

# EDUCATION AND RACE SUICIDE

Women's Colleges Have Heavy Responsibility for Disappearance of Old American Stock in the United States—Reforms That Are Needed.

ROBERT J. SPRAGUE

*Professor of Economics and Sociology, Massachusetts Agricultural College, Amherst, Mass.*

DURING the twenty-five years from 1887-1911 the deaths among the native born population of Massachusetts exceeded the births among the native born parents by an aggregate of 269,918.<sup>1</sup> During the same period the total births in families having foreign born parents exceeded the total of deaths by 526,987.<sup>2</sup>

The native and foreign birth rates within the Commonwealth have been as follows:<sup>2</sup>

	1890	1900	1910
Native birth rate per 1,000 native born population . . .	12.7	11.7	14.9
Birth rate among foreign born parents per 1,000 of foreign born population . . .	38.6	42.6	49.1
Native death rate per 1,000 native born population . . .	19.9	18.7	16.3
Death rate of foreign born per 1,000 of foreign born population . . . . .	17.5	16.6	15.4

I have no desire to hold up Massachusetts as a horrible example of a State committing race suicide. Conditions may be just as bad in other industrial and commercial populations, but unfortunately other States have not been wise enough to collect adequate data on these points, whereas the Bay State has led off for many years with a most efficient and commendable system of vital statistics.

If this apparent deficit of native births and the surplus of foreign births are true to the facts, and if they should be maintained for a number of generations, the writing on the wall is clear, and he who runs may read the fate of the Anglo-Saxon stock in every activity of Massa-

chusetts life; and if the conditions in this Commonwealth are typical of American industrial populations generally, then it is a National as well as a local problem that faces us.

How many children must each child-bearing woman, on the average, bring forth in order to sustain the present population, not providing for any increase?

Let us start with 200 living babies of native stock, of which 103 will on the average be boys and ninety-seven girls, due to the fact that nearly 6 per cent. more boys than girls are born. By the time the girls become twenty years of age at least nineteen will have died, leaving seventy-eight as possible wives.

It is a little uncertain to say how many of this seventy-eight would not marry, but I have a few data from which to get a general estimate.

In a selected New England village in 1890 there were forty marriageable girls between the ages of 20 and 35. Today thirty-two of these are married, 20 per cent. are spinsters.

An investigation of 260 families of the Massachusetts Agricultural College students shows that out of 832 women over 40 years of age 755 or 91 per cent. have married, leaving only 9 per cent. of spinsters. This and other observations indicate that the daughters of farmers marry more generally than those of some other classes.

In sixty-nine (reporting) families represented by the freshman class of Amherst College (1914) there are 229 mothers and aunts over 40 years of

<sup>1</sup> These aggregates are computed from the annual reports of "Births, Deaths and Marriages" issued by the Secretary of State.

<sup>2</sup> These statistics are computed from the U. S. Census Reports.

age, of whom 186 or 81 per cent. have already married.

It would seem safe to conclude that about 15 per cent. of native women in our general American society do not marry during the child bearing period. Deducting 15 per cent. from the seventy-eight possible wives leaves sixty-six probable wives. Now among the native wives of Massachusetts 20 per cent. do not produce children, and deducting these thirteen childless ones from the sixty-six probable wives leaves fifty-three probable, married, child-bearing women, whose duty it is to reproduce the original 200 individuals with which we began this study, or an average of 3.7 children for every married woman who demonstrates any ability to bear offspring.

According to these probabilities, every married woman bearing children must bring three to maturity, or to a marriageable age, in order to prevent the race from actually declining in numbers.

Under the present practices this would seem to be the minimum, because no account has been taken of those who are not marriageable on account of insanity and other incapacitating troubles.

#### THE SCHOOLS AND RACE SUICIDE.

The causes of race suicide in some parts of America are "numberless as the sands on the seashore," but I will discuss at length only the relation of higher education to it.

Too small a birth rate leads to race extinction, and too great a birth rate is the next greatest folly, since it may precipitate not only a domestic but a world problem. The great German birth rate is the natural force behind the present war. Too large a family is liable to cripple and stunt the higher life of both parents and children, and too small a one leads to lack of virility in both individuals and race.

The attitude of the schools towards the interests of the race merely reflects the general ideals and feelings of society and the immediate managers of these institutions should not be held unduly responsible for the failure of the schools and colleges in the past to prepare the

new generations for their living needs and racial responsibilities.

