

**Educating the Daughters of Savannah's Elite:
The Pape School, the Girl Scouts, and the
Progressive Movement**

BY PAUL M. PRESSLY

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HOW did the education of upper middle-class girls in the South change from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century? Attempting to study a group of women and their schooling over a period of time raises formidable obstacles, but one type of institution offers at least a partial surrogate for such an inquiry—the new breed of private schools that appeared throughout the South in the early 1900s.¹ Historians have exhaustively described improvements in public education during the Progressive era—from the turn of the century to about 1920—when thousands of schoolhouses were built, per capita expenditure on education doubled and compulsory attendance laws passed, but they have rarely noted a minor phenomenon that accompanied these reforms. At the very moment when the old-fashioned academy was going out of existence, a different kind of private school came into being, in Virginia and Tennessee especially, and to a lesser extent in Georgia, North Carolina and Texas.

¹The standard histories of the South make no mention of the private schools that appeared during the first fifteen years of the twentieth century. See "Education and the Southern Redemption," in Dewey W. Grantham, *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1983), 246-74; Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (New York, 1992), 417-20.

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THE GEORGIA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY
VOL. LXXX, NO. 2, SUMMER 1996

First and foremost were the military prep schools for boys, primarily but not exclusively boarding, where the South's proclivity for the martial spirit received a new formulation at schools like McCallie and Baylor in Chattanooga, Randolph-Macon Academy and Staunton Military Academy in Virginia, and the Porter School in Charleston. But there were also girls private schools in the South's larger cities that grew in response to much the same forces: concern for traditional values, distrust of public schools with their "hybrid" curriculum and mixing of social classes, and the increasingly felt need for a more academic preparation. Their origins were as diverse as their founders: the Isadore Newman in New Orleans, established for Jewish girls; Girls Preparatory School in Chattanooga, created for daughters of the professional middle class; and Washington Seminary in Atlanta, where future debutantes received a socially correct education.² As they developed an education that did more than prepare their pupils to be something other than the typical southern "belle," they came to serve as a little noticed link between the Old South and the New.

There were obvious reasons for their existence, most notably the preference of upper middle-class families for single-sex education and the desire for a socially exclusive environment. But one reason was less obvious—a belated recognition that girls had a new role to play, one that included cultivating the life of the mind beyond the limited sphere offered by women's literary clubs and other volunteer organizations. Leading this redefinition of the southern lady were a set of strong-willed headmistresses, single-minded women who, despite their roles as pillars of the old order of things, emerged as advocates of a strong college preparatory curriculum.

Distinctive among this small group was Nina Anderson Pape, born in Savannah in 1869, reared in traditional ways, the one educator who committed herself to a mildly progressive form of education, first as an active participant in the kindergarten

²Porter Sargent, *The Handbook of Private Schools* (Boston, 1942), 515-76. In the period 1895-1920, some sixty-four private schools were founded in eight states, primarily Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina and Georgia. This number includes only those which continued to operate through 1942. Timothy J. Crimmins, *The Crystal Stair: A Study of the Effects of Class, Race, and Ethnicity on Secondary Education in Atlanta, 1872-1925* (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1972), 139-45.



From a privileged background, Nina Anderson Pape (1869-1944) became a leader in the kindergarten movement in Savannah during the 1890s, a co-founder of the Girl Scouts in 1912, and a member of the controversial Progressive Education Association during the 1920s and then from 1908 to 1944, the head of the Pape School. *Photograph from the Massie Heritage Interpretation Center.*

movement and later as co-founder with Juliette Gordon Low of the Girl Scouts, then as an active member of the controversial Progressive Education Association. Her long career as a Savannah educator extended from 1895 to 1944 and offers an indirect way of approaching several critical issues: the impact of the Progressive movement, primarily aimed at the disenfranchised, on the lives of a Deep South city's elite; the uneasy relationship of the Girl Scout movement to Progressive reforms; and, in a broader sense, the way

private education provided the South's traditional leadership with an extra measure of staying power at a moment when its tenure seemed questionable early in the twentieth century.

At the turn of the century, Savannah remained a deeply conservative city glorying in its antebellum past. The old elite of planters, cotton brokers, lawyers, merchants and medical doctors continued their traditional dominance, behaving in ways that bespoke another era. Education was no exception. During Reconstruction, the city had created an impressive network of five elementary schools, a Girls High School and a Boys High School, the whole organized under a superintendent and a Board of Education, funded by local taxes. While actively supporting this effort as a way to maintain white control of schooling, the upper class continued to educate its daughters according to a pattern set well before 1860. The closely knit families who dominated the city entrusted their youngest children to private tutors who continued the tradition of the old "adventure schools" of the eighteenth century, simple affairs where widows and spinsters hung out their shingles to offer English composition, grammar, spelling, history and the "ornamental arts."⁸

At age thirteen or fourteen, their daughters either entered Girls High School, in appearance a new institution but in practice an updated version of its predecessor, Chatham Academy, with a significant tuition fee and the same narrow strata of girls in attendance, or went off to boarding school, as had their mothers, sometimes in Virginia but more commonly in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey or Maryland. In 1823, one Savannah mother had advised her homesick daughter in Pennsylvania, "I like a boarding school at your time of life. If you were at home, you would have nothing to contend for. You would see too little of the human mind to improve yours upon." Parents saw no reason to question that seemingly sage advice and, after the Civil War, the boarding school tradition snapped firmly back into place. In 1877, a frustrated superintendent complained to the Board of Education,

⁸Albert S. Otto, "The Public School System of Savannah and Chatham County" (n.d.), 81, Savannah Public Library. Mary S. Anderson, "Days Beyond Recall" (ca. 1940s), 6a, Georgia Historical Society (hereinafter cited as GHS). Edith D. Johnston, "A Southern Gentlewoman: The Life and Times of Eugenia Marion Johnston, 1861-1938" (1959), 105-106, GHS.

"Perhaps in no other city in this country is this custom so general" and despaired of ever achieving a prosperous high school until the practice disappeared. After secondary schooling, girls typically spent a year at a finishing school not in the South, where the plantation ideal seemingly offered a gracious model for manners, but ironically in the North, most frequently at the Chegary Institute in Philadelphia, the Charbonnier School in New York City, or Madame Lefebvre's Finishing School in Baltimore, well-established institutions where native teachers patrolled the rooms to ensure only French was spoken while imposing a rigid social etiquette liberally borrowed from the ancien régime.⁴

The first cracks in this century-old pattern appeared during the 1890s. The daughter of a one-time cotton broker, Edith Johnston, remembered her days as a sixth grader at Miss Elvira McCrory's minuscule school, where a handful of girls sat around one large table in a second-floor room. "In the winter of 1891," Johnston recalled, "we heard rumors of the opening of a new school in the fall, and there was table talk at home that we were going to be sent there because the principal was a Vassar graduate, and of course that meant greater advantages than we had at little Miss Elvira's elementary school." A member of a prominent Savannah family, Miss Lynn Hartridge had attended Vassar and, at age twenty-three, was returning home determined to shake Savannah girls out of their intellectual apathy. With all the fervor of a missionary, she announced an aggressively college preparatory curriculum at a moment when students at the newly formed Savannah High School were debating whether girls should go to an institution of higher learning and answering in the negative. Her school obtained a coveted designation from the College Examination Board and sent an occasional girl to college.⁵ However, despite her efforts, Miss Hartridge's students continued the older pattern of going off

⁴Miss Bryan to Mrs. H. G. Bryan, January 23, 1823, Arnold Screven Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Superintendent Baker, "Annual Report of the Public Schools" (1877-1878), 6. Abby L. Hunter, "Daisy Goes to Boarding School" in Anne Choate, ed., *Juliette Gordon Low and the Girl Scouts* (New York, 1928), 35-40. Johnston, "A Southern Gentlewoman," chap. 5, 107-116.

