

organization except the Ithaca Nursery School) all help to pay the way.

The building now standing solidly at the corner of Seneca and Cayuga Streets came into being only after hopes and dreams without limit – plus innumerable meetings, thousands of letters, and rummage and bake sales galore.

# Professions

Throughout history, a great number of women have thoroughly enjoyed woman's "traditional role" – that is, as mother, housekeeper and wife – and many, for good reason, choose that role today. But those women who wanted to explore other lifestyles without a family, or who simply had other interests in addition to their families, had to contend with strong outside disapproval. Such was the dilemma of women entering the professional world.

All of the following professions were originally "men only," and have since had to adjust accordingly.

## Teachers

Teaching was the first profession to open up to women, this transition occurring in the mid-1800s.<sup>1</sup> Soon it became the most acceptable job for a woman – perhaps because it was the most "maternal" of the professions – and kept that status well into the 1900s. For a long time, teachers were in especially great demand. County schools were rarely more than a few miles apart so that youngsters could get there easily. And each of these many schools needed a teacher.

The story of Cornelia Bascom of Ludlowville reflects the attitude in the mid-1800s towards the female teacher. Cornelia took two orphans into her home and gave them lessons, room, and board. They, in return, did chores around the house. Though a "brilliant scholar,"<sup>2</sup> she soon found that the students expected more of her than her ability to teach. Cornelia, you see, lacked all home-making skills, and alas, her young charges could not do without domestic delights.

Poor soul, the tragedy of it was she didn't know she was not making them happy. They were there to be taught, and she taught them, to be fed and she fed them, to be clothed and she clothed them. What more could she do? Poor Miss Bascom and poor boys! They endured their meager life for a few years and then revolted.<sup>3</sup>

One romantic moonlit night, the boys escaped by climbing down a rope from their window. The same moon allowed neighbors to observe the daring escape and so they were caught, but the whole episode brought a quick end to Cornelia's school and to her tutoring ambitions. Such was the fate of those dismissing too lightly their female responsibilities.

## Merchants

Many times the "first" woman in any given profession was boosted along the way by the support and understanding

she got at home. Susan B. Anthony came from a family of physicians. Lawyer Georgia Hare came from a family of lawyers. And Mrs. Ayers, the county's first female merchant, was married to a merchant. The two of them opened a store on West State Street in 1817, "he engaging in the sale of general merchandise and Mrs. Ayers specializing in millinery and ladies wear."<sup>4</sup>

At first, as with teaching, the world of merchandising allowed women in only that most feminine niche – millinery. Later on, other women entered the millinery market, and then all aspects of merchandising. Today, women have infiltrated just about every kind of business there is, and have made it their business to do so.

## Miss or Mrs. Drs.

The healing art was among the next of the professions to open up to women – like teaching, it was one in which women were considered to have "natural aptitude" (the nurse, mother, midwife). Women had long been nurses, but in a "non-professional" capacity.

There were a few lady doctors scattered throughout this county in its early history. Samantha S. Nivison was one, practicing in Dryden in the 1860s. "Mrs. Dr. Albina Hunter" (note the arrangement of titles) took up office at the corner of State and Tioga Streets in 1883. She was lavishly praised in 1887 as one of the most successful physicians in Ithaca.

Mrs. Albina Hunter of this place has demonstrated that it is possible for a female doctor of medicine to establish a successful practice and secure the confidence and good will of her contemporary male practitioners.<sup>5</sup>

Mrs. Dr. Hunter was one of the thirteen women doctors admitted to the Homeopathic Medical Society of Tompkins County in 1880, the first of which were allowed in only "after considerable discussion."<sup>6</sup> With 166 men enrolled, that amounted to one female doctor to every sixteen males.



Millinery was one of the first professions open to women.

# Fresh Goods,

Purchased this Spring at AUCTION in N. York for CASH, and now opened in the White Store formerly occupied by Mr. J. N. Perkins.

DAVID AYERS,

INFORMS his old customers, that he has formed a connection with Messrs L. & W. Skidmore, Merchants in New York, and has this day received an extensive assortment of

## DRY GOODS,

Shoes, Fresh Teas ;

And by the first canal boat, will receive a General Assortment of

## Groceries.

MRS. AYERS

has returned from New-York, where she obtained the SPRING FASHIONS for Bonnets, Caps, and Dresses. She has this day received an extensive assortment of

### Fashionable Millinery,

and she trusts that it is in her power to make it the interest of her customers to continue their patronage. The Millinery is REMOVED to the above named store.

