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Responding to Change: Girl Scouts, Race, and the Feminist Movement

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RESPONDING TO CHANGE: GIRL SCOUTS, RACE, AND THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

by

Phyllis E. Reske

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ABSTRACT

REACTING TO CHANGE: GIRL SCOUTS AND THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

by

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The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2018
Under the Supervision of Professor Joseph Rodriguez

The purpose of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA) is to teach girls to be giving, self-sufficient, and independent in their homes and communities through volunteer work and earning merit badges. Open to all girls since its inception, the GSUSA offers Girl Scouts training in both gender-conforming and nontraditional vocations. However, during the first half of the twentieth century, segregation and domesticity was emphasized in American society. The organization began to focus less on careers, independence, and racial inclusion to preparing predominately white girls to be good wives and mothers. As Black Power and women's liberation gained momentum in the early 1970s, the GSUSA decided to increase its racial diversity and move in a more feminist direction by nominating Betty Friedan to the National Board of Directors and endorsing the Equal Rights Amendment. Despite the anti-feminist backlash from the membership, the GSUSA continued to support women's liberation.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

I started researching the Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA) and its participation in the feminist movement for two reasons. The first reason is that of my own memories of being a Brownie and Junior Girl Scout. One memory that stood out to me was when my troop and other troops in Wisconsin gathered together at Eagle Cave near Spring Green, Wisconsin for a summer weekend during the mid 1980s. Eagle Cave is a cavern that has a main passageway that leads to a large area where troops and other groups can sleep. There are nooks and crannies in the cave for people to explore as well. The cave is wet and produces drops of water that constantly falls on visitors. I assumed at the time that the grand goal of the councils that organized this event was to get all the troops to sleep in the cave. Because of the cave's overall dankness, the troops, one by one, moved out of the cave and slept outside... except for mine. There I was in the cave with my friends, troop leaders, and our sleeping bags and gear covered with plastic protective sheets to protect us and our property from the water drops and wet ground. We were outside during the days and we learned how to use a compass and identify native plants and animals. I don't remember if the other troops gave us more respect because we slept in the cave, but I learned something about perseverance and team work.

I didn't think that Eagle Cave and my other Scout experiences were designed to prepare me to be a wife and mother. I never thought Girl Scouts was solely a traditionally feminine organization. On the other hand, I didn't think it was a feminist organization. The GSUSA simply exposed me to activities not normally offered to girls and I enjoyed my time in it. I left the Girl Scouts when I was twelve, and I didn't pay attention to the organization until I was much older.

For over twenty years, I'd read and heard news reports about Catholic archdioceses and individual members breaking from the GSUSA because of its ties to Planned Parenthood and radical feminism and its decreasing emphasis on being a Judeo-Christian centered organization. Being a conservative and former Girl Scout, I wanted to know how the GSUSA became a more liberal organization. Since its beginning in 1912, the GSUSA offered programming that maintained and challenged traditional gender roles. The organization, mainly through nature and camping activities, offered girls a way to become self-sufficient and independent. The GSUSA also provided domestic activities such as cooking and child caring (babysitting). This continued into the 1960s. With the rapidly changing political and social climate of the 1960s and 1970s, the GSUSA wanted to adapt and change in order to maintain and attract members. The women's movement gained momentum and influence. In order to stay current and be seen as progressive, the GSUSA decided to move in a feminist direction.

Scholars have discussed this change in direction and its consequences within the GSUSA. Tammy M. Proctor examined the letters from GSUSA members who opposed both the appointment of Betty Freidan to the GSUSA's Board of Directors in 1975 and the participation of the GSUSA in the International Women's Day March the same year. Most of the letters were written by active Girl Scout leaders or parents of Girl Scouts.¹ Proctor argues that the complaints "centered on the competing notions of womanhood."² Parents and leaders saw Friedan as a radical feminist who opposed the American Judeo-Christian family way of life. They also believed that the feminist movement negatively impacted the organization. Women did not volunteer as troop leaders or commit to other service positions within the organization because

¹ Tammy M. Proctor, *Scouting for Girls: A Century of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2009), 147, 149.

² *Ibid.*, 147.

they were too busy liberating themselves. Proctor uses one letter to sum up the thoughts and attitudes of leaders and parents who were against the GSUSA marching with the National Gay Task Force and the Catholics for a Free Choice in the International Women's Day March. The female letter writer believed that Girl Scout leaders are church and family oriented individuals with an abiding respect for life and people within their communities and that the GSUSA liberated women since its start in 1912.³ Proctor doesn't state how many letters she examined or how many letters the organization received in order to ascertain if in fact a majority of the membership, or just certain influencing members of local councils, were against Freidan and the March. Also, she does not include a discussion on the organization's reaction to the membership letters and why the GSUSA decided to continue in a more liberal direction.

Barbara Arneil addresses the decline in membership of both the GSUSA and the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) during the 1970s and why there was a divergence in membership in the next decade. She argues that girls and women left the GSUSA because the organization was out of touch with the race and gender issues of the 1960s. Once the GSUSA instituted feminist and racially and culturally diverse programming in the 1970s, membership numbers rose within the next decade. Arneil briefly discusses the meeting of all 333 local GSUSA councils in 1975, but does not state if the members discussed feminism or feminist policies.⁴ She offers this event as evidence that feminist ideas sparked the increase in GSUSA membership. It would have been helpful if she included the discussions and outcomes of the meeting. Only one outcome of the meeting is provided and that was a commitment by the GSUSA to develop a more racially and

³ Ibid., 147-149.

⁴ Barbara Arneil, "Gender, Diversity, and Organizational Change: The Boy Scouts vs. Girl Scouts of America," *Perspectives on Politics* 8, no. 1 (March 2010): 53-54, 56-57, 60.

culturally diverse membership.⁵ Arneil's evidence suggests that the increase in membership was primarily due to the GSUSA's goal to become more diverse instead of its support of feminism.

Surprisingly, the GSUSA rarely used the term "feminist" and its variations in its publications. Instead, the organization used phrases such as "empowerment," "championing the cause of women" and the "advancement of women." This and other verbiage is used in the GSUSA's 100th anniversary book published in 2012. The word "feminist" is replaced with "women's rights" and "Women's Liberation." The publication did not mention its affiliation with pro-choice and pro-gay organizations during the 1970s. However, the GSUSA stated with pride that it supported the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Its centennial publication cited the decrease in the young female population, the increase of mobility for American families, and an increase of women in the workplace as reason why GSUSA membership declined in the 1970s.⁶ The GSUSA does not mention the feminist programming as a factor in membership decline.

The GSUSA using different words to attract and maintain members is discussed in Susan Groth's thesis "Scouts' Own: Creativity, Tradition, and Empowerment in Girl Scout Ceremonies." Groth argues that fem-terms⁷ are rarely mentioned in Girl Scout literature and discourse because the "word never had a unified meaning and thus invites confusion and conflict."⁸ Related terms such as "independent" and "empowering girls" are more specific and function as code for feminism. Preserving the code avoids controversy and helps the GSUSA maintain relationships with members and outside entities. Groth also claims that although fem-terms aren't used, the values and strategies that have been identified as feminist, including the

⁵ Ibid., 61.

⁶ Betty Christiansen, *Girl Scouts: A Celebration of 100 Trailblazing Years* (New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 2012), 144, 151.

⁷ Fem-terms mean "feminist" and "feminism."

⁸ Ibid., 234.

endorsement of the ERA, are part of the organization.⁹ She describes how the Girl Scout programming is similar to the four stages of feminist consciousness-raising: the awareness of wrong, the growth of sisterhood, the development of goals and strategies to change the present circumstances, and the creation of a different vision of the future. The GSUSA teaches girls and leaders to envision a goal, build the skills needed to achieve the goal, and share the experience with fellow members.¹⁰

Groth's claims on why the GSUSA doesn't use fem-terms and that code preservation avoids controversy aren't supported by evidence. GSUSA members don't live in isolation. They are influenced by other institutions and people including parents, teachers, peers, church, and community groups. There were other women's rights words used by members other than fem-terms in the 1970s. Also, code can only be used for so long as a cloak. If members view a decision that is contrary to what the GSUSA stood for in the past, code will not matter - they will express their opposition and take action.

My argument is that the GSUSA moved in a feminist direction because the shifting attitudes in American society compelled the organization to stay relevant, and the GSUSA experienced a decline in membership because of the changing social dynamic in society and the GSUSA members opposed Friedan and the ERA. Women's liberation and ethnic and racial issues were at the forefront. Since the GSUSA was concerned about membership and the need to preserve its relevancy, the organization adapted to the contemporary climate. The GSUSA used other words and phrases other than fem-terms because its members, not living in isolation, used different terms and in order to maintain and attract members, the GSUSA used member-accepted terms. The GSUSA wanted girls to explore feminist consciousness-raising, but since the

⁹ Groth, "Scouts' Own," (dissertation, Bowling Green State University, 1980), 232, 234, 238-239, 242.

¹⁰ Ibid., 232-233.

membership was nuanced in its views on equality and liberation, the GSUSA implemented different types of programs and strategies to increase minority membership, improve relationships between races and ethnicities, and broaden the horizons of all members. When the GSUSA appointed Friedan as a member of its National Board of Directors and endorsed the ERA, members expressed their disapproval, but their complaints weren't compelling enough for the GSUSA to change its direction. Also, the President of the GSUSA supported the ERA and the women's movement. Because of the overwhelming tide of the women's movement, its concern about relevancy, and an administration's zeal, the GSUSA continued to support Friedan until the end of her term and endorse the ERA to the end of the decade. As a result, members left the organization. Another factor in the decrease of GSUSA membership was that girls spent more time doing other recreational activities. Americans in general weren't joining groups. The types of decisions made within the GSUSA in the 1970s still resonate today.

The literature provides pieces of the GSUSA and feminist timeline. The purpose of my thesis is to provide a more complete and accurate account on what happened within the organization in the 1970s. There isn't scholarship that describes more accurately in detail the relationship between the GSUSA and its membership. I attempt to answer the following questions: How did American attitudes towards race and gender affect the GSUSA? How did the Girl Scouts and Scout leaders, parents, and other volunteers respond to the feminist changes proposed and made within the organization? Why did the GSUSA move forward with feminist programming including electing Friedan and supporting the ERA if there was strong opposition? Why did GSUSA membership decline in the 1970s? How do the types of decisions made in the 1970s affect the organization today?

My thesis consists of an introduction, three chapters, and an epilogue. Chapter one provides a brief history of Juliette Gordon Low, the founder of the GSUSA. The chapter also describes race and gender attitudes in America and how the GSUSA reacted to this up to 1960. Chapter two gives a brief history of Betty Friedan, the publication of the *The Feminine Mystique*, the rebuttal by Phyllis McGinley, and the founding of the National Organization for Women (NOW). The chapter ends with a description of the GSUSA Black Conference in 1970. The third chapter is the bulk of the thesis. It delves into the GSUSA literature that was published during the 1970s. The organization offered various types of activities for girls on how to move beyond gender stereotypes and provided leaders on how to guide girls. The chapter also discusses the decisions the GSUSA made during the period including Friedan as a Board member and the ERA endorsement. Letters from members and the GSUSA are analyzed. The epilogue talks about the GSUSA in the 1980s, controversies in the 1990s, and the differences between the member reactions in the 1970s and what happened between the 1990s and the present day.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORY, GENDER ROLES, AND RACIAL DIVERSITY, 1912 – 1960

The GSUSA was founded by Juliette Gordon Low in 1912. The purpose of the organization at its founding was to build leadership skills in female troop leaders, and character, patriotism, and independence in girls. The main method used by the GSUSA to build leadership skills, independence, and character was having girls and leaders take specific actions that earn them badges. The Girl Scouts offered badges in nature education, outdoor camping, gardening, and environmental conservation. Gender-appropriate badge offerings such as handicraft, cooking and housekeeping were also offered. This dual approach struck a balance between traditional activities and ways for girls and leaders to hope and actually achieve a future that was beyond the gender norms of the time.

Juliette Gordon Low

Juliette Gordon Low was born in Savannah, Georgia in 1860. She was from a prominent family and learned to be a proper Southern lady. Gordon Low attended the best schools and was introduced to Savannah society as a debutante. Gordon Low also travelled throughout Europe to develop a sense of culture. In Europe, Gordon Low met an English playboy named William Low. They married and lived in Savannah. After a while, conflicts started in the household. Gordon Low found out that William was an adulterer. He also drank heavily and went on long, hunting expeditions. Together, they could not produce a child. With the adultery, drinking, long excursions, and the inability to have kids, Gordon Low felt alienated from her husband. Gordon Low's family sympathized with her, which made an action of divorce a possibility because her family and friends would not judge her. However, before Gordon Low could file for a divorce, William died. To her shock, William left the bulk of his estate to his mistress.¹¹

¹¹ Stacy A. Cordery, *Juliette Gordon Low: The Remarkable Founder of the Girl Scouts* (New York: Viking Press, 2012), 138, 147-148, 165-166.