Until recently the high schools of the whole country turned their backs on the family and failed to recognize the vital interests of this most fundamental institution; they tried to prepare our children for college, for the parlor, club and travel, but did not recognize the demands of the workshop, kitchen and nursery where the greater part of the average parent's time and energy must be spent. First in reform came the introduction into education of office work, and finally will come the preparation for the revitalized home life and race survival.

The former old public school ideals of the white collar, the white dress and helpless hands have sent thousands of boys into hopeless bachelor jobs and just as many girls into sterile school teaching and other nice, clean occupations where their blood might dry out of the race.

The former lack of opportunity in America for universal, efficient, vocational education has filled our roads with tramps, our prisons with young men, our brothels with young women, and the poorhouses with the aged of both sexes. These things, however, are changing in the public schools all over the land, and the common cry is to bring the school system down to the needs of actual life, earning power and efficiency in shop and home.

{ Home making and child rearing is the greatest job of life and calls for every resource of brain, hand and heart; anything which detracts from their normal development is an evil, because nothing can substitute for them in importance. }

#### THE WOMEN'S COLLEGES.

The classical college education for women without any doubt develops a high type of character and independence in the graduates as individuals, and such a training might be desirable for all girls that can afford it, if certain vital interests of the race and its future were taken into account. The standards of the home, school and office are all elevated when college graduates

enter them, but how about the vital future of the race?

*Is the woman's college as now conducted a force which acts for or against the survival of the race which patronizes it?* Whatever intellectual and moral superiority a race may have, it needs also a certain amount of reproductive impulse in order to remain on the earth.<sup>1</sup> No culture, art, science or morality can save it unless it produces about three matured children per married, child-bearing couple, and any race which does not do this is doomed to extinction. If we have forces which are drawing off the best blood of the American stock and

in the great coeducational institutions with the results tabulated below from the exclusive women's colleges; but no data are available for such a comparison. Either the coeducational institutions have given no attention to the matter, or they are too young for their results and tendencies to be discernible.

#### MT. HOLYOKE COLLEGE.

Mt. Holyoke College, the oldest great college for the higher education of women in this country, has collected some interesting statistics on the marital tendencies of its graduates.<sup>3</sup>

Decade of Graduation	Per Cent. Remaining Single	Per Cent. marrying	Children per Married Graduate	Children per Graduate
1842—1849	14.6	85.4	2.77	2.37
1850—1859	24.5	75.5	3.38	2.55
1860—1869	39.1	60.9	2.64	1.60
1870—1879	40.6	59.4	2.75	1.63
1880—1889	42.4	57.6	2.54	1.46
1890—1892	50.0	50.0	1.91	0.95

sinking it in a dry desert of sterile intellectuality and paralytic culture, let us know the facts, and let these magnificent colleges face them and the race responsibilities involved, because without any doubt, all of our great educational institutions can and will become powerful agencies for race survival rather than race suicide when their wealth and influence become applied along the right lines. The work to be done is not a criticism and reform of the colleges alone, but a change in the ideals and race feelings of the types of people that are represented in these institutions.

Reliable statistics can be obtained from only a few of the institutions granting college degrees to women. Those mentioned below have collected data concerning their alumnae and have made them accessible for the purposes of this paper.

It would be interesting to compare the effects of the education of women

Professor Hewes estimates from these facts that 41.9 per cent. of Mt. Holyoke graduates ultimately marry.

#### BRYN MAWR COLLEGE.

From 1888 to 1900 Bryn Mawr graduated 376 alumnae and up to January 1, 1913,<sup>4</sup> 165 or 43.9 per cent. of these had married. Up to that date these alumnae had given birth to 138 children, or an average of .84 of a child per married alumna, or .37 of a child per graduate in all classes up to 1900. Only 32.8 per cent. of all graduates up to January 1, 1913, had married up to that date.

#### VASSAR COLLEGE.

A compilation of the data given in the "Fourth General Catalogue of the Officers and Graduates of Vassar College" yields the following aggregates and percentages.

<sup>3</sup> Published by Prof. Amy Hewes of Mt. Holyoke College in the reports of the American Statistical Association.

<sup>4</sup> See "Statistics of Bachelors of Arts of Bryn Mawr College," published by the Administration.

CLASSES FROM 1867 TO 1892.