The above mentioned Goods and Millinery will be sold for ready pay only, and they sincerely hope, that none of their customers will apply to them for credit, and thereby place them under the disagreeable necessity of refusing them, as they are resolved to keep their goods until they get their pay for them. In future, the Store and Millinery will be connected ; and as Messrs. L. & W. Skidmore attend the Auctions daily, they will be able continually to keep the store supplied with a good assortment of Fresh Goods, purchased on the best terms.

Ithaca, April 17th, 1824.

### New Millinery.

MRS. WAY would inform her friends and customers that she has removed (not to the west but 2 doors east of her former residence, where will be found a General Assortment of MILLINERY which will be offered as cheap as any store in town.

Hats ready Trimmed from \$1 to \$10.  
May 5, 1857 M. WAY, Ithaca.

### NEW MILLINERY.

MRS. SEDGWICK, would respectfully inform the Ladies of Ithaca and surrounding country, that she has taken the Store No. 88 Oswego street, 1 door east of Avery, Woodworth & Co's, where may be found a large and entire New Stock of

#### MILLINERY GOODS,

suitable for the season, consisting of every description of Silks, French Flowers, Ribbons, Lace, etc. etc., all of which is offered at the lowest cash prices. Also NEW GOODS constantly received from the city.

Old Leghorns and Straws repaired in the latest style. From a long experience in the business she is confident of giving entire satisfaction to all who may favor her with a call.  
M. A. SEDGWICK  
Ithaca, April 13, 1857. 68

# MILLINERY

AND

## MANTUAMAKING.

MRS. TORREY,

HAS just received the Summer Fashions, for BONNETS, CAPS and DRESSES.—She has now on hand a A very well selected assortment of

### MILLINERY,

CONSISTING OF

LEGHORN, STRAW, SATIN AND SILK

### HATS,

Ribbons, Artificial Flowers, Silks, Laces, &c.

All of which will be sold as cheap for CASH or PRODUCE, as can be purchased in this village.

HATS Altered, Bleached and Pressed—and COATS and DRESSES, Cut and Made in the BEST MANNER, and on the shortest notice.

Ithaca, June 2, 1824.

n<sup>o</sup> 551f.

### NEW MILLINERY.

MRS. SEDGWICK, would respectfully inform the Ladies of Ithaca and surrounding country, that she has taken the Store No. 88 Oswego street, 1 door east of Avery, Woodworth & Co's, where may be found a large and entire New Stock of

#### MILLINERY GOODS,

suitable for the season, consisting of every description of Silks, French Flowers, Ribbons, Lace, etc. etc., all of which is offered at the lowest cash prices. Also NEW GOODS constantly received from the city.

Old Leghorns and Straws repaired in the latest style. From a long experience in the business she is confident of giving entire satisfaction to all who may favor her with a call.  
M. A. SEDGWICK  
Ithaca, April 13, 1857. 68

### Fashionable Millinery,



1<sup>st</sup> Aurora street, between the Hotel and Tompkins House, and nearly opposite Mr. Williams' Store. Mrs. TOTTEN grateful for favours already received, informs her friends and the public, that she has fresh from the Emporium, the Latest Fashions, and a splendid assortment of Millinery GOODS,

which she will sell on reasonable terms. She will have constantly on hand, an elegant assortment of Hats, Satin Beavers, Velvets, Sattin and Velvets, and Silks, of every description; 10 cases Straws and Turbans of every variety of patterns and quality— together with a choice selection of Ornamental Hair, Mohair Caps, and Misses Nets, Needle work and Tambour Capes and Collars, very cheap—a pretty assortment of Dress Handkerchiefs, Dress Silks, Belt Ribbons, Gloves, &c. &c. (We hope our merchants will not think this encroaching, as they have nothing to do with Millinery;) and furthermore, we sincerely hope we shall not see Blacksmith's anvils out, adorned with Lady's Hats, for sale.

Our country friends will recollect that we take Produce, or any pay that merchants take in exchange for goods. We hope they will take the trouble to call at No. 29, Aurora street.

JULIA A. TOTTEN.

Ithaca Nov. 7th, 1826.

# MILLINERY

AND

## MANTUAMAKING.

MRS. MERRITT & MRS. O'FLING,

INFORM their friends and the public, that they have on hand a very choice and well-selected assortment of

### MILLINERY,

CONSISTING OF

LEGHORN, STRAW, AND SILK

### HATS

OF ALL KINDS—A GENERAL ASSORTMENT OF

SILKS AND SATINS,

A very Elegant Assortment of

Ribbons, Artificial Flowers, Silks, Laces,

and almost every article in the Millinery line. All of which will be sold unusually low, for CASH or PRODUCE.

