁶⁶Peter Gay, The Cultivation of Hatred, (New York, 1993), 261. Gay's portrayal of Roosevelt and his relationship to the postbellum cult of manliness is an invaluable source for historians and other scholars interested in this intriguing and frequently ignored cultural phenomenon.

⁶⁷Franklin D. Roosevelt to Endicott Peabody, January 11, 1941, Peabody MSS.

Chapter Seven

The Cult of Manliness, Sportsmanship, and Morality: Peabody and the Moral Reform of Football

[Football] produces more manly, self-reliant boys, whose bodily and mental play-time will develop a race of fine physical bearing and of fine feeling that is best in sport. These will be contributing factors toward disciplined minds which will be better able to meet the complexities of a modern life.

R. Heber Howe, Jr., (1925)

Historians have long recognized that not only had football emerged as a vital and integral part of university life by the conclusion of the First World War, but that the direction and character of the sport was fundamentally shaped by the leadership of individuals at Harvard, Yale and Princeton.¹ The reasons for the game's meteoric rise and its tremendous impact on secondary school life during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century has not,

¹Rutgers 6-4 victory over Princeton on November 6, 1869 marked the official arrival of competitive football on college campuses. This game, however, was under rules and conditions which were closer to soccer than modern day football. In the first contest that employed the rules of rugby, Harvard tied McGill 0-0 on May 15, 1874. Yet one-half of this game was played under United States rugby rules, and the second half under Canadian rules. It was not until the following June 4, 1875 when Tufts squeaked by Harvard 1-0, that the first truly American-rugby version of the game was played. During the next two decades, the type of football played on American secondary and higher education campuses evolved from a English Rugby-like game, to one which was somewhat similar to the football currently played on campuses today. For a analysis of how Harvard, Yale and Princeton changed the game see Frederick Rudolph, "The Rise of Football," The American College and University: A History, (New York, 1962), 373-393. Ronald A. Smith, Sports and Freedom: The Rise of Big-Time College Athletics, (New York 1988), offers a more recent and detailed explanation of both college football's evolution and how the "Big Three" impacted the rules of the game. Moreover, an insightful commentary on the corruptive nature of college football can be found in Rick Telander, The Hundred Yard Lie: The Corruption of College Football and What We Can Do to Stop It, (New York, 1989).

however, been thoroughly explored. Although institutions of higher education assumed the dominate role in defining the nature of college athletics, historians have often overlooked the important role that American boarding schools played in the evolution and reform of college sports.² In particular, Endicott Peabody's role as one of the most influential and vociferous proponents of football reform has been, for the most part, largely omitted from the historical record. And yet, in 1905, he initiated a movement to alleviate the brutal and venal atmosphere surrounding football which ultimately led to the establishment of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.³

The primary aim of this chapter is to delineate the reasons why Peabody channeled his energies into reforming football. Examining his involvement and activity in this movement serves two

²Fred H. Harrison, Athletics For All: Physical Education and Athletic at Phillips Academy, Andover, 1778-1978. (Privately printed by Phillips Academy, Andover, Ma., 1983). Although Harrison's book deals exclusively with athletics at Phillips Academy, his book offers several invaluable insights into why boarding schools and colleges competed with one another up until the First World War. Boarding schools had an important role in the rise of college athletics because most public high schools were unable to sponsor athletic programs and field competitive teams. Therefore, college athletic programs ultimately depended upon boarding schools and endowed academies to supply a bountiful crop of rugged and well-drilled gridiron warriors. In addition, the boarding school teams provided competition for college freshman and sophomore development squads. Commenting on the contributions that many Lawrenceville School graduates made in college football, one student wrote: "In looking over the records of Lawrenceville graduates, who have obtained positions on the different college football teams of this country, one cannot help being astonished, not solely because of the numbers, but because of the positions that they have taken on several [Yale] and [Princeton] teams." For a more detailed account of Lawrenceville School athletics, see Roland J. Mulford, History of The Lawrenceville School, 1810-1935, (Princeton, N.J., 1935), 259-329.

³Smith, Sports and Freedom, 193-206. Smith only recognizes that Peabody contacted President Roosevelt about reforming football. The Rector's involvement in this particular reform movement, however, was more influential than Smith has suggested.

purposes. First, it suggests that the rise of "manly" athletics in general and football in particular was inextricably linked with the late nineteenth and early twentieth century "cult of manliness." Second, such an analysis reveals that Peabody's concern for moral character-building and his rationale for overhauling football corresponded to the cultural and educational movement which recognized strenuousness and masculinity as desirable dispositions. In order to understand sufficiently the motivation and impact of Peabody's attempts at redeeming the tarnished reputation of the game, it is necessary to examine first why educators, politicians, and other prominent social leaders believed that playing football could enhance an individual's manly and spiritual character.

The Education of Tom Brown

The importation of the English public school game of rugby into America paralleled the arrival of another distinctively British product, the publication of Thomas Hughes' Victorian manliness manifesto, Tom Brown's Schooldays (1857). Hughes' romantic portrayal of Rugby School headmaster, Dr. Thomas Arnold, underwent dozens of printings in both England and the United States. The enormous popularity of his book elevated the author, a lawyer and extremist British parliament member, to a celebrity status amongst his contemporaries.⁴ Describing the protagonist Tom, as a honest, morally strong, "broad in shoulder" and "deep in chest" adolescent, Hughes's morally uplifting narrative extolled the virtues

⁴Peter Gay, The Cultivation of Hatred: The Bourgeois Experience Victoria to Freud, (New York, 1993), 104.

of decency, independence, and self-sacrifice. His idea of combining rugged athleticism with robust spirituality became the archetype of Victorian manliness for British and American adolescents to emulate.⁵

Hughes' quintessential Christian gentleman was a strapping, stalwart warrior who competed fiercely, but honestly, in manly games such as rugby. Holding that a student's participation in rugby was essential to developing a boy's manly Christian character, Hughes wrote of the game: "This is worth living for; the whole sum of the schoolboy existence gathered up into one straining, struggling half-hour, a half-hour worth a year of common life."⁶ Hughes viewed the effeminate traditions of intellectualism and loaferism as anathema to his vision of rearing a generation of British public school adolescents on masculine and morally righteous virtues. In other words, those students who played rugby engaged in an activity which rejected femininity.

When Hughes's book appeared in America, upper-class Protestant Americans, and especially Boston Brahmins, were intrigued by his constant references to moral and spiritual uplift through "manly" education. While Horace Mann and Henry Barnard promulgated that the public school could instill a sense of Americanized Protestant morality within the social context of a rapidly changing ethno-religious urban population, Boston elites longed for the type of rigorous character-building training young

⁵Ibid.

⁶Thomas Hughes, Tom Brown's Schooldays, (1911, 6th rpt., New York, 1939), 122.

Tom Brown had received, and that Groton School later offered. Many patricians held English educational traditions in high regard, and they believed that Mann's blueprint for American public schools overlooked the emphasis that British public schools placed on athleticism, spirituality, and moral character building.

The proliferation of Irish and German Catholic immigrants into Boston and other eastern metropolitan centers between 1845-1854 challenged the political and cultural hegemony of the Brahmins' Puritan heritage.⁷ Brahmins abhorred by the moral debauchery of newly arriving immigrants instigated numerous moral crusades that targeted the drinking, gambling, and prostitution establishments that had appeared with alarming frequency in urban centers. By the mid-1850's, the anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant sentiment in Massachusetts had heightened to such an extent that the nascent, xenophobic Know-Nothing party captured a sweeping majority of state legislative seats.⁸

Although the political dominance of the Know-Nothings was ephemeral, by the beginning of the Gilded Age many Brahmins still believed that the morally destructive lifestyles of immigrants needed to be modified and controlled. Despite the industrial innovations which developed during the postbellum period, many educators, clergymen, and social commentators argued that moral progress had not paralleled the advent of technological advances. The corruption within the Grant administration, coupled with many bankers' and

⁷David M. Potter, The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861, (New York, 1976), 225-266.

⁸Daniel Walker Howe, The Political Culture of the American Whigs, (Chicago, 1979), 248-249.

industrialists' adoption of greedy and unethical standards, augmented reformers' concern that the moral and spiritual backbone of American society had been broken. Such men as Henry Adams, Charles Francis Adams Jr., and Charles Eliot Norton maintained that American society had evolved into a nation of philistines. They argued, however, there was a viable solution to curbing the moral and cultural denigration of society: turn a generation of American adolescents into well-cultured and morally hardened Tom Browns. These properly educated Christian gentlemen would resist the nefarious temptations of excessive drinking, frivolous spending, and underhanded business tactics. In short, they could inspire and elevate the cultural and moral character of the masses.

Muscular Christianity

Thomas Hughes was not, however, the only British author to extol the virtues of muscular Christianity. Christian Socialist Charles Kingsley surfaced as the first man to unite formally the concepts of godliness and manliness into a popular religious character building philosophy.⁹ A disciple of Reverend F. D. Maurice, Kingsley loathed the immorality, impurity, and general lack of spirituality which he felt permeated mid-nineteenth century England. He held that spiritual and moral nourishment depended more upon muscular rather than intellectual development, and attacked British education for lacking the necessary pain and endurance required to bolster an individual's masculine qualities.¹⁰

⁹David Newsome, Godliness and Good Learning: Four Studies on a Victorian Ideal, (London, 1961), 207.

¹⁰Ibid., 211.

Kingsley professed that his doctrine of "muscular Christianity" was an appropriate means of strengthening an individual's moral and spiritual character. Endorsed by many upper-class Protestant Americans, the popularity of Kingsley's cult of manliness steadily increased during the postbellum era and the rise of American boarding schools can be partially attributed to this movement. Moreover, this phenomena led many Americans to celebrate virility, aggressiveness, rugged, combativeness, while at the same time rejecting such effeminate dispositions as intellectualism, loaferism, and sensualism.¹¹

It was during this environment of hostility toward effeminate qualities that football emerged as an ideal mechanism to prevent susceptible adolescents from adopting slothful and unmanly mannerisms. Furthermore, alarm over the prevalent corruption of Gilded Age industrialists and politicians, coupled with the Anglo-Saxon patricians' obsession with moral character building, contributed to the widespread popularity of football on secondary boarding school and university campuses. Football's enormous popularity within educational institutions reached such extraordinary heights by the turn of the century, in part, because it united existing middle and upper class American values of gentlemanly propriety with the essential manly characteristics of aggressiveness and moral and physical vigor.¹²

Combining a survival of the fittest mentality of the Social Darwinists and the Victorian infatuation with rules, regulation, and

¹¹Gay, Cultivation of Hatred, 94-116.

¹²Newsome, Godliness and Good Learning, 216.

obsession for control, football provided a generation of postbellum bourgeois culture with an outlet to channel their aggressiveness and bellicosity in a honest and gentlemanly fashion.¹³ Unlike the noncombative sports of golf, lawn tennis, track and field, and horseback riding, football offered individuals plenty of opportunities to test their courage, virility, and honesty in an unyielding environment; some proponents of the game maintained that football was the moral equivalent of war.¹⁴ Many Anglophiles claimed that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton and Rugby, and if America were to emerge as a dominant world power, then educational institutions had to produce a new generation of muscular Christian warriors like Tom Brown.

Theodore Roosevelt: Manliness and Football

Historian Peter Gay has noted that perhaps no individual personified the Victorian and Progressive era dictum of manliness and strenuousness more than Theodore Roosevelt.¹⁵ As a scrawny young boy, Roosevelt overcame physical infirmity through an inexhaustible routine of rigorous exercise. His lifelong obsession with striving and perseverance convinced him that football was an

¹³Gay, The Cultivation of Hatred, 424-446.

¹⁴Benjamin Wheeler, president of the University of California, was perhaps typical of educators and politicians who believed that playing football resembled a military exercise. Comparing the game of football to a war, Wheeler once described the game as follows: "Two rigid, rampart-like lines of human flesh have been created, one of defense, the other of offense, and behind the latter is established a catapult to fire through a porthole opened in the offensive rampart a missile composed of four or five human bodies globulated [sic] about a carried football with a maximum of initial velocity against the presumable weakest point in the imposing rampart." Wheeler as cited in Rudolph, The American College and University, 380.

¹⁵Gay, The Cultivation of Hatred, 116.

excellent physical and moral character-building activity. Roosevelt's enthusiasm for the pugnacious game, however, went beyond the combative element of football contests. He held that individuals must play with aggressiveness and courage but most important, they had to compete with integrity and honor. In a Graduation Day address at Groton School, Roosevelt expressed his enthusiasm for rigorous athletics, football, and the joys of living a morally clean and strenuous life:

I believe with all my heart in Athletics, in sport, and have always done as much thereof as my limited capacity and my numerous duties would permit; but I believe in bodily vigor chiefly because I believe in the spirit that lies in back of it. . . . It is not the physical address but the morality behind it which really counts. If [a boy] has the physical ability and keeps out of [football] because he is afraid, because he is lazy, if he is a mollycoddle, then I haven't any use for him. If he has not the right spirit, the spirit which makes him scorn self-indulgence, timidity, and mere ease, that is not the spirit which normally stands at the base of physical hardihood, physical prowess, then that boy does not amount to much, and he is not ordinarily going to amount to much during life.¹⁶

Roosevelt asserted that proper sportsmanship was preeminent in all athletic contests and he repudiated those individuals, regardless of winning or losing, who displayed distasteful or unsympathetic dispositions. "I hung my head over the Cornell crew at Henley this year and should think Englishmen would feel the same way about Valkyrie's actions," a despondent Theodore Roosevelt wrote Peabody about the lack of sportsmanship of two collegiate

¹⁶Theodore Roosevelt, "The Address of the President on Prize Day," The Grotonian, no. 8, May 1908, 211-218.

teams. "I only hope that Yale and Cambridge boys will now give an exhibition of gentlemanly sport. I do not care which wins so long as both sides do their best and behave like gentlemen; behave, my dear Cotty, as every boy graduated from Groton will be certain to behave."¹⁷ Roosevelt's message was clear; one must compete ferociously, but fairly, and be able to praise an opponent despite the game's final outcome. Neither inappropriate displays of behavior nor dishonest methods were tolerable characteristics of properly trained, muscular Christian gentlemen.

With the exception of the bellicose Theodore Roosevelt, perhaps no individual influenced the widespread appeal of muscular Christianity in America more than psychologist, Granville Stanley Hall.¹⁸ Author of the two volume work Adolescence (1904), president of Clark University (1889-1919), and father of the child-study movement, Hall's theories provided an intellectual and psychological framework for individuals interested in understanding the mental, emotional and physical development of adolescents. Moreover, Hall's insistence that adolescence was a time in which "the strongest human passions develops, which exposes it to the greatest of all temptations to sin,"¹⁹ resulted in parents, Protestant moralists and a variety of educators, including Peabody, endorsing the idea

¹⁷Theodore Roosevelt to Endicott Peabody, September 13, 1895, Peabody MSS.

¹⁸See, Dorothy Ross, G. Stanley Hall: The Psychologist as Prophet, (Chicago, 1972), and Rotundo, American Manhood.

¹⁹G. Stanley Hall, "Christianity and Physical Culture," in Charles E. Strickland and Charles Burgess, eds. Health, Growth and Heredity: G. Stanley Hall on Natural Education, (New York, 1965), 158.

that youths had to be placed in a position of extreme dependence.²⁰ In other words, Hall's insistence that adolescence was a natural stage in the human development cycle, albeit one which needed to be monitored and controlled, had generated a legion of concerned middle-class parents who used the moral code of muscular Christianity as a means of rechanneling their young sons' aggression, sexuality, and masculinity in a more positive and moral direction.

Hall proclaimed at the turn of the century that "never has youth been exposed to such dangers of both perversion and arrest as in our own land and day." Without good health and strong exercise, Hall believed, "the mind tends to grow feeble; the will to be freaky; the heart to lose its courage; virtue to be exotic or a pale cellar plant; and the human brain, to become anemic and languid."²¹ Preaching to American educators with the passion of an evangelist, Hall asserted that "rational muscle culture, for its moral effects, offers for the young the very best possible means of resisting evil and establishing righteousness. . . ." ²² Throughout his writings, speeches, and lectures, Hall provided educators with an empirically based psychological rationale that affirmed the positive physical and moral character-building attributes of exercise and organized play. To compete in rigorous activities, Hall wrote, imbued adolescents with a "sense of superiority, dignity, endurance, courage, confidence, enterprise,

²⁰Joseph F. Kett, Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present, (New York, 1977), 174.

²¹Ibid., 156.

²²Ibid., 157.

power, personal virility, and virtue in the etymological sense of that noble word."²³

With the backing of Roosevelt and Hall, enthusiasm for football steadily gained momentum. During the last decade of the nineteenth century, for instance, the popularity of game had increased so dramatically that in the midst of an economic depression, 40,000 people paid to watch Princeton defeat Yale 6-0 on Thanksgiving Day.²⁴ Clearly, the game had arrived. Yet Roosevelt believed the overall hysteria surrounding the game encouraged players and coaches to cheat, and the "win-at-all-cost" mentality was anathema to his belief that the game should be played for exercise and enjoyment. "It is a bad thing for any college man to grow to regard sports as the serious business of life," argued Theodore Roosevelt.²⁵

However, by the turn of the century improper recruiting practices, dirty play, coaches earning twice the salary as professors, hiring professionals to play in big games, and frequent and grisly injuries were all so commonplace in the ethically warped world of college athletics that President Eliot of Harvard wanted to abolish the game: "The game of football grows worse and worse as regards to foul and violent play, and the number and gravity of injuries which

²³G. Stanely Hall, Adolescence, Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education, vol. I, (New York, 1908), 202-5.

²⁴Smith, Sports and Freedom, 80.

²⁵Theodore Roosevelt, Speech at Harvard University June 28, 1905, Peabody MSS.

the players suffer. It has become perfectly clear that the game as now played is unfit for college use."²⁶

Endicott Peabody rose high above the praetorian standards of intercollegiate athletics and demanded, in typical Rooseveltian language, a square and honest deal for all those individuals and institutions who played and supported the game. Moreover, Peabody's efforts to reform the game later encouraged prominent college athletic leaders to form the National Collegiate Athletic Association, an organization which was designed to maintain fair and honest standards of play at all colleges.²⁷ Before turning to Peabody's involvement in the creation of this particular institution, however, it is necessary to examine why he admired rigorous athletics, and how they were incorporated into the everyday life of his school.

Peabody and Athletics

Participation in rigorous athletic activities, Peabody held, enhanced the moral and physical development of all students. Exclaiming that "athletics are of the most immense importance in establishing righteousness in the school," all Grotonians were required to partake in afternoon sports.²⁸ "I am convinced that a man needs a clear brain to accomplish his best labor, and a clear

²⁶Report of the President of Harvard College, 1893-93, 16., in Smith, Sports and Freedom, 92.

²⁷For a more in-depth history of how the NCAA was formed following Peabody's initiation of the "Big Three" White House meeting, see Smith, Sports and Freedom, 191-208.

²⁸Peabody, "The Continuous Moral Influence," School Review, 628.

brain is dependent upon a healthy body," Peabody once wrote to a Groton graduate.²⁹

Competing in sports not only kept the boys busy, but also, Peabody hoped, helped them develop manly character. "Athletics are of great value not simply for the upbuidling of physique which shall endure the hour of stress of manhood," declared Peabody, but sports also help boys "be capable of standing the tremendous strain of modern life."³⁰ In Peabody's simplistic educational theory, his greatest fear was that his students would succumb evils of loafing. Speaking to a group of college and secondary educators, Peabody exclaimed: "The curse of American college life and of school life is loafing (applause). Boys and men get together in a sociable way and sit round a room and talk and gossip, and a little scandal comes in, and then evil." The only way to cure "loafersim," asserted Peabody, was to incorporate competitive athletics into a school's daily schedule: "The tone of loafers is always low. You can avoid that easily in a school, because you have the great advantage of athletics."³¹

The Rector claimed that boys participating in athletics improved the moral quality of life at a school because sports kept them tired and out of trouble:

For moral evil you have got to consider the care of the body, and the best thing for a boy is to work hard and then, after a short interval, to play hard, and then to

²⁹Endicott Peabody to unidentified Groton graduate, February 26, 1894, Peabody MSS.

³⁰Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Masters," September, 1921, Peabody MSS.

