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Behind the Fan:
Conservative Activists in the New Orleans Christian Woman's Exchange,
1881-1891

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
History

by

Gabrielle Walker

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Abstract

In 1881, Margaret Bartlett of New Orleans crafted the Christian Woman's Exchange using the New York Exchange chapter as a model. Bartlett hoped this new organization would help alleviate at least some of the economic suffering "reduced gentlewomen" faced. Despite the Exchange's original mission to help the elite, the group soon crossed class and racial boundaries in a campaign of conservative activism. The Christian Woman's Exchange helped women provide for their families by training them to produce homemade goods for sale in consignment shops. Simultaneously, working-class women found employment within the Christian Woman's Exchange lunch room and other business ventures. Since the group's consignors had the opportunity to earn wages while remaining at home, and working-class women tied themselves to a respectable business, the accepted societal expectations for all women involved remained intact. In the group's first decade, the Christian Woman's Exchange members managed to maintain the Southern lady veneer while attracting attention from women around the world.

Keywords: New Orleans Christian Women's, History, Nineteenth Century, South

“[Our first object is] to provide ways and means for the encouragement and relief of our impoverished women who can not be crushed into beggary and sin but who earnestly seek a help themselves.” Margaret Bartlett, founder of the Christian Woman’s Exchange¹

From the 1860s onward, Southern women suffered through years of war, Reconstruction, and financial depression. Though poor and minority women suffered the most, “reduced gentlewomen” also faced great hardship. Many were left widowed, orphaned, or destitute due to their husbands’, or fathers’, inability to provide.² In 1881, Margaret Bartlett of New Orleans recognized the deprivation of those around her and hoped a new organization would help alleviate at least some of the economic hardship many genteel women faced. Bartlett set forth the mission of a new woman’s group, which she planned to name the Christian Woman’s Exchange (CWE). In a newspaper article announcing the new endeavor, she stated, “If we are properly informed there is a great desire among many of our ‘best people’ to have an efficient organization of ladies, ready and willing to do whatsoever...for the encouragement, improvement, and reclamation of their own sex....”³ Bartlett designed her Exchange chapter to focus primarily on relieving elite, white women of their financial burdens by training them to produce homemade goods for sale in consignment shops. Simultaneously, working-class women found employment within the CWE lunch room and other business ventures. Since the group’s consignors had the opportunity to earn wages while remaining at home, and working-class women tied themselves to a respectable business, the accepted societal expectations for all women involved remained intact. In the group’s first decade, CWE members managed to maintain the Southern lady veneer. As one would hide behind a scented fan to shield herself from the stench of New Orleans’ city streets, CWE members hid behind the fan of Southern womanhood to create an innovative, conservative approach to nineteenth-century women’s reform. Using the fan to shield themselves from potential public criticism, CWE members

engaged women of various classes and created the standard for future New Orleans women's groups to follow.

Bartlett learned about the Woman's Exchange movement during a trip to New York City, where she received a copy of the constitution, by-laws, and 1880 annual report of the New York Exchange for Woman's Work (NYE). After returning to New Orleans, Bartlett placed an advertisement, entitled "The Ladies Call," for all interested women to meet on April 1, 1881, at the St. Charles Hotel parlor.⁴ At that meeting, with the help of Mrs. R. M. (Caroline) Walmsley, Bartlett introduced approximately forty women to the Exchange movement. The group, which rapidly grew to seventy-five, met again the next week.⁵

Even though the CWE's original mission focused on assisting white, upper-class women, in its first decade the group quickly developed an array of services to help women across class and racial lines. The women involved in the newly established organization sought to provide a stable, respectable way in which "reduced gentlewomen" could work from their homes to earn wages.⁶ To this end, the group opened a consignment shop for women to sell homemade handicrafts. Soon, the group extended its charitable endeavors to include a lunch room that not only supplied employment to a fortunate few working-class women, but provided affordable meals to the struggling upper-class and another place for consignors to sell homemade items.⁷ Over the course of then years, the CWE accomplished these early goals and in addition it opened a free-circulating library, a day nursery for working mothers, a boardinghouse for single women, and an employment bureau to assist those younger, and lower-class, women looking for honest employment outside the home.⁸

Among the first of New Orleans' Protestant organizations, the CWE was the first created by and for women. The group differed from other local charitable woman's groups in two ways.

First, the Board of Managers consisted only of Protestant women, whereas the vast majority of charitable operations within the city consisted of Catholic orders.⁹ Second, no men were involved in overseeing its operations.¹⁰ These differences allowed the CWE to manage its affairs without answering to an outside authority. A contemporary model for the CWE to follow was Margaret Haughery, a widowed Catholic woman of New Orleans. An Irish immigrant and poor, Haughery lost her husband, livelihood, and child early on. She eventually became an independent entrepreneur, donating much of her profits to a number of orphanages the Sisters of Charity operated.¹¹ Known throughout the city simply as “Margaret,” Haughery and her endeavors were celebrated city-wide, becoming one of the first United States women to have a statue created in her honor. As a widow and entrepreneur, Margaret set an early example for individual New Orleans women to replicate, but as the nineteenth-century progressed, few New Orleans women formed autonomous groups.

In 1876, New Orleans city directories had no listing of an independent women’s group that organized for philanthropic or educational purposes other than the Crescent City Relief Association (CCRA). The CCRA sought to help the families of the fallen Crescent City White League members, but its charity usually did not extend beyond hosting a concert or dance a few times a year. The group soon allowed men as members, although the women provided the majority of the group’s planning of functions and distribution of charity.¹² According to the book of charters at the Notarial Archives in New Orleans, at least thirty women’s groups formed between 1854 and 1880, but not all of them established themselves as independent or charitable organizations.¹³ From 1877 to 1884, the number of women’s groups listed in the city directories fluctuated from two to five clubs a year. In 1884, the first year of the World’s Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition, three women’s groups were listed in the city directory: the CCRA,

Teacher's Society, and CWE.¹⁴ The first two did not exist for improving or assisting needy New Orleans women. In the directories, women's group members advertised their meeting places and times, as well as their officers. Soon after the successful launch of the CWE, New Orleans' women's groups increased in number. These documents indicate that from 1885 to 1890, the number of women's groups listed in the directory grew to nineteen, and women began to form and participate in the female counterparts to male lodges.¹⁵ With no substantial, local example for the CWE to follow, the members adapted the Exchange model while carving a new path that adhered to the conservative Southern lady culture.