\* \* Mrs. MERRITT has brought on from the city of New-York, the

### LATEST FASHIONS.

HATS ALTERED, BLEACHED, and PRESSED, and COATS and DRESSES cut and made, in the best manner, and on the shortest notice

HARRIET MERRITT,  
LYDIA O'FLING.

Ithaca, May 17, 1824.

'531f

## NEW MILLINERY.

MRS. KENDALL,

RETURNS thanks to her friends and the public, for their former patronage, and respectfully informs them, that she has just returned from the city, with a

LARGE ASSORTMENT OF

LEGHORN, STRAW, AND SILK

### HATS,

AND

### CAPS

OF THE NEWEST FASHIONS,

And a handsome Variety of

SATINS, MANTUAS, LEVANTINES,

SARSNETS, RIBBONS, and

ARTIFICIAL FLOWERS;

Besides various other articles in her line, which she will sell on the Lowest Terms, for Cash and Country Produce.

Mrs. K. will REMOVE on the first of May next, to the BLACK BUILDING, formerly occupied by D. AYERS.

ELIZABETH KENDALL.

Ithaca, April 27, 1824.

'50w3

## Girl Lawyer Makes First Appearance in Court



### Lawyers

It took a little longer for the first woman lawyer in Tompkins County to appear. That's because the law profession has virtually no semblance of "femininity" at all. It wasn't until 1913 that Georgia Hare, returning home to Groton from Syracuse, set up practice with her brother — thus becoming the county's first female lawyer.

After graduating from Syracuse University in 1910, Georgia became the third woman to be admitted to the New York State Bar Association (on her birthday, yet). She promptly went out and worked for three years in a law firm, one member of which later described her as having a "legal and logical mind," being "industrious, persevering, active and fearless," and having equally admirable qualities.

A Syracuse newspaper interview with her read:

"I believe the professions should be open to both men and women," said the pretty young woman to a Post-Standard reporter yesterday. "The matter appeals to me as one of ability and not of sex."

Georgia made it her life's work, and died in the 1960s. During her lifetime, however, increasing numbers of women donned the title, "Counsellor at Law," and she was more than likely pleased to see it happen.

## WOMAN ATTORNEY TRIES FIRST CASE

Miss Georgia Hare Appears  
for Cripple in Baldwin-  
ville Lawsuit.

BALDWINSVILLE, Dec. 19.—Will Edward Exall lose his peanut stand? That is the big question upon which Baldwinville is aroused to-day. The big Seneca River Power Company says he will and they employed Attorney Eugene White in proceedings brought before Justice Marvin to get him out.

It looked like trouble for Exall, but he arose to the emergency and now the bets are even. He retained Attorney Hare of Syracuse and Attorney Hare called for a jury. The trial began this morning and will continue all afternoon. Everybody who could attend the trial was there and the verdict is awaited with anxiety.

Who is Attorney Hare? Well, this is Attorney Hare's first case. The lawyer's full name is Miss Georgia Hare. She was admitted to the bar only a few weeks ago and has since been associated with the office of Mosher & Wright.

Miss Hare claims that the land on which Exall built his peanut stand doesn't belong to the Power Company at all. The town owns the property, she says, and Mr. Exall built there under consent of the village of Baldwinville. If the Power Company is going to get him out, they will have to show a pretty clear title, and show it to a jury picked out not in the ordinary manner, but by a woman's intuition.

## Ministers

Do not expect [me] to marry. It is my wish to take a position as pastor of a church & remain with it for years devoting my time talent & strength to the upbuilding of the community in which God in his providence shall place me.<sup>9</sup>

With these words, Juanita Breckenridge introduced herself as a prospective pastor for the Congregational Church of Brookton(dale)\* in 1891. Getting to that point was hard enough. Her brother wrote while she was in school:

Mother thinks she cannot bare to have you go away from home to stay any length of time Anymore so you had better make up your mind to live at home until you're married, don't you think so?<sup>10</sup>

Apparently she did not, and wrote a close girlfriend of her intentions. Her friend replied:

To be quite frank I did not enjoy that letter as much as I usually enjoy your letters . . . I hope you will not enter the Christian ministry . . . God knew what was best for mankind; and it seems unnatural, unchristian, to sneer at what is so sacred, or should be to us all — marriage and home.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, Juanita survived the ordeal of criticism and advice. She graduated, came to Brookton, and applied for a license to preach in the Brookton Congregational Church. "After six months debate," noted the *Ithaca Journal*, "the license was granted."<sup>12</sup> One year later she was ordained, and joined the ranks of early female ministers in Tompkins County.