³¹Peabody, "The Continuous Moral Influence," School Review, 628.

work hard again and then to play hard again, and then, when the end of the day has come, to be so tired that he wants to go to bed and go to sleep.³²

As a young Grotonian, George Biddle practiced the "gospel of strenuosity" claiming, "I am going to try to broaden and expand my chest, sit up straight, and keep my digestion in order. These are minor things but they all help to broaden my character."³³ Recalling the emphasis placed upon athletics at Groton, Henry Foster said: "[Groton] was very athletic. Everyone was supposed to be kept busy all the time and the Rector was a great stickler for games; he loved games and he did everything he could to have a good athletic program. . . . "³⁴

Team Sports

Peabody endorsed team sports such as football, baseball, and crew. While some Grotonians played golf and tennis, the Rector believed these less strenuous activities did not "mold true character." He would have agreed with sports enthusiast B.W. Mitchell who wrote in 1895 that football "has ended a career of debauchery for more than one youth."³⁵ "Football was undoubtedly the king of games at Groton," declared a school historian."³⁶ Peabody and most

³²Ibid.

³³George Biddle, "As I Remember Groton School" Harper's Magazine, (August 1939), 299.

³⁴Henry Foster, interviewed by Bill Polk, Groton, MA. October 20, 1983. Groton School Oral History Project, Groton School, Groton, MA, Peabody MSS.

³⁵ B.W. Mitchell, "A Defense of Football," Journal of Hygiene and Herald of Health no. 45, 1895, 93, as cited in Harvey Green, Fit For America: Health, Fitness Sport and American Society, (New York, 1986), 233.

³⁶Frank D. Ashburn, Fifty Years On: Groton School 1884-1934, (Groton, MA., 1934), 101.

students seemed to trust a football player more than a scholar.³⁷ The rigors of playing football, Peabody affirmed vigorously, could cure almost any moral impurity or physical ailment. This belief often trickled down to the students. "I have had a cold for two days, but today I am much better as a result of playing football violently," Franklin Roosevelt wrote to his parents.³⁸

Unfortunately, for those individuals who did not excel at athletics, or who did not conform to the rigors of Groton's neo-Spartan lifestyle, life at the school could be miserable. A former student recalled, "we had to play football and baseball no matter how thoroughly we disliked them and how indifferently we played, unless the doctor actually forbade it."³⁹

Gospel of Exhaustion

A typical day at Groton School involved so much physical activity that when boys went to bed at night they had no mental energy for evil thoughts. Peabody maintained that "unmitigated sexuality" was perhaps one of the greatest potential downfalls of adolescence. The turbulent period of adolescent growth, Peabody argued, was replete with nefarious temptations, and that physical exercise and religious worship could help tame these passions. The mandatory cold shower or rugged late-afternoon practice, however, did not always serve its purpose and the Rector had to warn students about the dangers of masturbation:

³⁷Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 101.

³⁸Franklin Roosevelt to Parents, September 30, 1897. in FDR: Early Years, 228.

³⁹George Biddle, "As I Remember Groton School," Views From Circle, 14.

Some boys have fallen into the thralldom of the habit of [masturbation]. In most cases, so far as we could discover, the beginning of this evil dated back to home or to a preparatory school; but it is certainly our part to look out for weak nerves, the poor work, the lack of joyousness and frank expression some or all of which are indications of the existence of this habit. Dr. James Hunnington, who addressed the Sixth and Fifth Form last term upon sexual morality, is going to give talks fitted to the different ages of the first five Forms.⁴⁰

Preaching that Christian morals were linked with physical vigor, Peabody held that it was his duty to insure that all students were subjected to a rigorous dose of "manly" exercise in order to develop healthy bodies and strong virtuous wills. Describing a typical day at Groton to his parents, young Franklin Roosevelt wrote to his parents in 1897:

This morning I practiced baseball on Hugh Minturn's team and I think I am improving. This afternoon was a choir half-holiday, the first this term. Edmund and Ben Joy went out on the river with me, and we had great fun, although it was rather hot to do much paddling. We came home about four, and I kept score in a baseball game between two of the cup teams. In the evening after tea I had a game of tennis with Goodwin.⁴¹

Peabody's gospel of sheer exhaustion was aimed in part at mitigating the potentially explosive nature of adolescent sexuality. He affirmed with Puritanical resolve that if students were to be successful athletes then their minds must be free of impure thoughts. "A man knows that in order to succeed in athletics he must lead a clean life," Peabody told an audience of Harvard undergraduates in

⁴⁰Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Masters," September 15, 1913,

⁴¹Franklin Roosevelt to Parents, April 30, 1897, in FDR Early Years, 89.

1910 and, he added, an athlete "must avoid softness of life and keep himself in excellent physical condition."⁴² Fearful that boys might succumb to the temptations of masturbation or even worse, homosexuality, Peabody's doctrine of total exhaustion was, to a large extent, designed to curb the potentially explosive nature of adolescent sexuality.

Peabody, at all times, wanted his students to be pure in heart, body and mind.⁴³ "It is softness, not cruelty," Peabody declared in 1911, "which is attacking the character of our people."⁴⁴ He said of Groton, "and with the atmosphere of simplicity with which we are trying to establish here, we must make sure that boys are being trained along the lines of self denial and self control."⁴⁵

Within a short time after the founding of Groton, Peabody had emerged as one of the most influential late-nineteenth century advocates of muscular Christianity. Combining religion, classical education, and rigorous athletics into a Spartan ethos, Peabody's Groton School was a bulwark of moral and religious nurture for prospective young Christian gentlemen. As an adolescent at Cheltenham School, and later a student at Trinity College, Cambridge, Peabody had earned a reputation as a stalwart athlete and morally upright competitor. A great admirer of English public school headmaster Edward Thring who wrote that "the whole efforts of a

⁴²Endicott Peabody, "Talk to Harvard Undergraduates," in Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 126.

⁴³Martin, "Preface to a Schoolmaster's Biography," in Views From the Circle, 136.

⁴⁴Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Masters," September 18, 1911, 1, Peabody MSS.

⁴⁵Ibid.

school ought to be directed to making boys manly, earnest, and true,"⁴⁶ Peabody maintained that through athletics he could reinforce his conception of "manly Christian character."

The Importance of Football at Groton

Similar to Thring, Peabody believed that requiring his boys to participate in football augmented an individual's moral character and brought him closer to his Christian faith.⁴⁷ Football's militant and assertive style of play demanded that "the idle rich who are on the whole the most harmful element in our community," engage in a rigorous activity which realistically characterized the aggressiveness and manliness Peabody, and his friend Theodore Roosevelt, felt many patricians lacked.⁴⁸ Peabody required that all Grotonians, unless otherwise incapacitated by a serious injury, both partake in strenuous exercise throughout the year and play football during the fall. Convinced that football stood alone in terms of enhancing the moral fiber of his students, Peabody asserted: [Football] is of great value not simply for the upbuidling of a physique which shall endure the hour of stress of manhood in days when men must be capable of standing the tremendous strain of modern life; it is of supreme value to my mind in supplying subject for thought and conversation."⁴⁹ In this way, Peabody adopted yet another approach to inculcate his boys with those "manly" values he deemed essential.

⁴⁶H.D. Rawnsley, Edward Thring: Teacher and Poet (London, 1889), 12.

⁴⁷Newsome, Godliness and Good Learning, 196-197.

⁴⁸Endicott Peabody to C.M. Lincoln, November 17, 1908, Peabody MSS.

⁴⁹Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Masters," September, 1921, Peabody MSS.

In an era of increasing wealth, technology, passivity, and material comfort, Peabody's enthusiasm for football corresponded to his belief that students should be engaged in rugged and manly activities. Many Gilded Age historians and social critics agreed with Peabody and such luminaries as Brooks Adams, Alfred Thayer Mahan, and Frederick Jackson Turner postulated that the self-sacrificing and self-producing tradesman of the early Republic had been replaced by the lazy and greedy corporate manager and investment banker.⁵⁰ American civilization, they argued, was rapidly declining, and that the only solution to restoring the vitality of the enervated masses involved resurrecting a stalwart breed of energized moral crusaders. Peabody agreed. "In my work at Groton," Peabody wrote to Walter Camp,

I am convinced that foot ball is of profound importance for the moral even more than for the physical development of the boys. In these days of exceeding comfort, the boys need an opportunity to endure hardness and, it may be, suffering. Foot ball has in it the element which goes to make a soldier.⁵¹

Peabody held that competing in football offered his students an opportunity to partake in an invigorating contest that strengthened their physical constitutions and yet discouraged them from entertaining a life of passivity. He used football not only as a vehicle to build a pupil's character, but also to prevent his students from becoming rowdy and troublesome. It was during periods of

⁵⁰ Mahan was so impressed by Peabody that he sent his son to Groton. See chapter 2 for Mahan's view of Groton and his correspondence with Peabody about his son.

⁵¹Endicott Peabody to Walter Camp, November 23, 1909, Peabody MSS.

prolonged inactivity that students were most susceptible to the evils of "loaferism". "Since football has stopped," wrote a Groton student, "a tendency of no slight importance toward 'rough house' has sprung up. The cause is evident. The boys are either unoccupied or . . . and are not absorbed in what they are doing."⁵²

Afraid that their boys might display an aversion toward the strenuous life, many parents encouraged Peabody to coerce their sons into engaging in rugged activities. "I have noticed [William Jr.,] rather critically the last day or two and have come to the conclusion that he has an actual indisposition for the strenuous life," a concerned father wrote Peabody. "I have to try to give him a mental shaking, and I would be very grateful to you if you should see fit to put him through some discipline or course of treatment that would be calculated to stir him up."⁵³ A rough and tumble game of football with fellow Grotonians was Peabody's readily prescribed remedy to cure young William's disinclination for manly activities.

The Gentlemanly Code of Sportsmanship

Although football comprised a fundamental component of Peabody's "muscular Christian" educational philosophy, similar to the pronouncements of his close friend Theodore Roosevelt, the Rector's admiration and fondness for the game never paralleled the unbridled hysteria that many of his contemporaries displayed. "If you want to see real enthusiasm," a Groton parent wrote to Peabody, "if you want to see real entertainment; than go to the [Harvard versus Yale]

⁵²The Grotonian, December 1901, no. 3, 46, Peabody MSS. Walter Camp, a Yale graduate, was considered to be a founding father of the modern version of American football.

⁵³William Atwater to Endicott Peabody, March 27, 1905, Peabody MSS.

game." Capturing the fanatical devotion with which many late-nineteenth century Americans approached college football, he concluded:

If I could see that game I would give everything I possessed. When suddenly the two teams run through that huge arena, thronged with breathless thousands, it is like an old gladiatorial fight reproduced. . . . I can barely express what the feelings are that take hold of one. You are panting with excitement, wild with joy, and in abject misery all at the same time.⁵⁴

Peabody rejected the frivolous emotionalism that accompanied many college games. He argued that those individuals who promoted sheer athleticism and a "win-at-all-cost" attitude poisoned the virtuous qualities of the game, namely honor and sportsmanship. "During the past ten years or more," Peabody wrote in 1906, "we have lost sight of the fact that sports are fun" and, he concluded, this has resulted the encouragement of boys to play "sports in order to win and not to get recreation from them. . . ."⁵⁵ To Peabody, the true essence of football lay in its ability to create moral character building opportunities by allowing such lifetime moral attributes and skills as perseverance, self-discipline, self-control, teamwork, courage, and self-reliance to be fully realized. "[Football] is a capital exercise for boys' bodies, and for their characters as well," proclaimed Peabody, and "it is so identified with the life of Groton School that a boy who drops it for any reason other than health loses touch with school

⁵⁴S. N. Hinckley to Endicott Peabody, November 16, 1898, Peabody MSS.

⁵⁵Endicott Peabody, "Athletics and Morals," Harvard Bulletin, November 14, 1906, vol. 9, # 7, 1, Peabody MSS.

fellows, and is therefore deprived of one of the valuable factors in a boarding school education."⁵⁶

To the advocates of the game, one of the most important and valuable lifetime lessons football taught budding Christian gentlemen was that unsportsmanlike conduct or dishonest tactics could never be tolerated on the playing fields, or later, it was assumed, in corporate boardrooms. Peabody stated that:

If we can instill into the minds of the present generation of boys the idea of true sportsmanship, and can initiate them from their early days into a knowledge of these game so that they will be interested in them and really enjoy them, then we shall establish in their early days the right kind of traditions, and boys will go to college prepared to continue them there . . . [and beyond].⁵⁷

Most schoolmasters agreed with Peabody that the demonstration of gentlemanly sportsmanship during a football contest was a fundamental aspect of the game. "I am more anxious that they should be gentleman than that they should play skillful ball," one boarding school headmaster wrote to Peabody after Groton had defeated his school's team."⁵⁸ Often officiating football games

⁵⁶Endicott Peabody to E.B. Alsop, October 17, 1908, Peabody MSS.

⁵⁷Endicott Peabody, "Football and other School and College Games," The Illustrated Outdoor News, New York, April 21, 1906, 2, Peabody MSS.

⁵⁸W.A. Irving to Endicott Peabody, May 7, 1904, Peabody MSS. One headmaster of a rival school wrote to Peabody and expressed his opinion about the importance of sportsmanship: "[Games] should be played in just the same spirit that would animate two men helping each other prepare for some contest with two other men-the question of friendly criticism and advice of mutual helpfulness, of improving skill should be kept in the foreground. While the question of the season's record of victories and defeats as between the two schools should be kept in the background . . . without this personal friendliness for one's opponent it is very hard indeed to relieve the tension in athletic contest." Frederick Winsor to Endicott Peabody, December 14, 1906, Peabody MSS. Winsor was headmaster at Middlesex School, located in near-by Concord.

and other athletic contests between rival schools, headmasters usually rebuked those individuals who played unfairly, and subsequently applauded those boys who properly conducted themselves even after a heartbreaking loss. "I trust that the boys will not only have a first rate football game," University School headmaster George Pette wrote to Peabody, but "that the exchange of courtesies possible in such a contest they will find mutual satisfaction and profit."⁵⁹

Occasionally a friendly football game between opposing schools would turn sour due to an opponent's lack of respect for the rules and officials. "The Worcester boys were vexed by a decision of the referee at the beginning of the game," Peabody wrote to the head coach and principal of Worcester High School, "and from that time played a game which was quite different from the kind of play to which we were accustomed. They were inclined to hold in the line; they indulged in rough play, such as striking a man after he was down; and the language of a majority of your members of the team was most obscene."⁶⁰ These were certainly not the values which the game, as Peabody defined it, were supposed to advance.

The Rector expected his school's opponents to share the same enthusiasm he held for maintaining sportsmanship, control and order during a football game. He was especially critical of those players who surreptitiously bent the rules to gain an advantage over an

⁵⁹George Pette to Endicott Peabody October 3, 1900, Peabody MSS. The University School was located in Cleveland, Ohio.

⁶⁰Endicott Peabody to the Headmaster of Worcester High School, October 17, 1901, Peabody MSS. Peabody was the official in the game and made the call that the opposing team had protested.

unsuspecting competitor. "Your letter came to me today and you don't know how sorry I am that anyone should get the idea that I was what is commonly called a 'dirty' football player," a Groton graduate wrote to Peabody after he received an acerbic letter from the Rector which criticized his style of play. The former student responded: "As regards to holding, I am perfectly sure that I never told any of the fellows that they should do anything like that if the umpire doesn't see him, because there is nothing that the coaches down here are so strict and down on [as] holding when one side has the ball."⁶¹ Groton coaches and faculty, Peabody insisted, had a moral obligation to teach only proper techniques and that it was the masters' duty to instill a "spirit of sportsmanship which develops generosity and magnanimity and power to rise above defeat or success."⁶²

The zealous concern over the gentlemanly behavior of their students motivated Peabody and others schoolmasters to curtail the incessant violence and brutality of the game. Peabody resisted the temptation of allowing the country's frenzied excitement over the new-fashioned game to penetrate into his student's lives and

⁶¹F. Gordon Brown Jr., to Endicott Peabody, October 27, 1898, Peabody MSS. Peabody was especially concerned about a player's use of illegal holding tactics to gain an unfair advantage over an opponent. The Rector wrote some of football's most influential coaches and implored them not to demonstrate illegal moves to their players. Responding to one of Peabody's letters, Walter Camp wrote: "As regards to the question you ask about holding. My instruction in coaching have always been not to hold. I have even gone so far at times to have two or three substitutes watching for holding and penalizing it severely. It seems to me that the team that is brought up and instructed to hold is a dangerous one, setting aside all question of whether they break the rules or not, for they will certainly be penalized at most inconvenient times for them by the umpire." Walter Camp to Endicott Peabody, November, 13, 1901, Peabody MSS.

⁶²Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Masters," September 1921, Peabody MSS.

Groton's support of football never approached the level of enthusiasm students had generated at nearby Harvard.⁶³ The Rector abhorred the immense commercialization and expansion of football and he believed that the concern for winning games, especially at the college level, encouraged unethical play, corrupt admission practices and a level of violence unequaled by any other American athletic event:

We are not honest in our athletics. The statement looks ugly set down in black and white. But it is true. . . . What we need today in our colleges and schools, and in those institutions in which young men are living a common life, is the development of a spirit of amateur sport, a spirit of love for the game itself, of delight in activity and health and physical development, a spirit that cares for success, as a result of vigorous effort, but which can take defeat in a simple, manly way, and would rather give up any game than attempt to win it through means unworthy of a Christian gentleman.⁶⁴

Peabody personally held headmasters, college presidents, and other influential educational leaders responsible for keeping the game free of vicious and dishonest play. Expressing his views on sportsmanship, Peabody wrote:

The character of athletics depends finally upon the headmaster. . . . Generally speaking, however, the headmaster should be held accountable for the integrity of the boys who represent the schools as much as for the intellectual tone of the pupils. If we are to have games of the right kind in schools the headmaster must see to it:

⁶³James McLachlan, American Boarding Schools: A Historical Study, (New York, 1970), 284.

⁶⁴Peabody, Harvard Bulletin, November 14, 1906, 1, Peabody MSS.

First, that the head coach is honest; second, that the other coaches are honest; third, that the captain is honest. . . .⁶⁵

Despite the Rector's insistence that ethical and clean play would quell the numerous incidents of cheating and physical injuries, not all boarding school educators were proponents of building manly character through football. The numerous injuries students incurred while playing the game convinced at least one headmaster that Peabody should initiate a movement to abolish the game on boarding school campuses:

I witnessed the [football] game between The Hill School and Lawrenceville in which three boys were carried off the field, two of them with broken legs. . . . I am not squeamish about sturdy games for boys, but I protest against the needless sacrifices of precious lives and this constant maiming of the body. Cannot the American schoolmaster devise some other way of keeping our boys healthy in body and pure in mind?⁶⁶

While the Rector proclaimed that "football can never be made a gentle or an altogether safe game," he argued that its brutality was

⁶⁵*Ibid.* Other headmasters agreed with Peabody. At one point in the relationship between Groton and its football rival St. Mark's, headmaster William Peck decided to cancel the game due to the over zealous crowds who came to watch the two schools compete. "I am sorry that the good which has been accomplished in creating a more friendly feeling between the two schools by having the athletic contest held on their respective grounds, is rapidly being destroyed by the excessive interest displayed by those outside of the schools in these contest," Peck wrote to Peabody. "I was astonished to see the crowd that was present on my grounds on the eleventh, and I cannot but feel that intense interest in an athletic contest tends to make the boys overstate its importance, and feel that the winning of such a contest is the great prize of school life, and all the teaching to the contrary will have been lost in the minds of the boys." William Peck to Endicott Peabody, November 23, 1893, Peabody MSS.

⁶⁶J.L. Patterson to Endicott Peabody, January 3, 1902, Peabody MSS. Patterson was the headmaster of Chestnut Hill Academy located in Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania.

linked with unsportsmanlike conduct during games and injuries could be reduced significantly once both boarding schools and colleges adopted more gentlemanly standards of play.⁶⁷ "I am afraid that you are right about the lack of sportsmanship in this country," the Rector wrote to his brother Francis. He stated that the primary cause of this problem "has been a deterioration in manners and morals during the last twenty or thirty years."⁶⁸ In fact, Peabody argued, "the question of fair play in football and in athletics generally . . . is one which goes down toward the roots of our national character."⁶⁹ Since to Peabody football remained an important mechanism which allowed Grotonians to learn the importance of gentlemanly propriety, throughout his tenure at Groton he resisted any temptation to eradicate the game from his campus. Instead, he believed in the character-building merits of the game so strongly that he decided to reform it on a national level.

Peabody and the Moral Reform of Football

Peabody's efforts at reforming the game were launched at a crucial and delicate moment in football's history. As early as 1893, the brutality of football had reached such a catastrophic state that President Grover Cleveland canceled the annual Army-Navy football game after he read a report stating that twenty four Navy players had been admitted to the hospital following a game.⁷⁰ Eight years later, a headline from a Philadelphia newspaper read "Appalling

⁶⁷Endicott Peabody to Walter Camp, November 23, 1909, Peabody MSS.

⁶⁸Endicott Peabody to Francis Peabody, October 9, 1908, Peabody MSS. Francis was one of Endicott's brothers.