For the first time in her life, Gordon Low experienced financial insecurity. At Gordon Low's suggestion, her sister-in-laws sued the estate. This made a statement to the court that William's family supported Gordon Low which gave her the needed credibility to win a portion of her husband's assets. Yet, alone, childless, and middle-aged, Gordon Low became depressed and directionless. She also felt that her life was superficial because she did not have a meaningful career. Gordon Low travelled to Europe and focused on her hobbies of painting and sculpting. She also hiked and hunted with family and friends. In London in 1911, she met Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of the BSA.¹²

Baden-Powell discussed with Gordon Low the purpose and meaning of the BSA. Boys developed character and learned obedience and discipline by participating in military-inspired activities, helping others, following a moral code, and expressing honesty and cheerfulness. Baden-Powell also wanted boys to develop themselves by living in nature. To achieve this, the Boy Scouts went on camping trips. Baden-Powell, along with his sister, also started the Girl Guides which was similar to the BSA.

Gordon Low was so inspired by Baden-Powell's philosophy of protocol and self-sufficiency that she started a Girl Guide group. She traveled to a Scottish glen and recruited seven girls for the group. Gordon Low taught the girls knot-tying, map reading, knitting, cooking, and first aid skills. They also raised chickens and sold the eggs to the local community, and spun wool and sold the production to a weaving shop in London. Gordon Low, having had the experiences of financial and emotional insecurity, taught the girls to be independent, and this brought Gordon Low great meaning and happiness. She worked with girls from different

¹² Ibid., 165-170, 264.

economic groups and witnessed their lives improve. Motivated, she travelled back to Savannah to develop her own version of the Girl Guides.¹³

Gordon Low organized the Girl Guide troop military-style. Eight girls, ages ten to seventeen, made up a patrol led by a patrol leader who was elected by the girls. The patrol leader held the title Captain. A captain had to be twenty-one years or older. The Captain's assistant held the title of Lieutenant. Both the Captain and Lieutenant supervised the patrol. Three patrols made up a company and companies within a region formed a council. New guides were called Tenderfoots and they moved up the ranks by demonstrating at each level the required skills and knowledge. Gordon Low's title was Commissioner. Adult leadership at the council level was comprised of the Executive Secretary and the Board of Councilors. The Board advised the Executive Secretary. Patrol meetings were held once a week. At the meetings, girls memorized the Girl Guide promise, laws, salute, and duties. They also learned the importance of patriotism and the basics of camping, home care, and hospital work.¹⁴

Gordon Low wanted girls to have fun, and her leadership qualities motivated those around her. She trusted the innate abilities of girls and women to create meaningful learning experiences. Local Girl Guide leaders functioned with a certain level of autonomy. Although she financed much of the organization during its first stage of development, Gordon Low realized that the Girl Guides couldn't get off the ground without monetary donations. In the spring of 1912, Low inducted eight daughters from contributing wealthy families as the first Girl Guides.

Standing by her belief that any girl can be a Girl Guide, in the fall of the same year, a patrol was started at the Savannah Female Orphan Asylum. Gordon Low, however, realized that she needed to balance inclusivity with racial and economic segregation in order to obtain

¹³ Revzin, "American Girlhood," 264; Cordery, *Juliette Gordon Low*, 195-198.

¹⁴ Cordery, *Juliette Gordon Low*, 204.

financial assistance from wealthy, white donors. Each patrol was comprised entirely of working class girls, middle class girls, or debutants. Since racial integration was illegal in Georgia, Gordon Low established nonwhite patrols. She resisted her mother's urging to start a completely separate designation and charter for African American girls. When Girl Guide patrols spread throughout Georgia and nearby states, Gordon Low devised a three-part mission. First, she wanted Guiding to spread across the country. Second, she wanted all girls to experience the service, learning, patriotism, and fun that Girl Guiding offered. Finally, Gordon Low wanted to change the name of her organization to the Girl Scouts.¹⁵

Gordon Low wanted the name change for various reasons and when she attempted to change the name, Gordon Low encountered backlash in the form of gender stereotypes. The Girl Guides wanted to be Scouts, since they thought they performed similar duties to that of the Boy Scouts. Gordon Low thought so as well, and since she fished, drove a car, hunted, and sculpted with metal, she also thought that the word Guiding sounded more insipid than Scouting. When she discussed the possible change to Baden-Powell, he rejected the notion, stressing that the term "Scout" was reserved for boys. The Girl Guides in England were forbidden to call themselves Scouts so that they would not anger people who believed that boys and girls should not pursue the same activities. The BSA leadership heard of Low's idea and rejected it as well. They were concerned that "copying" the boys would produce more masculine girls who would then be unfit for marriage and motherhood. James West, the executive director of the Boy Scouts, thought that the title change would "trivialize" and "sissify" and term "Scout." Gordon Low understood their perspective and the Western culture's belief of the separation between female and male spheres, but also took into consideration what her and the Girl Guides wanted, and what they wanted was

¹⁵ Ibid., 204-206, 221; Tammy M. Proctor, *Scouting for Girls: A Century of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts* (Santa Barbara: Praeger Publishers, 2009), 18.

a better version of equality. Gordon Low did not make the final decision. In 1913, when Gordon Low was in Europe, the Savannah Girl Guides renamed themselves the Girl Scouts, and since Gordon Low wanted the name change, the Savannah Girl Guides's unofficial action became permanent. Gordon Low then embarked on writing and publishing the first GSUSA handbook.¹⁶

GSUSA Literature

Until 1960, the Girl Scout Promises and Laws were in the beginning of the handbooks. They were based on Judeo-Christian teachings and were the most important beliefs and values that the Girl Scouts had to learn. The Girl Scout Promise was,

On my honor, I will try
To do my duty to God and my country,
To help other people at all times,
To obey the Girl Scout Laws.¹⁷

The Girl Scout Laws were:

1. A Girl Scout's honor is to be trusted
2. A Girl Scout is loyal
3. A Girl Scout's duty is to be useful and to help others
4. A Girl Scout is a friend to all and a sister to every other GS
5. A Girl Scout is courteous
6. A Girl Scout is a friend to animals
7. A Girl Scout obeys orders
8. A Girl Scout is cheerful
9. A Girl Scout is thrifty
10. A Girl Scout is clean in thought, work and deed¹⁸

The first GSUSA handbook titled *How Girls Can Help Their Country: the Handbook for Girl Scouts* was published in 1913. In the handbook, Gordon Low advised girls that “no one wants women to be soldiers. None of us like women who ape men” and that it was “better to be a real girl such as no boy could possibly be.”¹⁹ Gordon Low wanted girls to be girls and to grow up

¹⁶ Cordery, *Juliette Gordon Low*, 221-223

¹⁷ *Sixtieth Anniversary Facsimile Edition of How Girls Can Help Their Country* (New York: GSUSA, 1972).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Girl Scouts of the United States of America, *Sixtieth Anniversary Facsimile Edition of How Girls Can Help Their Country* (New York: Girl Scouts, 1972), 12-13;

as women who held their own and didn't dominate males. She also wanted Girl Scouts to be of service outside of camp and experience God through nature. Girl Scouts learned useful and self-sufficient skills by building tents, building and keeping a fire, finding one's way at night, finding the time by the stars, tying knots, reading the meaning of signs and tracks, flag signaling, and tending to the injured.²⁰ Girls learned self-defense by knowing how to properly handle various types of firearms. They also learned how to shoot with a bow and arrow and secure a burglar with only eight inches of rope.²¹ By successfully demonstrating outdoor skills, Girl Scouts were on their way to earn the following badges: Child-Nurse, Cook, and Naturalist.²² They also earned badges that appeared in both the GSUSA and BSA handbooks including Electrician, Flyer, Signaling, Horsemanship, Telegraphist, Farmer, Pioneer, and Rifle-shot. Gordon Low also provided girls with stories of women in history who defied conventional gender roles and contributed to society. One story was that of Margaret Brent of Maryland who studied law and became a government advisor in the 1600s.²³

While the handbooks published up to 1933 offer similar badges and activities, the brochures published by the GSUSA in the 1930s urged mothers to sign up their daughters for Girl Scouts. In the pamphlet *Your Girl and Mine*, the GSUSA announced to the mother that they found the "practical and entertaining way of handling the problem of the growing girl" by taking the girl to the open air and train her in the skills of woodcraft, swimming, and camping.²⁴ The end product was that the girl became more independent. The Captain of the Girl Scout troop would witness her daughter earn badges and learn the meaning of fair play. The pamphlet

²⁰ Girl Scouts, *Sixtieth Anniversary*, 5, 14-15, 33-35, 37, 41.

²¹ As the burglar lay on his belly, the Girl Scout would tie the burglar's hands and feet together. How the burglar got to the floor is not explained in the handbook.

²² *Ibid.*, 1, 41-42, 44.

²³ *Ibid.*, 6; Cordery, *Juliette Gordon Low*, 223.

²⁴ Josephine Daskam Bacom, *Your Girl and Mine* (New York: GSUSA, 1933).

emphasized that fairness couldn't solely be taught in the home, but that she must participate with fellow peers to learn about integrity.²⁵ The brochure implored that teaching a "democratic give and take in friendly competition under trained leaders... was never so much needed as now, when a generation of girls... will have a greater direct effect on their country's laws and law making than any girls ever had before."²⁶ This hope of changing the world around them was tempered by assuring mothers that their girls would also earn badges in cooking, sewing, home nursing, and child care... to "sew on the sleeve of her uniform."²⁷ Patriotism was invoked as the pamphlet told mothers that their daughters would say the Pledge of Allegiance at every Girl Scout event.²⁸

Once the mother was sold and signed her daughter up, a pamphlet titled *Who are the Girl Scouts?* informed the mother on what to expect when her girl was in her Girl Scout troop. The organization told the parents that she would be "safe and happy, know her friends are active girls, eager to learn everything that will help them... and the Captain of the troop is to trusted."²⁹ The Captain was described as a young woman who was educated, courteous and friendly, and guided troop members to "helpful enjoyments like swimming, tramping, observing birds and plants, singing and make pottery for bird houses."³⁰ Similar to *Your Girl and Mine*, *Who are the Girl Scouts?* used words and phrases of female empowerment. Girls learned at camp to be "independent," "resourceful," and "earn her own living."³¹ Camping or other troop activities gave her a "chance to try her wings, to gain courage, to discover her talents and capacities."³²

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ *Who are the Girl Scouts?*, (New York: GSUSA, 1935).

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

Yet, the feminine role of keeping house wasn't forgotten. The brochure told the parents that the Captain "helps them to make a tasteful home of their meeting place."³³ The pamphlet didn't forget to add that girls also learned how to cook and make dresses.³⁴

Although the pamphlets sold adventure and broadened opportunities for girls, they didn't offer girls a vision of the future where they shattered the corporate glass ceiling. Volunteers couldn't expect much as well. *Who Are the Girl Scouts?* provided the stories of Sally, Marie, and Jane, former Girl Scouts. Sally learned story-telling, singing, lifesaving, and child nursing in Girl Scouting. After Scouting, Sally found a part time job as a mother's helper. The job helped her pay for college. Nothing more is mentioned of Sally. Marie, after Scouting, spent her summers in a camp for children. Jane went to a business college and found that her training as a Girl Scout hostess helped her not to become a CEO of a company, but helped her find a secretarial job.³⁵ The pamphlet suggested that through Girl Scouting, a girl could grow up to be useful and independent, but she end up working in female dominated spheres. The brochure, *Appeal for Girl Scout Leaders*, told potential leaders that they could help girls and develop a "happy combination of physical, mental, and character building activities, designed to supplement the work of the church, home, and school as a way to bridge the gap... in a girl's mind... between her desires and her duties."³⁶

The emphasis on training for conventional lives and volunteering as a past time was even more pronounced after World War II. Domesticity was heavily emphasized in American culture and the GSUSA adapted to the times. The *Girl Scout Leader* was a magazine published by the GSUSA and intended for women in Girl Scout leadership including troop leaders. The volumes

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Genevieve Garvan Brady, *Appeal for Girl Scout Leaders*, (New York: GSUSA, 1935).

published in the late 1940's to the early 1950s advised leaders on how to guide girls to eventually become better wives and mothers. The *Girl Scout Leader* also reinforced traditional gender roles by telling leaders that homemaking was just like being an executive in a Fortune 500 company. In the article "Homemaking is an Executive Job," the author Lillian M. Gilbreth stated that homemaking required various skills and it brought immense satisfaction. Gilbreth equated homemaking to an office manager or plant superintendent. The housewife had to plan, budget, make decisions, and relate to her family and community members. She alluded to decisions made while moving furniture and decorating the house as the types of hefty decisions that managers and superintendents make.³⁷ Gilbreth argued that homemaking was just as important as jobs traditionally held by men and told readers that their fulfillment in life lied in the home and family and not in careers. The *Girl Scout Leader* also focused more on activities inside the GSUSA and not on issues or vocations outside the organization.