In its formative years, the CWE possibly sought to combine the successful efforts of both Margaret and the independent NYE. Without an outside governing body, the CWE enjoyed the freedom to choose the charitable activities it judged as the most helpful for impoverished women. During the first decade of operation, 1881-1891, the women of the CWE raised more than \$100,000 for their consignors and experienced much success in all their activities. In doing so, the Christian Woman's Exchange solidified its legitimacy as a professional non-profit organization, and it became a template for many other charitable women's groups in New Orleans, across the nation, and in other countries.¹⁶

Today, the history and achievements of the CWE are largely unknown, and there is little academic work on the group. Charles DuFour's *Women Who Cared*, a popular account of the CWE, provides a chronological and biographical view of the institution and its activities.¹⁷ However, other than Kathleen Sander's *The Business of Charity*, few scholars have researched this particular woman's group or movement. Sander's work centers on the Woman's Exchange movement beginning in 1832 in Philadelphia, and its spread to many other prominent Northern cities. The 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition hosted a Department of Woman's Work, in

which numerous handicrafts and inventions designed and created by women were exhibited. Sander argues that the real growth of Exchange chapters stemmed from this exhibit.¹⁸ She asserts that the exhibit inspired the founding of the NYE and encouraged chapters everywhere to provide more ways to help women than just consignment shops, such as classes to teach women skills to help them find jobs or ready income.¹⁹

Recent scholarship on various nineteenth century, gender-related issues provides general overviews about women's groups and their members. Marjorie Wheeler, in her study of the Southern Suffrage Movement, argues that Southern women were inclined to take on the responsibility "for guiding and nurturing Southern society." Due to this inclination, she writes, Southern upper-class women began to form and join women's groups in and out of the church setting.²⁰ Elna Green examines the anti-Suffrage movement in Southern states. She argues that Southern women who objected to women's suffrage generally did not join women's clubs, even faith-based organizations. Joining a club would place middle- and upper-class women beyond their domestic sphere, and those women openly opposed to women's suffrage discouraged club membership in order to portray the epitome of a Southern lady. Some women joined without a political agenda, but after some years of belonging to such groups, women may have unintentionally developed political views in favor of reform and women's suffrage.²¹

According to Anne Scott's study of the changing role of women in Southern society, after the Industrial Revolution women had fewer labor-intensive chores. With less to occupy their hands and minds, women were encouraged to engage themselves so as to not become idle. This also prompted the formation and joining of a woman's group. Accompanying these reasons was the desire to help women in need. "Spinsters, widows, wives with disabled husbands – such women had to earn a living...."²² American middle-class and well-to-do matrons noticed the

desperation of some of these women and resolved to help them. However, for many of these philanthropists, their giving soon turned into receiving as men left and fortunes disappeared.

During the Civil War and Reconstruction, many genteel women lost their financial support when their men-folk departed or died. The year 1873 brought with it a financial panic leaving many of the elite bankrupt, and hundreds of women across class lines began seeking ways to assist (or become) the breadwinner.²³ Few extended charity toward these former elite, but many sought to alleviate conditions for the working- and lower-classes. In the final two decades of the nineteenth century, a group of women in Iowa established a group, called the Lend a Hand club, to aid working-class women, opened a dressing room for women to rest while in the city, and operated a home for women without friends or family. By joining and operating women's clubs and shops, these women learned management skills and financial independence from men. Sharon Wood wrote, "While appearing to uphold the nineteenth-century gender ideal that confined women to a separate sphere of private, nurturing duties, 'woman's work for woman' often subverted that ideal by inventing professional employment opportunities for women."²⁴ Women's charitable groups, however, were not universally supported.

Alice Kessler-Harris argues that the prevailing cultural expectations for women taught them to marry, raise children, and refrain from seeking (or helping others to seek) public wage-earning work. In her study, *Out to Work*, Kessler-Harris explains in more detail about the "domestic code" and the predicament faced by many working-class women. Many men did not encourage their wives and daughters to work beyond the confines of the home. She argues that in the years before the Civil War, the nation told its women that their patriotic duty was to help provide, but after wards, the nation encouraged women to return home, nurturing providing for the children emotionally, not financially. Widows and spinsters worked out of necessity, but

upper-class matrons did not stoop to working outside the home except in the most dire of circumstances.²⁵

To accommodate the upper-class financial needs and societal expectations, formerly wealthy women remained in their respected sphere while using their place and position to help make ends meet. Wendy Gamber's groundbreaking study on nineteenth century American boardinghouse culture reveals that many single women who inherited real estate took in boarders.²⁶ Some elite women were unable or unwilling to open their homes to renters. To provide for their families without rejecting the accepted woman's role, upper-class women used their artistic skills befitting their gender.²⁷ Charitable women's groups and individual philanthropists allowed these women to sell their wares for little more than the cost of making the items.

As mentioned earlier, the woman's work exhibit at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition sparked national growth among women's clubs, however pitiful in scope, as some women spectators noted, the exhibit was.²⁸ Contemporary women also noticed the growth of woman's organizations, especially in the South. As Mrs. J. C. Croly, a prominent woman's club organizer observed about one Tennessee town, "In so conservative a city, the idea of a society exclusively for women was novel; organization by women was decidedly an advanced step."²⁹ According to Sander, Candace Wheeler co-founded the NYE not long after her visit to the Centennial. It was at the exposition that Wheeler "learned how traditional ideas of self-help, used successfully in antebellum Exchanges, could combine with new influences of decorative arts and entrepreneurship to advance women's economic opportunities."³⁰ Because of the prevailing thought of woman's obligation to the home, Exchange chapters sought to keep women in their proper sphere – at home. Many chapters even offered anonymity for its consignors.³¹

Remaining at home while creating objects for sale encouraged women and men to approve the participation in woman's clubs. However, some of the most reform-minded felt the Exchange offer for anonymity was a tragedy and counter-productive for the advancement of women. The Lend a Hand Club in Iowa made it clear that women should receive full credit for their work.³²

Groups like the CWE, composed of wealthy women, cared for the impoverished elite and their reputations, making allowances for women seeking anonymity, and yet participation in these groups developed management and entrepreneurial skills in its members that eventually led to women's economic and social independence.³³ In many instances the New Orleans members did not assert a feminist-like independence, but rather they made an attempt at increasing the bond between women and men. While the CWE had total control of their assets and activities, the women sought advice and assistance from trusted male advisors. After the first CWE meeting, the women requested Protestant pastors to announce the group's mission and next meeting date during the Sunday morning services. A well-known attorney, and husband of a CWE manager, provided free legal services in most cases, especially when giving advice about the charter and by-laws. A few members interviewed the mayor about receiving a license at a reduced price.³⁴ Realizing a need for men's approval, in "The Ladies Call," Bartlett stated that involving themselves in such an organization would allow women to maintain "pace with out noble Christian men, and be trained into suitable life companions for the same."³⁵ Whether to satisfy legal obligations or their husbands' wishes, twelve of the original twenty-four CWE managers arranged for their husbands to "authorize" their wives' signatures on the charter.³⁶