⁶⁹Peabody, Harvard Bulletin, November 14, 1906, 1, Peabody MSS.

⁷⁰Sanitary Report of Naval Academy, January 1894. The contest between the service academy's resumed in 1899, news clipping, Peabody MSS.

Causality List on the Football Field," and the ensuing article listed that in the first three months of the 1901 season alone, there had been 9 deaths, 67 major injuries (14 broken collarbones, 12 broken legs), and two hundred other minor injuries.⁷¹ Indeed, by the turn of the century the uncontrollable violence and widespread cheating in intercollegiate athletics convinced many university presidents that football should be abolished from their campuses. President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard, for instance, emerged as one of the country's most acrimonious and leading critics of the game. The well-respected, but sometimes cantankerous President had argued in 1894 that "the game of foot-ball grows worse and worse as regards to foul and violent play, and the number and gravity of injuries which the players suffer has increased so dramatically that it has become perfectly clear that the game as now played is unfit for college use."⁷² Cornell President Andrew White, an ally of Eliot's on the football issue, displayed his fervent hostility toward the game when he rejected a request from Cornell students to play a game against the University of Michigan at a neutral site in Cleveland, Ohio. "I will not," he proclaimed, "permit thirty men to travel four hundred miles merely to agitate a bag of wind."⁷³ Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia joined Eliot and White in his disapproval of football, and like them, wanted to abolish the game at his campus. Although

⁷¹News Clipping from Daily Evening Telegraph-Philadelphia, November 27, 1901, Peabody MSS.

⁷²Charles Eliot, "Report of the President of Harvard College, 1893-94," 16, as cited in Smith, Sports and Freedom, 92.

⁷³Kent Sagendorph, Michigan: The Story of the University, (New York, 1948), 150 as cited in Rudolph, The American College and University, 373-374.

Butler succeeded in his efforts, Eliot failed to convince the Harvard trustees that the egregious violence of the game and flagrant disregard of university admission's policies by football coaches warranted the suspension of the sport at Cambridge.⁷⁴ Eliot's criticisms were not altogether unfounded.

Fifteen years after the first organized intercollegiate football contest was played, the scandalous nature of the game convinced many college authorities that its widespread popularity proved detrimental to maintaining an academically oriented environment. In 1895 one critic of Harvard's football team wrote to Peabody and claimed that the university's coaches,

sent out spies to note the progress of opponents. They [also] employ detectives to look up the athletic pedigree of a man believing that the other side will not hesitate to put in a professional. Instead of scorning the idea of going on the field and possessing an advantage, they glory in it, and pride themselves in being foxy.⁷⁵

The man who reformed the medical, law, and graduate school of arts and sciences at Harvard, however, never fully understood how important football was to Harvard undergraduates, alumni, and the general public.⁷⁶ Yet his desperate attempts to eradicate the baleful influence of the game from his campus almost came to fruition in February of 1905 when the Harvard Faculty of Arts and

⁷⁴In addition to Columbia, New York University, Northwestern, Stanford, and the University of California all banned football for a short period of time.

⁷⁵R. Kinder to Endicott Peabody, October 3, 1895, Peabody MSS.

⁷⁶Hugh Hawkins, Between Harvard and America: The Educational Leadership of Charles W. Eliot, (New York, 1972), 114.

Sciences voted to ban football for the next season.⁷⁷ Eliot's aversion toward the game deeply worried both Peabody and his long-time friend and football ally, Theodore Roosevelt. Both men were cognizant that many educators held Eliot's views in high regard, and unless they countered his abolishment movement, football, and the moral and manly lessons it taught those who played the game, might forever disappear from college campuses.

Peabody fully realized that, to some extent at least, physical roughness was an integral part of most contests. At the same time, however, he despised underhanded and dishonest tactics such as the 1905 University of Pennsylvania's athletic department intentional watering down of Franklin Field in order to gain an advantage over a quicker and stronger Harvard squad.⁷⁸ The unethical tactic worked as the Quakers obtained an important edge and defeated the Crimson 12-6. Moreover, during the same year, muckraker Henry Beech Needham exposed the corruption and brutality of college football, and his two part series in McClure's raised educators and the general public's concern over the lack of moral standards in the game.⁷⁹

Peabody realized the game must be reformed. He turned to his companion, Theodore Roosevelt, now in the White House, and encouraged him to become directly involved in reforming college football. Roosevelt, the Rector believed, could use the influence of his office and at least convince the leaders at Harvard, Yale, and

⁷⁷Harvard Athletic Committee Minutes, February 14, 1906, as cited in Smith, Sports and Freedom, 205.

⁷⁸Smith, Sports and Freedom, 196.

⁷⁹Henry B. Needham, "The College Athlete," McClure's Magazine XXV (June, July 1905), 115-28, 260-273.

Princeton to meet together and discuss how to resolve the incessant violence and cheating which was destroying the game. Peabody believed that "a complete revolution could be worked if we could get the coaches of Harvard and Yale and Princeton together, and persuade them to undertake to teach men to play football honestly." "You are the one man," he wrote to Roosevelt, "so far as I know, who could accomplish this without much effort."⁸⁰

While historians have long assumed that Roosevelt initiated the meeting between the "Big Three," Peabody's letter to his close personal friend Julius Atwood reveals otherwise. "Roosevelt was strong upon [the idea of reform] this last week when I lunched with him at Oyster Bay. I can see by the papers that he has taken up the question of reform in football. I made up my mind some time ago," continued Peabody, "that there must be a change [in football] and I felt sure that he could bring it about."⁸¹ Gloating over his success at convincing the President to engage in football reform, Peabody concluded: "You can look upon your little friend as the originator of this great scheme."⁸²

Within days of receiving Peabody's letter, Roosevelt began to organize a committee to tackle the college football debacle. "I want to take up the football situation and try to get the game played on a thoroughly clean basis," Roosevelt wrote. Taking Peabody's advice, the President continued by claiming that he had "asked coaches and physical education directors of Harvard, Princeton and Yale, to come

⁸⁰Endicott Peabody to Theodore Roosevelt, September 16, 1905, Peabody MSS.

⁸¹Endicott Peabody to Julius Atwood, October 10, 1905, Peabody MSS.

⁸²Ibid.

to lunch at the White House on October 9th, at 1:30 pm."⁸³ Roosevelt invited two representatives from each school to meet with him and Secretary of State Elihu Root: Harvard sent head coach Bill Reid and team physician Dr. Edward Nichols. Walter Camp and head coach John Owsley represented Yale, and Princeton sent Professor John B. Fine, a member of the school's athletic committee, and head coach Arthur Hildebrand.⁸⁴

During the meeting, Roosevelt encouraged these gentlemen to arrange a set of common standards and rules which supported honest, ethical and morally clean play.⁸⁵ Immediately following the meeting, the six members of the reform committee released a formal press statement to an anxious public:

At a meeting with the President of the United States, it was agreed that we consider an honorable obligation exists to carry out in letter and in spirit rules of the game of football, relating to roughness, holding, and foul play, and the active coaches of our universities being present with us, pledge themselves to so regard it and to do their utmost to carry out that obligation.⁸⁶

Convinced that the general consensus for reform at the meeting was positive, and that sweeping changes in the game would soon take place, the legendary Walter Camp assured Peabody that football had survived its most scrutinized ordeal. "We had a most agreeable little visit with the President and I have great hopes that the result of that meeting will be for the benefit of football for us all," Camp wrote to

⁸³Theodore Roosevelt to George Gray, October 6, 1905 in Morrison vol. 5, 46.

⁸⁴Smith, Sports and Freedom, 194.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶News Clipping, New York Herald, October 12, 1905, 1, Peabody MSS.

the Rector. "[Roosevelt] mentioned things that you and I have talked over, and I am sure that when I can get out our report you will feel that it is a step in the right direction."⁸⁷

The efforts of Peabody and Roosevelt to reform the game seemed to detractors such as Eliot, innocuous. "It is childish to suppose that the athletic authorities which have permitted football to become a brutal, cheating, demoralizing game can be trusted to reform it," Eliot declared less than one month after the White House meeting.⁸⁸ In a letter to the President, Eliot established that it was his intention to ban the game at Harvard, regardless of how effective the White House Six were at stymieing the widespread abuse in college football. "I claim no superiority for Harvard over any other institution in regard to cheating, and brutality, or quarrelsomeness, either among the players or among the alumni," wrote Eliot. "We have had our share in developing the evils of the game. I should be glad if we could now do more than our share in abolishing or reforming it. . . . "⁸⁹

⁸⁷Walter Camp to Endicott Peabody, October 11, 1905, Peabody MSS. Walter Camp was responding in part to the calls of certain college administrators to ban football. Camp argued that instilling various rule changes would change the negative aspects of the game. In 1880 he held a meeting of the Intercollegiate Football Association, and introduced profound rules changes that transformed the British version of Rugby football into an Americanized version of the game. The most significant rule change involved the tackling of an opponent. Once a person had been tackled, his team was allowed to retain possession of the ball for four downs, or until they accumulated enough yardage for a first down. Fourteen years after Camp initiated this meeting, university presidents and some boarding school educators were still decrying that football was an evil on campus.

⁸⁸Charles W. Eliot, "Topics from the President's Report," Harvard Graduates Magazine XIV (March, 1906), 406 as cited in Smith, Sports and Freedom, 206.

⁸⁹Charles W. Eliot to Theodore Roosevelt, December 12, 1905 in Henry James, Charles Eliot: President of Harvard University 1869-1909 Vol. II (Boston, 1930), 157.

Roosevelt was clearly upset about Eliot's stubbornness and sardonically declared that "Harvard will be doing the baby act if she takes any foolish course as President Eliot advises."⁹⁰ Worried that Eliot would convince Harvard officials to abolish the game, despite his efforts and calls for reform, a deeply concerned Roosevelt wrote to Peabody:

It seems to me that Harvard has made a mistake about football. . . . I am sure that if the presidents of Harvard, Yale and Princeton would interfere, just as you would interfere about the Groton eleven, they can secure absolutely clean football, played under sportsmanlike condition. But to try to abolish it outright is in my judgment to commit just such a mistake as the prohibitionists commit in national politics.⁹¹

Peabody agreed that Eliot's decision to abolish the game was ill-timed. Although Peabody had initiated the first significant reform movement within college football, he had no overt role during the original meeting. Several months after the meeting had convened, however, Peabody dedicated himself to thwarting Eliot's efforts to suspend football at Harvard by insuring that the "Big Three" kept their commitment to eradicating the morally dishonest practices of the game. "There are two encouraging features in the football situation at the present time," Peabody declared shortly after the White House meeting. "The first is the agreement which was signed by the coaches of three of our great universities after an interview with President Roosevelt, in which these gentlemen entered upon an honorable agreement to teach the men under them honest football.

⁹⁰Theodore Roosevelt to Edward D. Brandegee, March 7, 1906. in Morrison Vol. 5, 172.

⁹¹Theodore Roosevelt to Endicott Peabody, January 23, 1906, Peabody MSS.

There is good reason to believe that agreement was carried out during the remainder of the football season."⁹² Above all, maintained the Rector in the same article, sportsmanship must be held in high regard by all schools and universities: "It is true that training for football, and to a large extent for other games as well, means clean living and healthily occupation for body and mind," Peabody enumerated. "It supplies, as President Eliot has so well said, 'a new and effective motive for resisting all sins which weaken or corrupt the body.' It makes for a higher kind of intellectual, physical, moral and spiritual standard than our schools have yet developed."⁹³

Unlike Eliot, Peabody held the somewhat ingenuous belief that if college and universities incorporated a sense of Christian duty and sensible morality into every fundamental aspect of the game, then the widespread abuse would, in due time, cease. "If members of Christian Associations would enter upon a movement to bring about [fair play] they would have a vast influence in rescuing the great sorts from the suspicion which surrounds them today," Peabody wrote in an article published for the Harvard Bulletin. "They would hope to train men in habits of integrity which would tell through life; and they would be doing for young men in this country what can be done only by young men who are strong in body and soul."⁹⁴

⁹²Endicott Peabody, "Football and other School and College Games," The Illustrated Outdoor News, New York, April 21, 1906, 2, Peabody MSS.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Peabody, Harvard Bulletin, 1, Peabody MSS.

Ultimately Eliot's efforts to abolish the game were prevented by Harvard's Board of Overseers, and football remained an important part of undergraduate life at Harvard. Moreover, Peabody's seed of moral football reform which was planted in Roosevelt's mind in early October 1905, later blossomed when members of sixty-eight higher education institutions met at Murray Hill Hotel in New York City on December 29, 1905.. This collection of education leaders formed a permanent organization which later would be named the National Collegiate Athletic Association.⁹⁵ The impetus for creating this institution stemmed from both educators, such as Peabody and Eliot, and the general public's concern that the rules and regulations which governed college football needed to be redefined if the game were going to remain a vital part of a young man's educational experience.

Conclusion

Peabody realized that participation in rigorous athletics, and especially football, provided a physical venue from which he could instill a sense of moral and religious nurture within his pupils outside of the traditional classroom setting. Football, for all its aggressiveness, roughness, and strenuousness, became a logical and important component of the Rector's mission to produce manly Christian gentlemen. Perhaps no secondary school educator better exemplified the glorification of masculinity more than Endicott Peabody. Moreover, his involvement in the national reform of football illustrates that his role as an influential boarding school

⁹⁵Smith, Sports and Freedom, 202.

educator extended well beyond the walls of Groton School.

Concerned that the majority of wealthy Americans had adopted morally flabby and effeminate habits, the Rector detested "mollycoddles" and dedicated the better part of his life to admonishing his students about the inherent evils of such effeminate dispositions. Not surprisingly, similar to his friend Theodore Roosevelt, Peabody held that participation in football would increase the opportunities of many youths to embrace an active, healthy, and strenuous lifestyle. Although he believed in the character training merits of football, Peabody adamantly opposed the widespread corruption and emphasis on winning that had pervaded most college campuses. Yet, unlike Eliot or Nicholas Murray Butler, the Rector insisted that the valuable manly lessons football offered outside of the classroom should not be curtailed due the corrupt actions of a few individuals. Football, Peabody held, could be reformed by simply interjecting within the sport a heightened sense of sportsmanship, honesty, fair-play, and morality. In Roosevelt's trust-busting rhetoric of the time, Peabody wanted "a square deal for every man" who played the game. Therefore, as he previously had done in other reform causes, Peabody assumed the role of the self-appointed high priest of morality and fair-play in football. In a manner similar to his involvement in other moral crusades, he used his venerated position as headmaster of an elite boarding school as a bully pulpit to inveigh against the evils of the game. Moreover, his enlistment of Roosevelt, and the support of other influential men, to initiate a reform movement within college football arguably saved

the game from temporary banishment at some of the nation's most prestigious and influential universities.

Chapter Eight

Between Groton and Harvard

Instructors who are authorities on scientific or literary subjects but who do not worship God ought not to instruct the children of men and women who do.

President Charles A. Blanchard,
Wheaton College (1891)

It makes me sick to hear of boys becoming vile and foul. No hand is held out to grasp after them at [Harvard].

Endicott Peabody, (1897)

To many members of the newly emerging cadre of academically trained behavioral, physical, and social scientists, Peabody's strict adherence to a classical curriculum, emphasis on amateur public service, and his paternalistic "manly" character-building philosophy seemed to lose relevance in modern society. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, the rise of new sciences and the growing influence of specialized academic experts, to some degree at least, set the stage for the clashes between those individuals who believed in theological dogmas and philosophical absolutes, and their opponents who, as members of the burgeoning secularized and professional academic ranks, were more prone toward relativistic views.¹

Peabody, for instance, came to believe the secularization of knowledge was anathema to his particular mission of educating Christian gentlemen through moral and religious nurture. Too many professional scholars, Peabody held, displayed an open hostility

¹Edward A. Purcell Jr. The Crisis of Democratic Theory: Scientific Naturalism and the Problem of Value, (Lexington, Kentucky, 1973), 19-23.

toward traditional Christianity. Moreover, the secular drift within America's educational institutions, at least in Peabody's view, had been accelerated by those who pushed the scientific ideal over the importance of individual character development and moral responsibility through spiritual worship.

Peabody, of course, had his own rather narrow definition of what it meant to be an educated person. "We do not yet see," Peabody once claimed, "that the thing that we are to deal with [in education] is not brain and knowledge, but life."² Echoing these sentiments shortly before he retired, Peabody summarized his view of Groton's primary mission accordingly: "[Groton's] supreme task [has been] the development of [moral] character."³

While Peabody routinely maintained that his central mission involved immersing students in an overtly "Christian" ethos, he was also interested in developing the intellectual potential of his boys. In fact, eight years into his headmastership, he expressed genuine concern that the low quality of feeder schools adversely affected the level of academic achievement at Groton. "We are," Peabody explained to his board of trustees in 1893, "greatly hampered by the poor preparation of the younger boys in the early schools." Intent upon improving the situation, Peabody asserted: "we shall this year make the requirements for entrance to the School somewhat more severe and try thereby to improve."⁴

²Endicott Peabody, Speech to Groton Masters, February 19, 1900, Groton School Archives, Groton, MA., (Peabody MSS).

³Endicott Peabody, "St. Mark's Anniversary Speech," May 25, 1940, 3, Peabody MSS.

⁴Endicott Peabody, "Headmaster Report to Groton Trustees," December 7, 1891, Peabody MSS.

Strengthening Groton's academic standards, however, proved to be more difficult than Peabody had originally imagined. Peabody was confronted with the same educational and financial dilemma that, to a large degree, had prevented both endowed preparatory schools and institutions of higher education from improving standards of scholarship. Headmasters and college presidents faced the choice of either keeping admission standards low and attracting a large number of students, or raising entrance requirements and risk losing valuable tuition dollars. Since the survival of most institutions was predicated on money generated by student enrollment, and given the fact that only a small number of individuals even attended boarding schools or colleges, most educational leaders chose the former.

While Peabody believed in the merits of intellectual training, he stopped short of claiming that his greatest priority involved creating a vigorous and intellectually productive academic community. Groton, Peabody affirmed, was to be an institution of "sound learning." And yet the Rector "rejected the idea of it being regarded as a [college] preparatory school. . . ." ⁵ That mission, Peabody held, was best served by such academies as Phillips Andover and Phillips Exeter.

Despite Peabody's assertion that Groton was not originally designed to be a feeder school for colleges and universities, the fact remains that over 95% of Groton graduates between 1886 and 1919

⁵Endicott Peabody as quoted in Frank D. Ashburn, Peabody of Groton: A Portrait, (Cambridge, MA), 72.

matriculated at institutions of higher education.⁶ Moreover, Peabody acknowledged that the intellectual environment and "curriculum of the private school is naturally largely governed by the college requirement, in as much as a large majority of its students are destined for university."⁷

The daily pressures and strains of running a fledgling secondary boarding school at times precluded Peabody from rigorously examining both the quality of students academic work and the general level of pedagogical competency of his faculty. The reports Peabody received from Groton parents and alumni, however, indicated that most Groton graduates had performed well at college level. Despite the outpouring of support for his educational approach, Peabody still wanted to obtain a certain level of reassurance from members of the collegiate community that his school addressed the intellectual development of students in a demanding fashion. With this aim in mind, Peabody paid \$123.60 to have a team of Harvard professors analyze his school in 1893.

The Formation of the Schools Examination Board

This examination was carried out under the auspices of the Schools Examination Board of Harvard University that President

⁶See Groton Address Book, 1992, (Groton School, Groton, MA), Peabody MSS. The majority of Grotonians who graduated between 1886-1920 entered either Harvard or Yale.

⁷Endicott Peabody, "Academic Influence," The Education of the Modern Boy, (Boston, 1925), 107. This book contained five other essays written by private school headmasters, including: Samuel Drury of St. Paul's, Alfred E. Stearns of Phillips Academy and William Thayer of St. Mark's.

Charles W. Eliot created in 1892.⁸ Summarizing the aims of the Schools Examination Board, Eliot wrote:

Heretofore the [Harvard] faculty has exercised its influence on secondary schools solely by its requirement for admission. It is now to add to the influence of its examination papers a direct friendly intercourse with schools themselves. It is to endeavor to effect directly the teaching within the schools by systematic intercourse with the teachers, friendly criticism, and frank discussion of common aims and needs.⁹

The original seven members of the Schools Examination Board consisted of five Harvard professors and two secondary school headmasters.¹⁰ Harvard assistant professor of education Paul H. Hanus, a former instructor of Pedagogy at Colorado State Normal School and principal of a Denver high school, was appointed Secretary of the Board.¹¹ During the brief four year tenure of the

⁸At the same time he helped to initiate the Schools Examination Board, Eliot also served as Chairman of the 1892 National Education Association Committee on Secondary Schools (Committee of Ten). For a more detailed analysis of the goals and objectives of the Committee of Ten see Edward Krug, Charles W. Eliot and Popular Education, (New York, 1964), and Theodore R.Sizer, Secondary Schools at the Turn of the Century, (New Haven, CT., 1964).