⁵"My Schools and What Followed: An Autobiography," 5-23, Edith D. Johnston Papers, Walter Hartridge Collection, GHS. Journals of Miss Hartridge, 1892-97, Emelyn B. Hartridge Papers, Walter Hartridge Collection, GHS.

to boarding school, typically in the North. In 1902 the frustrated headmistress sold her school and moved to New Jersey to set up a boarding establishment that attracted many Savannah girls over the next thirty years. Of all the girls private schools in the South during the 1890s, only Washington Seminary in Atlanta could boast of its graduates going on to Wellesley, Smith, Rad-cliff or Bryn Mawr.⁶

Change in the education of upper-class girls was coming, but from the opposite end of the educational pyramid, in the form of the fast growing kindergarten movement, a crusade that began modestly enough but by the 1890s had become a major force in reshaping American attitudes toward education. Based on Friedrich Froebel's view that childhood was a special phase of life during which the individual learned by following his natural instincts, especially that for play, kindergartens first appeared in the United States on the eve of the Civil War. In 1873, St. Louis became the first city to make kindergarten a part of the public school system, while private associations carried the idea to New York, Boston, San Francisco and other metropolises where newly emerging slums required a different set of responses.⁷

True to its temperament, Savannah was slow to respond. In 1895, a group of upper-class women copied a program in Jacksonville, Florida, starting a kindergarten in a slum area, but the venture failed for lack of funds. Four years later, George J. Baldwin, the energetic president of Savannah Electric Company, founded the Kate Baldwin Free Kindergarten Association, named after his mother, to operate what became five kindergartens in depressed neighborhoods like the boisterous Yamacraw Village, home to the seafaring population. In 1904, a group of twenty-odd women founded an adjunct body, the Savannah Kindergarten Club, dedicated to the unsettling proposition that the way to redeem Amer-

⁶Mary Comer to Mrs. Comer, 1902, Comer Letters, Special Collection, Vassar College Library. Crimmins, *The Crystal Stair*, 145.

⁷Elizabeth D. Ross, "The Kindergarten Movement in the United States: 1870-1914" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Johns Hopkins University, 1971). Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The Metropolitan Experience: 1876-1980* (New York, 1988), 278-82. Marvin Lazer-son, "Origins of the Urban School: Public Education in Massachusetts, 1870-1915" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1971), 36-73.

ican children was to emphasize creative play over memorization, love over harsh discipline, and an appreciation of every child as an unique individual. Like thousands of women across the country, they convened regularly to discuss Froebel and reformers like John Dewey and G. Stanley Hall, as well as every conceivable aspect of the moral, intellectual and emotional development of children.⁸

For the first two decades of the century, both the Baldwin Kindergarten Association and the Savannah Kindergarten Club battled to force the public school system to add kindergartens to its elementary schools. But they failed to make a dent on the massive entrenchments dug by a ferociously conservative Board of Education. Ironically, the area where they were to have their greatest impact was on the well-tended daughters of Savannah's elite, the group who attended Miss Hartridge's old school. When a disillusioned Miss Hartridge decamped for New Jersey, a fellow teacher, Marion Haskell, bought her out and succeeded in attracting about 150 young boys and girls of all ages, the first time that a private school for girls had ever brought together a critical mass of students, mostly children of lawyers, cotton brokers and wealthy merchants. In 1905, she named as co-director an educator who made the ideas intended to redeem the "deserving poor" into a vehicle for modernizing a new generation of southern belles.

Thirty-six years old, tall, angular, with a collar wrapped tightly around her neck, Nina Anderson Pape came from the upper reaches of Savannah's society. Although her father was a restless German immigrant who left town when she was six, she grew up with her maternal grandfather, Edward Clifford Anderson, former naval officer, well-to-do planter, and mayor of Savannah for seven years, an unrepentant southerner whose house was a center for the political and social life of the city. Miss Pape received a thoroughly conventional education, first with the inevitable tutors, then at Girls High School, and finally a year at Madame Lefebvre's French Finishing School in Baltimore. The bankruptcy of the Central of Georgia Railroad, whose stock she held, ended her

⁸Savannah Kindergarten Club Papers, GHS. Kate Baldwin Alumnae Association Papers, GHS.



Founded in 1856 from funds left by a Scottish merchant, the Massie School was the premier elementary school in Savannah. Nevertheless, the city's elite continued to send their daughters to private tutors, continuing an eighteenth-century tradition. Massie students posed for this group portrait in the 1890s. *Photograph from the Massie Heritage Interpretation Center.*

post-debutante days, and in 1895, she gamely accepted a position in the best elementary school in Savannah, the Massie School. During her first year of teaching, Pape brought together a group of like-minded friends into the Froebel Circle, a chapter of the King's Daughters, and led them in establishing a Fresh Air Home at Tybee Beach for over a hundred youngsters during the summer. From the day she sat foot inside Massie, she was appalled by the teaching conditions: sixty-odd first graders squeezed into as many desks, drilled in forty-minute blocks of time. She quickly sought refuge in correspondence courses from the University of Chicago and later in summer school at Columbia University's Teachers College, both vital centers of the kindergarten movement. But when she divided her class of sixty into three separate groups so that one could be instructed in reading while the others played or did some activity, the superintendent delivered a stinging reprimand. In 1900, Pape, together with a colleague, resigned from Massie to open a private school where a more "progressive" approach could be employed. The two soon quarrelled, and a subsequent attempt to operate her own school ended in a nervous breakdown. Then came the call to help Miss Haskell strengthen elementary education at her establishment, and Pape responded. When Haskell married three years later, Nina Pape took charge.⁹

Between 1908 and 1912, the renamed Pape School of Savannah went as far as any of its peers in the South in creating a child-centered approach. The reforms were fairly timid if judged by the standards of the new Francis W. Parker School in Chicago or Patty Smith Hill's kindergarten and the Lincoln School, both at Columbia's Teachers College.¹⁰ Nevertheless, "the School even then was a Progressive School," Nina Pape later wrote, "educating the entire child, training the eye thru [sic] art, the ear thru music, the head thru sewing and manual work, the body thru physical exer-

"Life of Miss Nina Pape" (n.d.), Pape School Archives, The Savannah Country Day School (hereinafter cited as SCDS). The Froebel Circle Papers, GHS. Woodie T. White, "The Study of Education at the University of Chicago, 1892-1958" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1977), 50-55, 95-113.