The brochures and editions of the *Girl Scout Leader* would have been displayed on tables with other advertisements and reading material in schools, churches, and community centers. The information in them was the summary of what Girl Scouting was all about. Scouting offered opportunities for girls and volunteers to grow. However, they did not offer any promises of obtaining numerous and/or high-ranking positions in male dominated fields. Because of GSUSA's dualism with an emphasis more on traditional female roles, most girls would have learned domestic skills in Girl Scouting. Hounded by what was expected of her in the home, school, and church, the message would have overpowered the language of empowerment and non-feminine opportunities in Girl Scouting until the 1970s.

Racial Tension in the GSUSA

³⁷ Lillian M. Gilbreth, "Homemaking is an Executive Job," *The Girl Scout Leader*, December 1949, 6, 14.

Conversations about race started in the GSUSA in the 1920s. The Personnel Division of the Council Members, a division of the National Board of Directors, stated in a 1928 report that they would make a great effort to help African American girls become Girl Scouts and to get involved in troops. The earliest African-American Girl Scout troops formed in the late 1920s in New York City, Philadelphia, and New Haven, Connecticut. New York City Scout leaders created segregated camping schedules and designed segregated leadership training sessions for African American women in 1928. A report on African-American Girl Scouting from 1950 stated that mid-Atlantic and Midwestern regions supported black Girl Scouting through the 1940s. In the Northeast region, there were 652 African American troops and 182 integrated troops. The highest number of African American Girl Scouts was in the Southern states including Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Arkansas. By 1947, there were over 60,000 Girl Scout troops in America. Of that total, over 2,100 were comprised of black Girl Scouts and volunteers, representing 3.6 percent of the total GSUSA troop population. Integrated troops comprised 2 percent of the GSUSA population. Despite the small numbers, the GSUSA became more popular with African American girls and women in the Jim Crow south.³⁸

The GSUSA continued to strive for equality and respect for other races, classes, religions, and cultures, and made this goal a moral imperative in the pamphlet *Girl Scouting and the Protestant Churches*. Geared for protestant members and clergy, the pamphlet stated that educating the youth to maintain peace was one of the most important tasks of the organization, and that girls needed to cooperate with each other, understand differences among races and religions, and apply Christian principles to their own activities. The GSUSA stated that spiritual development was part of character development. When a Girl Scout troop was affiliated with a

³⁸ Brooke Alexis Thomas, "More than Girls Selling Cookies: Black Girl Scouts in Response to Black Power, 1970-1977" (master's thesis, University of South Alabama, 2016), 21, 26-27.

church, the church leaders gave an interpretation of the religious basis of Girl Scouting, and the interpretation helped Girl Scouts understand the deeper meaning of the Girl Scout Promise and Laws. The pamphlet included feedback from ten pastors. One pastor stated that his church sponsored a Scout party and invited the Girl Scouts and the parents of an African-American troop, Chinese troop, private school troop, and a public school troop from a socio-economically depressed area for the purpose of getting to know each other and discuss race and class problems.³⁹

Although, with the facilitation of a religious institution, troops attempted to overcome racial barriers, overall, racial integration and diverse membership growth was slow. In the 1949 report “Girl Scouting for Negro Girls,” African American Girl Scout membership climbed to almost 39,000 and represented 3 percent of the total Girl Scout membership. Before 1950, African American troops had to have a sponsoring white troop or face rejection from the GSUSA. The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision deemed separate but equal doctrine unconstitutional. The GSUSA had to figure out how to introduce integration without negative public opinion. In 1956, the National Board wanted to dedicate the birthplace of Juliette Gordon Low in Savannah and conflict arose over the question of integrated facilities and accommodations. The planning committee decided to have segregated spaces at the dedication.⁴⁰ Integration was slow because councils operated according to their racial views, and even though the GSUSA wanted more racial inclusion, it could not enforce councils to integrate. This continued until the mid-1960s when African American women demanded that the GSUSA commits to full racial inclusion.

³⁹ *Girl Scouting and the Protestant Churches*, (New York: GSUSA, 1944), 5, 7-8.

⁴⁰ Thomas, “More than Girls Selling Cookies,” 28-31.

CHAPTER III: REACTION TO THE MOVEMENTS, 1960s

Betty Friedan

Freidan was born in Peoria, Illinois in 1921 and was physically ill as a child. She read a great deal and wrote poetry and most of her friends were boys. Being Jewish, Friedan was not popular and her father faced discrimination. These experiences helped her develop sensitivity to discrimination. Friedan graduated high school as valedictorian and left Illinois to attend Smith College. She became the editor for the Smith College newspaper, won literary prizes for her critical editorials, and co-founded the Smith literary magazine. She received the Rosenberg Science Research Fellowship, but turned it down in order to marry her boyfriend. They moved to Greenwich Village, and Friedan started a job writing for labor newspapers and a news service.⁴¹

Her relationship with her boyfriend did not work out and in 1947 she married Carol Friedan, a theater producer. They had three children and Betty stopped working full-time to tend to her home. Ten years later, they moved to suburban Rockland County. Friedan slowly became bored, depressed, and anxious.⁴² Friedan, in her manuscript *It Changed My Life*, described that in the late 1950s, her own life and those of others was not be “understood in the abstract terms of conventional... thought which then defined woman and by which we defined ourselves.”⁴³ She later called this phenomenon the feminine mystique.

The Feminine Mystique

In conducting the research for her book, Friedan spoke mainly with women of her own race and class. She also research Sigmund Freund and read popular ladies’ magazine such as

⁴¹ Glenda Hodges, “Betty Friedan’s Role as Reformer in the Women’s Liberation Movement, 1960-1970” (dissertation, Bowling Green State University, 1980), 58-59, 61.

⁴² Ibid., 41, 62.

⁴³ Ibid., 62-63.

McCall's and the *Ladies Home Journal*. In *The Feminist Mystique*, Friedan described the problem "that has no name." She labeled the no-name problem the feminine mystique. It was the overall feeling that for most women, the roles of housewife and mother weren't fulfilling, and at their innermost selves they truly desired to discover and get to know themselves. Friedan argued that the core problem for women was not sexual but a problem of identity – a lack of growth that was perpetuated by the feminine mystique. As the Victorian culture didn't permit women to satisfy their sexual needs, Friedan claimed, the present culture didn't allow women to fulfill their basic need to grow and fulfill their potential. The mystique actually encouraged women to ignore the issue of self-identity. The feminine mystique got its power from Freudian thought, Friedan argued. Sigmund Freud thought that women were an inferior, less-than-human species. They were child-like dolls who existed to love men and serve their needs. These basic ideas permeated throughout the 20th century and wound up in woman's journals, which provided women information and advice on how to be better wives and mothers.⁴⁴

Friedan's ideas struck a nerve in women, and when published in 1963, *The Feminine Mystique* sold over a million and half copies in the United States. She was credited to having started the women's liberation movement. Her book was accepted by magazines that once before supported traditional family roles. Friedan began to speak at women's clubs, parent teacher associations, and college events. Friedan was catapulted into the national limelight, and her forceful rhetoric was persuasive. She knew that she had to organize with other like women and men and start demanding change as a collective force. With this in mind, Friedan founded the National Organization of Women (NOW) in 1966.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Norton, 1963), 71, 77, 103, 108-109.

⁴⁵ Hodges, "Betty Friedan's Role as Reformer," 4-5, 44, 64-65; Clark A. Pomerleau, "Empowering Members, Not Overpowering Them: The National Organization for Women, Calls for Lesbian Inclusion, and California Influence, 1960s-1980s," *Journal of Homosexuality* 57, no. 7 (2010): 843.

NOW

When NOW started, it had 300 charter members. Friedan became NOW's first President, and declared that NOW would work for equality on the behalf of all women. In 1967, NOW had 14 local chapters and by 1972 NOW had 365 chapters. There were other women's organizations that evolved and branched off from NOW that were more radical, and the members within these groups preferred to physically overthrow patriarchal systems. Friedan and NOW considered themselves a more moderate organization and served as mediators among the different groups. Friedan's strategy was to obtain equality not by violent takeover of power structures, but by legislative reform. The main approach to issues of inequality was feminist consciousness-raising, to find what was wrong on the outside by collectively looking within and then develop action plans to correct what was wrong. More radical feminists believed that men were the enemy, but NOW's perspective was that they were fellow victims, and that by demonstrating and speaking about the intolerable differences between the sexes, men were going to be freed from the drive to be in power, just as women were going to be released from the constraints that prevented them from fulfilling their potential.⁴⁶

By 1967, feminist consciousness-raising had become the main organizing and educational method of the women's liberation movement. NOW's main issues were sexist images in the media, the ERA, medical self-help, abortion rights, child care, and equal pay. Friedan, at the national conference of NOW in 1968, admonished that motherhood was a curse as long as women were relegated to being mothers. When women became free to be full and equal

⁴⁶ Hodges, "Betty Friedan's Role as Reformer," 48-49, 106.

human beings, then the household would not be oppressive and other lifestyles would also be acceptable.⁴⁷

Not all American women bought into the feminist movement. Phyllis McGinley, essayist and poet, lived most of her life in the New York suburbs. Her works have been featured in *McCall's*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and the *Saturday Evening Post* and she won the Pulitzer Prize in 1961 for her poetry. After *The Feminine Mystique* was published, McGinley's publisher pushed her to write a rebuttal. She conceded and wrote the book *Sixpence in her Shoe*. McGinley argued that a proper evaluation of women's domestic duties was needed and that the role of homemaker was very important for the woman and her family and community. In the first six months, 100,000 copies of McGinley's book were sold and the book was on the New York Times Bestseller list for six months. Initially, *Sixpence in her Shoe* outsold *The Feminine Mystique*, which sold 65,000 copies when it was first published.⁴⁸

McGinley asserted that feminists like Friedan "othered" the homemaker. She defended the daily roles and routines of housewives and mothers and stated they were the givers and not the "eaters-up of life," meaning that women weren't to be selfish and only serve themselves. For McGinley, homemaking was an honor and a profession, and that a woman's service to the family and community should not be belittled by males and disparaged by feminists. Similar to Friedan's assertions about Freud and women's periodicals, McGinley mentioned the damaging effect experts had on women because they gave forceful and contradictory advice on parenting in 1950s women's magazines. She encouraged mothers to raise their children as they saw fit and to ignore the criticism of others. McGinley also advised them to seek their own identities and make

⁴⁷ Ibid., 50, 108, 120.

⁴⁸ Jo Gill, "'Quite the Opposite of a Feminist': Phyllis McGinley, Betty Friedan and Discourses of Gender in Mid-century American Culture," *Women's History Review* 22, no. 3 (2013): 423-424.

a life of their own that was rewarding. Women who wrote to McGinley endorsed her vision of the fulfilled housewife and mother.⁴⁹

GSUSA and Racial Equality

The GSUSA decided to switch from selecting white women of social stature as President and/or a member of the Board to choosing highly educated and accomplished white women and women of color. Mildred Mudd was the President of the GSUSA from 1939 to 1941. Her husband was Harvey Seeley Mudd, a mining engineer and owner of Cyprus Mines Corporation. Mildred was known for her parties and charitable work. Olivia Cameron Higgins Layton was President from 1951 to 1958. She received her Bachelor's degree in education and liberal arts and was the secretary to George D. Pegram, then dean of the School of Mines, Engineering and Chemistry at Columbia University. In 1960, the GSUSA appointed the first African American, Dr. Jeanne L. Noble, to the Board. She was an educator and writer. Ada Deer is a Native American who served as Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs in the United States Department of the Interior. She served on the Board from 1969-1975.⁵⁰

Although the GSUSA appointed women of color to executive positions, the organization was still unwilling to fully integrate the organization. African American women who joined predominately white feminist organizations such as NOW felt that groups like NOW focused too much on gender equality rather than class and race oppression. Although NOW elected Aileen Hernandez as its second President, Hernandez felt that the organization failed to understand links between sexism and poverty. Also, African American women thought that preserving the family

⁴⁹ Ibid., 426, 428, 430, 432.

⁵⁰ Lillian S. Williams, *A Bridge to the Future: The History of Diversity in Girl Scouting* (New York: GSUSA, 1996), 5; "Harvey Seeley Mudd: Biography," Fampeople.com, accessed December 5, 2018, www.fampeople.com/cat-harvey-seeley-mudd_2; "Mrs. Roy Layton, Girl Scouts Chief," *New York Times* online, <https://www.nytimes.com/1975/10/11/archives/mrs-roy-layton-girl-scouts-chief-national-president-195157-is-dead.html>; "Dr. Jean Noble: Educator, Researcher, Author, and Consultant," *AAREG* online, <https://aaregistry.org/story/dr-jeanne-noble-educator-researcher-author-and-consultant/>.

in the Black community was crucial in preventing poverty and crime. They feared that women's liberation threatened the family.⁵¹ Because of differences in values and priorities, women of color organized their own feminist organizations. They started to advocate for their own interests and not seek solutions through white women's liberation groups.