The original founders of the Philadelphia exchange sought to focus upon assisting the genteel poor. After the 1876 Centennial, Exchange chapters, such as the NYE, began to incorporate and encourage women's education, sometimes crossing class borders. NYE

members sometimes taught, and other times hired others to teach, various skills such as embroidery, dress making, and cooking.³⁷ As an affluent society matron, Margaret Bartlett had the financial capability to travel to various states and countries during the summer months. In 1881, she came across the NYE and was so impressed that she asked for its organizational documents to share with New Orleans women.³⁸ At the first CWE meeting in April 1881, Bartlett read to forty women present the NYE 1880 annual report and presented her three objectives for the New Orleans Exchange chapter.

One, to provide ways and means for the encouragement and relief of our impoverished women who can not be crushed into beggary and sin but who earnestly seek a help themselves. Two, to provide some means of improvement in the education of our young women, by which they may become artistic workers in all the great and grand affairs of human life, both practical and ornamental. Three, we mean an earnest effort to reclaim the Lord's own from the pernicious amusements and allurements of this world, and to cultivate in our hearts the high Christian grace of compassion as shown by our Lord's example when He kindly said to that guilty woman, "Go and sin no more."³⁹

In her objectives there are two references to sin, revealing some of Bartlett's motivation for establishing the CWE. Some women in need of financial stability did enter prostitution and other immoral or degrading employment. Bartlett and Walmsley hoped to use the organization as a way to prevent these occurrences, especially among ladies of high standing. While extending a helping hand to women of any religious background, the Board consisted of only Protestant women. Many of the founding members were Presbyterian church-goers, and as one of, if not the only, faith-based Exchange chapter, they meant the religious component to be an extension of their faith. In "The Ladies Call," Bartlett quoted from the Biblical book of Isaiah: "Rise up, ye women that are at ease: hear my voice, ye careless daughters.... Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless, for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come."⁴⁰

Establishing the CWE as a faith-based organization encouraged rapid membership growth. After only two weeks, the group boasted over one hundred subscribers.⁴¹

With so many women in attendance, the group thrived and suffered at the same time. Few members possessed the management skills needed to maintain order during the meetings. As stated in the CWE minute books, some confusion as to proper governing procedure occurred, and more than once did a motion need repeating. According to the April 3 *Daily Picayune*, “The meeting was conducted without any strict attention to parliamentary rules, and since the ladies effected the purpose for which the meeting had been called, it can safely be said they got along just as well without parliamentary precision as with it.”⁴² The group had a high learning curve as it bumbled its way through its first year of operation. Without following an established set of governing rules, the women made numerous mistakes, but in accordance with their trademark phrase, the members expected “perseverance to the end.” On April 5, the group met for the second time, and Walmsley acted as pro-tem chairwoman. After the same activities and speeches took place, the body voted on seven articles for the CWE by-laws and for twenty-four members to act as a Board of Managers.⁴³ Not surprisingly, Bartlett became the first president. On April 11, the CWE voted to rent a premises at 41 and 43 Bourbon Street.

Representatives of the Southern Art Union and Woman’s Industrial Association (SAU) attended this meeting on April 11 with the intention of uniting their group with the CWE, but the union had one condition for the alliance. The SAU wanted the CWE to allow women of any creed, or religious affiliation, on the Board of Managers. This action “provoked a warm discussion” among the CWE members, and the motion to join the two groups did not pass.⁴⁴

The position of the CWE as a Protestant Christian organization caused some controversy for at least three months. Eliza Nicholson, owner and editor of the *Daily Picayune*, offered to

publish the group's notes in every Sunday paper. Many columns during the first year of the CWE's operation defended the religious component and its mission to help a portion of the female poor.⁴⁵ On April 10, "One of the C. W. E." wrote for the paper,

While we are a Protestant organization of no small dimensions, with an extensive work before us: for harmonious actions, and prudential reasons, we thought it advisable for once to try our strength in its management; but we do not shut out any others who may desire co-operation with us. ...we will cordially receive any who will accept as their property our trademark 'P.Lc.P.,' which means purity of motive, love and charity to all, and perseverance to the end. Now to ventilate our narrowness and exclusiveness. We have to say that we only follow the illustrious example of the other large religious bodies in our midst. Who of us have ever been asked to join an Israelite society, unless we accepted their religion? We mean no disrespect by this query; but on the contrary entertain the highest admiration for their example in the care of their poor.... We cordially invite them to co-operate with us. ...The Roman Catholics are not equally excluded. ... Any of them that desire to help us in our great work are cordially invited to do so.⁴⁶

The SAU made clear in one of its advertisements of its acceptance, into membership and charity, of women of every creed. In 1881, the CWE and SAU battled in the newspapers, each boasting of its efforts for helping needy women.⁴⁷ The CWE, defending its reasons for maintaining strict rules regarding religious affiliation, claimed to be open to helping those of other creeds. New Orleans' women of color were not as fortunate. Stated in CWE by-laws, "All *white women*, without regard to religious belief, may become members of the Christian Woman's Exchange and participate in the benefits of the Association, provided, the managers assent thereto at a regular monthly meeting."⁴⁸ On April 18, one member moved that the group help any woman in need no matter her race. However, she withdrew the motion before a vote was taken.⁴⁹ While guarding themselves and their organization, group members also carried a number of those willing and eager to help their cause. The group's notary, lawyer, and mayor provided their services for the CWE free of charge. In June 1881, Paul Tulane donated the first large sum,

\$100.⁵⁰ Despite all the publicity and criticism from a select few, Bartlett eagerly pursued fulfilling the group's mission.