¹⁰Marie K. Stone, ed., *Between Home and Community, Chronicle of the Francis W. Parker School, 1901-1976* (privately printed, Chicago, 1976), 1-34. Patricia A. Graham, *Progressive Education: From Arcady to Academe: A History of the Progressive Education Association, 1919-1955* (New York, 1967), 10.



When Miss Pape assumed full direction of the former Hartridge School in 1908, she modified the curriculum to include child-centered approaches—learning by doing, an emphasis on creative play, music, gardening, physical education and manual work. *Photograph from the Georgia Historical Society.*

cise and grammar, the spirit thru service to others." Fourth graders still waded through a "Modern English" textbook and speller, worked with fractions, studied the geography of all seven continents, immersed themselves in English history and took conversational French. However, they also took drawing, nature study, singing, manual training and physical education, a reflection of her deep commitment to educating the "whole child." She encouraged older pupils to participate in the "Haile-Charleston School of Physical Training" conducted in the school's small gym by her two physical education teachers. The students regularly put on evening displays of body building, marching drills, folk dances, waltzing and, for a climax of sorts, a basketball game. During 1910-1911, Pape sponsored a dozen of her girls, mostly fifth and sixth graders, in Saturday afternoon nature walks on the outskirts of town. In that year, she added a kindergarten to the Pape School, the first establishment in Georgia to do so, and made her facility the meeting place of the Savannah Kindergarten Club, where

speakers like the Director of the Montessori School of New York held forth.¹¹

On a Sunday in early March 1912, Nina Pape received a telephone call from her distant cousin, Juliette Gordon Low (known as Daisy). A member of one of Savannah's first families, Daisy had married a wealthy Englishman, William Low, a friend of the Prince of Wales and a devotee of the Edwardian life style, with numerous hunting trips to India and Africa interspersed between open affairs with other women. When Pape had a nervous breakdown five years earlier just as her second school failed, it was to London and Daisy Low's town house that she journeyed to recover. At the time, Daisy was in the initial stages of divorce proceedings against her husband, a traumatic process cut short by his death two years later. Drifting from town house to town house and continent to continent, Daisy Low spent a restless four years until she discovered a mission in life. "Do come right over," she said from her handsome town house in Savannah where she had just alighted. "I've something important for the girls of Savannah and all America that I want to talk to you about." "So over tea cups in Daisy's home," Miss Pape recalled, "she spoke of the Girl Guides in England and Scotland, how she had come home, for she was a native Savannahian, to start this movement of Girl Guides here in Savannah and in America and that she must start it at once." Low passionately argued, "Your girls are just what I am looking for. You see I want girls for my first patrol who have had some training together, are alert and can follow instructions, so why not let me select them from your school."¹²

Pape welcomed the news with a degree of skepticism, for she was well acquainted with Daisy Low's penchant for harebrained schemes and her love of an adventure. A witty, eccentric socialite with a passion for sculpting, Low hardly seemed the person to devote herself wholeheartedly to a cause. Twelve months earlier, she had met the enthusiastic Sir Robert Baden-Powell, hero of the

¹¹"A Progressive School," *Pape School Bulletin* (1927), 1, GHS. Pape School Prospectus, 1909-1910, Pape School Archives, SCDS. "Gymnastic and Folk Dances," April 9, 1910, *Savannah Morning News*. "Memories of Mrs. Henry N. Platt (Page Anderson)," *Savannah Morning News*, October 18, 1937. Gladys D. Schultz and Daisy G. Lawrence, *Lady from Savannah, The Life of Juliette Low* (Philadelphia, 1958), 305. Savannah Kindergarten Club Papers, GHS.

¹²Nina A. Pape "Some Memories of a Charter Member of The Girl Scouts," *Savannah Morning News*, October 13, 1937.

Boer War, founder of and missionary for the Boy Scouts, an earnest bachelor captivated by this energetic woman. Having helped found the Girl Guides only the year before with his sister, he encouraged the amusing Mrs. Low to create a troop for daughters of her Scottish tenants in the summer of 1911, and then to organize a second troop in the slums of Lambeth, outside London, that fall. On a boat trip to the United States in January 1912, the two impulsively decided that she should bring the movement to America at the first possible moment. The timing was perfect. Efforts were already under way to create something for girls loosely modeled on the English movement while a group of Progressive educators in New York City were launching the Camp Fire Girls as a national organization. Baden-Powell, who was busy appearing before Boy Scout assemblies along the eastern seaboard, wrote to Low in February that he had spoken to Mrs. Andrew Carnegie in New York and received assurances of her interest as well as to an organization of women in Pittsburgh who were ready to set up Girl Guide patrols. A few days later, he enthused, "I have had a number of people inquiring about the Girl Guides, so I do believe the field is all ready to be sown in this country."¹⁵

By 1912, the women around the Pape School and the Savannah Kindergarten Club were more than ready for a girls organization that emphasized nature study and physical conditioning as well as one bringing together young people from working-class backgrounds with those from middle-class families. Four years earlier, the Savannah Kindergarten Club had fallen under the spell of a new director of the Baldwin Association, Hortense Orcutt, a strongly progressive thinker who came from Felix Adler's Ethical Culture School in New York City, one of the prime forces behind the kindergarten movement in that city. As soon as she arrived, she pushed that organization into a more ambitious direction, sponsoring clubs for adolescent boys and girls that offered a mixture of folk dancing, games, story telling, handicrafts as well as an occasional ice cream party. She pioneered the notion that the clubs, made up of "deprived" adolescents, should have self-govern-

¹⁵Shultz and Lawrence, *Lady from Savannah*, 305. William Hillcourt, *Baden-Powell: The Two Lives of a Hero* (New York, 1964), 320-22. Sir Robert Baden-Powell to Mrs. Low, February 22, 1912, Gordon Papers, GHS.

ing constitutions in hopes that their members would learn the rudiments of democracy. Simultaneously, she initiated festivals of various shapes and sizes, bringing young children and adolescents together for a variety of celebrations, all of which enhanced the idea of doing more for all of Savannah's youth.¹⁴

In November 1910, Nina Pape and Hortense Orcutt had suggested that the Kindergarten Club choose as its annual topic the role of "play" in shaping the character and ideals of American youth. Miss Pape proposed that the club move beyond its traditional rhetoric, first by creating a lobbying effort that would force the city to establish public playgrounds for children "in danger of growing up wrong," secondly by sponsoring a single, grand May Festival for Savannah's children as a way of showcasing the "new" forms of play, in essence a community drama in which the children would act as missionaries to their own parents. On May 6, 1911, four hundred youngsters gathered at the Pape School across from Forsyth Park, a curious assemblage of less advantaged children from the free kindergartens and the several teenage clubs, together with the well-bred girls from Pape. The socially ill-matched group paraded into the park, marched once around, formed a large circle and watched selected groups perform folk dances and gymnastics. The urge to sponsor activities for young people of all social classes was strong among the small band of kindergartners.¹⁵