The GSUSA sponsored Conference on Black Girl Scouting in 1970 happened as a result of direct activism. Held in Atlanta, Georgia, the Conference brought together African American Girl Scouts, volunteers, and professional staff from across the country. The purpose of the event was to discuss the reasons why more African American women and girls were not involved in Girl Scouting and explored ways for the GSUSA to increase African American participation in the organization. The call to organize the Conference came from African American women leaders of national and local Seattle chapters of black women's organizations who attended the 1969 GSUSA triennium meeting in Seattle, Washington. A choir of 100 girls opened the meeting and other Girl Scouts served in ceremonial duties. The choir and most of the children who participated in the ceremonies were comprised of white Girl Scouts. The leaders thought that the GSUSA was hypocritical. While the organization presented an image of working toward racial inclusion, its actions expressed the opposite. The African American leaders demanded a meeting with the GSUSA to discuss and develop ways that the organization would include more African American women in their programming and publicity.⁵²

When the Conference opened, attendees ranged from older women who were influenced by racial uplift ideologies and the black clubwomen's movement from the early 20th century, to

⁵¹ Roth, Benita, *Separate Roads to Feminism: Black, Chicana, and White Feminist Movements in America's Second Wave* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 101, 106.

⁵² Thomas, "More than Girls Selling Cookies," 12-14.

teenage Girl Scouts who were influenced by the Black Power movement. Groups represented at the Conference included the National Council of Negro Women and collegiate black sororities.⁵³

Conference attendees realized that the biggest weakness in the Girl Scouting program was the image of Scouting. The Girl Scout image was that of a white girl in a little green uniform selling Girl Scout cookies. The need to increase the number of African American Girl Scouts became more apparent and crucial. The council from Cincinnati suggested that Scouting be commercialized and that more African American members be included in Girl Scout publicity, and radio and television ads. At the conclusion of the conference, the delegates approved of the GSUSA Board of Directors' efforts to include stories and pictures of minority members in all GSUSA materials. Minority members who would appear in ads and publicity included girls that had darker skin tones, facial features attributing more to African Americans, and natural hair styles such as afros. This cultural and racial pride aspect of Black Power was accepted by the Conference delegates.⁵⁴

Delegates also sought to increase connections between the GSUSA and African American communities and heritage. The Los Angeles council referred to the image of the Girl Scout selling cookies and stated that the picture was void of social concern and didn't speak to the solution to or the involvement in contemporary social issues, and it didn't connect with African Americans and poor people in general. The attendees thought that the GSUSA didn't encourage political activism or community involvement and called for more activism and social involvement activities in the Girl Scout programming. Activism was also part of the Black Power movement, and the majority wanted to incorporate Black Power ideas without breaking from the broader GSUSA mission. Delegates also wanted the GSUSA to create and expand the

⁵³ Ibid., V-VII, 1-2.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 126-127.

badge work opportunities that allowed Girl Scouts to participate in personal and/or community activism. Also, because African-American Girl Scouts identified with different aspects of Black Power, they felt that they should be able to define their Scouting experiences for themselves, and not let white people speak for them. Overall, the Conference was a success. Two years later, eight new challenges were added to the Cadette Girl Scout Program. The challenges included the Challenge of My Heritage, Challenge of Today's World, Challenge of Community Action, and Challenge of International Understanding.⁵⁵

While the GSUSA was able to develop and implement programming designed to increase African American membership and visibility, the GSUSA started to design programs for girls and women inspired by the women's rights movement. The organization wanted to be viewed by the membership and the public as modern and the goal of the new and innovative programming was to retain and gain members. In the next decade, there would be an expression from the membership that didn't manifest before. Because of the GSUSA's decisions on Freidan and the ERA, the polarization between conservative and liberal members, and the organization itself, came into view.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 128, 131, 133-134.

CHAPTER IV: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GSUSA AND ITS MEMBERSHIP, 1970S

The Liberating Wave

The American Girl, a magazine published by the GSUSA for Girl Scouts, let girls and young women voice their perspectives in its opinion columns to the issues of the day. The periodical didn't shy away from the pressing topics of the 1970s such as women's liberation and the similarities and differences between the sexes. Girls were very much aware of women's rights and its historical context, and they gave their opinions on the subject. In the letters to the editor, Janet from California enjoyed an article from a past issue called "Boythink." She was glad to read about a boy's perspective on life and boy/girl relationships. Sixteen year old Kathi, a dissenting voice, was "disturbed" by "Boythink" because the article gave the impression that girls shouldn't attempt to outdo boys.⁵⁶ "For too long," Kathi stated, "women have been catering to the male ego. I've always felt that *The American Girl* tried to encourage girls to be the best they can at anything... I'm very disappointed that allowed this to be printed."⁵⁷ Janice, a sixteen year old from New Orleans, was glad to read about the great careers girls can choose to have. She stated that "women are still fighting for their rights... didn't get to vote until 1920... have been a member of NOW since I was 14... I believe more strongly than ever that everyone on this earth is supposed to be the equal of everyone else. I hope one day everyone will realize this."⁵⁸ Thirteen year old Lorri and her friend Sue from Michigan determined that the magazine "is becoming sissified. You're always printing articles about girls who like being girls – pretty and dainty. But what about the girls who would rather climb trees... play football, and soccer? Why can't we tomboys have a voice...? We would like to see more sports-minded articles."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ "A Penny for Your Thoughts," *The American Girl*, December 1971.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ "A Penny for Your Thoughts," *The American Girl*, July 1972, 44.

⁵⁹ "A Penny for Your Thoughts," *The American Girl*, June 1972.

Occasionally, the editor responded to a letter, which was published under the girl's letter in the column. The editor wrote to Lorri and Sue that the GSUSA published a magazine for Girl Scouts similar to Sports Illustrated titled *The American Girl Illustrated*.⁶⁰

Girls reacted to an article from *The American Girl* titled "Boys' Thoughts on Girls' Lib." One of the boys in the article was Brian and he stated that women were compelled to strip in public to prove their equality. Brian's statement may have been a response to women who publicly burned their bras in protest and at women's rights rallies. Girls gave a variety of reactions to the article, most in favor of equality and respect for both boys and girls. Lisa from Pennsylvania stated that she didn't make passes at boys or even stripped in public, but she believed in women's liberation, and that she was proud of her accomplishments in which boys as well as girls were involved. Lucy, a thirteen year old from Texas, stated that she never had to do anything drastic to prove her equality to boys. She picked up books and opened doors for boys and felt that she should not be labeled "radical" for doing so. Lucy suggested that guys follow the golden rule - if boys open doors or carry books for girls, then expect girls to do the same.⁶¹ The sharpest response came from Marian, a teenager from California, who thought that the article "was the funniest... I've read in months. It seems that many boys believe that girls are 'asking' them for liberation. It will be quite a shock to them when they discover that women will take what they want without permission."⁶²

Girl Scouts of various ages from all over the country expressed different perspectives on equality. Overall, they supported women's liberation. The GSUSA, in response, discarded its domesticity training for girls from two decades before and started to offer information to girls

⁶⁰ "A Penny for Your Thoughts," *The American Girl*, August 1972.

⁶¹ "A Penny for Your Thoughts," *The American Girl*, July 1973, 38.

⁶² Ibid.

about careers in male dominated terrains and other avenues of self-fulfillment. The GSUSA and the local councils created training programs for girls that would inspire them to enter careers in science and executive administration. The organization developed ways for girls to explore themselves and their world. A method used was feminist consciousness-raising. Feminist consciousness-raising was the process where one became aware of what was wrong in the world, developed ways to change the circumstances, shared this process with peers, and envisioned a different future. Its variation was best displayed in the GSUSA publication titled *Options*.

Options was published in 1974 for Senior Girl Scouts ages fourteen to seventeen. The draft of the book was reviewed by Cadettes, Senior Girl Scouts, and adult Scouts. The front cover was illustrated with a Senior Girl Scout and the planet Earth in the center, and on the upper left hand corner of the cover was a picture of the Scout as a little girl and on the upper right corner was the faceless version of the girl with a question mark. The cover alluded to outward and internal exploration. How the book should be used by the Senior Girl Scout was described as,

No set program that you just 'fit.' The book addresses personally to the senior scout, and what avenues they want to explore, activities to careers. The senior scout selects 'options' to fashion a program to fit you based on your interests, your needs, your style. The book encourages the senior to start anywhere in the book, and find the parts that help you to move in the directions you want to go... In this book, as in Girl Scouting, the focus is on you: you deciding for yourself, getting into harmony with others, tuning into the problems of your world... This book is meant to spark your ideas and your thinking. The rest is up to you.⁶³

The book also provided illustrations of women of different races and ethnicities in diverse careers including racing, medicine, tennis, ballet, and astronomy. It also encouraged Senior Girl Scouts to create their own "inner space" – to get in touch with themselves and seek answers to the questions of "Who am I?" "Where do I fit in this world?" and "What shall I

⁶³ *Options: A Resource for Senior Scouts* (New York: GSUSA, 1974), Introduction.

become?”⁶⁴ Self-discovery also meant that girls needed to interact with fellow Scouts and non-Scouts in “deciding, planning, creating, talking, arguing, sharing, and solving problems, you depend on the mirror of others to help you form a realistic picture of yourself.”⁶⁵ Along with developing a sisterhood and participating in deep self-discovery, feminist consciousness-raising included a plan of action for social change. *Options* told Senior Scouts to create a “plan of attack.” The book described this in more detail,

How many times have you said to yourself that you wish things could be different? You sit and ponder rising costs and how your family is making ends meet; or how your neighbor, a senior citizen, will get through another ice-ridden winter... All your worrying and pondering just makes you tired, so you go to sleep, right? *wrong*... If you really want to get into action, you look over the situation and make a plan of attack... you must initiate the action.⁶⁶

Options offered Senior Scouts ideas on social change, as defined as using one’s skills and abilities and get involved in day care centers, tutoring, or an after school drug abuse clinic. One idea was that if a Senior Scout was good with organizing and handling money, she could consider starting a consumer education center for her peers and community members. In the back of the book, bibliographies organized by subject were provided to readers so that they could further educate themselves about the topic they were interested in.⁶⁷

Scouts could skip the feminist consciousness-raising process and participate in GSUSA programs. One program in the 1970s was *Runways: To Wider Opportunities*. *Runways* offered Girl Scouts vocational opportunities through educational trips to different parts of the country. Some trips offered undergraduate credit. Either the GSUSA or a local council hosted the trip, and each trip lasted one to two weeks. Each girl who applied, if accepted, got matched with a trip according to her interests and skills. One trip was called “Survival U” at the University of

⁶⁴ Ibid., 68.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 69.

Wisconsin – Madison. It was a summer workshop that focused on environmental conservation for girls and women ages fifteen to eighteen. Scouts learned to recognize environmental problems and develop solutions. “Explore the Florida reef in the Florida Keys” was another runaway opportunity for Girl Scouts fifteen to seventeen years old. Girls collected and studied marine specimens and learned about the history of the Florida Keys. The GSUSA hosted a career preview in New York City for sixteen to eighteen year old Scouts. They heard and saw first-hand how women managed both motherhood and career while working in traditional and non-gender traditional fields such as law, medicine, advertising, broadcasting, social work, and fashion design. The Girl Scouts also had the opportunity to carry out responsibilities that their chosen/interested career entailed. Local councils and troops also offered girls the opportunity to build their skills in careers and community service.⁶⁸

Another program offered by the GSUSA and featured in *The Girl Scout Leader* was called “From Dreams to Reality: A Career Awareness Exploration Project.” The article included illustrations of girls machining and caring for pets. With one project, Girl Scouts went to a forest area and learned ways in which land was developed for wildlife preservation and recreation. They also visited a construction site and learned how to build new housing in urban areas. After visiting the construction site, they listened to a social worker about how a community met the needs of its elderly. The purposes of these field trips were to display female role models in different career paths, encourage career decision-making behaviors, and stimulate non-stereotypical thinking and approaches to careers. On a local level, the Girl Scouts of Milwaukee developed a Juniors and Career Exploration Program called “Anything You Want to Be.” Girl

⁶⁸ *Runways: To Wider Opportunities* (New York: GSUSA, 1972), 4-5, 8-9.