After paying the five dollar annual dues, members were each given three tickets with which a needy woman of their choice could enter items for sale in the consignment shop, located in their rented space on Bourbon Street. The group also opened a cafeteria-style lunch room just opposite the consignment shop, where women could enter cakes, bread, and other food items for sale. Men and women were welcomed as customers, and the CWE appears to have targeted the upper-class as its customers. On one occasion a girl of modest means asked to be served in the back of the lunch room away from the ladies and gentlemen in the front. The CWE managers praised this girl's actions in the board minutes.⁵¹ Financial records reveal that the consignment shop was almost an immediate success. The lunch room, on the other hand, required special attention. By August 1881, sales in the lunch room were up, larger numbers of guests came, and more women and girls were employed to work in the lunch department.⁵² In October, the semi-annual report revealed a balance of \$3,098.70; over \$2000 originated from sales in the lunch room and consignment shop.

In April 1882, the CWE held its first annual meeting. The treasurer reported a balance of nearly three hundred dollars on hand, and she reported the CWE having made and spent over \$13,000, a considerable sum in the 1800s. During the year, the group rented rooms at low rates and held classes for embroidery and dress making, offering some classes free.⁵³ During its first few months, the CWE helped a number of women, and in her excitement, Bartlett encouraged the establishment of CWE auxiliaries in various Southern cities. However, she was in Europe and made this request in a letter. The group decided its responsibilities were too great but that its president could do as she wished with her own time.⁵⁴

Still learning proper operating procedures, the CWE began its second year term with some confusion.⁵⁵ The by-laws required a nominating committee to suggest members to the Board of Mangers at the annual meeting. The committee needed to nominate some for three, two, and one year terms. It developed that the committee did not understand its duties as required in the by-laws. CWE manuscripts do not include the reasons for the confusion, nor all the details surrounding the event. The original board members called a special meeting later in the month for the selection of mangers and officers. Caroline Walmsley became president, while Margaret Bartlett became one of five vice-presidents.⁵⁶ Walmsley's election to office began a twenty-four year reign in that capacity. In May, the new president passionately spoke of goals the CWE needed to attain, including a home for women and a free circulating library.⁵⁷

During the 1882-83 year, other women's groups in the Unites States wrote to the CWE for advice, particularly about the lunch room. This term the CWE offered cooking classes to any woman who sought training and hosted a bazaar for the consignors' benefit. The group also opened an artistic needlework, or Kensington, department, named for a type of fancy embroidery. The group purchased a large amount of material and supplies for the class. A teacher fro the NYE arrived to assist the department, but few pupils attended. In March 1883, due to the lack of funds and students, the group was forced to terminate the Kensington Department and sell the material.

The next term came without incident, and the CWE carried on its consignment shop and lunch room successfully. The group instituted an employment bureau and opened a dressing room for women to use as a place of rest while in the city.⁵⁸ However, the group began to suffer some minor financial and relational problems with outside companies. Following unsuccessful negotiations with the landlady, the CWE paid for some major renovations to its building space.

The telephone company that previously offered some services pro bono did not receive an official note of thanks and refused the group's request of a reduction in billing costs. In March 1884, three intoxicated men accosted one of the managers, Mrs. Juden. The managers decided to ensure a situation like this did not happen again, and while they accepted the drunk men's apologies, these three were no longer allowed to patronize the lunch room. Also, any noticeably drunk or "profane" person was to be refused service while a policeman was summoned. At this same meeting, the managers dictated a letter to Major Edmund A. Burke, head of the New Orleans World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition, requesting information on how they could be involved. He did not immediately answer, so three members met with Burke personally in order to find how their group could be of service to the Department of Woman's Work.⁵⁹ From April to October 1884, the CWE readied its exhibits for the department.

While preparing for the Exposition, the CWE assumed a prominent place in the Department of Woman's Work, and its building served as the department's headquarters.⁶⁰ Major Burke appointed Julia Ward Howe as the president of the woman's department in the fall of 1884.⁶¹ Known largely as the writer of the abolitionists' anthem "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," Howe was an energetic activist. Her activities included writing poetry, assisting in anti-slavery campaigns for new states admitted to the Union, and publicly promoting women's rights.⁶² She also had presided over the successful woman's department at the Boston World's Fair in 1883.⁶³ With a record of effective management skills, Howe seemed the perfect fit as president. However, a number of New Orleans' women were offended at the New Englander's appointment rather than a local, or at least a Southern, woman.⁶⁴ Some in the CWE became even more offended when, for reasons still unclear, Howe refused Walmsley as a CWE representative to the Woman's Department.⁶⁵

Suffering through interpersonal problems and with high hopes, Howe sent letter to various governors and influential women to assist her in collecting exhibit items and making arrangements for their attendance.⁶⁶ However, upon arrival in late 1884, exhibitors found the fair site unfinished and the city unable to pay its vendors until after the fair opened. Under Howe's leadership, this department promoted women's rights and exhibited many accomplishments of working women. The CWE assisted the department in selling handmade items from its consignment shop.⁶⁷ During the Expo, the department grew beyond the sale and exhibition of homemade items; it became a place of discussion on ideas about reform. Colonel Frank Morehead, a friend of Howe, remarked at the department's opening, "At [a] fair of the New-England Institution were exhibited many marvelous contrivances by which a woman can earn her own livelihood at home.... I believe in giving her the same pay for the same work, allowing her the same power to earn a living. In [the New Orleans] department all the devices by which she may benefit herself are explained, all her chances for self-education are increased."⁶⁸

With all its difficulties, the woman's department succeeded in creating an attractive and profitable exhibit space, with the CWE display placed in the center of the exhibit room. The CWE assisted the department even more when it paid for its own exhibit, as well as offering \$250 to the women of color exhibit. The CWE disregarded its rule of not assisting non-white women because of the Expo's importance. As stated in the minutes, "This was [the] only money given in the month, to assist women to make an exhibit."⁶⁹ The craftsmen built the exhibit space to each exhibitor's liking. The women from the Northwest preferred high partitions in order to hang photographs and plaques. However, the Northeastern and Southern women "preferred to

have their spaces defined by barriers which would not interfere, either with the general view of the gallery, or with the circulation of air....”⁷⁰

The most expensive decorations were the display cases used for exhibiting items. Their tables were made of rough pine board, but the women covered the tables with various inexpensive cloths. The walls were covered with low-priced draperies, and they covered the floors with small remnants of carpet. Each state and territory represented also added a unique touch to their exhibit space, like Kentucky whose representatives made their exhibit to resemble a frontier camp site. The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union of New Orleans offered purified drinking water with temperance literature at its exhibit. Despite the agonizing humiliation of increasing debt and the early discord over Expo appointees, the woman’s department participants received some of the highest accolades at the Expo.⁷¹ In an agreement with the Expo Board of Management, the CWE was able to keep the ten percent commission on any item sold in its space.⁷² The Department of Woman’s Work at the Expo, as with the 1876 Centennial, ignited a spark for the growth of New Orleans independent woman’s organizations, such as the CWE.⁷³