Organized on March 15, only one week after Daisy Low's arrival, the first two Girl Guide troops, the White Rose and the Carnation, were organized from among Pape School sixth and seventh graders. Low then conjured into being within a matter of weeks a council of advisers, a secretary drawn from the Kindergarten Club and several new troops. By mid-May, seven patrols were meeting one afternoon a week in the servant quarters behind the

¹⁴Clipped articles on Hortense Orcutt, Kate Baldwin Alumnae Association Papers, GHS. For the youth clubs, see Municipal Reports, City of Savannah, 1907-1912, Savannah Public Library. "The Philosophy of the Kindergarten: Miss Orcutt explains the Theory of the Education of the Child," June 7, 1908, *Savannah Morning News*.

¹⁵Minutes of Meetings, 1910-1911, Savannah Kindergarten Club Papers, GHS. "Four Hundred Marched in Elizabethan Pageant," *Savannah Morning News*, May 11, 1911. See Joseph F. Kett, "Women and the Progressive Impulse in Southern Education," in Walter J. Fraser, Jr., R. Frank Saunders, Jr., and Jon L. Wakelyn, eds., *The Web of Southern Social Relations: Women, Family and Education* (Athens, Ga., 1985), 166-69.



Of all the aspects of the early Girl Guide/Girl Scout movement, uniforms had the greatest appeal for the girls. The first ones were middie blouses and skirts of dark blue duck, with light blue sateen ties. Here Juliette Gordon Low (left) inspects the uniforms of early Girl Guides, whose mothers made them according to a variety of patterns. *Photograph from the Juliette Gordon Low Girl Scout National Center, Savannah.*

Low house. Despite later accounts which made the founding of the Girl Scouts in Savannah seem inevitable, the summer vacation all but derailed what was an exceedingly fragile movement as the troop leaders headed for the north Georgia mountains. When a new secretary took control in October, she found the few remaining girls demoralized: "Imagine those troops of Girl Guides without uniforms, no badges, Mrs. Low in Europe, and with only (one) English Hand Book for reference."¹⁶ In June, Low had left for points north and, then, after the unexpected death of her father in August, retreated to her Scottish estate, steadfastly putting off entreaties to return until March the following year. Hard work by the new secretary, Edith Johnston, as well as Nina Pape and Hortense Orcutt, redeemed the situation—by July 1913, there

¹⁶"Early History of the Girl Scouts in Savannah and Washington," May 6, 1925, Edith D. Johnston Papers, GHS.

were twelve troops with over 150 Scouts—but the resulting success had less to do with the lessons of the English handbook than with ideas that came out of a purely American setting, especially those of the kindergarten movement. The fledgling Girl Guides (renamed Girl Scouts midway through 1913) were as much a product of homegrown conditions as they were of Baden-Powell's vision.

First of all, the initial leadership created by Daisy Low was essentially from the small world that revolved around the Pape School. The Council of Advisers included Nina Anderson Pape, two members of the Gordon-Anderson family, the wife of the Episcopal bishop, and three of the prime leaders of the Savannah Kindergarten Club—Hortense Orcutt, Jane Judge, reporter for the *Savannah News*, and Mrs. George J. Baldwin, whose husband had founded the Free Kindergarten Association. The first troop leader was Page Anderson, cousin by marriage of both Nina and Daisy and a Pape School mother; two other leaders were wives of a lawyer and a physician, but most were recent debutantes and Pape School graduates.¹⁷

Secondly, the youth leader of the YMCA, William Chairsell, advised the new group to organize a competitive basketball league modeled on his own boys program. The Guides responded quickly. From February 1913 on, there were intense practices followed by well attended basketball games, a development that led the secretary to caution her leaders, "The enthusiasm over basketball has been great and the guide captains have been so desirous of having the teams practice for the League games that it has occupied a good deal of time. Please do not let athletics absorb too much time to the detriment of the other work." Yet that is precisely what happened.¹⁸

Thirdly, the outdoor activities which the Girl Guides undertook came squarely out of the American nature study movement,

¹⁷W. J. Hoxie, *How Girls Can Help Their Country, Handbook for Girl Scouts*, 1913 (facsimile edition, 1972). Mrs. Edward S. Elliot, "A Record of the Savannah Girl Scouts, March 12, 1912-1930," 2, Juliette Gordon Low Girl Scout National Center. Nina Pape's Diary, 1935, Pape Papers, GHS.

¹⁸"Early History of the Girl Scouts," May 1, 1925, Johnston Papers, GHS. She recalled, "The Boys Secretary of the YMCA, Mr. A. W. S. Chairsell, acted as unofficial 'adviser' to the Executive-Secretary, and his expert knowledge of the adolescent age and his training in athletics were an invaluable aid in introducing some of the recreational features and in helping with the training of leaders." Edith D. Johnston, "Monthly Reports of the Savannah Organization of the Girl Scouts from October 15, 1912, to June 15, 1913: Notes for February (1913)," Girl Scout Papers, Low Girl Scout National Center, Savannah.



Girl Scouts in the first seven troops practiced first aid skills, skills of observation and other activities developed by the English Girl Guides. But most of their efforts went into basketball and tennis (as the front row of girls posing here in 1913 demonstrate), as well as participating in the Savannah Play Festival in the spring of 1913 and Saturday afternoon nature walks and picnics. *Photograph from the Juliette Gordon Low Girl Scout National Center, Savannah.*

with its emphasis on simplicity of living, "naturalness," and "sympathy with common things," rather than the heavy-handed efforts of Sir Robert to instill a quasi-military approach to camping. During the first twelve months, a local naturalist and outdoorsman, Walter Hoxie, did yeoman duty in taking Girl Guides on walks through his wooded property, giving lectures on birds and mammals, and having them cook lunch over an open fire, with eggs, bacon, marshmallows and "anything else they wanted."¹⁹ He had worked with Miss Pape when she organized her fifth graders for nature study.

Fourthly, Nina Pape and her friends in the Kindergarten Club pushed the Girl Guides into the annual "Play Festival" in Forsyth

¹⁹W. G. Fargo, "Walter John Hoxie" (reprint from *Wilson Bulletin*), Savannah Historical Research Association Papers, GHS. Miss Sallie McAlpin to Mrs. Epsy on Hoxie, October 29, 1936, Juliette Low House: "Well educated, a life full of interesting experiences, which he used to love to tell at times, a great lover of nature, there was not a leaf or stick or flower in the woods that he did not know its name, and where it belonged, and all about it. It was the same with birds and fishes."