Scouts explored the working world and introduced them to a broad range of careers without the traditional male-female stereotypes.⁶⁹

Along with creating career and educational opportunities for Girl Scouts, the GSUSA published articles that attempted to enlighten and embolden girls and women to embark on journeys in education that historically weren't available to them. High schools and universities started to offer classes in women's studies. In 1970, Cornell University and University of Pennsylvania offered courses on women's roles in society. In the article "Women's Studies: An Experiment that Worked" published in 1976, a girl named Karen took a course in women's studies and was one of an increasing number of women to learn more her "femaleness." The article described women's studies as offering a variety of subjects including women's image in sports, her place in the career world, and her achievements in education or politics. One girl named Carol worried that she was the only girl in her advanced math class and that she would be intellectually threatening to her male peers and that the teacher may be too hard or soft on her. After she took a course titled "Sex Roles and Education," Carol learned that girls who showed a talent for math and science rarely continued to receive advanced degrees in those fields. She also found that she was not alone in her concerns about competing with boys. After taking several women's studies courses, Marion thought more about having a career and taking professional training instead of liberal arts courses.⁷⁰

The Girl Scout Leader also advised Girl Scout leaders on how to guide the girl to have bigger dreams and the fortitude to go after them. In 1972, *The Girl Scout Leader* ran an article written by Elizabeth Duncan Koontz, Director of the Woman's Bureau of the United States

⁶⁹ Nancy Garfield, Mary Gilmore, and Roxanne Spillet, "From Dreams to Reality: A Career Awareness Exploration Project," *The Girl Scout Leader*, November/December 1976, 22.

⁷⁰ Marilyn Lanerty, "Women's Studies: An Experiment that Worked," *The American Girl*, August 1976, 35.

Department of Labor, titled “Woman’s Work: What it is, What it Isn’t, What it Could Be, and Why a Girl Must Be Prepared for It.” At the center of the article’s first two pages was an image that illustrated quite simply the change in the status of women. On the left page was a bride and on the right page was a confident woman at a podium giving a speech. The image depicted what women were trained to aim for in the past and how that evolved to women wanting something outside of the home that was worthwhile and prominent. Koontz began with stating that the majority of women workers were single. If married, women worked because the family needed additional income.⁷¹ “Today, twenty-two percent of women in the workforce are single, the rest are either married or have been,” Koontz stated.⁷² With these statistics, Koontz asked if the teenage girl had to abandon her dream of both family and career. According to Koontz, the teenager only had to put a 20th century look on her dreams. She didn’t have to live her life in the kitchen and nursery; she could design a better future and think of different ways to contribute to her family.⁷³

Koontz declared that woman could have both family and career because women were not expected to have larger families, technology had simplified homemaking, and many chores that kept women busy were now done in shops outside of the home. Koontz channeled Friedan and stated that throughout history, girls were told that a house, children, and husband were all that a woman needed. This ideal picture led to disillusionment and most mothers found homemaking monotonous and boring, which went unrelieved. To avoid deep-seated disappointment, Koontz

⁷¹ Elizabeth Duncan Koontz, “Woman’s Work: What it is, What it Isn’t, What it Could be, and Why a Girl Must be Prepared for it,” *The Girl Scout Leader*, June 1972, 8.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

warned that teenagers had to prepare ahead of time and find solutions that produced a balance between both home and work.⁷⁴

She told Girl Scout leaders that girls needed to be encouraged to develop their highest potential, to aspire to obtain a personally and financially rewarding job, and to follow their own ideas instead of “conforming to the stereotypes, still widely held, as to what is properly ‘women’s work.’”⁷⁵ Girls and young women needed to be prepared to be met with resistance to their efforts to have a career because many people still didn’t view them as serious contenders in the job market. The resistance was not only in the marketplace, Koontz stated, but friends and relatives thought that higher ambitions deterred their friend or relative from getting married.⁷⁶

Koontz uplifted her audience by listing the present labor and educational breakthroughs, and concluded by selling vocational training. She stated that the Federal Government made strides in increasing the number of women in the skilled trades, and that grants were available to states and nonprofit agencies for innovative programs, especially those that met the needs of the historically disadvantaged including women. Girl Scout leaders, Koontz declared, must work with girls and their parents to recognize the possibilities vocational training held for girls and motivate them to plan careers around the skills that employers demanded and that which can be obtained through vocational training.⁷⁷

The GSUSA redefined values that were held since the organization’s inception. In early handbooks, Scouts were strongly encouraged to do a “good turn” many times daily. A good turn meant a thoughtful act, such as helping the elderly carry their groceries or picking up rubbish in public parks. The emphasis was on doing the action for the betterment of the elderly and the park

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 9-10.

and not on what the Girl Scout got out of it. The action was its own reward. This changed in the 1970s. The GSUSA article “What’s the Difference about Service?” explained that service was a process that changed both the giver and receiver. Service was not only about bettering the community, but improving oneself. The article told leaders to help the Girl Scout recognize community needs and how political and economic forces worked within the community. Also, leaders needed to have their Scouts meet and discuss issues with people different from themselves, and identify the unlimited roles women would have in the future. The article assured the leaders that each girl, as her contributions helped meet the needs of the community, would notice how she had grown in her skills and abilities.⁷⁸

It was a progressive time in the GSUSA. Because of what happened in the 1960s, the organization changed its emphasis from homemaking to careers and self and external exploration. Women and girls had opportunities laid before them that gave them tools to reach their potential as a feminist like Friedan desired. As there were supporters of Friedan’s ideas, there were also women who supported conservatives like McGinley. The GSUSA change in programming didn’t threaten the more traditional members as the decisions to nominate Friedan to the GSUSA Board of Directors and endorsing the ERA did.

Nomination of Betty Friedan

To better understand Friedan’s nomination and the ERA endorsement, it is important to explain the changes that were made to the GSUSA’s organizational structure. Troops and councils were still retained at the local level. Instead of an Executive Secretary, councils consisted of a Board of Directors who oversaw all the troops within its jurisdiction, usually a group of counties within a state. The level above the council was the national headquarters. At

⁷⁸ “What’s the Difference About Service?,” *The Girl Scout Leader*, June 1972, 19.

the national level there was the Board of Directors, Board President, and the Executive Director. There were also various committees operating at the national level such as the Executive Committee and the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee appointed National Board members and the Board President. Appointments were made several months before the GSUSA triennial convention and although appointed, Board candidates weren't official Board members until the majority of the GSUSA body voted for them at the convention. Councils elected delegates to attend the triennial convention and the delegates voted on the Committee's appointments. Nominations were also taken from the floor of the convention. The Board of Directors selected the Executive Director.⁷⁹

When the Nominating Committee considered Friedan for a position on the Board, she was considered by many to be the founder of the women's liberation movement. She was a member of the GSUSA and the organization was aware that a person of her stature brought relevancy and connections. The GSUSA conducted an interview with Friedan in the fall of 1974. Friedan recognized that the Girl Scouts had an influence on young girls, and that she wanted to be an influence on the Board. Friedan also visualized the GSUSA as a mode to break down sex role stereotypes. As a nominated Board member, Friedan was given the materials needed to learn about the organization and how to conduct herself as a member of the Board.⁸⁰

When the GSUSA announced the appointment of Friedan as a Board member, letters came into the GSUSA headquarters. The letters were written with sincerity and had an assertive yet polite tone. Most of the letters were written by Girl Scout council and troop leaders, and from

⁷⁹ Leader's Guide to Success (California: Girl Scouts Heart of Central California, 2018), https://www.girlscoutshcc.org/content/dam/girlscouts-girlscoutshcc/documents/Leader%27s%20Guide%20to%20Success_Fall%202018.pdf; ARA Notes on Betty Friedan, October 1974, Box 2574, Folder Friedan, Betty Appointees, GSUSA Collection and Archives, New York City; Ann Franklin to Betty Friedan, 4 December 1974

⁸⁰ ARA Notes on Betty Friedan, October 1974; Ann Franklin to Betty Friedan, 4 December 1974.

mothers of Girl Scouts. Most of the members and mothers opposed the appointment. Lynn from Florida was against the decision because Friedan and NOW's ideals of womanhood did not connect to the ideals of Scouting. Lynn warned that if the GSUSA's intention in appointing Friedan was to change the image of Girl Scouts then she would reconsider affiliating with the Girl Scouts, and would advise other women to reconsider as well.⁸¹ Other women wrote that Friedan's values and beliefs were in contrast to the values and beliefs of the GSUSA, or to the American Christian way of life. They either threatened to take themselves and/or their children out of Girl Scouting, or declared their outright resignation from the GSUSA.⁸² Another letter received expressed how each girl was uniquely feminine and that Girl Scouting, like that of Boy Scouts that taught boys about manhood, had the duty to show girls the beauty of being "truly womanly."⁸³ One letter was from a woman who was a Girl Scout leader and troop organizer from North Carolina. Her letter was of honest despair over the consequences of Friedan's ideas. She wrote,

Sit here writing a letter, I could just cry. One of many frustrated leaders and troop organizers, I am one of few who can actually make the time to sit down and say how we feel. In your gorgeous inspiring letters which I feel are all so glorious and uplifting you stress... helpfulness to others, and consideration through devoted service to girls. Where in the name of the Lord do you all think we are going to get these beautiful selfless women who aren't working at becoming liberated. You made matters worse by putting Betty Friedan on the Girl Scout Board. I'm very familiar with all she stands for and in some respect she has a few good points. But basically she is making women very unhappy with their role as mother and wife which is so very very important. Public and private schools seeing discipline problems... We need women to get back to being women and being content with their roles as mother, wife and teacher... In our area alone many troops are operating on a shoestring leaders wise and some girls are without leaders. Please do something... to help promote contentment in the home... and whatever you do – take Betty not too seriously.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Lynn Johnson to Dr. Cecily Selby, 7 November 1974.

⁸² Ellen Pekarna to Dr. Cecily Selby, 18 November 1974; Mrs. James Cox to Girl Scout Limberlost Council, 19 November 1974, Box 2574, Folder Personalities – Friedan, Betty – Correspondence – 1974-1978.

⁸³ Gail Hudson White to Dr. Cecily Selby.

⁸⁴ Mrs. Richard Citrine to Marjorie Ittmann and Dr. Cecily Selby, 13 January 1975.

In going through the folder of letters, there was no returning letter found from the GSUSA to this woman. Most responses from the national headquarters were comprised of acknowledgment of receiving the letters and that the GSUSA upheld the values that were in the Girl Scout laws and promises. The woman may have received a letter like that.

Another batch of letters opposing Friedan came from archdioceses across the United States. The leaders of the Catholic Girl Scout Committee of the Diocese in Lansing, Michigan protested her appointment to the Board because she signed the Humanist Manifesto II. The Committee reminded the GSUSA of the Girl Scout Promise to serve God, country, and mankind, that the Girl Scout constitution declared that they are united by a belief in God, and that the motivating force behind Girl Scouting was a spiritual one. The current triennial goal of initiating social change, the Committee argued, could support or oppose a service to God. The Committee then asked rhetorically if the GSUSA was using its structure to serve God as the Promise proclaimed and if a belief in God and the acceptance of the Promise was a requirement for adult membership and positions in Girl Scout leadership. The Committee continued to argue that Friedan, in signing the Humanist Manifesto II, was contradictory to the Promise to serve God. Also, in signing the Manifesto, Friedan denounced her belief in their understanding of God's laws which included the protection of the life of the unborn, the physically and mentally challenged, and the elderly. The Committee asked the GSUSA to reconsider Friedan's election to the Board. The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights wrote a similar letter to the Board.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Mrs. Delores Newman and Carl Simon, Chaplain, Diocese of Lansing, Catholic Girl Scout Committee to the GSUSA, 17 April 1975; Mario Spalatin, Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights to the GSUSA National Board of Directors, 20 May 1975.

In a March 28, 1975 memorandum, the GSUSA revealed that it was aware that it handled the responses to Friedan in an impersonal way. Although Friedan was appointed to the Board, she still had to get officially elected to the Board by the GSUSA membership at the 1975 triennial conference, which was scheduled for later that year, and the opposition to Friedan and the upcoming Board election concerned the administration.⁸⁶ The GSUSA's top brass also collected and organized in a timeline comments that Friedan had made in the press and the letters opposing and supporting her Board membership. The excerpts from news articles were of a controversial nature. Friedan commented on lesbianism, the changes in sex roles and on helping women get illegal abortions.⁸⁷ The administration decided to share their concerns and information with Friedan and prepare her for what may happen at the conference including other nominations from the floor, speeches against her nomination, an attempt to remove her name from the nomination list, and protests. The administration was confident that whatever may happen that they were prepared.⁸⁸ Friedan was elected at the conference, and the GSUSA put out a News Release about her election and numerous accomplishments.⁸⁹

There are several reasons why the GSUSA administration and membership did not back down from electing Friedan to the Board. The Board was composed of fifty members. Friedan probably would have had influence on the Board, but she needed to compete with forty-nine other people who had power. The influence she may have had may not have been as significant. Friedan, being viewed as a founder of the women's movement, brought with her a reputation, connections, and modernity. Friedan expressed a desire for the GSUSA to restructure itself and

⁸⁶ Helen Drake to Richard Knox, 28 March 1975.