⁹Charles W. Eliot, Annual Report of the President of Harvard University, 1891-1892, (Cambridge, MA, 1892), 72, Harvard University Archives.

¹⁰The five Harvard professors included: President Charles W. Eliot; Charles F. Dundbar (Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences), A.S. Hill, Ephraim Emerton and Paul H. Hanus. The two members of the board not associated with Harvard were William C. Collar, headmaster of the Roxbury Latin School and Frank A. Hill, headmaster of Cambridge High School. By the time Groton was evaluated, however, professors Emerton and Hanus were the only two members of the original board who visited the school. See School Examination Board Pamphlet, June 22, 1892, Harvard University Archives (HUA).

¹¹Hugh Hawkins, Between Harvard and America: The Educational Leadership of Charles W. Eliot, (New York, 1972), 253-257. Professor Hanus was considered one of the most influential individuals in the creation of Harvard's Graduate School of Education. See Henry W. Holmes, "The Graduate School of Education, 1891-1929," in Samuel Morrison, ed., Development of Harvard University, 518-

examination committee, investigators visited and made various recommendations to thirteen secondary schools throughout New England.¹²

In an effort to improve the quality of secondary school education, members of the Board, upon receiving an examination fee from a school, would visit the campus and make specific recommendations to improve the curriculum and general tone of the institution:

Under the direction of this Board the regular work of instruction in any school-public, endowed, or private of a grade to prepare boys for Harvard College or the Lawrence Scientific School, will, on request, be thoroughly examined. An examination may cover the entire work of a school, or only the work in a department or departments to be specified by the person or person inviting the examination.¹³

The members of the Examination Board were deeply concerned about the poor academic preparation prospective Harvard freshmen had been receiving in secondary schools or other tutorial arrangements. A perusal of the Harvard College Admission Book between 1830 and 1880 illustrates that no uniform admission

42 as cited in James McLachlan, American Boarding Schools: A Historical Study (New York, 1970), 245.

¹²The schools that were examined other than Groton include the following: Northfield Mount Hermon School (1892-94); Milton Academy (1893); Watertown, (Ma) High School (1893); Peekskill Military Academy (1893) St. Mark's School (1893); Roxbury Latin School (1893); Rideont School (1893); Newton (Ma) High School (1893-94); Phillips Exeter Academy (1893) Salem (Ma) High School (1893); New Bedford High School (1894-96); Clinton (NH) High School (1894-96) and Utica Free Academy (1895). See School Examination Board File, HUA.

¹³Ibid.

policy existed. According to Eliot and several of his colleagues the majority of students entered ill-prepared to handle the strenuous academic environment which some Harvard officials deemed essential for properly training academic experts. The inferior intellectual preparation that most adolescents received, however, may have resulted as much or more from a school's inability to prepare pupils sufficiently for colleges, than from the indolence or lack of interest of the students. Virtually no two school's curriculums were alike.

Since secondary school faculty members or private tutors often had to prepare each student individually for a different college entrance exam, this confusion routinely led to fragmented curriculums.¹⁴ St. Paul's School headmaster Henry A. Coit, for instance, argued that universities had an obligation to limit the amount of information that students were expected to cover on their entrance exams.¹⁵

The members of the Harvard Board held that an investigation that targeted the "organization of the school, its methods of instruction, discipline, and physical training, the proportionate attention given to each study, the quality and range of the books used, and the quality and quantity of the apparatus," would serve

¹⁴The confusion over admission standards was partially resolved in 1900 when the College Entrance Examination Board was established. In 1906, Groton followed Harvard's lead and adopted the boards' system. See Claude M. Fuess, The College Board: Its First Fifty Years, (New York, 1950), 34-46, as cited in McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 350.

¹⁵Henry A. Coit, "An American Boys School--What It Should Be," The Forum, September 1891, 1-11. Coit was headmaster of St. Paul's School.

two fundamental purposes.¹⁶ First, it might reveal the inherent weaknesses of a particular institution's academic program. Second, such an examination could potentially help teachers overcome their reliance on antiquated pedagogical techniques.¹⁷

The Harvard investigation operated as follows. After visiting the classroom of each teacher in a particular department, the Harvard investigator prepared a short report delineating the strengths and weaknesses of a specific faculty member, and then made several recommendations about how an individual, or the department, might improve its level of instruction. Describing the routine of the investigators in a brochure disseminated to prospective schools, Secretary Hanus wrote:

To make a complete examination of a school which has a comprehensive program of studies, six examiners will ordinarily be required--one for each of the following subjects,--classics, mathematics, natural science, history, English, other modern languages.¹⁸

Each Harvard Report was divided into two segments. The first part included general comments on the purpose, organization and general tone of the school, and the second half offered criticism and suggestions to specific academic departments.¹⁹ Although many of the examiners had mostly positive remarks about the general life and moral tone of such boarding schools as St. Mark's and Mount Hermon School, their analysis of the teaching and intellectual aspects

¹⁶School Examination Board Pamphlet, 1. June 22, 1892, HUA.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Schools Examination Board Report, Groton School, June 2, 1893, 1, HUA.

of the schools left much to be desired. The examiners scrutinized every detail, and in one instance, admonished members of the Mount Hermon School faculty to be more cognizant of using proper English in their classes:

The Board notes with regret that in this respect the habits of some of the teachers who are not directly connected with the English Department leave much to be desired. Bad English is frequently heard in the classrooms and not always from the pupils alone.²⁰

Having already visited a number of schools, the Harvard investigators eagerly turned their sights on Groton School, an institution that had provided the college with thirty-nine students since it opened in 1884.²¹ Moreover, the six member team, many of whom were considered the experts in their field, "looked forward with pleasure to examining the work of [Peabody's] school."²²

²⁰Schools Examination Board, Mount Hermon School, 1, Northfield Mount Hermon School Archives, Northfield, MA. Dwight Moody was the founder of the Northfield Seminary for Young Ladies (1879). In two years, and less than five miles from the women's campus, Moody opened the Mount Hermon Boys' School. Located in bucolic Northfield, Massachusetts these boarding schools were committed to helping impoverished young boys and girls receive a Christian education. Summarizing the aims of the school, a member of the Schools Examination Board reported: "Its main object is to place the fundamentals of a good secondary education in the reach of young men of any race who, sound in body and mind but poor in purse and lacking in early advantages, are willing to work on the farm, in the stables, in the dairy, in the laundry, in the kitchen, and in the halls and dormitories, as part compensation for their education." James Lee Love, "Report of James Lee Love" in The Schools Examination Board of Harvard College, 1, Northfield MSS. For a more detailed history of the school see Burnham Carter, So Much to Learn: The History of Northfield Mount Hermon School for the One Hundredth Anniversary, (Privately Printed, Northfield Mount Hermon School, 1976)

²¹For the complete record of where Groton School graduates attended college, see Groton School: Address and Record Book, 1992, Peabody MSS.

²²Paul H. Hanus to Endicott Peabody, March 15, 1893, Peabody MSS. In addition to Hanus who was appointed to examine mathematics, Harvard sent the following individuals to Groton: John H. Wright, a professor of Greek at

Most of the examiners came during late March and early April of 1893 and by June 2 of the same year Hanus sent a summary of their final evaluation to Peabody. "The Board conceives the aim of your school to be to prepare boys for life through the intermediate stage of a college course," Professor Hanus wrote Peabody in the Report's opening statement. Continuing, he added:

They perceive that the scholarly aim is not the primary one, but that is everywhere held subordinate to the higher purpose of forming character. They are impressed with the fact that the ideals of character kept in view are thoroughly true and manly ones.²³

While Peabody was probably quite pleased with this assessment of the school's overall aim, the individual reports on the intellectual side of Groton left much to be desired.

Intellectual Life at Groton

"It may be inferred," wrote Mathematics examiner Paul Hanus, "that every effort is made to surround the pupils with the most evaluating and refining influence," but he advised "the course of study in Mathematics could be improved by making a wiser selection of topics in Arithmetic."²⁴ The selection of textbooks, Hanus argued,

Harvard, and later dean of the graduate school, examined classics; Theodore W. Richard's, one of the most prolific experimental chemists at the time, examined Science; Ephraim Emerton, a professor of history at Harvard scrutinized Groton's American and European history courses; Dean of Harvard College, LeBaron R. Briggs examined the English department, and Harvard German instructor, Hugo K. Schilling, was appointed to investigate modern languages. See also Paul H. Hanus to Endicott Peabody, December 21, 1892, Peabody MSS.

²³School Examination Board, (Paul H. Hanus), "Groton Report," June 2, 1893, 1, HUA.

²⁴Paul H. Hanus, "Mathematics at Groton," 1, 7, SEB, HUA. The Groton Mathematics curriculum was as follows: A year and a half of arithmetic, a little more than a year of algebra, one year of geometry, and a year and a half of trigonometry. See Ibid., 2.

was not the most disturbing aspect of Groton's math curriculum, as he admonished that "all the work needs enlivening. Enthusiasm in some pupils and interest in nearly all ought to be aroused."²⁵ Most of the work, he asserted, needed to be elevated above the "dead level of text-book routine." According to Hanus the teaching was "lifeless, uninteresting and unsatisfactory," and virtually all faculty members had to improve their classroom management skills.²⁶ In his concluding remarks, Hanus suggested that Groton faculty "needed to study the work of good teachers," and Peabody should allow them to "take time to visit other schools where they could see plans of class management and methods of teaching in operation."²⁷

English fared a little better than mathematics as LeBaron Russell Briggs commented, "on the whole, I believe that Groton School sends to [Harvard] boys well equipped in English. Briggs did however, criticize Groton faculty for their general lack of scholarship and knowledge. "Among the teachers that I met," Briggs reported, "there were only one of two that I should call distinctly good."²⁸ Briggs assessment of the quality of teaching at Groton concurred with Hanus's as he witnessed plenty of "limp" and "feeble" lectures and

²⁵Ibid., 7. During the time the Board examined Groton school, the curriculum consisted of the following: Latin was taught in all forms (a form equaled one year, and most Groton students spent six years at school). The last four forms had to take Greek and French, while the first four forms were required to take German. English was required in all forms, and the first two forms had to take classes in Greek, Roman, British, and American history. Mathematics was taught during all six forms as was Sacred Studies. Only one year of science was required, usually during the sixth form. See Frank D. Ashburn, Fifty Years On: Groton School 1884-1934, (New York, 1934), 95-101.

²⁶Ibid., 8.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸LeBaron R. Briggs, "English at Groton," 10, SEB, HUA.

observed several teachers who were "pretty gruff in the classroom."²⁹

Science examiner Theodore Richard's task was perhaps the easiest of his colleagues as Groton only had one science course, physics, and that only meet once a week. Believing that the physics course was satisfactory, he encouraged Peabody to introduce a chemistry course in the future.³⁰ Overall, he expressed his approval of Groton's approach to teaching science: "The plan pursued at Groton of not attempting more than is possible satisfactorily to fulfill, is a very excellent one."³¹

Hugo Schilling was less sympathetic toward Groton's program of modern languages. He criticized Peabody for placing far too much emphasis on Greek and Latin. "The Groton School has only one course of study," Schilling complained, and "it is prescribed throughout . . . and Classics and Mathematics are the most important subjects in it."³² Additionally, Schilling criticized Peabody for placing the intellectual tone of the school at the lowest end of his educational platform. "According to [Peabody]," claimed Schilling, "the chief aim of the instruction in the Groton School is the imparting of general culture; preparation for college being a secondary consideration and a purely incidental feature."³³ Peabody's general lack of enthusiasm for scholarly pursuits, in Schilling's view, was a poor influence on both students and faculty, and subsequently

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Theodore W. Richards, "Science at Groton," 1-2, SEB, HUA.

³¹Ibid.

³²Hugo K. Schilling, "Modern Languages at Groton," 1, SEB, HUA

³³Ibid., 1-2.

contributed to the discursive nature of the modern language department. "The classroom work consists as a rule," wrote Schilling, "solely in the monotonous routine of reciting the prepared lesson . . . [it] lacks life and spirit throughout. A great deal of valuable time is lost in the recitations through the teachers' slowness and indecision in asking questions."³⁴

Groton, Schilling reported, failed to spend an adequate amount of time teaching German and French and furthermore, even when classes were taught, they were poorly organized and intellectually dull.³⁵ "The idea of teaching modern language by spending one whole year on the grammar before reading is one repudiated years ago by intelligent teachers," Schilling wrote, and "its use at Groton shows either that the teachers are hopelessly beyond all modern thought on this subject or that they are deliberately acting in opposition to it."³⁶

"The first impression made upon one consulting the program of exercise is that History is hardly taught in the school at all," wrote examiner Ephraim Emerton of his experience at Groton.³⁷ Emerton found that the primary focus of the history department was on Rome, Greece, and England. Even a competent teacher was criticized by Emerton for pitching " his teaching too high for the

³⁴Ibid., 10, as cited in McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 262-263.

³⁵Schilling requested that Peabody compile a list of the number of hours Groton students spent per year in recitations. The following schedule reveals the major emphasis Groton faculty placed upon the classics and mathematics: Latin-972 hours over six years; math-864 hours over six years; English-756 hours over six years; Greek-432 hours over three year; French 396 hours over four years and German 252 hours over two years. See Ibid., 3.

³⁶Ibid., 8.

³⁷Ephraim Emerton, "History at Groton," 1, SEB, HUA. The history report was the shortest of the six and consisted of four hand written pages.

comprehension of the boys." "Much of his very intelligent and rapid talk," Emerton observed, "went over their heads and must rather have confused than instructed them."³⁸

The quality of instruction within the classics department received much praise from John H. Wright, who commented: "A more attractive and scholarly group of gentlemen engaged in elementary teaching I have never met."³⁹ And yet, Wright found that the intellectual environment of the school often suffered because of the greater emphasis on moral and religious training. "A casual visitor to Groton School receives at once an impression of healthy as characterizing the instruction, physical, moral, religious, and intellectual--an impression which time only deepens," Wright wrote. Similar to his other colleagues, however, he asserted that "perhaps the intellectual life of the boys might be made more vigorous and intense, and a keener interest aroused in literature. . . ." ⁴⁰

Peabody supported the idea that the classics comprised the most fundamental component of a student's intellectual experience. "The private boarding schools for the most part retain what is known as the Classical course," Peabody wrote. Affirming this belief, Henry A. Coit, headmaster at St. Paul's School, noted that "language and mathematics are the two great means of mental discipline, as much so now as in the days of Bacon."⁴¹ Despite the emphasis which Groton placed upon the classics, Wright commented that the

³⁸*Ibid.*, 10. The master Emerton referred to was William Greenough Thayer, one of the Rector's most valued employees.

³⁹John H. Wright, "Classics at Groton," 2, SEB, HUA.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 7.

⁴¹Coit, *The Forum*, 5.

department's curriculum had to be reorganized: "The fact that so long a time is spent on Greek and Latin and so slight a command of the language and so little familiarity with the literature are gained has its depressing effect on the observer, as the teachers say it has upon themselves."⁴²

As a student Peabody had been thoroughly trained in the classical course. Moreover, during the first few years of his tenure at Groton there was, for the most part, an unwillingness on his part to introduce new and exciting material into the school's overwhelmingly traditional curriculum. A generalist by nature, Peabody had not yet been convinced that academic specialization, intellectual rigor, and scientific innovation significantly strengthened moral fiber. "My occupation has brought me into contact with very many average men and also with men above and below the average," Peabody wrote defending the benefits of studying classical culture, in 1925, and "far more have referred to the history and literature of Greece and Rome than to any of the well-known scientific subjects."⁴³

In conclusion, the six examiners found the teaching and intellectual tone of Groton was, at best, mediocre, and in some instances they believed it to be totally incompetent. On the whole, however, compared to the thirteen other schools which were examined, historian James McLachlan suggested that "Groton was ranked academically in the middle: if it nowhere approached the

⁴²Wright, "Classics at Groton," 5, SEB, HUA.

⁴³Endicott Peabody, "Academic Training," Education of the Modern Boy, 115.

excellence of Roxbury Latin School, neither does it suggest that academic nadir of the Peekskill, New York Military Academy."⁴⁴

The Significance of the Harvard Report

The contents of the Harvard Report revealed an interesting educational predicament for those parents and educators who chose to support the primacy of paternalistic character building over the scholastic emphasis of emerging academic experts. As McLachlan has noted:

The [Harvard] examiners had been instructed to comment on the aim and general tone of [Groton] school. Peabody's aim was primarily to create an atmosphere in which "manly, Christian character" would be nurtured, only secondarily to prepare boys for college. In his chief aim, if the examiners are to be trusted, Peabody had become, only a little over eight years after founding Groton, completely successful. . . . The final score in the confrontation between the university and the boarding schools was "Experts 10, [Christian] Gentlemen 10": Groton afforded mediocre instruction, but excellent education. The Harvard faculty members were caught in a dilemma which they hardly recognized and made little attempt to resolve.⁴⁵

To some degree, Peabody himself exemplified the paradoxical nature of the educational dilemma that was created in part by the emergence of scientific naturalism and the rise of the modern American university. On the one hand, Peabody firmly believed that it was essential for all educational institutions to develop challenging intellectual programs. At the same time, he also stressed the

⁴⁴McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 264.

⁴⁵Ibid., 264-65.

importance of incorporating moral, ethical and religious teachings into the daily lives of students.

No real consensus existed in the growing debate over what defined a properly educated person. In one respect the elusive nature of this debate contributed to the mixed messages that underlined many of the Harvard investigators comments about Groton School. Almost every Harvard examiner, for example, fully acknowledged the advantages of Groton's character-building mechanisms. Nonetheless, at the same time they also believed strongly that the ideal education was grounded both in modern scientific principles and in a belief of individual student liberty. These two integral components, according to the contents of the Harvard Report, were virtually nonexistent at Groton. Yet with few exceptions most examiners remained somewhat reluctant about aggressively challenging the dominating influence Groton placed upon piety and strength of character.

It is interesting to note that although Peabody might have been initially intrigued by the comments of the Board, he made little or no effort to implement many of the suggestions individual members made. "All right about the Harvard Report," William Lawrence, chairman of the Board of Trustees wrote to the Rector several months after Groton had received the final product. "As so much time has passed since it was made I think, as you say, that it would be hardly worth while to bring before the trustees. You will no doubt mention in your next report that changes have been made."⁴⁶

⁴⁶William Lawrence to Endicott Peabody, January 26, 1894, Peabody MSS.

During the next Board meeting, however, and over the course of the next several gatherings, the Rector never mentioned the existence of the Harvard Report.⁴⁷

Peabody's failure to act upon the suggestions of the Harvard Report is revealing. Perhaps Peabody feared that implementing the recommendations of the Schools Examination Board might threaten the religious, family, and moral ethos of Groton that he and members of his faculty had worked so hard to establish. Another point of tension may have been the fact that Peabody was deeply troubled that some Harvard investigators, and President Eliot in particular--at least in his view--wanted to steer education in a more secular direction. Before Peabody conceded any points to members of the Schools Examination Board, he actively tried to reverse what he believed to be a general lack of religious and moral instruction on college and university campuses across the country and at Harvard in particular.

Foundations of the Modern, Secular University

In many respects even before the Schools Examination Board investigated Groton, Peabody was swimming against a powerful intellectual current that had already made it possible for the flavor of the German academic expert and modern university to reach the shores of the United States. While the opening of Johns Hopkins University in 1876 came to symbolize the arrival of a new academic

⁴⁷For a detailed account to the Board of Trustee meetings see Minutes of the Trustees Meetings, Vol. 1, Peabody MSS. The letter from Lawrence to Peabody remains the only documentation in the Groton Archives which reveals that the Rector ever mentioned this report.

era, to some degree at least, Charles W. Eliot's selection as Harvard's third non-clerical president in 1869 reflected the more modern and secular drift of post-secondary education already underway.⁴⁸

Peabody approached this change in direction with increasing trepidation. While many others of his generation either came to reject or at least modify their religious beliefs, Peabody was never fully persuaded to abandon his traditional Victorian moralist outlook. Although Eliot, by contrast, considered himself a Christian and supporter of religion, as one of his biographer's observed, to have labeled him a deeply pious individual "would have rung false . . . even in his ears."⁴⁹

Peabody's Puritanical worldview, of course, profoundly shaped his educational and social outlook. More importantly, his actions and rhetoric as a boarding school founder, educator, minister, and social

⁴⁸Addressing the importance of President Daniel Coit Gilman's contribution to higher education during his twenty five year presidential tenure at Johns Hopkins (1876-1901), Princeton President Woodrow Wilson exclaimed: "If it be true that Thomas Jefferson first laid the broad foundation for American universities in his plans for the University of Virginia, it is not less true that you were the first to create and organize in America a university in which the discovery and dissemination of new truth were to concede a rank superior to mere instruction, and in which the efficiency and value of research as an educational instrument were exemplified in the training of many investigators." Woodrow Wilson quoted in Johns Hopkins University, Celebration of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary, (Baltimore, 1902), 37-42. Eliot, in fact, fully acknowledged that Gilman's pioneering efforts had influenced the direction of Harvard. Reflecting on his tremendous contribution to American higher education, Eliot wrote to Gilman: "You must look back with serene satisfaction on your achievement at Johns Hopkins. It has been an original, successfully and highly influential piece of creative work. There isn't a university in the country that has not been greatly benefited by what you have done at Baltimore. I am well aware that it would have been much more difficult, if not impossible, for us at Harvard to have developed our Graduate School . . . if you had not built up your University so wisely and effectively on the graduate side." Charles W. Eliot to Daniel Coit Gilman as cited in Henry James, Vol II 132.