Park, the great community drama to publicize the need for public playgrounds. The Guides spent the better part of March and April practicing in the Pape gym their dance number, at first a Scottish dance, then, because the recently returned Daisy Low violently objected, a simpler English folk dance. On May 6, 1913 over 1,200 boys and girls assembled on the green at Forsyth Park—children from the several kindergartens, adolescents from the clubs, the YMCA, the YWCA, the Haile gym class, the students from the Pape School, and the Girl Guides, again a mixture of children from radically different ends of the social spectrum. The festival repeated the format of 1911, except on a grander scale: a procession of characters from fairy tales, plus milkmaids, Robin Hood, chimney sweeps, village girls and finally the Cornish dancers, which consisted of eighty-two Girl Guides. Afterwards, Hortense Orcutt, Nina Pape, William Chairsell, and Edith Johnston met to form the Savannah Play Festival Association to campaign on behalf of public playgrounds.²⁰

Fifthly, the members of the Savannah Kindergarten Club left their mark on the writing of the first American Girl Scout Handbook. In late March 1912, Baden-Powell had mailed an early copy of *How Girls Can Help* to Low, who in turn gave it to the Savannah Girl Guides. She also decided that an American version of the handbook should be written by Walter Hoxie, he with the Harvard degree and the newspaper articles on wildlife. Aged sixty-eight, Hoxie had come south in 1867 to teach freed slaves, stayed on to study the wildlife of coastal South Carolina, then retired to a beautifully wooded piece of property in Bona Bella outside Savannah. Although he is given sole credit on the cover, he in fact wrote only the two chapters on camping, with the bulk of the work put together by Hortense Orcutt, Jane Judge, and other colleagues.²¹ This little band of novices operated with a pair of scissors and glue, paring

²⁰Edith D. Johnston, "A Brief Statement of the History of the Savannah Festival Association" (1919), Savannah Festival Association Papers, GHS. "Report of the Savannah Organization of Girl Scouts" (April, May 1913), Girl Scout Papers, Low Girl Scout National Center.

²¹Shultz and Lawrence, *Lady from Savannah*, 320-21. Shultz contends that while Hoxie may have written most of the book, Daisy herself did the adapting from the English handbook. Daisy did go over the final proofs but the bulk of the text was put together by a committee of women. Pape, "Some Memories of a Charter Members of the Girl Scouts." Also, "Early history of the Girl Scouts in Savannah," Johnston Papers: "Her next aim was the American Handbook, and with the aid of Mr. W. J. Hoxie, Miss Orcutt and Miss Jane Judge and others the preparation of that first inadequate little volume was begun."

the English volume from 472 to a mere 144 pages, the length that Daisy Low could afford to underwrite. In the process, a new document emerged. Gone were the numerous stories and comments that fitted the skills expected of a Girl Guide into the context of war and defense of the Empire. The ladies of Savannah rigorously eliminated any and all stories that involved blood and violence: an account of the bravery of the Duchess de Noailles at her beheading, the Arizona mother who fooled Apache Indians by burning the thatched roof of her home and hiding her children in a spring-hole in the floor, the use of fingerprinting analysis to solve the mystery of the old gentleman found in bed with two wounds in his head, and the numerous acts of heroism by Sir Robert Baden-Powell against the Boers. Passages taken from the English edition were often softened; gone were the sections on frontier life—mountaineering, patrolling, pathfinding and seafaring.²²

In the process of backing up the Girl Scout secretary during those first fifteen months, Nina Pape and Hortense Orcutt made it possible to integrate an English movement into the mainstream of Progressive educational ideals. Most importantly, they and their colleagues saw to it that the Savannah Girl Scouts realized one of the principal aims of the kindergarten movement: bringing children from the far ends of the social spectrum—lower class and “aristocracy”—into communion with one another in a way that did not threaten the social fabric of the town. In the first eighteen months, the twelve patrols of the Savannah Girl Scouts fulfilled their ambition. The first three patrols, formed from Pape and one other school, consisted of children of lawyers, bankers, cotton brokers, merchants and medical doctors. The rest, however, were made up of girls from a broad range of families, extending downward to locksmiths, painters, laborers at the Savannah Brewery, shoe salesmen, clerks, plumbers, machinists, bakers, and a night guard at the “convict camp.” The Lily of the Valley patrol included daughters of a physician and the manager of Chatham Mills alongside those of a plumber and a printer. Some of the patrols seemed to be tied to specific occupational groups, like the Pansy, which in-

²²Agnes Baden-Powell, *The Handbook for Girl Guides or How Girls Can Help Build the Empire* (London and New York, 1912). W. J. Hoxie, *How Girls Can Help Their Country: The 1913 Handbook for Girl Scouts* (New York, 1913, 1972), facsimile edition.

cluded railroad families, from a shop foreman to a conductor and a machinist.²³ It was as close to a working democracy as one could reasonably expect to find among young people in early twentieth-century America and yet class distinctions were preserved in precisely the way that Juliette Low envisioned.



The 1920s were to pose a critical problem for Nina Pape: how to define the nature of her own version of "progressive" education, up to that point a relatively mild dose of nature study, music, physical education, manual training and art within a traditional curriculum. It seemed unlikely that the school would dare move further toward the goal that came to dominate Progressivism after the war: liberating the creative potential of each child in ways that drew inspiration from two movements that were reshaping American intellectual life, expressionism and Freudianism.²⁴ For the Pape School played an unspoken but generally acknowledged role as the gateway to Savannah's closely knit upper class, the rite of passage that equipped so many future debutantes with the requisite virtues.

In 1919, a family had three choices for a daughter's high school education: Savannah High, St. Vincent's Academy, and Pape, the only kindergarten through twelfth grade school in town. For those with any social pretensions, St. Vincent's was scarcely an option. Founded in 1843 by the Sisters of Mercy, it sought out the poor and disadvantaged while serving Catholic families from working and lower middle-class backgrounds.²⁵ The public high school had a much broader constituency and in earlier days had drawn daughters from the elite like Miss Pape, but the girls who received diplomas between 1915 and 1930 were primarily daughters of small and medium-sized merchants and shopkeepers: druggists, jewelers, grocers and dry good retailers, owners of their own

²³"First Girl Guides in USA," typed alphabetical list of all members of the Girl Guides who joined between March 1912, and August 1913, Girl Scout Papers, Low Girl Scout National Center. Fathers' occupations were established through the city directory for those two years.

²⁴Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York, 1964) 179-80.

²⁵Sr. Jude Walsh, "A History of St. Vincent's," paper presented November 1993, St. Vincent's Academy, Savannah, Georgia.