May 1885 marked the end of the World’s Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition and the beginning of a new term for the CWE. New Orleans women went back to their everyday lives. However, in the months and years to follow, New Orleans women began to form and join more independent reformist groups for charitable and educational purposes. The CWE members continued working to improve the lives of women with the consignment shop and lunch room, but the managers also began a “house fund” this year. One of Walmsley’s goals was to establish a rooming house for single women. The rooms rented at the group’s Bourbon Street building were apparently open to anyone. At least one older man and several women with male children

rented rooms from the group. The house fund would also give the group the required funds to purchase a building to use as a meeting place and a boardinghouse for single, working women.⁷⁴

The 1885-86 year was a financially difficult term for New Orleans and the CWE. Twenty-two women and girls worked in the CWE lunch room, but a number of them lost their jobs before the end of the year. Many others suffered salary cuts, and the group suffered membership losses. In the next term, to compensate for the losses, the group attempted to sell much of its stock at a Christmas bazaar. The event was so successful that the members decided to host another bazaar at Easter. In February 1887, “Mrs. Walmsley also laid before the board for its approval...the formation of a new department to be under the supervision of the CWE but otherwise an independent organization of young ladies – to superintend a day nursery or crèche.... {T}he treasury of the CWE not to be drawn upon for its maintenance.”⁷⁵ The crèche was apparently the first of its kind in New Orleans, and it was the realization of one of many goals Walmsley sought to complete.

The young women in charge created a board and committees for their nursery and endeavored to open the crèche with a number of subscribers. Children ages three months to seven years were allowed entrance to the crèche, and members of the nursery board visited each day to teach the older ones and entertain the ones too young to learn. To accommodate as many as possible, the crèche managers decided it best to not adopt or teach any creed, but to teach “moral principles...with the utmost earnest.”⁷⁶ While caring for the children, the crèche board members also assisted the children’s mothers when ill or having difficulty in obtaining work. In its first year, the nursery cared for mote than one thousand, five hundred children with a remaining balance of less than one hundred dollars.⁷⁷

The crèche provided the CWE members some happiness in the midst of a difficult year, but to add to their burdens, Bartlett and four other original CWE members were no longer able to serve as active members of the Exchange.⁷⁸ Their names were added to an Honorary List, and the group asked the five women to serve as an advisory board. In just five years, these founding members saw thousands of dollars distributed to the poor and new reform efforts spread through the city. Many in the group were saddened at the loss of the founding members, especially their first president, but Walmsley urged them to push forward, looking ahead for the needs still unmet.⁷⁹

The 1887-88 term turned out to be the most memorable and successful year since the Cotton Expo. Walmsley began the monthly board meeting with a speech encouraging the ladies toward reaching their goals. The crèche was underway, but the free library, kitchen garden, and home for women were still far off. In June 1887, Colonel Johnston of Tulane University contacted the CWE about donating the school's library, over 3000 volumes, as the group's free circulating library. The maintenance cost was one hundred dollars per month. The conditions of the purchase included the CWE leaving behind reference books and removing the library to the group's location by October 1888. The CWE hesitated at first, but the members soon realized a donation of that size, with a patronage of almost two thousand readers per month, might not happen again and accepted the terms.⁸⁰ To begin, the group obtained copies of library rules from the New York Young Woman's Christian Association (YWCA), and the group adopted many of them for its library. Walmsley solicited more than seventy women to donate twelve volumes to the library per year, so the group would not have that extra expenditure.⁸¹

Adding to the members' enthusiasm, in March 1887 Walmsley received notification of two large donations to the CWE home fund. Mrs. M. L. Whitney donated \$10,000 and to

further the members' exhilaration, Walmsley disclosed that Mrs. Charles Howard also donated money in the amount of \$20,000. The members were overwhelmed, and Walmsley took great pains to bring the room to order. Not wanting to spotlight these two women and their contributions, Walmsley strongly suggested that each member keep the donations a secret. Some found this unreasonable, but after a lively discussion, the managers decided keeping mum was the best approach. However, Walmsley was not finished with the surprises. She then discussed conversations about the purchase of a house on the corner of South and Camp Streets. The Edward's House, as the building on South and Camp was called, was spacious and affordable. The asking price was below the balance in the home fund, and the building's location provided numerous outlets for growth and patronage.

Proceeding with caution and with its lawyer's assistance, the group pursued the purchase of the Edward's House.⁸² After many conversations, some confusion over ownership, and price negotiations, the CWE announced in January 1888 that it had a permanent home.⁸³ Due to needed repairs and some confusion between the former owners and the CWE managers, the group did not move in until November 1888. On Thanksgiving Day, the CWE hosted an open house to showcase its new premises. During the 1887-88 annual meeting, Walmsley addressed each issue and remarked how well the Exchange made out. On April 25, the *Daily Picayune* published its report of the annual meeting and stated, "[The CWE] is the leading institution of its kind in the country, leading them all in its practical value and advantages. ...[D]uring the seven years of its existence [it] has paid out more than \$100,000 to working women."⁸⁴

The 1888-89 cycle began in anticipation of moving in to the new building. The CWE members became more confident after moving into the permanent establishment, and, in January 1889, Walmsley ordered the destruction of "all useless papers, committee reports, and useless

vouchers up to April 1, 1887.”⁸⁵ The next term, 1889-90, brought a little ore excitement. Mrs. B. V. B. Dixon, wife of a future Newcomb College president, became a manager in June 1889. Not surprisingly, a discussion ensued in this same month to allow Newcomb College students to rent rooms from the CWE. One of the managers “informed Mrs. Johnston that \$30 would be the price required or \$22.50 with no extra except for fuel and lights; several would occupy one room and arrangements must be made by the professors in regard to proper person to take charge of the young ladies to board with them, etc.”⁸⁶ After more discussions between the CWE and Mrs. Johnston, the group decided to open certain rooms to Newcomb students.