⁴⁹Hugh Hawkins, Between Harvard and America, (New York, 1972), 121.

critic were influenced by and can only be amply understood in light of his strong commitment toward insuring that Grotonians remained faithful to Christ.

Not entirely impressed with academic innovations, in Peabody's eyes, the aim of the college or university should correspond with the mission of Groton School: provide a classical education that would inculcate in students a knowledge of and commitment to moral and religious values. Thus, in order to produce properly trained Christian gentlemen Peabody believed that the college ought to adhere rather strictly--as Groton did--to traditional Christian character-building influences.

Yet within Peabody's idealized educational institution, as most members of the Harvard team duly noted, students experienced a rather narrowly defined conception of intellectual and social freedom. Students were often subjected to a rigid paternalistic regime of rules and regulations that both restricted their behavior and prevented them from exploring a wide variety of academic pursuits.⁵⁰ While Peabody clearly endorsed this restrictive environment, Eliot came to express the views of many university reformers who believed that the old-time college's religious orthodoxy and classical curriculum no longer seemed relevant in an expanding industrial and technological society.

⁵⁰For a critical view of the antebellum college see Donald Tewksbury, The Founding of American Colleges and Universities, (New York, 1932). For a more favorable portrait of these institutions and rebuttal to Tewksbury's thesis see Natalie A. Taylor, "The Antebellum College Movement: A Reappraisal of Tewksbury's Founding of American Colleges and Universities," History of Education Quarterly, Fall 1973, 261-274.

Indeed, sixteen years before Groton opened, Eliot envisioned taking his school from a small provincial, sectarian college, and turning it into an internationally competitive institution. To this end, he implemented a variety of new academic initiatives that included the reorganization of the professional schools (i.e. business, law, and medicine), the broadening of the elective system, and the restructuring of the undergraduate curriculum.⁵¹ By the beginning of the twentieth century, Harvard had emerged under Eliot's leadership bereft of many of the evangelical characteristics of the antebellum college. Character development, Eliot claimed, was still a paramount objective, but the approach was now to be through freedom, choice, and responsibility not rigid adherence to stifling rules and in loco parentis policies and practices.⁵²

The notion of expanding student freedom within the nascent university, however, generated a certain degree of apprehension among some the country's leading educators and especially those who held old-time character-building viewpoints. Peabody emerged as a firm and leading dissenter. In simplistic terms, one of the fundamental questions that gave rise to certain tensions between church school founders such as Peabody and university builders like Eliot focused in part on the type and degree of freedom the modern university would grant to undergraduates.⁵³ Another closely related

⁵¹ Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr., "The American Compromise: Charles W. Eliot, Black Education and the New South," Ronald Goodenow and Arthur White, eds., Education and the Rise of the New South, (Boston, 1981), 28.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Jennings L. Wagoner Jr., "Moral Education in Retrospect: Character Building in Higher Education 1870-1910," Proceeding of the South Atlantic Philosophy

issue involved the extent to which the university would be held culpable for nurturing student character.⁵⁴

Peabody, for instance, was often highly critical of Eliot's conception of student freedom and with the gradual abatement of Harvard's in loco parentis tradition. Thus, after Peabody's first student--George Rublee--left Groton to attend Harvard in 1886, and given the fact that many of Eliot's reforms had already taken root, Peabody's interest over students well-being at the Cambridge campus intensified significantly. While his assessments of the Eliot administration were often misguided and to some measure slightly exaggerated, Peabody routinely asserted that Eliot's leadership and policies had overemphasized academic specialization, reduced undergraduate religious enthusiasm, and widened social disunity. As Peabody argued shortly after Eliot retired:

The two great things that they need of Harvard are 1. social unity. There is a great rift between the haves and the have-nots. Such a condition is bad in the university and 2. A spiritual atmosphere. . . . Men who go there either find no enthusiasm and give up their own or else struggle on without much of any aid from the president or older men.⁵⁵

Therefore, throughout the last twenty-five years of Eliot's tenure and continuing into the Lowell era as well, Peabody often voiced his concern about those reforms at Harvard that provided

of Education Society, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Va., October 17, 1980, 3.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Endicott Peabody to unnamed Groton graduate, January 14, 1909, in Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 212.

undergraduates with a greater degree of social and religious freedom.

An analysis of Peabody's and Eliot's corresponding beliefs about student freedom make for an interesting comparison and contrast in two respects. First, such an examination reveals the extent to which an influential religious boarding school founder believed that he had to redefine and reshape the original goals, methods and purpose of his institution in order to respond adequately to the more secularized and relativistic ethos of the emerging modern university. Second, this analysis deepens our understanding of Peabody's educational theories and of the strains and stresses of institution building and change at both Groton School and Harvard.

Laissez-Faire Versus Paternalism

In defining the merits of both academic and student freedom, Eliot proclaimed that "the student ought to find himself free to determine the method of his daily life with no more restrictions than the habits and customs of civilized society necessarily impose."⁵⁶ Emerging as one of the modern American universities most adamant defenders of student freedom, Eliot held that a young person's character was largely formed prior to his eighteenth birthday and that "he will probably never be fit for freedom unless he is then fit."⁵⁷

⁵⁶Charles W. Eliot, "Academic Freedom," *Science*, XXVI (July 5, 1907), 9.

⁵⁷Letter from Charles W. Eliot to Dr. Henry S. Pritchett, July 13, 1907, as quoted in Henry James, *Charles W. Eliot President of Harvard University 1869-1909*, II, (New York, 1930), 149-150, see also Wagoner, "Moral Education in Retrospect," 5.

The traditional collegiate tradition of in loco parentis, Eliot came to believe, actually limited the growth of an individual's character and mind. True character, Eliot gradually realized, evolved only when the student himself was free to choose his own path, even if it involved the freedom to sin.⁵⁸ Allowing an individual to assume full responsibility for his own course of action, in Eliot's view, was inextricably tied to the development of proper character.⁵⁹

Not all educators, however, shared Eliot's enthusiasm for liberating Harvard students. Indeed, Eliot's reforms--and those of other university designers as well--often generated a good deal of concern among some clergymen and other educational traditionalists. "I believe the . . . general [moral] tone," at Harvard, Horace Dutton Taft, founder and headmaster of The Taft School, wrote to his long-time friend and fellow school founder Sherman Day Thacher in 1909, is "much worse than at Yale."⁶⁰ More recently, historian James McLachlan concluded:

Boarding school educators felt that something had been lost in the transformation of the antebellum paternalistic, character-building college into the laissez-faire university, which left students to his own devices and Harvard seemed the greatest offender.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Hawkins, Between Harvard and America , 112

⁵⁹Wagoner, "Moral Education in Retrospect," 7.

⁶⁰Horace Dutton Taft to Sherman Day Thacher, August 10, 1909, The Taft School Archives, The Taft School, Watertown, CT. Thacher was the founder and headmaster of The Thacher School located in Ojai, California.

⁶¹McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 265-266.

Peabody believed that the fledgling university's gradual movement toward a laissez-faire and secular doctrine reduced substantially the opportunities for elevating moral character. Most undergraduates, Peabody asserted, had not yet fully matured. To insure that all students acted within strictly defined moral boundaries throughout their college lives, Peabody urged university administrators to resist abandoning their in loco parentis role.

Eliot certainly came to hold a much different perspective on the degree to which undergraduates could handle increased amounts of freedom. Believing that students should be treated as mature and responsible individuals, Eliot became convinced that the university needed to loosen the reins regulating student activities and behavior.⁶² At the conclusion of his presidential tenure Eliot had made tremendous progress in this regard. In essence, his initiatives had liberalized disciplinary policies and regulations and engendered an environment of religious freedom and tolerance on campus. "My main efforts for forty years," Eliot wrote to a friend shortly before his retirement, "have been given to increasing the amount of liberty and variety in education, in place of compulsion and uniformity."⁶³

In sharp contrast, Peabody was insistent that instilling students with ethical and religious values took precedence over the advancement of student freedom. Thus, Peabody remained fundamentally opposed to many of the reforms that ultimately transformed Harvard from an antebellum college into a more laissez-

⁶²Wagoner, "Moral Education in Retrospect," 3.

⁶³Charles W. Eliot to Louis F. Post, February 4, 1908, as cited in Hawkins, Between Harvard and America, 224.

faire governed institution. From his conservative, classical perspective, Peabody feared that the moral foundation of a Grotonian's education was being unraveled slowly at Harvard. More significantly, he held Eliot's administration culpable for this condition.

In Peabody's mind, Eliot's elective system and his deregulation of the previously strict discipline code made it increasingly difficult for students to focus not only on their studies but their spiritual and moral development as well. Students, Peabody assumed, needed intense supervision and the gradual relaxation of standards and rules openly invited students to engage in nefarious activities. Writing to Theodore Roosevelt about the condition of Harvard in 1908, Peabody asserted:

Is it all nonsense to fool yourself into thinking as President Eliot seems to think, that you are treating men in a peculiarly manly way when you give them full scope and no advice--stand off and watch things go wrong and still say nothing and finally when you consider that things have become so bad stop them or try to stop them altogether. . . . That is not what [Harvard] authorities are paid for.⁶⁴

While inveighing against the poor moral influence of Eliot's more laissez-faire oriented system, it never occurred to Peabody to modify, or at least reexamine, the merits of Groton's paternalistic approach. A lackluster performance of a Groton student at Harvard, in Peabody's eyes, was easily explained; Eliot's "New-Education" policies created an atmosphere of almost total freedom, and this, in

⁶⁴Endicott Peabody to Theodore Roosevelt, January 30, 1906 in McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 266.

turn, had a deleterious impact on the moral integrity of an individual. Typical of his response to such criticism, Eliot replied:

The elective system has been described by its opponents as a wide-open, miscellaneous bazaar, at which a bewildering variety of goods is offered to the purchaser, who is left without guidance, and acts without constant or sensible motive. Nothing could be farther from the facts than this description.⁶⁵

Yet despite Eliot's assertions to the contrary, at least Ellery Sedgwick--a Groton and Harvard graduate--shared the views of his former headmaster. "It was President Eliot's theory," Sedgwick wrote in his autobiography, "to make knowledge interesting, to offer it in immense variety, and then, if a body did not take advantage of his opportunities, to bid him a brisk good-bye."⁶⁶

Institutional Responsibility

Simmering at the core of Eliot's and Peabody's disagreement over student freedom were the varying degrees of responsibility an institution assumed in regards to monitoring, regulating, and developing character. Any educational environment, Peabody believed, had to be organized in a heavily paternalistic and authoritarian fashion. As Peabody argued:

[A student] must make his own mistakes and bear his punishment, and so learn the lesson of life. This is the fallacy which underlies [Eliot's] so-called elective system. It fails to take into account the fact that parents, teachers, and tutors and governors are placed in authority in order that they may give to those who are under them the

⁶⁵Charles W. Eliot, University Administration, (Boston, 1908), 131-32.

⁶⁶Ellery Sedgwick, The Happy Profession, (Boston, 1944), 72.

benefit of the wisdom of ages and of their own mistakes and discoveries, in order that the child may, by and by, be able to form a sound judgment.⁶⁷

To Eliot's point of view, such a tightly regulated and structured environment typically prevented students from exercising greater religious and academic freedom. The optimal environment for developing character, Eliot argued ". . . should more closely resemble the professional life or business life [students] are soon to lead, and their leading motives should resemble the motives of adults, rather than those of school boys."⁶⁸

Eliot did not, as Peabody often asserted, advocate an abandonment of character development. In fact, throughout his career, Eliot remained convinced that developing sound character was a primary aim of education.⁶⁹ What Eliot came to disapprove of however, were the complex number of rules and to a certain degree suppressive regulations that had previously characterized much of the antebellum college tradition. Unlike the old-time college Eliot argued that:

The moral purpose of a university's policy should be to train young men to self-control and self-reliance through liberty. It is not the business of a university to train men for those functions in which implicit obedience is of the first importance. On the contrary, it should train men for those occupations in which self-government,

⁶⁷Endicott Peabody, "The Training and Responsibility of Parents," Speech to Groton Parents May 1908, Peabody MSS.

⁶⁸Charles W. Eliot to Edwin H. Abbot, February 8, 1899, as quoted in James, II, 49. Cf. Wagoner, "Moral Education in Retrospect," 7.

⁶⁹Wagoner, "Moral Education in Retrospect," 10.

independence, and originating power are preeminently needed.⁷⁰

At the nucleus of Eliot's reform vision was the concept of individual choice. Eliot defined the university community as "a voluntary cooperative association of highly individualistic persons," and this arrangement was "thoroughly democratic in spirit."⁷¹ Peabody's ideas of organizing the university along the lines of a securely fixated community ran contrary to Eliot's belief of providing students a certain degree of autonomy.⁷²

Eliot believed that character formation essentially remained the responsibility of the individual student and not the university.⁷³ Providing undergraduates with the opportunity to expand their own intellectual horizons independently, in Eliot's view, could only be accomplished when an institution shed its sectarian and authoritarian coat and fully acknowledged that the rigorous pursuit of original knowledge was paramount to the concept of self-improvement. Students, Eliot proclaimed, could be introduced to important virtuous lessons in a much less constrictive environment and manner than Peabody advocated. "A young man is much affected by the expectation which his elders entertain of him," Eliot wrote. "If they expect him to behave like a child, his lingering

⁷⁰Charles W. Eliot, "Liberty in Education," (Debate with James McCosh before the Nineteenth Century Club of New York, 1885.), *Educational Reform*, 142-43. Cf. George M. Marsden, The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief, (New York, 1994), 188.

⁷¹Charles William Eliot, "Academic Freedom," *Science* XXVI (1907), 11.

⁷²Veysey, The Emergence of the American University, 93.

⁷³Wagoner, "Moral Education in Retrospect," 10.

childishness will oftener rule his actions; if they expect him to behave like a man, his incipient manhood will oftener assert itself."⁷⁴

Peabody's numerous personal visits to the Harvard campus coupled with the information he received from various second hand reports led him to conclude that the Cambridge campus lacked a general sense of cohesion. More significant however, was his growing concern that once Grotonians left the firmly controlled confines of his school and entered Harvard they would act "like sailors on shore leave." How his graduates behaved in college, and especially those who matriculated at Harvard, remained a constant source of worry and agitation for the benevolent Rector. "Deep down [Peabody] loved and respected Harvard and what is tradition stood for," his biographer wrote, "but he observed with concern Grotonians at Harvard were more apt to get into trouble than at [Yale] or Princeton and he never ceased to battle for an improved righteousness in Cambridge."⁷⁵

Although Peabody frequently reprimanded Grotonians who struggled academically or sequestered themselves in elite dining clubs or "Gold Coast" suites--both of which affluent boarding school graduates helped to initiate--they were at least partially absolved from their actions in the Rector's mind. Many undergraduates, Peabody believed, still possessed frail moral constitutions that

⁷⁴Eliot, "Liberty in Education," in Education Reform, 128-129, in Wagoner, "Moral Education in Retrospect," 8.

⁷⁵Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 117-18. At one point Peabody was so concerned about the lack of strong religious environment at Harvard that he wrote to Henry Thompson, Harvard's Secretary of Graduate and Undergraduate Employment Appointments, to inquire how many Harvard graduates had entered the ministry in the past five decades. Endicott Peabody to Henry S. Thompson, January 11, 1905, Peabody, MSS.

demanded constant nurture and guidance. Therefore, rather than scold Grotonians who seemed to drift too far from the path of righteousness, Peabody held Eliot and the Harvard community directly accountable for many of the flaws that emerged in their individual characters.

College students, in Peabody's opinion, were simply not mature enough to assume the amount of responsibility that Eliot believed was necessary to break away from the antebellum college traditions. Yet in many respects Peabody assumed an air of self-righteousness when he reproached either Eliot or Harvard. The purpose of Groton, Peabody wrote in 1900, is to send our graduates "up to the universities having committed themselves to certain ideas which they may be expected to retain in their college career." "The hope," he continued, "is that they will have learned the straight path from habit, and then from principle."⁷⁶

Quick to assign blame to others, Peabody often avoided the degree of deep introspection that may have led him to realize that his educational theories provided little or no room for individual choice and self-expression. Since success in education is often associated with the idea of growth and change, it is therefore somewhat ironic that perhaps Peabody's most enduring character flaw was his rather uncompromising disposition. While his iron-will and steady resolve proved quite beneficial during Groton's nascent stage, over the course of time, his inability to modify many of his

⁷⁶Endicott Peabody, "The Aim of Groton School," The Church Militant, Boston, 1900, vol. 3, 4.

firmly held traditional beliefs ultimately narrowed rather than broadened his influence as an educator.

Some Groton alumni eventually came to realize that Peabody's insistence on educating students in such a regulated manner made the adjustment to college and adult life far more difficult. One graduate in particular, George Martin, himself a Harvard College and law school alumnus, suggested to his former headmaster that if Groton only softened its emphasis on molding "manly" character in a coercive fashion, Grotonians might be better prepared to handle the more generous amounts of student freedom that accompanied university life at Harvard. Martin's observations are worth citing at length:

. . . [The] way boys are treated at Groton is, I believe, the very worst preparation for Harvard that could possibly be devised. You might as well train a boy at Sparta and expect him to shine at Athens. The training is all right of its kind, but it cannot be adapted to certain purposes at all. . . . [Is not] the frank admission of the use of fear as a corrective, of the philosophy of enforced conformity, of the holding up authority as of more importance than truth, of coercion rather than inspiration, and of the attempt to mould [sic] the boys into the desired form irrespective of their capacities or proclivities . . . like [sending them] into battle naked. . . . You are training boys [at Groton] so that they are more afraid of popular clamor than they are of making a difficult tackle in a foot-ball [sic] game. What I want to see is a boy produced who will have the courage to say that he thinks foot-ball is nonsense and he won't play no matter to what social tortures he is subjected. If you could produce this kind of courage you would have a percentage of ministers among the graduates that would be the wonder of the country. But you cannot produce ministers if you preach obedience and submission to the voice of the majority,

because the majority of the country is now engaged in furiously making money and in self justification sneering at everybody who says that is nonsense.⁷⁷

Although criticisms of Peabody's educational approach among alumni--and especially those who attended Harvard--were often well-founded, they remained, nevertheless, quite rare. Despite these and other protestations from university officials, Peabody remained strongly convinced that both the boarding school and university had a moral obligation to assume full responsibility for the character development of their students. To this end, Peabody simply refused believe as did Eliot and some members of the Schools Examination Board, that a less restrictive and regulated educational community provided a more realistic and appropriate learning environment. As Peabody reminded members of his faculty in 1919:

Without the order which comes from and through consistent discipline, a school [or university] not only becomes disorderly, but soon loses its moral tone, and degenerates into a place in which it is bad for a boy or a man to live.⁷⁸

The Lowell Administration

Peabody was quite optimistic to learn that A. Lawrence Lowell had been selected to replace Eliot in 1909. Peabody, in fact, anticipated that Lowell might be far more appreciative and sympathetic toward his in loco parentis viewpoint than Eliot. Expressing his excitement over the new appointment, Peabody wrote: "The selection seems to me a wise one . . . [Lowell] is more progressive without being radical. More human than Eliot, and, I

⁷⁷George Martin to Endicott Peabody April 15, 1926, Peabody MSS.