FATHER'S OCCUPATIONS
SAVANNAH HIGH SCHOOL - PAPE SCHOOL, 1917-1930

	Savannah High %	Pape School %
Professional (Lawyers, doctors, teachers, others)	4.0	34.6
Government	5.6	—
Manufacturing Transportation	27.1	16.7
Cotton Merchants Naval Stores Shipping	4.0	20.6
Banking - Insurance	5.1	9.4
Wholesale and Retail merchants	33.5	18.9
Laborers	7.2	—
Farmers	2.3	—
Other	11.2	2.2
	100.0	100.0

Source: Transcripts of Savannah High School students, 1917-1933, Archives, Savannah-Chatham County Board of Education, a sample of 345 students. Sampling techniques offer a general range of occupational groupings rather than a precise measure of class structure.

establishments, men ambitious for their daughters. A second group, several rungs down the social ladder, were the Central of Georgia Railroad families, a few from the upper level of management, but most of them clerks, engineers, conductors, watchmen, and mail clerks. Two or three steps below them were a few children of the working class whose fathers were carpenters, plumbers, painters and even a blacksmith. To be sure, one found families from more elevated social levels—the director of the American

Tobacco Company, the vice president of a bank, the chief engineer of a fertilizer plant, but they were relatively few.²⁶

A whole class of families elected not to participate in public education, stepping across the street or several streets to attend the Pape School with its small classes and strong academic orientation. The most single important group of fathers were lawyers, whose profession was the most carefully guarded citadel of power within Savannah, a virtually closed world where entry depended on the right contacts. Through the 1920s, these men, whose fathers and grandfathers had directed the affairs of nineteenth-century Savannah, dominated the board rooms of the town's banks, railways, and corporations: Alexander R. Lawton, Walter Charlton Hartridge, Jefferson Randolph Anderson, George Noble Jones, David Crenshaw Barrow. Alongside the lawyers were those in cotton exporting, shipping and naval stores in whom Savannah's wealth was concentrated: traditional names like George Arthur Gordon, Frank Battey and Charles Bell, as well as newer names like John Jacob Rauers, John A. G. Carson and Einar Trosdale. Pape families also included the heads of the Southern Oil Company, Savannah Electric and the Central of Georgia Railway.²⁷

Socially Miss Pape's loyalties lay with this, the rock-solid core of Old Savannah. "Her background and heritage were those of the fine old Southern families so secure in their social place that no honest work, no matter how menial, could dislodge them," a friend observed. Outside school, her personal life revolved around the well-heeled Independent Presbyterian Church and the Colonial Dames Society, repository of the historical conscience of Savannah's upper class. With hair piled high on head, a collar tightly wrapped around her neck, and a long, dark dress, she seemed the very image of the Victorian school mistress. When the feared Miss Pape appeared in classrooms and hallways, backs stiffened and conversation ceased. "She had a somewhat cavern-

²⁶Transcripts of Savannah High School students, 1917-1933, microfilm, Archives, Savannah-Chatham County Board of Education.

²⁷Student Files, 1905-1930, Pape School Archives, SCDS. William Harden, *A History of Savannah and South Georgia*. Vol. 2. (c1913, reprint, Atlanta, 1981), biographical sketches. "Roll Book of Senior Department, The Haskell-Pape School," 1905, Haskell-Pape School Paper, GHS.

ous voice," a student remembered, "and a way of emphasizing a point by wagging her middle and index fingers at her listener; it did sort of rivet your attention." "Good morning, children!" she intoned in every class; "The same to you, Miss Pape!" came the one acceptable reply.²⁸

And yet the 1920s saw her push the fragile school into the mainstream of progressive education. At the end of World War I, several directors of private progressive schools—led by the heads of the Park School in Baltimore, the Washington Montessori School, the Lincoln School in New York City, and the Organic School in Fairhope, Alabama—came together to create the Progressive Education Association, a body later identified in the public's mind with the worst excesses of the movement.²⁹ Calling for creative self-expression on the part of the child but refusing to endorse any one approach, the association attracted a large following: 86 members at the initial meeting, 491 twelve months later, including Nina Pape, the lone representative from Georgia, and 1,600 by 1922. Shortly after joining, Pape shared with the parents of her students her concept of experimental education. Her school, she told them, was not one of those that deemphasized formal subjects in favor of play and manual work; rather it emphasized subjects like math and English, but taught them in unison with games, field trips and other approaches that served to reinforce the lesson. Attending PEA annual conventions in cities like Baltimore, Chicago and New York, she visited progressive schools and heard talks which urged educators to "teach how to think, not what to think" and to "avoid regimentation."³⁰

Although Pape's progressivism was a mild version of what prevailed elsewhere, it represented a dramatic contrast with the educational philosophy of the Savannah public school system. Fourth graders went outdoors to study geometric forms in the shapes of

²⁸"A Tribute to My School Teacher" (n.d.), Pape School Archives, SCDS. Nina Pape's personal diaries, 1933, 1934, 1935. Pape Papers, GHS. Arthur Gordon to author, April 16, 1992.

²⁹Crimmins, *The Crystal Stair*, 240-50; Graham, *Progressive Education*, 17-20.

³⁰Typed notes that accompany the first draft of the prospectus, "The Parent School Company," November 1919, Pape School Archives, SCDS. Undated notes from meetings of educators at Park School, Buffalo, New York, and Shaker Heights School, Cleveland, Ohio, Pape Papers, GHS.

bushes, trees and other plant life in Forsyth Park. Seventh graders spent the year taking a "cruise around the world," a student recalled. "As soon as the ship made port, we would write up our individual impression . . . I can still clearly remember the train ride from Le Havre to Paris and then on to Marseilles, Florence, Rome and Naples, and the more exotic cities of Asia still come into view." Flush with Wilsonian idealism, Pape reorganized the upper school in 1919 to allow student participation in rule making, with the principal serving as the executive branch, the faculty the Senate, and the upper level students the House of Representatives. Even if the most substantive issue was the question of discipline in study hall, democracy in education meant "allowing or rather insisting that the pupils should cooperate in school government."³¹

In one innovation, however, Pape placed herself squarely in opposition to a deeply entrenched tradition of southern private schools: the commitment to single-sex education. In 1919, she contacted Eugene R. Smith, a founder of the Progressive Education Association and headmaster of the Park School in Baltimore, one of the few coed day schools in the country from kindergarten through twelfth grade. She was attracted not only to the notion that the child must be an active participant in the learning process but to the idea of coeducation. If mixing boys and girls in upper level classes was a novel concept for private schools in the North, it was a revolutionary one for the South. No private school south of the Mason-Dixon Line had ever attempted integrated classes beyond the elementary grades, and even public schools treaded lightly around the practice.³²

Nina Pape's own conversion was prompted as much by a hard-headed analysis of the future as by her progressive leanings: the fact that Savannahians continued to send the best and the brightest to boarding school by ninth grade, the lack of commitment to a genuine college prep education, and the fierce resistance within

³¹Pape School Bulletin, February 1923 and February 1928, Pape Papers, GHS. George Fenwick Jones to author, 1993. "Pape School Has Excellent System," November 5, 1919, *Savannah Morning News*. Typed note: "The Pape School stands for democracy in education," 1920, Pape School Archives, SCDS.