In July, two more opportunities availed themselves. The first was the redemption of a department seemingly gone by the wayside. The CWE Employment Bureau had not fully accomplished its goal of actively seeking to match jobless women with suitable employers. In previous years, many months showed this department as filing no report nor filling any positions. Walmsley determined the venture a good one, and she encouraged the committee members to read the YWCA rules and procedures for their employment bureau. By the end of the year, the bureau re-organized and almost fifty women find employment. The second opportunity was that of the Traveler’s Aid Society. This group responded to the need of providing safe haven to young women traveling alone to the city for various reasons. Many of these girls found themselves in houses of prostitution or on the street for lack of funds, friends, or family support. Some women of that association contacted Walmsley about utilizing the CWE meeting rooms as a place to organize and prepare themselves for their work. The group responded with enthusiasm and allowed the society to use the CWE house for all their needs.⁸⁷

As a testimony to the group’s well-known and positive reputation, later that year a sales woman posed as a CWE consignor and went door to door attempting to sell goods. This went on

for some months before the CWE managers became aware of the situation. At that time the group issued a public statement that no CWE consignor had the Board of Managers' permission to use the group's name to sell her wares outside the consignment shop. The abuse stopped shortly thereafter.

The last major event of the cycle came in December 1890 when Walmsley presented the idea of a monument fund. Southerners mourned the loss of Jefferson Davis, and Walmsley, still behind the fan of Southern womanhood, felt a need to collect monies for a monument to Davis. The group agreed and sent a resolution of the kind to the newspapers in various southern states:

Come forward Southern women with one accord and without delay, and pay such tribute to the memory of him who was the soul of chivalry and honor as shall prove you worthy of the esteem in which he ever held you: the bravest, truest women the world has ever known!⁸⁸

After sending the resolution, the group established several collection boxes in which people could donate money for the monument.

The year 1890-91 marked the end of the first decade for the Christian Woman's Exchange and brought news of Mrs. Bartlett's ill health. She became ill with pneumonia and died of heart failure on December 28, 1890. Her death was a blow to the Exchange and to other New Orleans organizations and charities. The death notice in the *Daily Picayune* occupied one full column and noted that "Mrs. Bartlett's time was wholly occupied with benevolent and religious matters" across the city.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, the CWE survived, and genteel and working women continued to find support from the Exchange.

In the years preceding the CWE's formation, women's groups in New Orleans had struggled to develop. Women in the Deep South did not generally join clubs independent of man's authority in order to provide charity or education. A woman's sphere included these virtues, and men encouraged their women to provide and promote charity, as long as it did not

remove them from the protection of the home and the authority of their husbands.⁹⁰ It was not ‘lady-like’ for a woman to reach out to those less fortunate in a fashion independent from her husband, father, pastor, or other men in her life. Nor was it acceptable for a woman to publicly promote reform efforts away from conventional institutions like the church. Women learned from birth what was expected of a proper Southern lady. George Fitzhugh wrote, “as long as ‘woman’ was ‘delicate, diffident, and dependent, man will worship and adore her’ and that the true lady ‘naturally shrinks from the public gaze, and from the struggle and competition of life.’”⁹¹

During its first decade, the Christian Woman’s Exchange became one of the leading organizations among New Orleans’ elite women, and it served as one of the most influential of all New Orleans women’s groups. As the group surged into a new century, Walmsley encouraged the group to continue its charitable efforts.⁹² After a major hurricane in the 1890s, the CWE opened its boardinghouse free of charge to help those women and children affected. In order to remain as an active organization, the CWE at times made difficult decisions to continue or close different programs. The library’s operating expenditures were a drain on the CWE treasury, so after some years, the group closed the service and donated the books to several institutions. The Employment Bureau eventually became obsolete as more women joined the workforce, and the group terminated the department in the early twentieth century. The crèche became a kindergarten, and the Edward’s House fell into disrepair toward the fin de siècle.⁹³ Walmsley died in 1905, and the group floundered a little after her death. Then, in the 1920s, the group rented the dilapidated Edward’s House to the *Daily States* newspaper and purchased its final property, the historic Hermann-Grima House located in the French Quarter.⁹⁴ For several

more decades, the group used the Hermann-Grima property to provide reputable housing for single New Orleans women and as a center for needy women seeking respectable employment.

In 1881, Bartlett and Walmsley had called for the ladies of New Orleans to come together for the “improvement and reclamation of their own sex.”⁹⁵ Needing to establish themselves as legitimate and worthy of notice, the Christian Woman’s Exchange members worked beyond the confines of their traditional sphere to help impoverished women, including those who had been born wealthy, without losing their respectability. The first decade was vital to the group’s development. In its first ten years, the CWE became a model for women’s charitable groups in and out of New Orleans. Wholly independent, the group broke the paradigm of New Orleans female philanthropic activities tethered to Catholic orders. Unlike the exceptional Margaret Haughery the Bartlett, Walmsley, and the original founders bravely joined forces to introduce to New Orleans women the prototype of autonomous women’s groups. The CWE members began with almost no understanding of parliamentary procedures for organizations, yet they quickly learned how to efficiently run their enterprise. The group used innovative and unconventional techniques in order to provide many opportunities for women to earn wages. While claiming to uphold the expected standard role for women, many times the CWE challenged the system in order to help women of means, and those with lower socio-economic status, maintain financial and institutional independence. By establishing a faith-based organization that primarily assisted the genteel, white female, the CWE from the outset readied to defend itself against potential attack. The members did so in a highly visible way by altering the Woman’s Exchange model to include Christian in their name, thus ensuring it to be a Protestant Christian organization. In ten years, the members established their respectability and legitimacy, and they upheld the Southern lady façade, all the while conducting fairly radical movements behind the fan.

Endnotes

¹ Margaret W. Bartlett, Opening Speech to the First Christian Woman's Exchange Meeting, April 1, 1881, MS 257, Box 1, Folder 8a, Christian Woman's Exchange Collection 1881-1961, Special Collections, Tulane Libraries, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA (hereafter cited as Bartlett Speech).

² Anne Firor Scott, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930*, 25th Anniversary ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1970), 91-92.

³ "The Ladies Call," *Daily Picayune*, March 27, 1881 (hereafter cited as Ladies Call).

⁴ The Christian Woman's Exchange: An Interesting Meeting in Furtherance of an Important Movement," *Daily Picayune*, April 3, 1881.

⁵ Board Minutes, 1881-1885, MS 257, Volume A3, Christian Woman's Exchange Collection 1881-1961, Tulane Libraries, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA (hereafter cited as Volume A3), 1-3.

⁶ Caroline Walmsley, Annual Report, April 1888, Woman's Exchange Papers, Hermann-Grima House Museum, New Orleans, LA (hereafter cited as Walmsley Speech).

⁷ Volume A3, 22-24. The CWE charged a 10% commission on all items, insuring its financial security in these departments, especially in trying times.