⁷⁸Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Master," 1919, Peabody MSS.

think more interested in the development of the Institutional religion of the college."⁷⁹

To a certain degree Peabody's instincts proved accurate. Lowell had a better appreciation and understanding of undergraduate life than Eliot. Moreover, Lowell believed that the student, and not the courses he took, comprised the most important aspect of a Harvard education.⁸⁰ In this regard, once Lowell assumed the Harvard presidency in 1909, he began to reverse many of Eliot's curriculum reforms and attempted to arouse a greater sense of cohesion among faculty and students. "I believe that the future of this country is in the hands of its young men and that the character of its young men depends largely upon their coming to college," claimed Lowell. "And in college I believe their character depends not merely on being instructed, but mostly on their living together in an atmosphere of good fellowship."⁸¹

At least Peabody felt that he now had an important ally who seemed willing to listen to his suggestions and comments about religious life at Harvard. "I am very grateful to you for your letter about the [religious] condition of Harvard College," Lowell wrote to Peabody months after he assumed the reins of the presidency, "and I should be very glad to discuss it with you more fully when we have a chance to meet."⁸² Moreover, in the same letter Lowell discussed

⁷⁹Peabody to Julius Atwood, January 14, 1909

⁸⁰Smith, The Harvard Century, 74.

⁸¹President Lowell quoted in "The New President of Harvard," The Congregationalist, October 2, 1909 in Smith, The Harvard Century, 63.

⁸² Lawrence Lowell to Endicott Peabody, February 26, 1909.

his intentions to challenge many of the policies Eliot had boldly initiated. Explaining his rationale for this decision, Lowell wrote:

Does not a good deal of the difficulty of college life come in the freshman year, when the student fresh from the stronger discipline of his boarding school or his home is suddenly plunged into a freedom to which he is not accustomed? He loses his way, gets insensibly drawn under the influence of others who, like himself, are indolent and have no positive standards, although not in any way bad and before he knows it he has got on probation, or acquired habits of self-indulgence which it is afterward hard to throw off.⁸³

Peabody was certainly not the only educator who enthusiastically embraced Lowell's more paternal direction. Many other boarding school educators had come to acknowledge that perhaps many of Eliot's reforms encouraged university authorities to place a greater emphasis on student freedom and specialized academic training rather than pious character training. "Every day the universities seemed to demand the inculcation of higher and higher levels of expertise amongst their applicants," argued one education historian, and "such demand often seemed directly at odds with what Peabody and other boarding school leaders were trying to accomplish."⁸⁴

Although Lowell opposed reinstating many of the old-time college policies that Peabody strongly supported, he was nonetheless cognizant that some of Eliot's reforms tended to adversely effect the social cohesion of the Cambridge campus.⁸⁵

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 260-261.

⁸⁵Wagoner, "Moral Education in Retrospect," 12.

While in due time Peabody reluctantly realized that Harvard's secular drift was perhaps inevitable, he still felt strongly that the president's most important job involved instilling a sense of religious values and commitment within the institution. "To me the greatest interest in the world is the development of the lives of young men," Peabody wrote to Lowell, adding, "I feel confident that the reforms, social, moral, spiritual which are needed in college life can be effected by you in a comparatively few years if you are able to give yourself in a large measure to them. . . ." ⁸⁶ To Peabody, the power of personal example and genuine concern over students still carried tremendous influence. Writing to Lowell soon after he assumed the Harvard presidency, Peabody advised:

I hope very much that it may be your intention to devote a great deal of your personal attention to the undergraduates. It seems that they have been sadly neglected. President Eliot has been so busy with the development of the university that he has found no opportunity to get into touch with the students. Indeed, his theory has been, I believe, that the students are well able to take care of themselves and that the tone at Harvard is pretty satisfactory. ⁸⁷

Despite the reservations Lowell and Peabody had about the extent to which Eliot's educational philosophy adversely impacted undergraduate life, it was ultimately Eliot and other university builders who profoundly influenced the direction and shape of the modern university. Their revolutionary ideas eventually paved the way for the professionalization of medicine, law and business and

⁸⁶Endicott Peabody to Lawrence Lowell, February 22, 1909.

⁸⁷Ibid..

higher standards of scholarship for other academic departments. In fact, to a certain degree, the Harvard Eliot helped create eventually became the prototype post-World War II research directed university. It was a transformation, however, that Peabody witnessed regretfully.

Conclusion

During the last four decades of the nineteenth century the Protestant moralist worldview of the many religious educators who held leadership positions in academic establishments was challenged by the anti-metaphysical and empirically based scientific methodology of such men as William James, John Dewey, and Edward Lee Thorndike. Asserting that there were no a priori truths, the provocative ideas of the scientific community were held in opposition to the moral absolutism of theological doctrine.⁸⁸

The objective, measurable, and empirical methods of science infiltrated almost every facet of higher education's academic environment and conservative and iconoclastic educators such as Peabody simply had little power to prevent the eventual complete overhaul of America's educational system. More significantly, the increasing respectability and authority of the rational, scientific expert provided university officials the opportunity to challenge directly the promotion of the virtues of mental and moral discipline on the one hand, and espouse the benefits of the scientific method on the other.

⁸⁸Purcell, The Crisis of Democratic Theory, 6.

Certainly not all Americans shared the moral and religious cynicism of the empiricists who believed that all knowledge must be experimentally verifiable. Peabody believed that the transition from the paternalistic college to the laissez faire university engendered a non-sectarian environment that prevented most higher education authorities from infusing students with religious and moral teaching. "I have no positive remedy to suggest for the renewing of the religious and moral life of [Harvard] college," a somber Peabody wrote Lowell, "except that of personal influence brought to bear upon it by the president. Things have come to such a pass that it is well worth the while of the head of the university to devote the greater part of his energy to this important department."⁸⁹

The goal of character development was certainly not, as Peabody had assumed, abandoned entirely. Nevertheless, many late nineteenth century university builders backed away from the many rules and regulations that had previously dominated antebellum college life. Eliot and many members of the Schools Examination Board, for instance, clearly acknowledged the merits of character building education, yet they objected to the paternalistic philosophy of clergymen such as Peabody whose moral and religious agendas often hindered the intellectual freedom of students. The competing educational visions of Peabody and Eliot bumped heads soon after Groton began to send its graduates to Harvard. It was, in a small sense, a confrontation for the soul of the American youth, and the

⁸⁹Endicott Peabody to A. Lawrence Lowell, February 26, 1909, Peabody MSS.

final outcome of the struggle influenced the future course of both higher education and American boarding schools.

Chapter Nine

The Impact of Progressive Education at Groton School: The Flexner Report of 1913

As Groton moved into its third decade as a flagship religious boarding school, in the eyes of many outsiders, Peabody's shadow over his school appeared to have lengthened considerably. This perception was, in part, based on the fact that Peabody had withstood often intense external and, at times, internal pressure to reconstruct his traditional character-building mission along more modern lines. In due time, however, the emergence of the modern university demanded a more broadly educated applicant and Peabody came to realize--albeit slowly and somewhat reluctantly--that Groton had to make some institutional adjustments in order to respond adequately to the rapidly changing world beyond its walls. Reflecting this theme of change, Peabody told his faculty in the first meeting of the 1906 school year:

It will be well for us during the coming year to give much thought to the development of a curriculum which shall retain the thoroughness of the old system, and yet at the same time give a reasonable opportunity for choice to those pupil's for whom it may become evident that variation from the regular choice is inevitable or greatly to be desired.¹

¹Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Faculty," September 17, 1906, Groton School Archives, Groton, MA., (Peabody MSS).

Peabody's enthusiasm for change, however, was not altogether of his own making. To a certain degree the push for variation in Groton's daily routine emanated from a few members of the school's board of trustees. It was the comments, suggestions and concerns of these individuals that were ultimately responsible for at least convincing Peabody that it might prove beneficial to reexamine the school's formal curriculum and perhaps reconceptualize its primary character-building mission as well. Bishop William Lawrence, for instance, an original trustee and life-long friend of Peabody's, reminded the Rector that in the eighteen years since Groton had been founded, the concern of parents over the intellectual development of their sons had increased significantly. Groton, affirmed the Bishop, must be sufficiently prepared to address the rising parental interest in academic rigor. "We have got to satisfy not only the parents that want [the moral character of] their sons taken care of," Lawrence wrote to Peabody in 1902, "but parents of intellectual ambition who want their boys taught in the best way."²

Peabody's general lack of attention to the academic side of Groton, at least in the minds of some Groton trustees, alumni, parents, and other school constituents, gradually evolved into a serious point of contention. In reality however, what appeared to be an inattention to strengthening academic standards on the part of the Rector, can in fact be attributed partially to his firmly established desire to improve the school's endowment--what headmasters commonly referred to as the "Almighty Wall." Seeking out new

²Bishop William Lawrence to Endicott Peabody, September 9, 1902, Peabody MSS.

sources of revenue in the midst of a deepening national economic depression often meant that Peabody had to leave Groton for prolonged periods.

Fortunately for Groton, Peabody's strong social connections coupled with his business acumen provided him the unique opportunity to secure a generous number of munificent donations. With the confidence that the size of Groton's endowment and quality of its physical plant rivaled, and in some cases even surpassed, the resources that many of America's finest colleges had accumulated, Peabody eventually turned his attention toward the intellectual improvement of his school. By 1910, the impulse of progressive education, the proliferation of the social sciences, and the rise of the modern American university all contributed in some respect to Peabody's growing sense that perhaps Groton's formal curriculum and his ideal of Romantic Christian nurture might be subjected to serious criticism in the coming years. "Our curriculum at Groton," Peabody wrote to a friend in 1909, "is, as you know, rather rigid [and] to critics it probably seems old-fashioned." I suppose that sometime we shall have to have an overhauling of the courses [and mission]," Peabody claimed, "but we are not ready for this at present."³

To Peabody, the idea of modernity and the notion of change were anathema to his specific mission of Christian nurture. He certainly did not endorse the degree or type of comprehensive changes that many members of the School's Examination Board had

³Endicott Peabody to Mr. Osborn, October 15, 1909, Peabody MSS.

strongly recommended in 1893. Nevertheless, since the time of that report, the outside pressures for change and reform at Groton had steadily gained momentum. Moreover, the advent of American Progressivism created fertile soil for new educational ideas and institutions to take root. In due time, these phenomena and their offshoots altered the character of the American educational landscape.

In The Transformation of the School, Lawrence Cremin maintained that progressive education was a pervasive movement whose leaders and ideas directly challenged the traditional academic and character building emphasis of many secondary schools. Indeed, by the beginning of the First World War, progressive education had made significant inroads into mainstream American education in two important respects. First, it disabused many of the conventional notions that education consisted only of those exercises which enhanced a student's mental discipline, and second, the leaders of this new crusade contended that if American democracy were to survive, then the school must be organized on the principles of a social community.⁴

In marked contrast to Peabody's paternalistic theory of education that emphasized the accumulation of knowledge through such restrictive methods as drill, recitation, and "manly" character building, many progressives held that the aim of "new" education was two-fold. On the one hand its philosophy afforded students the intellectual and curricular freedom to extend their parameters of

⁴Lawrence Cremin, The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education 1876-1957, (New York, 1961), 89.

knowledge independently. At the same time, most progressive theories extolled activities that encouraged students to solve their problems collectively.

The architect of this grand scheme was the teacher; an individual who had graduated from a normal school or university social science department armed with the latest scientifically tested pedagogical theories. The teacher would function, according to the progressives, as both an artist and professional. Instead of listening to recitations and drilling students incessantly, these new pedagogical experts aimed to create an ideal learning environment by tailoring their instruction to fit the experiences of each student.

While the progressive impulse unmistakably altered the direction of public secondary education, to what extent did various strands of this movement infiltrate into, or by contrast, remain segregated from, Groton's ethos.⁵ The contents of the Flexner Report (1913) and Peabody's reaction to its ideas and suggestions shed some light on this question. Moreover, although such an analysis certainly adds depth and perspective to our understanding of Peabody's mission for Groton, it also provides an excellent framework to discuss the overall impact of progressive education at boarding schools in general.

The Progressive Impulse

⁵Lawrence Cremin claimed that the Progressive impulse in education began to emerge as early as 1876 and had lost its momentum by 1957. This chapter focuses on Progressive education from 1876 to the mid 1920's. For a more detailed description of the origin and decline of Progressivism in American education, see Ibid.

Since historians have often defined progressive education in elusive terms, it is not at all unusual to discover that the historiography of American boarding schools has, but for a few notable exceptions, typically ignored the impact of this movement.⁶ Historian Lawrence Cremin, for instance, claimed that a consensus definition of progressive education does not exist because it "meant different things to different people, and these differences were only compounded by the remarkable diversity of American education."⁷ Despite the complications associated with the lack of a precise definition of progressive education, most historians have agreed that pedagogical progressives challenged the prevailing assumptions embedded in late-nineteenth century educational theory and practice on two important fronts.

The harder side of this educational crusade consisted of the "administrative" and "scientific" progressives who aspired to reform public education through human engineering. Frederick W. Taylor's idea of scientific management, for example, was gradually implemented into an American public school system that political ward bosses and poorly trained personnel; had, for the most part,

⁶Two works that explore how progressive ideals impacted boarding schools are, James McLachlan's American Boarding Schools, A Historical Study, (New York 1970), and The Putney School, =

⁷Ibid., x. Cremin held that Progressive education was an important outgrowth of the social and political Progressive movement. Both movements attempted to improve the quality of life of all American citizens: "In the minds of Progressive this meant several things. First, it meant broadening the program and function of the school to include direct concern for health, vocation, and the quality of family and community life. Second, it meant applying in the classroom the pedagogical principles derived from a new scientific research in psychology and the social science. Third it meant tailing instruction more and more to the different kinds and classes of children who were being brought within the purview of the school." see Ibid., ix.

solely mismanaged. As America evolved into a more metropolitan, ethnically, and economically diverse society, the Progressives viewed the public school as the primary institution to advance the political and social values they believed were necessary to maintain harmony in a democratic nation.

Public education, to many progressive educators, represented a panacea that could potentially eradicate, or at least mitigate the cultural, social, and economic disparities prevalent in an age of rapidly expanding resources and technology. If public schools failed to produce productive and civic minded individuals, progressives insisted, America's great democratic experiment would end in despotism. With a heightened sense of urgency, a cadre of university trained pedagogical experts contested the public school hegemony of the partisan hacks who hired and fired teachers as political favors, and who ran their school systems in a corrupt and disorganized manner. Over time professionally prepared teachers and administrators slowly began to infiltrate the public schools and utilize their academic training by using mental testing and academic tracking to reorganize the school.

Unlike the rather harsh social engineering side of progressive education, a softer version of the movement grew out of the philosophical writings on education and democracy of John Dewey.⁸ Born and reared in the small New England town of Burlington,

⁸Dewey is perhaps the most influential, and yet, least understood American educational philosopher. His ideas were often misinterpreted and implemented in a manner that he felt was inappropriate. Understanding the major components of Progressive education, however, necessitates an brief overview of his philosophy.

Vermont, Dewey graduated from the University of Vermont in 1879. After teaching for three years, the young idealist entered Johns Hopkins University to pursue graduate work in philosophy and psychology. Upon receiving his doctorate in 1884, Dewey had a ten year stint at the University of Michigan (he spent one year, 1888-89, at the University of Minnesota), before becoming chair of the philosophy and pedagogy department at the newly created University of Chicago. Over the next ten years, he developed his theories on teacher training and education, and even erected his own experimental school, the University Laboratory School (1896), to test his philosophy empirically. By the time he secured a position at Columbia University, (1904), Dewey had written one of the most important educational manifestos of the progressive era, The School and Society (1899). This book along with his voluminous other writings about education, democracy, and philosophy had a profound impact on American education and, without a doubt, established him as the most influential American educational philosopher of the twentieth century.⁹

Although his writing was dense and ideas complex, by the end of the First World War, Dewey's prolific works had, in effect, broadened curricula, introduced new methods of instruction into classrooms, and radically altered the perception of what constituted

⁹Robert B. Westbrook, John Dewey and American Democracy, (Ithaca, New York, 1991), ix. Historians have yet to give Dewey a definitive intellectual biography. For a detailed analysis of his early career see Neil Coughlan, Young John Dewey: An Essay in American Intellectual History, (New York, 1972) and George Dykhuizen, The Life and Mind of John Dewey, (1973).

an educated person.¹⁰ Schools, Dewey argued, needed to organize themselves to reflect the interests of both children and the community. Claiming that children were active rather than passive learners, he asserted that knowledge must be contextualized if a child were to assimilate successfully into a more complex social and industrial society.

In marked opposition to Peabody who espoused that only traditional subjects should be studied in high school, Dewey contended that curricula must be expanded to include vocational, practical, and experimental education. For Dewey, teachers had to accommodate their lessons to meet the interests and experiences of each individual student. The complexities of the modern world, in Dewey's view, demanded that schools such as Groton expand their horizons and teach students viable and p

¹⁰In contrast to the idea of fitting the individual into society, Dewey argued the purpose of the school was to initiate social and political reform. The only way the great democracy would evolve into the great community was by teaching students lessons that reinforced "democratic" values. In Experience and Education, he rebuked the typical high school curriculum as being "an imposition from above and from outside." Furthermore, he continued, "it imposes adult standards, subject-matter, and methods upon those who are only growing slowly toward maturity." Dewey argued that a curriculum needed to be molded on the experience of the child. When children were introduced to a constellation of positive experiences, Dewey proclaimed, this would help them develop positive attitudes toward life long learning. Thus, a school that provided students with opportunities to be engaged in active learning experiences, had a better chance of achieving the ultimate goal of establishing a cooperative community. Dewey's "progressive" theory of learning emphasized incorporating the activities and processes children were most familiar with into the schools. He believed the continuity and interaction of experiences, not rote memorization of eclectic facts, played a pivotal role in the educational development of a child.

ractical skills that they could readily apply in the workplace. Dewey came to recognize that the continuity and interaction of experience played a pivotal role in the education development of any student. In short, Dewey's pragmatism led him to believe experimentation rather than strict adherence to fixed beliefs comprised the most fruitful educational approach.

From Peabody's point of view, the repudiation of traditional education and fixed beliefs represented yet another full-fledged assault on his mission to produce well-disciplined, classically trained, and distinctively pious Christian gentlemen. "[Boarding schools] are free," Peabody once wrote, "to disregard, in some measure at least, what is known as [progressive] education."¹¹ According to Peabody, authority was a fixated principle and obedience, conformity, and self-discipline were time-honored traits that had to be instilled and indeed nurtured in all students. "It should be an obedience," Peabody reminded his faculty, "of an intelligent nature, obedience [and moral discipline] obtained not by means of punishment but through an appeal to a boy's good sense and perception of right."

Peabody's rhetoric notwithstanding, to a large extent his philosophy relied almost exclusively upon the application of such coercive tactics as social conformity and alienation. From the student-controlled prefect system to Peabody's insistence that all students participate in football and other "manly" games, a Grotonian quickly realized--or was soon made to recognize--that the

¹¹Endicott Peabody, in The Education of the Modern Boy, (Boston, 1925), 113.

concepts of individual choice and freedom were not highly valued.

As Groton graduate Dean Acheson recalled:

The organization of [Groton School] . . . devoured my early freedom. School life was organized from the wakening bell to the policed silence which followed light-out. All was organized--eating, studying, games, so-called free time, the whole thing. One could understand and accept rendering unto Caesar the things which were Caesar's, the control of one's external life. The mind and spirit were not Caesar's; yet these were demanded too. And I, for one, found it necessary to erect defenses for the last citadel of spiritual freedom.¹²

Groton and Peabody's Response to the Progressive Impulse

The growing acceptance of Dewey's ideas among some of the country's most respected educators helped launch a pedagogical revolution that directly challenged many of Peabody's firmly entrenched beliefs, including his conviction that moral character could be developed through a rather rigid and traditional system. To Peabody, however, the pedagogical side of a schoolmaster's role was perhaps the least important duty in his daily interactions with students. The Rector's theory was simple: the members of the faculty in an upright and inspiring fashion were to lead by personal example and motivate all boys to be morally clean. Reminding the faculty of their responsibilities, Peabody said in 1910:

[A master] should count himself responsible for the health of every inmate of his care, and especially in the case of the younger boys, for their cleanliness. Masters should have pretty accurate knowledge of the work of every boy, and he should most of all hold himself

¹²Dean Acheson, Morning and Noon, (Boston, 1965), 24.

accountable for the moral and spiritual condition of the boys' collectively and individually.¹³

Contrary to Peabody's Victorian moralist outlook, Dewey and other progressives encouraged schools to adopt an educational philosophy that allowed students to become more personally responsible for their own intellectual development. Peabody's paternalistic attitude and heavy handed approach, most progressives came to believe, proved to be quite unhealthy and in some cases might even be harmful. One critic of Peabody's method noted as early as 1893:

The general effect of [Groton] is to make boys dependent upon impulses from without and thus to weaken their power of directing their own exercises. The atmosphere of the place, delightful, as it is to the visitor, suggests . . . the dangers of a hot-house development which might ill prepare many a pupil to meet the responsibilities of college and later life.¹⁴

Shortly after Groton celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, certain members of the school's board of trustees wanted to broaden the curriculum, heighten admission standards, and generally improve the school's intellectual tone. Specifically, Joseph Minot, George Rublee, and Ellery Sedgwick--all Groton graduates--had come to realize that to some degree Groton had failed to keep pace with the innovations that Dewey and other progressive educators advocated.¹⁵ These men, with the consent and support of other trustee members, proposed that the school "extend a sum of money to employ a

¹³Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Masters," September 1910, Peabody MSS.