⁸⁷ Chronology of Events, 10 April 1975.

⁸⁸ Helen Drake to Richard Knox, 28 March 1975; Helen Drake to Marjorie Ittmann and Dr. Cecily Selby, 16 April 1975.

⁸⁹ News Release, 29 October 1975.

become an organization that taught girls to live beyond sex stereotypes. The GSUSA, always concerned about its modernity and membership roles, needed a person like her on the Board to give the organization continued relevancy in American society and attract potential members. Although most of the letters opposed Friedan, the total number of letters received by the GSUSA represented a small percentage of the membership. With the membership moving much more into a feminist direction, it looked like the conservative voices were being left behind. This wasn't the case however in regards to the GSUSA endorsing the ERA.

ERA and the GSUSA

The wording of the ERA to the United States Constitution is the following: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."⁹⁰ The amendment was introduced in Congress since 1923 and wasn't debated by Federal legislators until 1972, when the women's movement had gained great momentum. Congress did pass the ERA the same year and the amendment was sent to the states for ratification. Twenty-two states ratified the ERA immediately and thirteen more states ratified it over the next five years. The states that ratified the ERA were comprised of both predominantly liberal and conservative states.⁹¹ With the momentum shifting swiftly to the ratification of the ERA, the GSUSA considered whether or not to endorse the amendment.

The first discussions among the GSUSA administration about whether or not to endorse the ERA began in April of 1974. The GSUSA at first went back and forth with the idea of getting involved. The organization voiced its strong apprehensiveness in a letter to an executive member of a local Girl Scout council. The member wrote to the GSUSA to find out if the council would

⁹⁰ Sarah A. Soule and Brayden G. King, "The Stages of the Policy Process and the Equal Rights Amendment, 1972-1982," *American Journal of Sociology* 111, no. 6 (2006): 1871.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 1871-1872, 1874.

violate Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations if it conducted legislative activity concerning the ERA, since the GSUSA was a non-profit organization and the council was a part of the organization. The GSUSA responded that it was unlikely that a council would be in violation of IRS regulations.⁹² The GSUSA then attempted to discourage involvement with the ERA by raising bigger and broader questions to the council member,

There are other perhaps more important considerations. If a Girl Scout council board takes a position on the ERA, can the Board be sure that the position truly represents the majority of its members, girls and adults? Even if the position represents a clear majority, does that position tend to polarize girls, their families, and adult leader into two factions on an issue that does not directly affect the working of the organization? There is no reason why any and/or all members of the Girl Scout organization cannot take individual stand for or against the ERA as private citizens. Can not this be done without a Board position which could polarize the Council politically or cause a community polarization?⁹³

The GSUSA referred the member to individuals who had prior knowledge and experience about the issue for future discussions.⁹⁴

Although the GSUSA discouraged councils to get involved with the ERA, it still dabbled with the potential reality of either officially supporting or not supporting the amendment. The GSUSA asked a law firm about the legalities of endorsing the ERA. The firm responded that it did not believe the organization would violate federal laws restricting activities of charitable organizations merely by the GSUSA Board endorsing the ERA, providing that it didn't actively lobby for the amendment. The next correspondence was in November when the GSUSA wrote to Mrs. Metzger, Executive Director of the Sakakawea Girl Scout Council in North Dakota. Mrs. Metzger described the ERA campaign in North Dakota and asked if the GSUSA took a position on the amendment. The GSUSA stated no, and that it would not take one in the future. The GSUSA further explained to Mrs. Metzger about what to consider which was similar to the

⁹² Thomas W. Kelly to Marie T. Spann, 4 April 1974, Box 1662, Folder Equal Rights Amendment, 1972-1976. GSUSA Collection and Archives, New York City; Dr. Cecily Selby to Marie Spann, 11 April 1974.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

council member inquiring about the IRS regulations. The GSUSA suggested to Mrs. Metzger that her and her colleagues needed to determine how their community would react if her council took an official position on the ERA. The reaction would have a bearing on how organizations and individuals view Girl Scouting and the level of support they give. The current position of the Board, the GSUSA declared, was that members as private individuals could take action but members and councils couldn't take official Girl Scout actions.⁹⁵

The organization held its position of not officially supporting the amendment for the next two years. Gloria D. Scott was President of the GSUSA and in November of 1976, responded to a letter writer who was "appalled" that the GSUSA was not on a list of ERA supporters. Scott told her that she didn't want to jeopardize the organization's tax free status by participating in partisan political activity, which was against IRS regulations. Scott also explained that any type of legislative activity had to have direct bearing on the GSUSA. Scott explained to the writer that actions such as helping to draft language for the Youth Camp Safety Act and requesting exemption for traditional single sex agencies such as the Title IX provisions of the education laws were examples of restrictive legislative activity. Scott told the writer that the GSUSA believed that Girl Scouts needed to be aware of the issues facing the country and encouraged councils to discuss the pros and cons of supporting the amendment. Despite Scott's fear of legal repercussions, councils from across the country wanted the GSUSA to step up and take a leadership role on this issue, and the GSUSA gradually changed its tune.⁹⁶

In January of 1977, the Board announced in a news release that they endorsed the ERA because the amendment ensured for "our girls" (Girl Scouts) as they would become women with

⁹⁵ William C. Tracy to Mrs. Metzger, 15 November 1974.

⁹⁶ Patricia Hegarty to Gloria D. Scott, 1 November 1976; Gloria D. Scott to Patricia Hegarty, 11 November 1976.

equal opportunities and rights in their homes and careers.⁹⁷ Letters and calls poured into the GSUSA headquarters for clarification on its stance. In early February, Scott released a memorandum to all the Girl Scout Council Presidents in the country that included a list of justifications for the endorsement and an offer to help councils answer questions their respective communities may have. In the memo, Scott reminded Council Presidents that Girl Scout councils, girls, and adults could make their own choices to whether or not support the ERA. Scott declared that the legal opinions from various counsels, including the GSUSA's counsel, were that the organization was within its right to voice an opinion that had a bearing on its rights, responsibilities, and duties. She explained that councils wanted the GSUSA to support the amendment, and with over 2.6 million girls and over half a million women and men in Girl Scouting, the ERA had an impact on the present and future membership. Scott reasoned that the Board, by endorsing the ERA, legally voiced an opinion on an issue that affected the organization's rights, duties, and responsibilities.⁹⁸

Contrary to what she said in previous correspondence, Scott claimed that the endorsement was not a political action. She didn't offer evidence to support her argument and she may have said it to appease her audience. Scott didn't consider what the GSUSA stated to councils to consider - how the community would view their decision of supporting the ERA and how it would affect their financial well-being. At the core of it, the GSUSA believed in equality and that, coupled with the need to be socially relevant and the push from Girl Scout councils, compelled the organization to endorse the ERA.

Actions come at a price, and the GSUSA was about to face a slew of dissent from its membership on the ERA endorsement. As the 1970s continues, more conservative voices will

⁹⁷ Girl Scout National Board of Directors Votes to Endorse Equal Rights Amendment, 30 January 1977.

⁹⁸ Gloria D. Scott to Girl Scout Council Presidents, 10 February 1977.

organize and collectively protest the amendment. As the decade came to the close, the ERA lost support and the GSUSA needed to make a decision on whether or not to continue its support of the amendment.

Opponents of the ERA

The main opponents of the ERA were the Concerned Women for America (CWA) and Phyllis Schlafly. One of the founding members of the CWA was Beverly LaHaye, wife of Tim LaHaye who was a founding member of the Moral Majority. LaHaye believed in the male headship of the household and had a fundamental interpretation of the Bible. She was angry when Barbara Walters interviewed Betty Friedan in 1978 and that Betty stated she spoke for all women. LaHaye felt that the founder of NOW didn't speak for her or represented her views and values. Feeling like true Christian women needed a voice to fight feminism, LaHaye organized a conference and formed the CWA.⁹⁹

LaHaye thought it was a long time coming. She believed in an ongoing secular decay in society that started with John Dewey, the founder of Secular Humanism. The main idea of secular humanism is that man not God is the center of existence. In 1973, humanists wrote the Human Manifesto II that challenged the credibility of the Church. Tim LaHaye's book *The Battle of the Mind* informed readers about the perils of secular humanism. To the LaHayes, the battle with the secular humanists was a battle between good and evil. Beverly LaHaye realized that the definition of womanhood was open to radical redefinition and wrote books articulating God's definition of womanhood during the ERA's ratification period.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Chelsia Griffis, "'In the Beginning was the Word': Evangelical Christian Women, the Equal Rights Amendment, and Competing Definitions of Womanhood," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 38, no. 2 (2017): 159.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 159-161.

LaHaye believed that a woman's place was under God and her husband, but she didn't believe women were inferior to men. However, she believed that feminists were too radical and that they were hostile and bitter women who wanted to usurp the patriarchal system, and their assertions against the Bible were acts of rebellion against God. LaHaye criticized the Evangelical Women's Caucus (EWC) stating that the EWC's idea of being a Christian feminist caused women to be confused and unsure of God's proper role for them. LaHaye believed that one could not be a feminist and a Christian. Although she was against the ERA, she believed in equal pay for equal work and supported a woman's right to be free from sexual harassment in the work place. She was against an amendment that would radically redefine the family and be used as a tool to invite total government control over everyone's lives.¹⁰¹

By 1980, the CWA had over half a million members, and paid for anti-ERA advertisements in states that were in the process of ratifying the amendment. Over the next two years, LaHaye advised CWA members to pray to God that the ERA will not be ratified. In 1982, the ERA failed to be ratified, and LaHaye stated that their prayers have been answered.¹⁰²

As the CWA grew in numbers and influence, Phyllis Schlafly started her assault on the ERA when she headed the pro-family conference in Houston at the same time and area as the National Women's Conference in 1977. Schlafly published a scholarly monthly newsletter named after her and founded a conservative women's forum called the Eagle Forum. She was also a radio commentator, wife, mother of six, and a lawyer.¹⁰³ Schlafly was a very formidable and persuasive woman because she researched the details of the ERA and spoke to many groups about what she considered to be its hidden dangers. She managed to get people to look at the

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 161, 163, 165.

¹⁰² Ibid., 166-167.

¹⁰³ Sharon Whitney, *The Equal Rights Amendment: The History and the Movement* (New York: F. Watts, 1984), 63-64.

bigger picture - that the ERA was an *amendment* to the Constitution, and how significant that was and what that really meant. She founded the anti-ERA advocacy group called Stop ERA.

In the late 1970s, Schlafly spoke to the wives of the labor union members of the Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industry (AWCI) about the ERA. Aware that it was several years since the end of the Vietnam War and drafting young men, Schlafly started her speech with the news that President Jimmy Carter, in his State of the Union address, called for women as well as men to be drafted in the military.¹⁰⁴ Schlafly declared that “in that one call, a number of people suddenly realized what equality really means.”¹⁰⁵ She notes that during the Vietnam War, no woman was drafted and sent into military combat. Schlafly stated that we “are so fortunate that we have a Constitution which allows for rational differences of treatment between men and women” and that the American people were not willing “for our daughters to be treated exactly like our sons. Nobody wants to fight a war. Nobody wants to be drafted.”¹⁰⁶ She focused on the fact that the purpose of training soldiers was to teach them how to kill, not offer them world trips and employment training. “We don’t want our daughters to be taught to kill,” Schlafly admonished, “Women are for the participation in the creation of human life, not the killing of human life.”¹⁰⁷

Pregnancy in the military was another issue Schlafly discussed. Although it was the 1970s, sex outside marriage was very much frowned upon. Schlafly injected a little moral and financial panic as she described what proper ladies would be subjected to by the ERA and feminists,

Nor do we want them put into an environment where immoral sex is tolerated, rewarded and financed by the government. The rape rate in the military today is considerably higher than it is in civilian life... 15% of them at any one time are pregnant... another six percent of them have had their baby and brought them back to the army post... you’ll find any army that looks like a maternity ward or child care center... most

¹⁰⁴ Phyllis Schlafly, “What’s Wrong with the ERA?,” accessed September 20, 2018, https://www.awci.org/cd/pdfs/8005_b.pdf, 11.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

of these babies are illegitimate and financed by the taxpayers... it is, because of pressure from Women's Liberation, forbidden to the Army to discharge a pregnant service person.¹⁰⁸

Schlafly then addressed the crowd with the broader implications of the amendment. "The ERA being in the Constitution would apply to everything... every law... every regulation," Schlafly warns, "the Equal Rights Amendment in the Constitution would immediately make unconstitutional the existing laws that make women exempt from military combat."¹⁰⁹

Similar to what LaHaye argued, Schlafly discussed the nature of men and women and stated that the ERA would prevent people from treating women differently and that wives being treated like husbands is based on the false assumption that there were no differences between women and men.¹¹⁰ Being keenly aware that her audience was mostly comprised of housewives, she stated that she opposed the ERA because every law will treat men and women the same. There were state laws that made husbands support their wives. Schlafly pointed out that this law was a sex-discriminatory law and that it was beneficial.¹¹¹ "Those laws are basic to the institution of a family," Schlafly claimed, "Those are the laws that give a wife her right to be a full-time homemaker. It gives the children the right to have a mother in the home. Why would anyone want to wipe out those laws?"¹¹² She also stated that the problem of sex neutrality was that "you can't wipe out the fact that women have babies and men don't have babies... For the support of a family on the husband... that the wife would have to share in that equally... is hardly fair when the woman is the only one to bear the burden of having the baby."¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 13.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 14.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

In her final part of her talk, Schlafly stated that the ERA would transfer approximately seventy percent of state laws to the federal government. Hence, the federal government would have too much power. She also compared the ERA with Title IX. Title IX was federal legislation that was passed in Congress and that people could still work with Congress and make amendments to Title IX. With the ERA, people wouldn't be able to do anything except pass another amendment which would cost a great deal of time, money, and effort. After Schlafly's speech, the wives were polled in a confidential ballot and voted against the ERA 171-15.¹¹⁴ Schlafly knew who she was addressing and probably encouraged them to join Stop ERA and to call their state representatives and tell them to not ratify the amendment. It isn't sure if GSUSA members were influenced by Schlafly, but the members who wrote letters to the GSUSA opposing the ERA endorsement made similar anti-ERA arguments.