³²Cremin, *The Transformation of the School*, 197-98, 242, 250, 277; David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, *Learning Together: A History of Coeducation in American Schools* (New Haven, Conn., 1990) 46-113; Crimmins, *The Crystal Stair*, 182-99.

Savannah to anything which resembled progress. In early 1920, a prospectus, copied verbatim from the Park School, announced the formation of a Parents School Company, a privately held corporation that was to establish a new coed college prep day school offering hot lunch, a supervised study hall after school, then sports, drama, and dancing classes. "The aim," according to an early draft, "is to develop initiative, freedom and self-government, to foster democracy rather than autocracy. To arouse interest by relating the subject of study to life and the world around the child." Pape put together an impressive committee to lead the campaign but, despite a handsome set of architectural plans, an elaborate prospectus and a series of meetings, few subscribed to the stock offering of \$150,000, and the Pape School opened in October 1920 unchanged.³³

Two years later, she took matters into her own hands and hired a male teacher from the Park School, to whom she gave the grandiloquent title "Headmaster, the Boys Department, the Pape School." His credentials may have been modest—a B.S. from Johns Hopkins in physical education and a teaching career in manual work and eighth grade science—but he had enthusiasm. In early May, the new "headmaster" attended the annual meeting of the Progressive Education Association, then boarded a train for Georgia. Shortly after his arrival, George Grim told parents that the new plan was "strictly in accordance with the most modern practices" as demonstrated by the Park School, but his efforts never attracted serious support, and, although Nina Pape did have boys who advanced as far as the tenth grade, the majority moved on after the eighth grade to St. Paul's, Exeter, Woodberry Forest or Episcopal High.³⁴ The Pape School had taken a step that was to be successful in the South only after World War II and the appearance of a newly affluent middle class.

³³"The Pape School: Problems," 1919, Pape School Archives, SCDS. Typed notes that accompany the first draft of the "Prospectus: The Parents School Company," November 1919, Pape School Archives, SCDS. Prospectus, "The Parents School Company," Order of Incorporation of the Parents School Company, March 9, 1920; Minutes of the First Meeting of the Subscribers . . . , March 24, 1920; By-Laws of the Parents School Company, Pape School Collection, GHS.

³⁴Correspondence of Nina Pape and George C. Grim, 1922-1925, Pape School Archives, SCDS.



In 1920, Nina Pape met Eugene Smith, head of the innovative Park School in Baltimore and a founder of the newly created Progressive Education Association. Following his encouragement, she made the Pape School into the first coed private day school in the South. A group of her sixth and seventh grade students pose here. *Photograph from the private collection of Mr. David Barrow, Jr., Savannah.*

From their beginnings, the elite of girls private schools in the South committed themselves to a college preparatory education. The catalog of Washington Seminary in 1899 advertised that special attention was given to "preparing pupils for the leading colleges, particularly Wellesley, Vassar, Radcliffe . . . and Bryn Mawr." In 1905, Girls Preparatory School in Chattanooga was formed after the public high school refused to train its female students for college, and over the course of the next thirty years GPS sent 266 out of 450 graduates to college, the majority to the University of Chattanooga, which was more nearly a junior college, but also to Agnes Scott, Wellesley and Smith. And if Margaret Mitchell, a 1917 graduate of Washington Seminary, found Smith College to be a mortifying experience for a southern girl, most did not. Northeastern colleges continued to adhere to the religious ideal of virtuous True Womanhood, long after most of their peers had become coed and were pursuing other visions. Only in the South was single-sex higher education still the rigorously upheld norm.

Nevertheless, by the 1920s, college of some form was the expected step for southern girls of upper middle-class background.⁵⁵

Fundamentally an elementary schoolteacher, Nina Pape was slow in discovering the attractions of a four-year post-secondary education, but, from her earliest days, she had insisted that girls be spontaneous, creative, and naturally curious, that nature study and physical conditioning be an expected part of a girl's training. Parents applauded. By the time she reached her mature years, four years in an elite women's college had come to seem a necessity. In 1909, Vassar admitted a Pape student; two years later Radcliffe followed suit; and bit by bit the headmistress emphasized a traditional college preparatory curriculum in the upper grades. By the 1920s, she bragged to any and all that the Pape School was an "A" class institution the equal of any in the North. Her teachers held diplomas from Johns Hopkins, Columbia, Swarthmore, Vassar, Vanderbilt and Minnesota, although turnover was high because most were young women fresh from college who quickly married or moved on. The rock on which her program rested was a singular woman who dominated the classroom from 1904 until 1936. "Eventually, one fell into the clutches of Miss Emily Charlton, who taught Latin and was the most fearsome (and the best) teacher in the school," a student recalled. "You had to stand up and recite and if you made a mistake she would roar, 'Pure, unadulterated, inexcusable carelessness.'"⁵⁶

For a small prep school in a town of the Deep South, the results were impressive. Between 1915 and 1934, the Pape School gave diplomas to 116 girls: 77 of them went on to a four-year college; 3 attended junior college; 5 went to finishing school; 9 became secretaries; 7 attended teacher training schools; and 13 married, traveled or entered immediately into the social life in Savannah. By way of contrast, almost none of the female graduates

⁵⁵Crimmins, *The Crystal Stair*, 145. College Placement, 1905-1935, School Archives, Girls Preparatory School, Chattanooga, Tenn. Darden A. Pyron, *Southern Daughter: The Life of Margaret Mitchell* (New York, 1991) 106-115; Barbara Mills Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven, Conn., 1985), 46-61.

⁵⁶"Open Air Commencement: First Graduating Exercises of Pape School on School Lawn," May 29, 1909, *Savannah Morning News*. "Facts about the Pape School: Private Schools an Asset to a City," 1919, Pape School Archives, SCDS. Pape School Yearbooks, 1921-1929, Pape School Archives, SCDS. Arthur Gordon to author, April 16, 1992.

of Savannah High went on to college and, when they indicated intended careers, rarely was there a mention of more than teaching or "stenography." Of the 77 Pape graduates who entered college, a scant 16 chose a public school within Georgia, while 14 went to Agnes Scott, the one acceptable choice within the state.³⁷

Miss Pape set her sights on elite women's colleges and, in so doing, played on a tradition that extended back to the early nineteenth century when families sent their girls to boarding schools in the North. From 1915 to 1934, 66 percent of the graduates went to college out-of-state, and most of these (55 percent of the total) to northern schools. The college of choice was Smith, with 16 Pape graduates, followed by Randolph-Macon (8), Wellesley (6), Barnard (5), Columbia (4) and Vassar (3), then Radcliffe, Swarthmore, Goucher, and Sarah Lawrence with one each. Georgians in general had a special affinity for Smith College. Ironically, Savannah sent more students to Smith than six southern states and almost as many as two others. Not surprisingly the collegians were daughters of lawyers and doctors, cotton brokers and merchants, fertilizer and lumber executives. Although one could find a hard-