¹⁴LeBaron R. Briggs, "English at Groton," Schools Examination Board 1893, 3, Harvard University Archives, (HUA).

¹⁵Frank D. Ashburn, Peabody of Groton: A Portrait, (Cambridge, MA, 1945), 137.

competent person to make a report regarding the educational standard of Groton School."¹⁶

This type of hands-on involvement from members of the Groton board reflected a departure from what had typically been a relatively laissez-faire management approach. Approximately twenty years earlier, for instance, the Rector in conjunction with Groton's trustees had employed the services of the Schools Examination Board to examine the fruits of his educational labor. More importantly, despite the fact that many of Peabody's theories received harsh criticism, the Rector essentially buried the report without much fanfare. Clearly, Peabody was in complete control.

Moving slowly into positions of school leadership, Groton graduates gradually assumed a more influential role in determining the direction of their alma mater. The impetus for a report prepared by Abraham Flexner in 1913 reflected a changing of the guard in Groton's leadership hierarchy. Prior to this report, Peabody had ultimately determined the direction of Groton School. Yet as Groton's constituency grew in size and influence, Peabody felt obligated to address their numerous concerns. From all accounts, while Peabody may have experienced some frustration with the more active involvement of trustee's, parents, and school supporters, he remained somewhat amenable to their suggestions. Peabody, in fact, endorsed his trustees' latest proposal to have the school examined in 1913 by proclaiming that "such a [report] will have the effect of

¹⁶Board of Trustee Minutes of Groton School, February 13, 1911, Peabody MSS.

stimulating us to renewed efforts, not only for our own reputation but also for the good name of the school."¹⁷

As was sometimes the case, the Rector's rhetoric seemed more forceful and extreme than his actions. In the specific case of the curriculum, for instance, Peabody's verbal declarations never quite paralleled his actions. Unwilling to abandon his Victorian moralist and traditional education principles, one can only suppose that Peabody routinely spoke about broadening the formal curriculum once every three or four years to mitigate the concern among trustees, parents, and some faculty. The views of Judge William Choate, founder and benefactor of The Choate School, paralleled Peabody's. Choate School, declared the judge in 1906, "is a school for training your minds in knowledge and the habit of study. It is a school for training your bodies for strength and perfect health. It is a school for developing your [moral] character."¹⁸

Peabody, as with many other boarding school leaders, came to fear that progressive ideas would threaten the sectarian influence of his school. Although Peabody's concerns about secularism were deeply rooted, with the assistance of Groton graduate and trustee George Rublee, the trustees convinced the Rector to retain the services of noted educator reformer, Abraham Flexner, for the specific purpose of analyzing Groton.

¹⁷Endicott Peabody "Speech to Groton Masters," September 1913, Peabody MSS.

¹⁸William Choate, "Judge Choate's Address," The Choate School Brief, VII (June, 1906), 7. The Choate School Archives, The Choate School, Wallingford, CT., Cf. McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 273. The Choate School was founded in 1896 and some of its most distinguished alumni include John F. Kennedy and Adlai Stevenson.

Born in Louisville, Kentucky, Flexner had entered Johns Hopkins in 1884 and upon graduating returned to Louisville and taught four years of high school. Frustrated with the low level of academic achievement among his students, Flexner decided to open a private tutoring school to prepare boys for college.¹⁹ Many of his graduates, in fact, matriculated at Harvard and performed so admirably that President Eliot convinced Flexner to describe and publish his methods in the Atlantic Monthly.²⁰

In 1905, Flexner entered Harvard graduate school to pursue a master's degree in psychology. Finishing his program and traveling to Europe one year later, Flexner enrolled at the University of Berlin to study comparative education. Reminiscent of Ticknor, Everett, Cogswell, and Bancroft, Flexner quickly discovered that American education lacked the intellectual vigor of western European secondary schools and colleges.

Deeply impressed with the analytical quality of Flexner's work, Henry S. Pritchett, head of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, recruited him to do a comprehensive study on the status of North American medical education. Spending two years meticulously researching every medical school in both America and Canada, Flexner released his report in 1910. The contents of the report were not flattering. Flexner strongly

¹⁹Michael R. Harris, "Abraham Flexner," Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement Six 1956-1960 (New York, 1960), 207-209.

²⁰Ibid.

recommended that 120 of the 155 schools be closed due to the poor quality of teaching and facilities at these institutions.²¹

The thoroughness of his investigation coupled with his previous assessments on American education earned him the reputation as one of America's most promising and well-respected educational reformers. Fresh from his medical school muckraking endeavors, John D. Rockefeller Jr. invited Flexner to join the prestigious General Board of Education. Shortly thereafter, George Rublee contacted Flexner and asked him to spend some time examining the educational curriculum and philosophy of Groton School. In Rublee's eyes, no man was better suited to tackle such a rigorous task.

To Flexner, the opportunity to examine an exclusive boarding school was rare and he accepted the assignment with a certain degree of excitement. Within months of the initial invitation, Flexner traveled to Groton and spent several days visiting classrooms, reading student assignments, examining faculty lesson plans, interviewing students, and investigating with his customary thoroughness the non-academic side of the school. Flexner summarized his views in a sixteen page report, including one page dedicated solely to his recommendations, and sent a copy to George Rublee on February 13, 1913. Similar to the Schools Examination Board of 1893, Flexner divided his study into three parts: 1. an examination of the curriculum; 2. an analysis on the quality of teaching; 3. a critique of the quality of students.

²¹Ibid., 208.

Realizing that his brief stay precluded him from making a series of comprehensive recommendations, Flexner cautiously approached his assignment from the perspective of "a total outsider." Not completely familiar with the history or traditions of Groton School, Flexner simplified his task by setting two objectives for his visit. First, he wanted to identify "the defects of the school" and second, he proposed to "suggest such measures as would tend to remedy them."²²

Intellectual Tone of Groton

It is quite revealing to note that what Flexner witnessed within Groton's walls was almost an exact replica of what the School Examination Board had seen two decades earlier. To a certain degree at least, Peabody's methods and approach, despite the advent of many pedagogical advancements, had remained essentially unchanged. As had the previous Harvard investigators, Flexner viewed many of Groton's traditions and methods as antiquated and repressive. Most teachers, according to Flexner, used mechanized and rigid lock-step routines in their classrooms. The lack of deviation in Groton's daily routine, asserted Flexner, produced dull and underdeveloped boys. "Monotony," Flexner wrote, "is bad for the capable boy because it leaves unawakened so many sides of his mental make-up."²³ And from what he discovered when he talked to the boys, there were many students walking around campus in a proverbial intellectual slumber.

²²Abraham Flexner, "The Flexner Report," February 13, 1913, (The Flexner Report), Peabody MSS.

²³Ibid., 5.

To a certain extent, the inflexibility of Groton's curriculum and the soporific classroom atmosphere were due to Peabody's long-standing conviction that all students had to devour the classics. To Peabody, a healthy portion of Latin and Greek should be on each student's intellectual plate and he remained rather skeptical that either the modern languages or applied sciences provided enough intellectual rigor to enhance a student's mental discipline. "I do believe," Peabody once wrote to a Harvard professor who had been critical of his school's classical curriculum, "that a boy is able to learn all the other languages more easily when he has had a thorough initiation into the language ideas through Latin Grammar and translation."²⁴

Flexner disagreed. "Consider now the wide range of a growing boy's interests and energies," Flexner urged Peabody, "how adequately are they tapped by or represented in a curriculum made up of the [Classics]."²⁵ "Every effort," contended Flexner, "should be made to vary the curriculum," and if Peabody simply reduced the requirement of taking Greek and Latin by just one year, "the school would move less mechanically."²⁶ In the case of the Classics department--an area that Peabody felt Groton faculty excelled greatly--Flexner observed that most classes were "infrequently good." History, English, and modern languages fared much worse. In all these classes, noted Flexner, the quality of instruction "tended to

²⁴Endicott Peabody to John Q. Hart, February 25, 1909, Peabody MSS.

²⁵Flexner, "The Flexner Report," 4, Peabody MSS.

²⁶Ibid., 7.

be poor," and in most instances the lessons bordered incompetence.²⁷

The most egregious offenders surfaced in the Modern Language department. When Hugo Schilling visited the school to analyze this department twenty years earlier, he found the class work consisted "solely in the monotonous routine of reciting the prepared lesson."²⁸ Since Shilling's visit, if Flexner can be trusted, Peabody had done little to ameliorate the intellectual livelihood of this department. To Flexner, most classes in both French and German were conducted in an unprofessional and anti-intellectual manner.²⁹ "Most of the instruction in German and French," Flexner noted was "split up among several teachers, of whom only one has fairly fluent mastery of the language that he teaches."³⁰ During French classes, for instance, Flexner commented sadly that "the boys did not even pronounce the French text."³¹

From Flexner's point of view, the study of modern languages, if done in a thoroughly professional manner, was a viable intellectual activity and he strongly urged Peabody to hire French and German instructors who had not only command of the language but "who [could] accomplish something concrete and practical. . . ."³² Several years after he examined Groton, Flexner still remained an outspoken critic of classical education: "For nothing is commoner in the

²⁷Ibid., 8.

²⁸Hugo K. Schilling, "Modern Languages at Groton," School Examination Board, 10, HUA.

²⁹Flexner, "The Flexner Report," 3, Peabody MSS.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., 9.

³²Ibid.

teaching of ancient languages and formal mathematics than drilling, in arbitrary signs by means of which pupils determine mechanically what they should do, without intelligent insight into what they are doing."³³

Peabody, however, simply disagreed with Flexner's assessment of the classics. Defending the ancient texts, Peabody wrote to a colleague in 1909: "I am afraid that you will write me down a heretic, when I say that I do not care to assign any more hours than we now have for the studies of French and German." If Groton were to place a greater emphasis on modern languages, Peabody continued, "we [would] be leaving out the [classics] which seem to me . . . [more] important."³⁴ Many boarding school educators, in fact, sided with Peabody and viewed the upsurge of support for the science of pedagogy and its assault on the classics with deep suspicion. As boarding school founder and headmaster Horace Dutton Taft expressed in 1916:

The Headmaster's meeting was quite interesting this year. A representative of the Teacher's College (Columbia) bobbed up again, and we had more of that, modern [progressive] stuff, which seems to be spreading all over the country. . . . Why has this soft and mushy sediment swept all institutions off their feet in this country? . . . ³⁵

³³Abraham Flexner, A Modern School, (The General Education Board, New York, 1916), 16.

³⁴Endicott Peabody to Stephen R. Cabot, March 8, 1909, Peabody MSS. Cabot was headmaster of St. George's School located in Newport, Rhode Island. Cabot wrote to Peabody in regards to how many recitations hours Groton required of its students in the department of modern languages.

³⁵Horace Dutton Taft to Thacher February 28, 1916. The Taft School Archives, The Taft School, Watertown CT.

While Peabody's disagreement with Flexner over the relevance of modern languages may appear to have been minor, it plainly illustrates one of Peabody's most notable character flaws: his rather unyielding and inflexible disposition. In effect, Peabody's methods, to Flexner at least, tended to inhibit students' intellectual curiosity. Yet Peabody felt strongly committed to providing an appropriate environment to nurture Christian character, and if the conversion of young boys into Christian gentlemen meant that "modern" subjects were purposefully omitted from the formal curriculum, the Rector made such a decision swiftly and without remorse.

Peabody's philosophy, in Flexner's view, often stymied a boy's capacity to pursue his own intellectual interests and generally prevented him from discovering his potential to excel in a variety of areas. Similar to Dewey's educational philosophy, Flexner argued:

Life is organized on the basis of capacities and men are valued and designated by what they can do. I hold that it is the function of the secondary school to offer variety of occupation to the boy in order to exploit his full abilities.³⁶

Peabody's insistence on the need for constant supervision and his strict adherence to high moral standards of behavior, observed Flexner, generally resulted in the "intellectual as well as moral damage" of a student's mind.³⁷ Commenting on how the typical day at Groton did more to constrain a student rather than foster his independence, Flexner wrote:

³⁶Flexner, "The Flexner Report," 5, Peabody MSS.

³⁷Ibid., 13-14.

His life is so minutely regulated that he is spared almost all decisions, with the result that the conscientiousness and forethought of the masters are too generally substituted for his own. Increased responsibility for himself ought to be introduced from the very beginning. These boys are destined for the most part to lead lives in which their own wills are going to play unusually large parts. Individual resolution can only be developed by exercise from a comparatively early age.³⁸

Expressing views that paralleled many of Eliot's earlier criticisms of Peabody, Flexner was essentially bothered by what he considered as an unhealthy absence of individual choice and personal liberty at Groton.

To foster more opportunities for permitting students to realize their intellectual potential, Flexner suggested that Groton "cease to emphasize preparation for college," and instead introduce "manual training and science throughout" the curriculum.³⁹ "The main object of this addition," maintained Flexner, "must be to give the boy something that is interesting, helpful, and stimulating, something that appeals to his interests and capacities that the present curriculum leaves untouched."⁴⁰

Flexner's recommendation represented a philosophical departure from the more academically oriented suggestions of the Schools Examination Board. Reflecting the ideals of the Progressive education movement, the merits of vocational and practical training had steadily gained wider acceptance in pedagogical circles. Monotonous and irrelevant subject material not only fettered a

³⁸Ibid., 13.

³⁹Ibid., 16.

⁴⁰Ibid., 7.

student's mind, proclaimed many progressives, but rendered him useless once he graduated from school and entered a more socially and occupationally diverse society.

Flexner acknowledged that Groton's formal relationships--in terms of university admission practices--with Harvard and Yale accounted for Peabody's strong instance on a rigid and overwhelming traditional curriculum. In order to gain acceptance to these institutions, most Groton students had to prepare assiduously for a series of special entrance examinations. In fact, most secondary schools that sent a majority of their students to highly selective colleges routinely constructed their curricula entirely around the admission exams. Groton, indeed, was no exception as Flexner noted that "on its intellectual side the course of study is made up of the entrance requirements of Yale and Harvard."⁴¹

Nevertheless, the specific aim of preparing students to pass special exams, in Flexner's opinion, was myopic and hindered the potential of each student to realize his own intellectual calling. As Flexner argued:

To a curriculum thus limited there are very serious objections. In the first place, it makes of going to college, both for the teachers and for the boys, an end instead of an incident. From the standpoint of actual performance, the mastery of the maximum college entrance requirement is a poor result of six years' schooling; and the success of a school as measured by results thus attained proves, not that the school is a good one, but that the object is an easy one.⁴²

⁴¹Ibid., 3.

⁴²Ibid.

Flexner had concluded that the primary objective of all the classes was to teach students how to pass the entrance exams. This specific objective encouraged teachers to employ excessive drill and recitation activities. These methods and other processes designed to augment an individual's mental training were viewed by most progressive educators, including Flexner, as deficient and altogether harmful in nurturing a child's intellectual development. Commenting on the disadvantages of mental discipline years after he visited Groton, Flexner wrote:

A man educated in a modern sense will forego the somewhat doubtful mental discipline received from formal studies; Instead, his education will be obtained from studies that serve real purposes. Its content, spirit and aim will be realistic and genuine, not formal or traditional. Thus the man education in the modern sense will be trained to know, to care about and to understand the world he lives in, both the physical world and the social world.⁴³

Although throughout his tenure the Rector insisted that Groton was not a college preparatory school, the fact remains that only 23 of the school's first 238 graduates chose not to enter college.⁴⁴ And yet, Flexner argued, even if Peabody's aim was to prepare each boy for the active work of life, "the affective awaking and disciplining of his total intellectual capacity," required the expansion and variation in his the course of study.⁴⁵ Flexner asserted that Peabody needed to

⁴³Flexner, A Modern School, 8.

⁴⁴Groton School Address and Record Book 1992, (Privately printed, Groton Board of Trustees, 1992), 68-70. Between 1884 and 1900, 238 students graduated from Groton, Peabody MSS.

⁴⁵Flexner, "The Flexner Report," 7, Peabody MSS.

broaden the scope of Groton's mission and curriculum to include those activities and courses which were not offered on college campuses:

The purpose of the school ought to be more broadly conceived. It should take account, first, of the prolonged period during which its students remain, second, of the capacity of individual boys, and finally, of their environment and opportunities for development and usefulness. Groton School, in complete control of their education during the six years of greatest mental expansion, must seek to explore their capabilities and, if it be possible, to attach them to serious aesthetic, intellectual, or civic interest, such as may steady them later in life and ensure a productive utilization of their powers.⁴⁶

The Quality of the Faculty

Realizing that Groton had to be accommodating toward colleges and universities, Flexner remained convinced that Groton could still compensate for the narrowness of their curriculum by simply enhancing the quality of teaching among the faculty. More than any other aspect of Groton School, the failure of its faculty to keep abreast of the latest pedagogical innovations profoundly disturbed Flexner. "The school has at present a staff of some twenty masters, quite disorganized," Flexner remarked, and "unless I misjudged the situation that particular subjects assigned are often matters of convenience rather than of highly specialized fitness."⁴⁷ Moreover, as a whole, this group of residential educators was professionally untrained and intellectually deficient. "Men teach in various departments, in some which their incapacity is quite striking," noted

⁴⁶Ibid., 4.

⁴⁷Ibid., 8.

Flexner, and even "young men fresh from college are set to teach this or that subject without adequate guidance or supervision."⁴⁸ Even when faculty members had a command of their subject, their classroom performances rarely captured the imagination and interest of students.⁴⁹ Most distressing to Flexner was the prevailing attitude among Groton's faculty that the advances in education and psychology were to be widely ignored.

One Groton historian attributed the absence of pedagogical advances within the school to the fact that being a capable teacher was only a minor part of the faculty's role. "There are admirable college teachers who would be rank failure as schoolmasters," Ashburn wrote about the arduous daily routine of Groton faculty. Furthermore, he continued, "one may say this without qualification, that a man who is to teach school well must love boys and love character and the things that are right."⁵⁰ Peabody and most other Groton masters came to believe that the scientifically based methods that progressive educators upheld as the new gospel failed to recognize that, above all, the moral and spiritual qualities of a teacher were preeminent.

Despite this tension between paternalistic and progressive educators, Flexner noted that Groton could significantly improve the quality of scholarship if members of different academic departments simply coordinated their assignments with one another. Several times he had noticed that even members of the same

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid., 9-10.

⁵⁰Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 138.

department did not communicate their goals and objectives to each other. The end result was a completely disorganized teaching staff and curriculum. "There is no co-operation, no unifying design, except in the external form of the college entrance standard," Flexner wrote. "The school needs professional inspiration and ambition. The absence of educational books and periodicals is striking and significant. Few of the instructors belong to the teaching organizations devoted to the study of their subjects; few of them participate in the development of their own specialties."⁵¹

Flexner strongly recommended that Peabody hire future instructors who were considered "experts" in their fields and who could introduce new pedagogical techniques into Groton's fossilized system. The problem with Groton, and most other boarding schools, Flexner claimed, was that they selected faculty based on their character rather than their intellectual and pedagogical competence. This hiring procedure created a myriad of problems for those schools looking to improve their intellectual tone:

Consider for a moment a typical case. A boy graduates at a college preparatory school of precisely this type, where his instruction has been mainly mechanical. He spends four years at Harvard or Yale, where the teaching is in the main extremely feeble, avoiding for the most part the courses in education which might awaken in his mind some curiosity as to educational technique and purpose; he is appointed to a position to teach, say, English at Groton and finds that he is loaded with classes in mathematics and German beside; he is left to his own resources in all subjects alike; he has his time filled with routine, correcting papers, no end of marking, athletics,

⁵¹Flexner, "The Flexner Report," 11, Peabody MSS.

dormitory work, and so on. How can he possibly develop on the side of either technical skill or general intellectual power? And if the teacher stagnates, what is ultimately the fate of his pupils?⁵²

To avoid the deleterious ramifications of this scenario, Flexner encouraged Peabody to allow department heads to select the teaching staff and suggested that a new crop of faculty might be plucked from university social science departments. As for those teachers currently at the school, Flexner remarked that Peabody's primary objective should involve developing within his faculty "an acute and active interest in teaching as an art and profession."⁵³ This could only be accomplished, Flexner argued, if the faculty were allowed more time for professional development. Therefore, he urged Peabody to reduce the number of minute details each master was assigned. "The masters are now occupied with routine details that consume well-nigh every available moment from morning till late evening," Flexner wrote.⁵⁴ If Groton's intellectual tone was ever to rise above mediocrity, then Flexner argued, the typical schoolmaster's role had to be altered radically.