⁸ Board Minutes, 1886-1889, MS 257, Volume A4, Christian Woman's Exchange Collection 1881-1961, Special Collections, Tulane Libraries, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA (hereafter cited as Volume A4), 19-20, 80-84. Some popular literature claims the CWE's library as the first free-circulating library in New Orleans. However, from newspaper accounts and CWE official papers, it seems that another group, the Southern Art Union and Woman's Industrial Association, owned the 3000 volume library the CWE eventually obtained. Referred to as a "lending library," it is unclear if the Southern Art Union allowed the general public free access to the books.

⁹ Charles "Pie" DuFour, *Women Who Cared: The 100 Years of the Christian Woman's Exchange* (New Orleans: Upton Printing Co, 1980), 12. The first New Orleans Protestant woman's benevolent group was probably the Female Charitable Society, established in the early 1800s, serving the needs of orphaned children and Haitian refugees. It is referred to as being "Protestant," but Emily Clark points out that this group allowed both Protestants and Catholics as members. It is unclear if this group allowed women from various religious backgrounds on a Board of Directors or other governing body. See Emily Clark, *Masterless Mistresses: The New Orleans Ursulines and the Development of a New World Society, 1727-1834* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 249-252. There was one other largely publicized woman's group at the same time as the CWE, the Crescent City Relief Association. However, the group admitted men as active members, and it did not serve to meet the needs of women only.

¹⁰ Clark, 223.

¹¹ Marci McGrath, "Margaret Haughery and the Establishing of St. Vincent's Infant Orphan Asylum in New Orleans, 1858" (Master's Thesis: University of New Orleans, 1993), 5-8.

¹² New Orleans City Directory, 1876, Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, LA. In the preceding years women operated and occupied a large number of orphanages and asylums, but, with the exception of the Female Charitable Society, churches or other religious organizations held ownership of these institutions. The Female Charitable Society worked closely with convents and other religious orders, making them not wholly independent.

¹³ New Orleans and Louisiana Abstract Co., Ltd., book of charters 1852-1904, Unpublished, Notarial Archives, New Orleans, LA. Not all of these groups remained in existence from 1854 to 1880. This is the earliest record book of charters in the archive.

¹⁴ New Orleans City Directory, 1884, Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, LA. See “Crescent City Relief Association,” *Daily Picayune*, October 13, 1874.

¹⁵ New Orleans City Directories, 1885-1890, Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, LA. 1890 was the first year in which women advertised as having their own lodges. When analyzing the book of charters, one finds some contradictory numbers. This manuscript reveals that there were at least seven new women’s groups formed each year from 1885 to 1890. When comparing these two sources, there were as many as twenty-five active women’s groups going into the last decade of the century.

¹⁶ Throughout the minute books there are references to women from all over seeking advice on how to create and operate a Woman’s Exchange in their home town or country. For example, one group of women from Italy sought advice on how to start an Exchange, a woman consignor in Japan regularly sent work to sell, and Queen Olga of Greece requested information on how to start a similar organization in her country.

¹⁷ While his account is in many ways accurate, there are some statements that are opinions of Exchange members not based on historical documentation. The author also did not include citations to reference the materials used in his research.

¹⁸ Sander, 41-44.

¹⁹ Ibid, 43, 53-59.

²⁰ Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, *New Women of the New South: The Leaders of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the Southern States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 51.

²¹ Elna Green, *Southern Strategies: Southern women and the Woman Suffrage Question* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 19-25.

²² Scott, 135.

²³ Sander, 52.

²⁴ Sharon E. Wood, *The Freedom of the Streets: Work, Citizenship, and Sexuality in a Gilded Age City* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 49.

²⁵ Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States*, 20th Anniversary ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 68-71, 122.

²⁶ Wendy Gamber, *The Boardinghouse in Nineteenth Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 39. It is interesting to note that in 1882, the landlord of the CWE died and his widow took over his responsibilities for a number of years.

²⁷ Sander, 7.

²⁸ “Exchange Notes from the Christian Woman’s Exchange,” *Daily Picayune*, June 26, 1881.

²⁹ Mrs. J. C. Croly, *The History of the Woman’s Club Movement in America* (New York: H. G. Allen, 1898), 1077.

³⁰ Sander, 43.

³¹ Ibid, 6. The CWE documents learn no indication as to how many women requested anonymity.

³² Wood, 73-74.

³³ Ibid, 4-7.

³⁴ Volume A3, 15. The mayor gave them the license for free.

³⁵ Ladies Call.

³⁶ Charter and By-laws, ca. 1884, MS 257, Box 1, Folder 8, Christian Woman's Exchange Collection 1881-1961, Special Collections, Tulane Libraries, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA (hereafter cited as Charter).

³⁷ Sander, 1.

³⁸ It is possible Bartlett heard of the NYE before this visit, but no known historical document reveals her reasoning for visiting the NYE that summer. Whatever her reason for visiting, she began working immediately on establishing an Exchange chapter in New Orleans. The documents Bartlett read at the first two gatherings are not housed at the New York Historical Society with the NYE collection. It is possible these documents have been destroyed or otherwise lost.

³⁹ Bartlett Speech, Reference to King James Bible verse John 8:11 when Jesus speaks to a woman caught in adultery.

⁴⁰ Ladies Call. Scripture is quoted as in newspaper article. Reference is to King James Bible verse Isaiah 32:9-10. It seems that the CWE was the only Exchange chapter to establish theirs as a faith-based organization.

⁴¹ Volume A3, 9-17.

⁴² First Meeting.

⁴³ The number of managers changed the next year permanently to thirty. They also voted on five vice-presidents, a recording secretary, and treasurer.

⁴⁴ Volume A3, 7-8. The SAU existed before the CWE, but it consisted of women and men. Its original mission did not include the department for helping women until after the formation of the CWE. There were at least two members of the CWE that were also members of the SAU at this juncture.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 2, 20-21. Nicholson and Catherine Cole, a female *Picayune* journalist, worked diligently to use the paper to promote women's efforts throughout the city. Cole was present at the first CWE meeting and numerous subsequent meetings. It is possible that Cole wrote nearly all the articles in the *Picayune* referring to the CWE, but the author of these articles did not sign his or her name. Given the level of publicity the CWE received from the paper, it is possible that without Nicholson's and Cole's endeavors, the CWE may not have received as much approval or success during its critical first few months and years. In regards to the group's religious beliefs and societal expectations, at times the CWE did cross class and religious boundaries. However, every consignor had to meet the Board's approval, and there were instances of some women being turned down without reason.