She married Fred Bates in 1893 when she was thirty-three. The newlyweds settled into a large home on Aurora Street (where the Prudential Life Building now stands). He became mayor of Ithaca, and she busied herself with a multitude of women's projects in the community. Juanita never returned to the ministry. However, Ruth Adams, a retired local minister, believes she was always

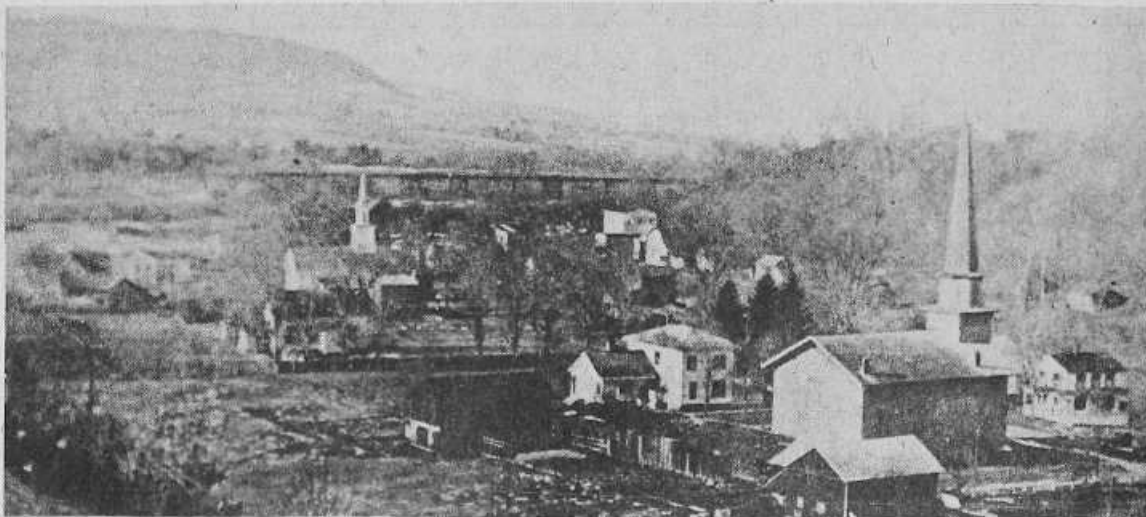


*The Reverend Juanita Breckenridge Bates, in her home on Aurora Street.*

a minister at heart. "I don't think marriage or home life ever changed her, really," she says. Juanita Breckenridge Bates died in Ithaca in 1946, at the age of eighty-six.

There is only one ordained female minister practicing in this county today, the Reverend Ruth Phillips-Huyck, of the First Baptist Church in Ithaca.

\**Brookton(dale)* — long known as "Brookton," this small community nestled along the banks of Six Mile Creek changed its name to "Brooktondale" in 1926 due to mail confusion with "Brockton" and "Brooklyn," New York.



*The Brooktondale Church.*

## ROUTED



Illustrating what might happen to policewomen on the bathing beaches.

### Policewomen

By 1913, Ithacans agreed that there was a need for "special [police] work with crime prevention among women and children."<sup>13</sup> Katherine Shaw, a middle-aged Ithacan with little special training, came forward for the job. But eleven years later, women from the City Federation of Women's Organizations wondered if her age was getting the best of her. The announcement of her reappointment in 1924 reportedly was greeted by "an eloquent silence" from Federation members, they feeling the job was "one for a young, strong and trained woman."<sup>14</sup>

Subsequently, Mrs. Shaw resigned, and the better-qualified Alice Ellis replaced her in July 1924. At the end of her first year, she reported 168 cases, the single largest chunk of which were men who "attempted to make the acquaintance" of young women on the city streets.<sup>15</sup>

Her resignation in 1927 was widely lamented. The *Ithaca Journal-News* admitted:

When she came here many citizens were frankly doubtful that the services of a trained policewoman were needed. She will leave us having more than proved the case.<sup>16</sup>

Today, the "special office of policewoman" has long since been eliminated. Those functions are now handled by policemen. Currently, there are no policewomen "in the force" — not one. "We're all male chauvinists here," a local policeman joked.

### Summary

Now, it is a rare profession that totally excludes women. Most went through the traumatic days of their "first woman" long ago. But prejudice and social stigma are still alive and well. Because of these, women who might otherwise chose a career in the professions often remain at home.