Flexner felt that Peabody should allow his masters the opportunity to seek the professional assistance of pedagogical experts outside the Groton community. Indeed, he was convinced that such an exchange would prove quite profitable to all Groton teachers. "I suggest that arrangement be made to enable at least departmental head to visit other schools in the course of the school year to see at work men who are attacking pedagogical problems

⁵²Ibid., 12.

⁵³Ibid., 13.

⁵⁴Ibid., 12.

form fresh points of view," Flexner advised.⁵⁵ Moreover, Groton teachers had to become more familiar with the numerous pedagogical innovations that were being developed at various institutions of higher education. This could be easily accomplished, Flexner remarked, by inviting members of the psychology and pedagogy departments to conduct seminars at Groton. He even encouraged the Rector to initiate an "in-house" pedagogical club to discuss the latest advances in the teaching profession:

The entire [Groton] staff should also organize as a pedagogical seminary meeting, say twice monthly for discussion of current educational literature and papers prepared by the members. The head of the seminary should be annually chosen by the members and should be responsible for the program. Outsiders should be brought to Groton from time to time to participate, an easy task with Harvard, Clark, and Yale universities so close.⁵⁶

Peabody Maintains his Vision

Both Flexner and the School Examination Board members agreed that Groton's system lacked substantial intellectual rigor and had encouraged Peabody to adopt policies that promoted individual freedom rather than group conformity. Despite the somewhat critical nature of these two documents, Peabody remained committed to instilling a sense of moral and spiritual values within his students by virtue of his own system. Commenting on Flexner's assessment of Groton, one master noted: "[Flexner] made a careful report, the gist

⁵⁵Ibid., 11.

⁵⁶Ibid.

of which was to the effect that too little attention was paid to the practical training of the hand and eye and rather too much attention to languages. Moreover, he criticized the fact that the dull boy had little encouragement in the pursuit of subjects in which he might not be dull."⁵⁷

Most outside visitors, including Flexner and those from Harvard, recognized that the sheer force of Peabody's personality allowed his school to accomplish its mission in a manner that other institutions could never duplicate successfully. Even his most ardent critics recognized that he possessed a special inclination to positively influence the moral and spiritual development of his boys:

Peabody takes a personal interest in every one of his pupils and treats them with the greatest kindness and consideration; and it is no exaggeration to say that they all love and admire him. Teachers and pupils live together like members in one large family and their relations to each other are characterized by mutual respect and confidence and at the same time by a total absence of stiffness and constraint. The boys seem to enjoy the company of the instructors as much as that of their fellows, and they seek it at home, on their walks and even in their sports which by the active participation of most of the teachers, including [Peabody] himself, acquire a high tone not frequently met with elsewhere.⁵⁸

In spite of his rhetoric to the contrary, Peabody's view on how to educate a boy simply remained unaltered during the early part of

⁵⁷William Amory Gardner, Groton Myths and Memories, (Groton, MA., 1928). 77-78, Peabody MSS.

⁵⁸Hugh Schilling, "Modern Languages at Groton," Schools Examination Board, 1893, HUA. Of the six examiners who visited the school during the making of this report, Schilling was Peabody's strongest critic.

the progressive education movement. While he might have read with interest those weaknesses which others claimed were inherit in his educational approach, Peabody rarely deviated from the notion that his primary objective was the development of manly Christian character. In order to achieve this aim, Peabody believed the discipline, activities, and lessons which emanated from his doctrine of "muscular Christianity" provided adolescents with the most supportive and morally appropriate educational environment.

Although the daily routine at Groton consisted of a military-like routine that may have stymied the individuality of most students, the school nonetheless contained certain actives, rules, and traditions that were quite progressive. The prefect system allowed members of the sixth form to virtually run the non-academic side of the school. Students wrote and printed their own newspaper, and while Dewey was promoting the need for schools to become more active within their communities, Grotonians had successfully established four Sunday Schools, worked in a variety of missionary societies, and had established a summer camp to provide financially disadvantaged urban youths with a summer vacation.

When it came to the latest in pedagogical innovations, however, the Rector remained highly suspicious of new teaching methods and the applied sciences. Shortly after he examined Groton, Flexner opened the Lincoln School (1917), a thoroughly progressive institution located in New York City.⁵⁹ Peabody and other boarding

⁵⁹For a brief description of what Cremin called the most influential progressive school in the history of American education, see his Transformation of the School, 280-290. For a more detailed account on the

school educators remained quite conservative and cautious about implementing the new teaching strategies and curriculum material that Flexner incorporated into his new school. "I take it for granted that you will have seen Dr. Abraham Flexner's Pamphlet on the modern school, or at least a summary of it as printed in the newspapers," an acquaintance of Peabody wrote him. "I imagine that it has aroused some emotions of dissent in your mind."⁶⁰ The reasons for Peabody's and other boarding school educators' reservations provide an excellent framework to discuss briefly the overall impact of progressive education in American boarding schools.

Expressing his grave doubts that Flexner's school was accomplishing anything substantial, Horace Taft, headmaster and founder of The Taft School, wrote Peabody:

The Lincoln School is whaling away with an exceptional set of highly paid experts. I am unable to judge what the results are. I hear violent opinions both ways, but I feel certain that methods that might produce good results with such exceptional teachers would be calamitous when used by ordinary teachers."⁶¹

Taft agreed with Peabody that the merits of progressive education had proved unworthy in enhancing the ultimate aim of their own institutions, namely the development of moral or spiritual character:

I agree with you that there is something in the new education idea. The trouble is that they have carried it so far that they have taken all the back-bone out of a boy's

origins of Lincoln School, see Flexner's autobiography entitled, I Remember, (New York, 1923).

⁶⁰John Lovit to Endicott Peabody, April 14, 1917, Peabody MSS.

⁶¹Horace Taft to Endicott Peabody, April 27, 1927, Peabody MSS.

[character] training. . . . The only thing that you have succeeded in getting into the minds of the half-million half-backed high school girls who are doing the teaching for the country is: make it interesting, and the only way in which they can possibly interpret it is, make it easy.⁶²

Progressive educators usually ignored the type of paternalistic moral and spiritual development Peabody desired. Moreover, boarding school educators, including Peabody, argued that the eclectic choice of subject material resulted in curricula that had no educational substance. "There is some danger in aiming at general ideas and neglecting specific facts in connection with Grammar, for insistence, and in fact with all our studies," Peabody remarked in response to suggestions to make his school's curriculum more inclusive.⁶³ Peabody and most other boarding school educators refrained from experimenting with progressive methods mainly because they believed that those educational strategies were feeble, ineffective and failed to foster manly character development.⁶⁴

Conclusion

Addressing the impact of progressive education at Groton, Peabody's biographer recalled: "Let it be said only that the word [Progressive] has been grievously misused and misappropriated by extremists, who have obscured sound and sensible doctrine with faddism. Groton is progressive in the sense that is steadily aiming for progress, steadily improving its technique and equipment, steadily

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Endicott Peabody, "Speech to Groton Masters," September 1931, Peabody MSS.

⁶⁴James McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, (New York, 1970), 282.

expanding its educational horizons."⁶⁵ While Ashburn's assessment of Groton educational development was not entirely correct, his view that mainstream progressive education had virtually little impact upon Groton's ethos was accurate.

Peabody was a man of strong convictions who remained convinced that most of the pedagogical innovations generated from research within the social sciences lacked religious values. He believed that vocational training, child-centered theories, and the applied sciences represented a dangerous departure from the moral and spiritual nurture that he maintained comprised the foundation of a Christian gentleman's education. Two decades after the Harvard Report was released, Peabody still opposed many of the reforms forward looking educators had suggested. Even many of Flexner's suggestions and recommendations would not fully be realized until after Peabody retired. For the most part, Peabody's system of education remained unchanged during his fifty-six year tenure despite the protests of parents, educational experts, and some faculty members. Summarizing Peabody's views of most pedagogical innovations, Ashburn remarked:

He was not only suspicious of nostrums and the untried; he definitely mistrusted short cuts which emphasized method more than duty. He didn't even advertise. He was well content to have other people experiment. If their experiments worked, he would use what had been proved good; but he wanted to proof first, and he stuck to sound simplicities.⁶⁶

⁶⁵Frank D. Ashburn, Fifty Years On: Groton School 1884-1934, (Privately Printed, New York, 1934), 97-98.

⁶⁶Ashburn, Peabody of Groton, 329.

Many Progressive Era educators and scholars armed with Ph.D.'s in education, psychology, philosophy, and sociology argued that the classics were of little value in modern society. These members of the new academic guild opposed Peabody's paternalistic philosophy and suppressive methods and suggested that his school concentrate less on developing character through physical, religious, and moral means, and broaden their curriculum, reduce the restrictions on student freedom, and strengthen the quality of the faculty. Indeed, Progressives believed that knowledge did not exist in a vacuum and they attempted to restructure education in a manner that allowed the child to have a more comprehensive understanding of his role in a democratic community.

In the final analysis, Peabody largely abstained from adjusting or re-defining his curriculum and method of paternalistic character building by maintaining that his school's primary aim, throughout his tenure, remained providing opportunities for both himself and his faculty to develop the "manly" character of the students:

We have from time to time dotted our curriculum with additional course which broaden the pupil's conception of modern life. But it is not the curriculum which characterizes Groton. It is not the physical plant, which though I think is to be adequate and not elaborate. Simplicity has always been the keynote. No, those are not the things that have made Groton. It is not a perfect institution but whatever it is can be resolved to two elements--the masters and the boys. That relationship, I think, tells the whole story.⁶⁷

⁶⁷Carl Warton, "The Masters and the Boys Have Made Groton School," Boston Herald Sunday March 5, 1939, Peabody MSS.

Conclusion

Endicott Peabody and Groton School in Retrospect

By apprising them of the past, will enable them to judge the future.
Thomas Jefferson, (1784)

Rather than constantly reinventing the wheel, educators could learn a great deal from the study of the history of education.
Susan Semel, (1994)

On a crisp Spring morning in 1943, Endicott Peabody, then eighty-five, reminisced about life at Groton with his close-personal friend, staunch ally, and biographer, Frank Ashburn. During the course of their conversation, Ashburn conveyed his deep admiration for Peabody's life-long accomplishments as an educator. Modestly brushing aside such praise, Peabody told his friend that:

I have been a most fortunate man. The things for which people are kind enough to give me credit were largely not my doing and they were very little and I have to thank my wife, my friends, the trustees, the masters, and the boys. They have forgot the failures and the mistakes. But it has been fun and most interesting. I have been a most fortunate man.¹

Several months after this particular conversation, Peabody witnessed proudly the sixtieth opening day of Groton School. It was also to be his last. On November 17, 1944, shortly after Peabody had finished eating breakfast with one of his weekly house guests, he gave his friend a quick tour of Groton and then proceeded to drive her to the railroad station in nearby Ayer. Engaging in small talk, Peabody exclaimed fondly that "Franklin Roosevelt is a very religious

¹Endicott Peabody to Frank Ashburn, in Frank D. Ashburn, Peabody of Groton: A Portrait, (Cambridge, 1940), 418-419.

man." These proved to be his final words as he gingerly steered the car to the side of the road, shut off the ignition, closed his eyes, and slowly fell forward until his face gently met the steering wheel. The mighty "muscular Christian," once seemingly indestructible, had abruptly, yet peacefully, died from a heart attack.

More than fifty years have passed since Peabody's death. Although the fundamental tenets of Peabody's educational philosophy are certainly not beyond reproach, it is interesting to note that the same questions Peabody raised over a century ago in regards to moral and spiritual education are prevalent in the pedagogical discourse of contemporary society. Wandering into almost any bookstore today, or perusing the "New York Times Best Seller List," one quickly discovers that books pertaining to morality, virtue, and character have achieved widespread popularity.

Two notable examples are William J. Bennett's Book of Moral Virtues: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories and James Q. Wilson's, The Moral Sense. Bennett, former Secretary of Education and current codirector of Empower America, has received many accolades for his latest work. Syndicated columnist, George Will, hailed Wilson's book as the "intellectual event of the year [1993]." The social breakdown of American society--proliferation of violent crime, illegitimacy, family dissolution, and substance abuse--argue Bennett and Wilson--have resulted in what both men perceive as an absence of moral values and standards in schools and family households.²

²See, for example, James Q. Wilson, The Moral Sense (New York, 1993), and William J. Bennett, The Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories, (New York, 1993). Bennett, for instance, claims that the crucial issue that educators at all levels should address is: "How does education form character and help

Families aside, how schools can improve the morality of society in general and students in particular, remains a much debated, and as of yet, unresolved issue.

To what extent, then, is it even relevant for contemporary educators to draw upon Peabody's life experiences? Analyzing certain aspects of Peabody's life, including the rise of Groton School, provides unique insight into the complexities of leadership and change that occur within educational institutions. Moreover, if there exists an overarching theme put forth in this dissertation, it might be argued that Groton's evolution underscores the importance of education institutions and their leaders responding in creative and engaging ways to the diverse social, cultural, and intellectual changes that constantly reshape and redefine our society.

In the particular case of Groton School, Peabody's firm resolve that others match his intense level of enthusiasm for traditional Christian viewpoints often stymied institutional discourse and routinely hindered student creativity and individuality. Unflinching in his approach to moral character development, Peabody in effect, tightly wrapped his rather narrow educational ideals around himself like a security blanket. One result was that over time Peabody had alienated himself and his school from the modern world. As both Charles W. Eliot and Abraham Flexner noted, Groton's major weakness was the faculty's inability to provide students with those

students achieve moral literacy?" Agreeing in premise with Bennett, child psychiatrist and Harvard professor, Dr. Robert Coles, has asserted that education today needs to "do more than pay lip service to the word character."

intellectual skills and social experiences that were required to communicate effectively in a more complex and pluralistic society.

On the one hand, to tenaciously hold onto and steadfastly defend viewpoints and values that outside forces are constantly debunking and deconstructing is admirable. In a contemporary era when many leaders seem overtly concerned and consumed by pandering to the desires of others, it might be argued that Peabody's passionate resolve to never compromise on moral and spiritual matters serves as an appropriate leadership model. At the same time, however, his essentialist and uncompromising disposition proved to be his Achilles' heel.

With an uncanny ability to resist institutional change, Peabody in a sense exercised a tremendous advantage over his peers. As founder and headmaster of Groton for fifty-six years, Peabody embodied the school. Judged from contemporary standards where the average tenure for a head of school is less than a decade, Peabody wielded unprecedented power and influence.

The trustees, alumni, parents and students rarely, if ever, aggressively challenged his authority and policy decisions. Consequently, his iron-grip over the school appeared to strengthen with each passing day. It is not surprising, then, that Peabody was effectively able to bury the Harvard Report of 1893 and later pronounce Flexner's findings as rather inconsequential to Groton's overall mission. Clearly, Peabody was in complete control. Yet his inability to respond positively to constructive criticism or potential changes eventually became a liability.

On issues relating to educational development, for instance, Peabody felt that he held the superior moral and ethical high ground. And yet in the eyes of many observers, his overly moralistic message, delivered in a simplistic, right-against-wrong fashion, served to alienate individuals who had no formal ties to Groton School.³ In other words, the impact of his message was rather limited in scope. His ideas mostly appealed to supporters of religiously affiliated boarding schools. While others may have expressed an interest in his "muscular Christian" philosophy, the practicalities of implementing his system within other educational environments proved limiting.

Groton School survived, and more accurately thrived, in its nascent stages because Peabody assumed the role of the self-appointed moral guardian of the white, Northern, bourgeoisie class. His didactic methods helped assuage the fears of worried parents who increasingly recognized the need to monitor and control the recreational and educational environments of their children. Peabody's primary aim involved finely tuning a young boy's moral gyroscope. By holding the attainment of "manly" and "moral"

³Peabody, in typical good versus evil, us-versus-them rhetoric, complained in 1940 that, "old morals, old books, old furniture, [and] old ideals . . . [have been] cast aside. Look at modern furniture. Its lines show the unrest of the world. Compare the metal-framed chairs with the comfortably upholstered ones of the previous generation. The furniture reveals the passing of the home spirit--another example of the change that has taken place [in our society]." Peabody to Groton Faculty, September 1939, Peabody MSS. On another occasion he stated flatly that the spiritual and moral demise of this nation may be rooted in many Americans new found enthusiasm for jazz. "Moral decline," Peabody lamented, "is the outcome perhaps of jazz. Jazz in books, in art, in music, in the drama. Jazz in life: the climax of restless and desire for new excitement. It is one thing which sends many of the society people to private asylums or institutions for the care of people who are afflicted with nervous disease." Peabody to Groton Faculty, November 1940, Peabody MSS.

character as an ideal, Peabody was striving to improve the overall "character" of youths through physical and spiritual nurture. As historian Daniel Walker Howe has argued:

The Victorians themselves called the quality they sought to create "character." This was not a set of responses but an intangible strength of purpose, combining self-reliance, self-discipline, and responsibility. Victorian educators sought to mold character through the carefully balanced development of human facilities. . . . The ideal [of character] was important . . . [and] it explains why such Victorian institutions as . . . the American [boarding] school devoted so much attention to character building discipline.⁴

To some extent, then, one of Groton's primary aims involved providing a sheltered and regulated environment to "preserve the innocence of childhood into a pure and responsible maturity."⁵ When faced with the decision to send their children to the bureaucratic public schools, or to the laissez-faire environment of the academies, some Protestant families who could afford Groton's high tuition chose to relinquish their children to the total institution.

As Baltzell, Levine, Mills and other scholars have suggested, it is important to examine the extent to which Peabody adopted and implemented policies designed to foster social exclusiveness. However, when our perspective is broadened beyond the issue of elitism to encompass the explanations as to why various constituents attempted to challenge and redefine the original mission and intent of Groton School, a more complex and revealing story emerges.

⁴Daniel Walker Howe, ed., Victorian Manliness, (Philadelphia, 1976), 25.

⁵McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 13.

Moreover, the richness of this narrative allows one to gain a better perspective and appreciation for the multitude of reasons why individuals such as Peabody were inspired to channel their energies into opening a boarding school.

Simply labeling Groton as undemocratic an "upper-class" status seminary does not further enhance our understanding of Peabody's unique educational contributions. Indeed, focusing almost exclusively on the "elitist" theme, historians have often failed to enlarge our perspective of institutions such as Groton. They have, for instance, either payed little attention to their existence or simply erroneously lumped all boarding schools into a single category. Yet the establishment and subsequential development of the Phillips Academy's (Andover and Exeter) have quite a different history than those of church affiliated boarding schools such as Flushing Institute, St. James College, St. Paul's School and Groton School.

Groton was, above all else, Peabody's raison d'etre. Both his life and the evolution of Groton were entwined together like the strands of a thick rope. In fact, to some degree, Groton to this day remains an institution whose threads are as tightly woven as they were during the Peabody years. To be sure, over the past five decades, the advent of coeducation, civil rights, and technology have altered significantly Groton's daily ethos. All things considered, however, in its original mission of enriching students' moral and spiritual lives Groton has not strayed far from its original roots.

For some, the constant of Peabody's time-honored ideal remains a comfortable arrangement. Others, however, appear more interested in weaning the school from its traditional roots and

redefining and reshaping its mission through a different set of ideas. Commenting on how change often pulls and tugs institutions in diverging directions, Larry Cuban exclaimed:

Reformers can create a new school and, over time, those new schools adapt to changing conditions, reforming what was initially created. To some, such changes are evidence of a loss; to other such changes are evidence of creative adaptability.⁶

To this day, that Peabody's vision hovers like a cloud over the school cannot be denied. Yet in the minds of many, it remains an unresolved issue as to whether the strength, wisdom, creativity and adaptability of his vision maintains a strong degree of relevance. Certainly, Peabody's romantic vision of infusing American higher and secondary education with sharply defined moral and spiritual values never achieved the wide-spread popularity that he longed for so passionately. Nonetheless, within the limited realm of the religiously affiliated boarding school world, his accomplishments remain impressive. In the final analysis, Peabody's Groton is the measure of calibration for boarding schools past, present, and future.

⁶Larry Cuban, Review of Susan Semel, The Dalton School History of Education Quarterly vol. 34 Fall 1994, 182.

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