Through the 1930s, a high percentage of Pape School graduates went north to college, preferably at Smith, Vassar or Wellesley. The migration of Savannah's brightest girls to the colleges of the Northeast served to keep alive the antebellum ties with the cultural corridor that had long flourished along the east coast. *Photograph from the Georgia Historical Society.*

³⁷"Colleges and Normal Schools which have enrolled Pape School graduates since 1915" (1934). "List of Pape School Graduates by Years," 1934, Pape School Archives, SCDS.

ware dealer, a printer or a building contractor, noticeably absent were families from manufacturing or industry. It was a narrowly traditional group, one that had provided Savannah its leadership throughout the nineteenth century.³⁸

The group did contain one novel feature: Jewish families who had been prominent in Savannah's life but were, for the first time, entering into an arena that had been an exclusively white Protestant preserve: the Sheftalls, the Myers, the Franks, and the Pinkus-sohns, all members of Temple Mickve Israel. Pape worked to see that these graduates were not penalized in the admissions process. "In the South, we have a type of Jewish family that one does not find in the North," she wrote Smith College on behalf of a senior. "They are not only cultured and refined but occupy positions of high esteem with Christians as well as Jews, and their children associate with Christian children. We think it only fair to mention this in justice to Jane, for she is an exceedingly nice girl and should not be classed with the objectionable type of Jewess."³⁹

With the 1930s, Nina Pape grew into a caricature of herself, becoming testier and more autocratic as she fought for the financial solvency of her fragile school at a moment when educational reform seemed an unaffordable luxury. Fewer girls tended to go to colleges of the Northeast; more went to local institutions, and some dared descend to the junior college level. In the process, the quality of studies in the upper grades, if not the elementary ones, declined. When Pape died at age seventy-four in 1944, still in firm control, the days of talking about Froebel and Pestalozzi seemed long ago. The school passed into the hands of her niece, who successfully ran it for eleven years, then sold the assets to a new group seeking to establish a coed country day school, ironically modeled on what Miss Pape had sought in 1920.

Despite the frustration of her later years, Nina Pape's career testified to the impact of the kindergarten movement on Savan-

³⁸From a representative sample taken from Smith's student directories between 1915 and 1929, a total of 64 girls from Georgia attended, of whom 21 were from Savannah and 22 from Atlanta, compared with only 5 girls from all of South Carolina, 12 each from North Carolina and Florida, 23 from Alabama and 24 from Tennessee. *Smith College Directory of Students, 1915-1916 through 1929-1930*, Smith College Archives. Fathers' occupations taken from student files, 1911-1930, Pape School Archives, SCDS.

³⁹Pape to the Dean, Smith College, March 15, 1924, Jane Myers Folder, Pape School Archives, SCDS.

Nina Pape, pictured at right in the 1930s, continued to maintain full and firm control of her school until the time of her death in 1944, at the age of seventy-four. Her niece followed her as head of the school, a position she held for the next eleven years. *Photograph from the Savannah Country Day School.*



nah's traditional leadership during the early years of the twentieth century. On one level, the small band of upper-class women who worked to make the educational ideas of Friedrich Froebel a reality for the town's privileged daughters laid a foundation that made possible the quick incorporation of the Girl Scouts into the ideals of the Progressive movement—nature study, community dramas, gymnastics and basketball, saving disadvantaged children through “new” forms of play, and bringing together young people from different ends of the social spectrum. Through the careful editing of the English Girl Guides handbook by these women, the image of the “up-to-date” traditional woman took a shape that was to influence American girls over the next decade. On another level, the kindergarten movement helped Savannah's upper class broaden the definition of the southern lady, in effect to recognize that young girls needed to be creative, spontaneous, athletic and able to think critically. They were attracted to a program that had their children in Forsyth Park studying geometric forms or taking elaborate imaginary trips around the world or debating the rules governing the life of the upper school. Even for those who withdrew

their support, notably over coeducation in the 1920s, their disaffection was manifested by polite indifference rather than outright hostility.

Finally, the changes helped make it easier for that small upper class to choose a college education for their daughters, preferably in the Northeast at a Smith, a Vassar, or a Wellesley. And herein lay the irony. The migration of Savannah's brightest girls to northern colleges served to keep alive the antebellum ties with the cultural corridor that had long flourished along the eastern seaboard. Ultimately, the progressive reforms of Nina Pape took a deeply entrenched tradition, dusted it off and made it relevant to the new age. A 1934 survey of Pape alumnae showed that the largest number of graduates living outside Savannah did not reside in Georgia, where Atlanta seemed the natural magnet, but in the state of New York. Fifty-one percent of all alumnae lived outside the eleven states of the Confederacy.⁴⁰ A *Savannah Morning News* article detailing the careers of Pape alumnae in 1950 listed a psychiatrist on the staff of the Colorado General Hospital, an information officer with the United Nations, the wife of a former British ambassador to Japan, a professor at Columbia University, a landscape architect, and the head of a private school in New York.⁴¹

During the 1920s, the South may have been a singularly insular land, but the cultural horizon of its urban elite of doctors, lawyers, cotton merchants and bankers represented a notable exception to that stingy pattern. In many ways, the paradox of Nina Pape's life was the paradox of Savannah's traditional leadership: the ability to reach out and acquire northern cultural values in a way that did not threaten or damage the delicate fabric that held that society together. Representative of a small but influential strata of private schools in the region, the Pape School served as a powerful link between the leadership of the Old South and that of the New, a filter through which older social groupings could pass and emerge with enough protective coloring to survive in the new world of the twentieth century.

⁴⁰"Out-of-Town Alumnae," a survey compiled in 1933, Pape School Archives, SCDS.

⁴¹"Pape School looks back over 50 years of service in local education field," January 15, 1950, *Savannah Morning News*.

"Up in the Argonne":
The Tragedy of Lieutenant Justus Owens
and the 82nd Division in the First World War

BY RICHARD S. FAULKNER

ON October 10, 1918, as the 82nd Division's 3rd Battalion, 326th Infantry Regiment began its attack to capture the small Argonne Forest town of Pylone, France, the doughboys of Company L came under heavy and accurate machine gun fire from German positions overlooking the Decauville railroad. The company deployed to silence the machine gun, but the steep and rutted terrain of the Argonne quickly channeled and fragmented the American advance into a series of disorganized, uncoordinated and huddled rushes. The enemy fire began to take a heavy toll among the confused and bunched American ranks. First Lieutenant Justus Erwin Owens rallied his soldiers and was leading the platoon to destroy the German gun. As they scrambled up the slope, twelve Company L soldiers fell before the machine gun's concentrated fire. Twenty feet from the German position the young lieutenant also fell, shot by a German sniper concealed in the fork of a tree directly over the machine gun. Shooting the lieutenant proved equally fatal to the sniper. The German's fire had disclosed his position to First Sergeant John M. Peurifoy, whose fire knocked the sniper from his high perch to the forest floor be-

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