Letters from the Membership

Most of the letters that the GSUSA received were in opposition of the ERA endorsement. Letters came from local council members, troop leaders, mothers, and girls. Some writers were against the GSUSA participation in politics, despite Scott's claim that the endorsement was not a political action. Clara and Betty who served on the Girl Scout Council of the Apalachee Bend in Florida expressed their "displeasure" with the Board and strongly reminded the Board that, despite Scott's insistence that the GSUSA's action was separate from that of an individual or group in Girl Scouting, to the public Girl Scouts was Girl Scouts. The ladies went on to say that they lost volunteers and contributions because of the endorsement. The GSUSA's response to them was that their protest was "duly noted" and reiterated how the Board acted as a group within its own activity, that troops and Scouts could take a different position, and that other

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 14, 16.

councils requested that the GSUSA support the amendment.¹¹⁵ Girl Scouts who wrote in varied in age and basically stated that they did not agree with the GSUSA's viewpoint and that its action were hurting their cookie sales. One Brownie wrote that she liked Girl Scouting but mommy told her she had to quit because of the ERA endorsement.¹¹⁶

Some of the letter writers used reasons similar to Schlafly's arguments against the ERA. A twelve year old Cadette named Suzy stated that the year before she sold over 160 boxes and now nobody were buying her cookies because of the GSUSA's support of the amendment. She stated that she didn't want to fight in a war or share a toilet with a man. This alluded to Schlafly's claim that the amendment would include females in the military draft.¹¹⁷ Suzy stated that "a girl is made differently and should be treated differently."¹¹⁸ She conceded that part of the amendment was "alright," but the "bad things" overshadowed the good.¹¹⁹ Troop 901 from California signed and sent several petitions to the GSUSA in opposition of the ERA endorsement. They didn't want to be in the arm forces and the GSUSA's endorsement was negatively impacting the troop's cookie sales.¹²⁰

A couple of months after the official endorsement, Scott tallied the 1,048 responses received from members and nonmembers. Out of the 1,048 respondents, 959 opposed the GSUSA support for the ERA. Most of the respondents were troop leaders at 293. Out of the 293 leaders, 287 opposed the endorsement. Sixty-two respondents were Girl Scouts. Sixty-one out of the sixty-two were in opposition. Each year, Scott came out with a new tally. It isn't clear as to who was allowed to see them; there was no list of report recipients.¹²¹ In 1978, 1,532 people sent

¹¹⁵ Clara Jane Smith and Betty Ebel to Gloria D. Scott, 1 March 1977; Responding to Apalachee, 3 March 1977.

¹¹⁶ Christy Smith to the GSUSA National Board of Directors, 1 March 1977.

¹¹⁷ Suzy Smith to GSUSA National Board of Directors, 1 March 1977.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Troop 901 to Gloria D. Scott, 4 March 1977.

¹²¹ Gloria D. Scott to GSUSA National Board of Directors, 31 March 1977.

in their opinions on the Board's ERA endorsement and 1,188 of them opposed the action. This time, instead of troop leaders, and largest group was comprised of adult members, volunteers, and supporters. Of the 443 adult members, volunteers, and supporters, 410 were ERA opponents. Most of the troop leaders opposed the endorsement as well.¹²²

The GSUSA continued to receive letters against the endorsement. Reasons for the opposition were the same – a non-profit cannot take political positions and act accordingly and that the endorsement went against Girl Scout values. The GSUSA, when responding to the letter writers, continued to justify that as a corporate group, it could legally take a stand on an issue that directly impacted the organization. In a letter from March of 1977, the GSUSA most clearly spelled out what it could and couldn't do regarding its ERA endorsement,

The National Board of Directors acting as a corporate group, within its own are of activity, without the involvement of others. One of the very crucial differences between engaging in political or partisan activity and taking a public position, or developing a position statement on an issue, is in the advocacy role implicit in the former. The Board of Directors did not advocate that anyone vote for or against the ERA in any legislative body, either state or federal. It further does not encourage any person or group to take a position for or against the ERA. Our legal counsel defines us along with our Constitution and Bylaws the interpreted right to participate through public statement on those things which have potential impact on the organization's responsibilities and its membership.¹²³

The GSUSA told its members that it did not allocate any funds to any legislative or organizational entity that was either for or against the ERA.¹²⁴

Contrary to what the GSUSA told its members, Scott did write a letter on the behalf of the Board in the late summer of 1978 to Democratic Senator Birch Bayh Jr. and asked him to support Joint Resolution 138 which would extend the time limitations for States to consider ratification of the ERA. Copies of the letters were sent to other top administrators in the GSUSA. During this time, opposition to the ERA was growing in the country. To persuade the Senator,

¹²² ERA Correspondence, 18 January 1978, Box 1662, Folder Legislations: Stat and Federal ERA.

¹²³ Correspondence to Apalachee, 3 March 1977.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

Scott described the main content of *Worlds to Explore: Handbook for Brownies and Junior Girl Scouts*, the new GSUSA handbook released earlier in the year, and how the organization had been very interested in the women's movement. Scott mentioned that she served on the Commission of the Observance of International Women's Year and the planning committee for the first National Women's Conference. Scott stated that women sought full partnership with men in order to achieve a peaceful and secure world. She then asked as a woman and United States citizen that he support the ratification time extension.¹²⁵

Whether or not the GSUSA legal counsel knew that Scott sent the letter to Bayh is unknown. Also, there are no archival materials that reveal that Scott, the Board, or any other GSUSA executive participated, as representatives of the GSUSA, in other ERA-related activities. What the letter revealed is that the President of the GSUSA was very much in favor of the ERA. No evidence has been uncovered that proves any type of strong tension between Scott and other GSUSA executives. A reason that the GSUSA continued to support the ERA despite the opposition from its members is that Scott, professionally and personally, strongly supported the ERA. Because of her position as GSUSA's President, there was probably little resistance from within the national headquarters.

Bending the rules didn't mean the GSUSA outright defied its Constitution and Bylaws. As the seventies were coming to a close, a NOW representative contacted the GSUSA and wanted Girl Scouts in uniform at vigils at the House of Representatives in Washington D.C. supporting the ERA time extension. A GSUSA executive explained to the NOW representative the difference between the Board endorsement of the ERA and the right of councils to take their own independent actions. The executive stated to the NOW representative that the GSUSA

¹²⁵ Gloria D. Scott to Birch Bayh, 14 August 1978.

would alert Councils about the vigils and if the Councils wanted to do something they may do so.¹²⁶ As the 1980s began, the GSUSA wanted a Board that was more diverse in its worldview, age, ethnicity, and skills. Also, the GSUSA decided to shrink the Board from fifty to fourteen. The organization informed Friedan that she would not be nominated for another Board term.¹²⁷

Regarding the ERA, letters that opposed the ERA endorsement dropped off considerably. Perhaps Schlafly and other anti-ERA supporters were becoming successful at persuading people to not support the ERA – the GSUSA members didn't think it necessary to voice their concerns. A year later, NOW again asked the GSUSA to ask its councils to participate in the fight for ERA ratification in Illinois. The GSUSA turned NOW down, stating that since there were differing opinions among the Illinois councils concerning the ERA, it would be improper for the GSUSA to suggest to the councils to participate in legislative activity.¹²⁸ Eventually, because of the influence of Schlafly and other anti-ERA individuals and organizations, the ERA was never ratified.

Interracial Progress

The organization in the 1970s strove to include more people of color in its publications and programming. *The American Girl* covered topics such as “Black is Beautiful and “Black and Proud – Marrying Someone of a Different Race.” Opinions on race and relationships varied. Most of the letters posted in the column were from Girl Scouts in support of interracial marriage. Some of the girls thought that if one decided to be with another person of a different race, then he or she needed to accept the problems that went with it. Other Scouts thought that wanting to be with their own race was not one of racism but of preference.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Marge Vance to GSUSA, 24 August 1978.

¹²⁷ Mrs. Howard Sprague to Betty Friedan, 6 February 1981.

¹²⁸ Richard Knox to Mrs. Orville Freeman, 4 May 1982.

¹²⁹ “A Penny for Your Thoughts,” *The American Girl*, January 1970.

Ten years before, these views expressed by Girl Scouts would have been very different. The changes made in America in just a decade were fast and powerful. The Conference on Black Girl Scouting yielded results. The GSUSA illustrations and photographs in its publications including *The Girl Scout Leader* depicted more people of color. Girl Scouts started to meet other Scouts from a different racial and economic background. An article describes a group of Senior Scouts from the Greater New York Council recruiting inner-city Brooklyn Girl Scouts to go camping at a Girl Scout site. Since it was their first experience, the Senior Scouts taught them outdoor skills. They made hot dogs over vagabond stoves, walked along the beach, and collected sea shells. The first time campers had to get use to the sights smells, especially the night sounds of camp. The article had pictures of white and African American Girl Scouts enjoying camp and talking to one another.¹³⁰

Beverly Harris, an African American Girl Scout, described her experience living with a white family and taking field trips throughout Massachusetts. Harris participated in a wider opportunity sponsored by the Plymouth Bay Council in Massachusetts called “Tuned In and Turned On for Action.” Harris lived in the “ghetto area of the Bronx” which was populated by African Americans and Puerto Ricans and stated that it was “quite a change for me when I found myself living in a five-bedroom colonial home with the Harveys.”¹³¹ They wrote to her beforehand and explained themselves and their home. They didn’t not know she was black, and she didn’t know they were white. For Harris, being with a white family was a “once in a lifetime experience... I found them to be considerate, sensitive people who accepted me as an individual and treated me the same as a member of their own family.”¹³² The Harveys showed her around

¹³⁰ Mabel A. Hammersmith, “It Only Takes You,” *The Girl Scout Leader*, March 1972, 18-19.

¹³¹ Beverly Harris, “Tuned In and Turned On for Action,” *The Girl Scout Leader*, April/May 1972, 20.

¹³² *Ibid.*

the Massachusetts area and helped her shed a different light on her ideas about black-white relationships.¹³³

Harris traveled with interest groups to different places. She visited the State House in Boston and her group got to speak with the Governor. Harris walked away from the meeting with a new prospective on the government system. The next day, she joined an interest group dealing with prejudice and visited community groups in New Bedford. The highlight for Harris was a visit to the Black Panther headquarters. She spoke with the chapter's chairperson and understood his point of view of the system.¹³⁴ After the trip, Harris needed to think a great deal about the perspectives she heard, and that she couldn't rely on the media because "that's where many of my misconceptions originated."¹³⁵

After the field trips, Harris spoke with girls of other ethnic groups and economic and educational backgrounds and "it helped to dispel some of the stereotypes that I had assigned to kids who I considered different from me."¹³⁶ The girls had different views on racial equality, welfare, and international and political issues, yet both similarities and differences were beneficial to their burgeoning friendships.¹³⁷

Girl Scouts also had negative experiences during wider opportunities. However, the experiences gave Scouts a chance to confront and discuss solutions to racism. Over 150 Girl Scout members ascended on New York City to enmesh themselves with people of all walks of life. A group of Scouts of different races went to the New York City subway station. They were accosted by a policeman because of the girls took pictures of the subway (the girl didn't know it

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 21.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

was illegal to take subway pictures). The policeman tried to force one girl to go with him to the police station and told the other girls it was none of their business. The girls didn't back down and told the officer that it was their affair and that they would all go to the station. After a call to his precinct, he changed his mind. The Girl Scouts recounted the incident and its racial implications to the rest of the group. Another group of African American and white girls walked down the street and an African American youth came up to the white girl and told her to "get lost." Her African American friend told him that it was not his business and that she was her friend. The white Girl Scout, when recounting the story called the black youth "boy" rather than "man." It was pointed out to her about the insinuated insult, although it was not her intention to insult African Americans. She apologized and realized, along with the others of different races in the group, that below the superficial similarities in age, hometowns, and backgrounds, were different views of the world and that they could not assume that a word meant the same to all people.¹³⁸

The GSUSA in earlier publications had the occasional picture of Girl Scouts of different races. The organization was progressive in that there were integrated troops in the early half of the 20th century. Yet, it took a vocal group of African American women to call out the organizations contradictory stance on racial diversity. Once the push was made however, GSUSA put more images of African American Scouts in its publications and there were more articles authored by women of color. The GSUSA may not have been successful with the ERA, but it made great strides in opening up more avenues for Girl Scouts of all colors and backgrounds.