⁴⁶ One of the C.W.E., "Christian Woman's Exchange," *Daily Picayune*, April 10, 1881. See also "Exchange Notes from the Christian Woman's Exchange," *Daily Picayune*, June 12, 1881.

⁴⁷ "Southern Art Union and Woman's Industrial Association," *Daily Picayune*, June 12, 1881.

⁴⁸ Charter, Statement XIV. Italics added.

⁴⁹ Volume A3, 9-11.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 20-21.

⁵¹ Board Minutes, 1889-1891, MS 257, Volume A5, Christian Woman's Exchange Collection 1881-1961, Special Collections, Tulane Libraries, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA (hereafter cited as Volume A5), 115-116.

⁵² Volume A3, 24. In July, the House Committee reported "unfavorably in regard to the lunch room and a very warm discussion ensued." Not wanting to quit, the managers decided to continue the venture for a while longer.

⁵³ Ibid, 51-55.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 26.

⁵⁵ A one year “term” is from April to April the following year. The group began in April 1881 and held annual meetings each year in the third week of the following April.

⁵⁶ The Tulane documents and newspapers do not give the reason for Bartlett’s seeming demotion to Vice-President. It is possible her age was a factor as she resigned from membership just a few years later.

⁵⁷ The library goal might have been part of the silent competition between the SAU and the CWE. In July 1881, the SAU began asking for people to donate books or money to a lending library the group wanted to operate. It is unclear if this library was open to the general public, but it does appear so from the newspaper account in late July 1881. See “The Southern Art Union and Woman’s Industrial Association,” *Daily Picayune*, July 10, 1881. See also “The Southern Art Union and Woman’s Industrial Association,” *Daily Picayune*, July 31, 1881.

⁵⁸ Neither of these additions led to much financial success until after the 1884-85 Expo.

⁵⁹ Volume A3, 129-132.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 165-167. Hereafter, the Exposition will at times be referred to as the “Expo.”

⁶¹ World’s Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition, *Woman’s Department, Report and Catalogue of the Women’s Department of the World’s Exposition, Held at New Orleans, 1884-1885* (Boston, 1885), 1. The date of her appointment was not given; it was noted only as “autumn of 1884.” Hereafter this manuscript will be cited as Woman’s Department.

⁶² Mary Suzanne Schriber, “Julia Ward Howe and the Travel Book,” *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 62, No. 2, (June, 1989), 265. For a full biographical account see also Deborah P. Clifford, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Biography of Julia Ward Howe* (Boston: Little Brown, 1978).

⁶³ Woman’s Department, 2.

⁶⁴ Samuel Shepherd, “A Glimmer of Hope: The World’s Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition, New Orleans, 1884-1885,” *The Journal of Louisiana Historical Association* 26 (1985), 274.

⁶⁵ Volume A3, 179-181.

⁶⁶ Woman’s Department, 2, 4-5.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 19. By this time, the CWE had a number of consignors that were not residents of New Orleans, so women from a number of states and a few countries were represented in the CWE exhibit space.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 11.

⁶⁹ Volume A3, 165-167.

⁷⁰ Woman’s Department, 18.

⁷¹ Ibid, 12-14, 17-19.

⁷² Letter to Exposition Board of Management, MS 257, Box 1, Folder 1, Christian Woman’s Exchange Collection 1881-1961, Special Collections, Tulane Libraries, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA. The Board must have forgotten because the CWE received a letter requesting these funds. In a short letter on CWE stationery, the ladies responded strongly that they would keep the commission due to the arrangement made before the Expo’s commencement. The Board of Management sent an even shorter reply acknowledging its mistake.

⁷³ For other examples of World Fairs and the influences on the growth of women’s groups see Scott, 156-157.

⁷⁴ Volume A3, 125-128. In 1883, the group resolved that people with male children over ten years could not rent rooms. In a 1923 letter (found in MS 257, Box 1, Folder 15, Christian Woman's Exchange Collection 1881-1961, Special Collections, Tulane Libraries, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA), the presiding CWE president stated that the boardinghouse was established specifically for older women. However, with the vote to allow Newcomb College students as renters disproves this officer's understanding. Also the renter's register of 1913-1916 reveals some women as lodging with their young children and younger siblings.

⁷⁵ Volume A4, 58.

⁷⁶ Walmsley Speech.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ None of the records indicate why these women resigned from the CWE, although age and/or infirmity may have been the deciding factor.

⁷⁹ Volume A4, 70-73.

⁸⁰ Walmsley Speech.

⁸¹ Volume A4, 105-109. See also Walmsley Speech.

⁸² Ibid, 59-62, 176-180.

⁸³ In her 1888 speech, Walmsley gave the reasons for not moving into the house at the time of purchase. There were numerous problems with obtaining a proper power of attorney and perfect title.

⁸⁴ "Christian Woman's Exchange," *Daily Picayune*, April 25, 1888.

⁸⁵ Volume A4, 189-191.

⁸⁶ Volume A5, 17-20.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 21-24.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 40-41. The entire resolution sent to print in newspapers is located between pages 40 and 41 of Volume A5 on a separate sheet of paper. It is unclear from the documents if the group succeeded in raising enough money for the monument, or if the group's endeavor was in support of a nation-wide campaign. The CWE did receive some monetary donations from Confederate veterans attending a convention in Tennessee. See Volume A5, 102.

⁸⁹ "Death of Mrs. Margaret W. Bartlett," *Daily Picayune*, December 30, 1890.

⁹⁰ Scott, 136-138.

⁹¹ Quoted in Antoinette M. Tardo, "An Earlier Dawn: The 'Southern Lady' Enters Public Life in New Orleans, 1876-1898" (Master's Thesis, University of New Orleans, 2001), 11.

⁹² Walmsley Speech.

⁹³ DuFour, 17.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 18-22, 29. The property consisted of a mansion, stable and carriage house, courtyard, and back building once used to house enslaved workers. It is still operated by the Exchange, but now it is an historic house museum displaying nineteenth century New Orleans life and architecture.

⁹⁵ Ladies Call.

Vita

Gabrielle Walker grew up in Southeast Louisiana, before moving to Alabama in 1994. After graduating high school, she attended Judson College in Marion, AL, where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in History. After graduating, she moved to Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, as a humanitarian volunteer and to continue study. She returned in late 2005 and married 2LT Thomas Walker, Army National Guard, in 2006. Upon her return to New Orleans in 2007, Gabrielle entered graduate school at the University of New Orleans and Thomas at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.