Conclusion

¹³⁸ "The City: Now! Tomorrow!," *The Girl Scout Leader*, January/February 1972, 14.

After examining a portion of the Friedan and ERA opposition letters, I am able to expand on Proctor's assessment. The organization was not swayed by their opinions. Friedan stayed on the Board because of her connections and having a founder of the women's movement on the Board gave the GSUSA the public image of modernity. Scott and the Board supported the ERA primarily because they wanted the Girl Scouts to experience full equality in their marriages and careers as they matured to womanhood.

A reason that membership fell in the 1970s was that the GSUSA nominated a feminist to the Board and endorsed an amendment feminists supported. Arneil argues that members left the GSUSA because the organization didn't address the race and gender issues of the 1960s. When the GSUSA implemented more liberating and racially inclusive programs in the next decade, the membership number increased in the 1980s. Contrary to Arneil's claim, members, in their opposition letters, left the organization because of its decisions on Friedan and the ERA. Also, the programs implemented in the 1970s weren't meant to be utilized in the next decade - they were taken up by the membership during the time they were advertised. Additionally, GSUSA membership did not rise significantly until the mid 1980s. From 1970 to 1980, membership dropped from 3.9 million to 2.8 million. From 1980 to 1985, total GSUSA membership, given some slight increases and decreases in the six years, was at 2.8 million. From 1985 to 1990, total membership increased from 2.8 million to 3.3 million.¹³⁹

Perhaps another reason that GSUSA membership declined was that people weren't joining groups in the 1970s as they did a couple of decades before. This was discussed in Robert D. Putnam's book *Bowling Alone*. Putnam argued that Americans had been slowly disengaging from social groups and that Americans needed to reconnect to each other. He put forth a theory

¹³⁹ "Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts – Membership Units," United States Census Bureau, accessed December 6, 2018, https://allcountries.org/usensus/443_boy_scouts_and_girl_scouts_membership.html.

used in past by social scientists called “social capital.” The main idea of social capital theory was that social networks were valuable. Putnam explained that as a screwdriver has physical capital and could increase one’s productivity, so did social contacts. Socializing outside the home decreased in the 1970s. During this decade, Americans shifted more from outside social participation to home-based activities. The most popular home activity was watching television. In regards to children, Putnam described a study where television was a major factor in families being less engaged with community groups. Girls, instead of joining the GSUSA, which offered outside activities and socialization, may have been satisfied just watching television. Also, attendance at sporting events doubled since the 1960s.¹⁴⁰ More girls may have wanted to watch sports. Because Title IX passed in 1972, more contact and competitive sports were opened to girls. Being in a sport is a commitment, and girls may have had to choose between Scouting and participating in sports, with the sports option winning out.

Since its inception, the GSUSA offered gender conforming and nontraditional skill-building programming to girls of different races and creeds. As America focused on domesticity in the mid-20th century, the GSUSA responded to this shift by emphasizing Scouting activities that prepared girls to become better homemakers. It wasn’t until the women’s liberation movement that the GSUSA’s programming shifted from homemaking to promoting career opportunities in male dominated fields. Despite opposition, the GSUSA continued to support Friedan and the ERA. From the 1920s, the GSUSA had integrated troops, but the organization was afraid to fully commit to integration until African American leaders confronted the GSUSA on its hypocrisy. Whether by choice or by confrontation, the GSUSA continued to help girls become something greater than what they were.

¹⁴⁰ Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 18-19, 28, 55, 113, 236-238.

CHAPTER V: EPILOGUE

In 1980, the GSUSA published a guide for leaders to supplement the handbook titled *You Make the Difference: the Handbook for Cadettes and Senior Girl Scouts*. The book's verbiage was similar to past publications designed for Girl Scout leaders. The book advised leaders that as young women reached out for greater competence and freedom, they could help them find avenues of action, and find courage to find the balance between guiding and taking over.¹⁴¹ The

¹⁴¹ *You Make the Difference: Cadette and Senior Girl Scout Leaders' Guide* (New York: GSUSA, 1980), 5.

leaders were informed on what badges the Girl Scouts could earn and to find out what their interests were and match them to the activities in the handbook. Girls were to see how leaders helped provide direction, group consensus, and individual contributions in team work, and the responsibilities the troop leader had to the council. Leaders were to help girls realize their potential.

Potential and mentorship aside, the handbook mentioned future careers for Girl Scouts. The approach was different than the decade before. The GSUSA was not serious about girls going on to careers that have been historically dominated by men. Gone also was the feminist-consciousness raising process. The organization told leaders that girls could read GSUSA publications and explore careers but there were “no heavy handedness with this section on careers. The GSUSA doesn’t push girls to go into careers traditionally held by men. Career cards – put info about a career on card – more of a fun and light hearted approach to career exploration.”¹⁴² Girls were to develop values that gave meaning to their lives, but deep exploration into oneself and developing a sisterhood around social change weren’t unnecessary.¹⁴³ Unmentioned in 1970s literature was the relationship between the leaders and parents of the Girl Scouts. The handbook encouraged leaders to meet quarterly with the parents and talk to them about volunteerism and donating money to the troop.¹⁴⁴ The direction shifted from the autonomy of the girl and young woman to the authority of the leaders and parents.

The changes I saw in this publication compelled me to ask a series of questions. What is femaleness? Is it the ambitious feminist or the conservative homemaker? Is it something in-between? Where is the GSUSA venturing off to now? The handbook I received when I was a

¹⁴² Ibid., 21.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 28.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 34.

Brownie in the early 1980s was *Worlds to Explore: Handbook for Brownies and Junior Girl Scouts*. As Scott boasted to Senator Bayr, *Worlds to Explore* offered five worlds a Brownie or Junior Girl Scout could investigate. There was the World of Well-Being that focused on emotional and physical health, relationships, and nutrition. The World of People emphasized diversity of cultures and offered ways to appreciate religious, national, and ethnic conditions. The World of Today and Tomorrow addressed the changing roles for girls and women. Girls who wanted to explore art forms read about them in the World of the Arts. Last by not least, camping and nature were described in the World of the Out-of-Doors.¹⁴⁵ It seemed that the GSUSA left girls and leaders determine what they wanted and stopped prescribing a certain lifestyle as was directed in the 1970s materials such as the heavy emphasis on training for a career outside of the home.

As a Scout, I explored different worlds (slept in that cave), earned badges, held the American flag in a local parade, and sold cookies. Nothing out of the ordinary came up in Girl Scouts. My troop leaders never told us of any trouble simmering at the Great Blue Heron Council - my local Council, or within the GSUSA, nor do I remember any media reports on Girl Scout controversies.

During the 1990s however trouble started to brew. The GSUSA decided to put an asterisk next to the word “God” in the Girl Scout Promise. The asterisk means that any member can substitute God with another spiritual term.¹⁴⁶ The GSUSA made this decision in order to be inclusive to populations underrepresented in the GSUSA including Indian and Muslim American girls. There is no evidence that a Girl Scout member, in response to the changes made in the

¹⁴⁵ Gloria D. Scott to Birch Bayh, 14 August 1978.

¹⁴⁶ “The Story of American Heritage Girls,” American Heritage Girls, accessed November 8, 2018, <https://www.americanheritagegirls.org/about/history/>.

seventies, broke from the GSUSA and started another group. This changed in 1995, when Patti Garibay decided to quit the Girl Scouts.

Garibay was a Girl Scout troop leader who had two daughters in her troop. They joined Girl Scouts because Garibay wanted her daughters to experience outdoor activities such as camping and develop social skills, leadership, and character. She was also a Christian who helped girls in her troop know more about Christianity, and viewed her leadership as her ministry. In 1995, she found out that the GSUSA decided to put an asterisk next to the word “God” in the Girl Scout Promise. She also heard of reports of camps that taught sexual ethics that were against Biblical scripture. She wanted to know what was going on and voiced her concerns to her local council, and was met with silence and disdain. Realizing that the council would not change its views, Garibay decided to start the American Heritage Girls (AHG).¹⁴⁷

The AHG emphasizes skills called Life Skill Enhancement and Social Development. These skills range from sewing a button to protecting oneself, and learning about the astronaut career. Social Development gave girls the opportunity to make friends in the AHG through camping and other recreational activities.¹⁴⁸ Similar to the GSUSA, there are different levels according to age and badges can be earned at each level. Each badge includes a Bible verse that connects the girl spiritually with what she is attempting to earn and a list of activities to perform

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ “Emphasis,” American Heritage Girls, accessed November 8, 2018, <https://www.americanheritagegirls.org/program/emphases/>.

to earn the badge.¹⁴⁹ There are over 42,000 AHG members in the United States, and nine countries are represented through its Trailblazers program.¹⁵⁰

Another former GSUSA member created a website to expose the GSUSA's connections to radical feminism, Planned Parenthood, and other so-called nefarious organizations and individuals. The website "100 Questions for the Girl Scouts" was created by Family Watch International (FWI) in collaboration with former Girl Scouts, leaders, and parents. Sharon Slater is the President of FWI. Slater is a former GSUSA member and started the website after she stopped by a meeting room at a United Nations conference in 2010. A workshop co-sponsored by the GSUSA and girls from other nations concluded and Slater picked up some of the reading materials in the back of the room. One booklet was titled *Healthy, Happy, and Hot*. The booklet informs girls and young women that they have a right to engage in any type of sexual activity and that it is their choice if they want to tell their partner that they have HIV. Slater was shocked by this and asked other leaders and parents to investigate the GSUSA and their actual stands on issues such as abortion, homosexuality, and radical feminism.¹⁵¹ They gathered the information and provide the public to view their materials and their claims on the website.

The GSUSA's pattern since the 1970s is the gradual moving away from being recognized as an organization based on Judeo-Christian values to becoming increasingly identified as a liberal organization. Within the 1970s materials, I found very little material that mentioned the

¹⁴⁹ *Engineering Badge*, American Heritage Girls, https://www.americanheritagegirls.org/media/filer_public/a6/95/a695016d-0922-4134-b681-7488671c0c63/engineering_2010.pdf.

¹⁵⁰ *AHG by the Numbers*, American Heritage Girls, https://www.americanheritagegirls.org/media/filer_public/ef/73/ef732d93-2f4f-458c-9f6d-64a52c56a538/ahgbythenumbersforweb.pdf.

¹⁵¹ Sharon Slater, "Message from the Family Watch Council," http://www.100questionsforthegirlscouts.org/100/about_us.cfm.

Girl Scout Promise and Laws. The type of decisions made over the years such as putting an asterick next to God in the Promise is perceived as liberal and anti-Christian. Members like Garibay resign and start a new group that more closely connects with, in their minds, how the GSUSA use to be, or like Slater, make an argument on how the GSUSA is endorsing inappropriate materials and associating with radical feminists and Planned Parenthood.

The GSUSA was not too concerned about girls transferring to another organizations until the fall of 2017, when the BSA decided to allow girls to fully participate in its program. Over the years, girls joined the BSA because their local GSUSA troops focused less on rugged activities that harkened back to the first couple of GSUSA handbooks. They emphasized fluffy fun and “girl power” (BSA never had a program that included the term “boy power”). Now that the BSA will open its whole organization to all girls, the GSUSA may be threatened by this. The GSUSA wrote a letter to the BSA and requested that they do not go forward with this new policy. The BSA declined the request and now the GSUSA is suing the BSA. Ironically, NOW supports the BSA’s decision to be all gender inclusive. If the GSUSA want girls to realize their potential, shouldn’t it believe that all doors should be open to them? Again, what does it mean to be a female? Perhaps the GSUSA needs to go back to what Juliette Gordon Low originally intended Girl Scouting to be – an organization that struck a balance between tradition and progress, femininity and masculinity, camaraderie and individuality, and obedience and freedom. In order to embody all that there is in being a girl or woman, coming around full circle to its original starting place may be in the GSUSA’s best interest.

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