Number of graduates .....	959
Number that taught .....	431 (45 per cent).
Number that married .....	509 (53 per cent. of all graduates).
Number that did not marry .....	450 (47 per cent).
Number that taught and afterward married.....	166 (39 per cent. of all who taught).
Number that taught, married and had children.....	112 (67 per cent. of all who taught and married).
Number that taught, married and were childless.....	54 (33 per cent).
Number of children of those who taught and had children....	287 (1.73 children per family).
Number of children of those who married but did not teach....	686 (2 per married graduate that did not teach).
Total number of children of all graduates.....	973 (1 child per graduate).
Average number of children per married graduate.....	1.91
Average number of children per graduate.....	1.0

CLASSES FROM 1867 TO 1900.

Number of graduates .....	1739
Number that taught .....	800 (46 per cent).
Number that married .....	854 (49 per cent).
Number that did not marry .....	885 (51 per cent).
Number that taught and afterward married.....	294 (31 per cent).
Number that taught, married and had children.....	203 (69 per cent. of all who taught and married).
Number that taught, married and were childless.....	91 (31 per cent).
Number of children of those who taught and had children....	463 (1.57 children per family).
Number of children of those who married but did not teach....	1025 (2 each).
Total number of children of all graduates.....	1488 (.8 child per graduate).
Average number of children per married graduate.....	1.74 per married graduate.
Average number of children per graduate.....	0.8

WELLESLEY COLLEGE

The data concerning Wellesley graduates are not as complete as might be desired, but Miss Caswell, the Secretary to the President, reports the following statistics.

causes of and remedies for the situation presented by these statistics, and it might not be well to enter into that anyway; but I will mention a few points that seem important.

1. There is needed throughout the

Classes	Number of Alumnae	Number Married	Per Cent. Married	Number of Children	Number of Children per Married Graduate	Children per Graduate
1875-1889	528	265	50%	438	1.65	.83
1890-1912	3927	1213	31%	1287	1.06	.33
Total.....	4455	1478	33%	1725	1.17	.39

Women are the capital of the race. The farmer that uses his land for golf links and deer preserves instead of for crops has but one agricultural fate; so the civilization that uses its women for stenographers, clerks and school teachers, instead of mothers, has but one racial fate.

A FEW PERTINENT POINTS.

The space given to this paper is not sufficient for much discussion of the

nation a campaign of public education through church, school, and legislation, to strengthen the ideals and economic foundations of the family. Our education has glorified individualism and our tax system has steadily penalized the man with a family. The opportunities for social legislation in laying a better foundation for the family and ultimately the race are unlimited. Such a development would be reflected in the new aims

and methods of schools and colleges. Public opinion must be created by our leaders of literature and thought both without and within the educational institutions, and it is high time that this line of action is pushed to results, before the best blood of the American people becomes dried out of the race.

2. More strong men are needed on the staffs of public schools and women's colleges, and in all of these institutions more married instructors of both sexes are desirable. The catalogue of one of the colleges referred to above shows 114 professors and instructors, of whom 100 are women, of whom only two have ever married. Is it to be expected that the curriculum created by such a staff would idealize and prepare for the family and home life as the greatest work of the world and the highest goal of woman, and teach race survival as a patriotic duty? Or, would it be expected that these bachelor staffs would glorify the independent vocation and life for women and create employment bureaus to enable their graduates to get into the offices, schools and other lucrative jobs? The latter seems to be what occurs.

3. Some people are advocating coeducation as a solution of these difficulties, but we cannot now make assured statements on that matter, because there are not sufficient data available for final conclusions, and time only can

show the effects of the coeducational institutions of the other parts of the country. If by coeducation we merely enable the women to get a man's education and prepare for a man's work, then certainly this is not a full solution, even though the environment of college life would be more normal and lead to some marriages.

4. Women college graduates are not greatly sought after as mates, to share in the work of getting a living and founding a family, because they are not prepared psychologically and technically for the jobs of cooking, sanitation, nursing and child rearing, and are not seeking that mode of life except under specially selected conditions. They have culture and intelligence and demand high standards in husbands and homes, but they are not prizes in the matter of efficiency in domestic life. The principles of supply and demand are effective in this as in other things. If college women could combine their culture with domestic ideals and efficiency there would be a higher demand for them as helpmeets and mothers of the new generation. The American people as a whole have idealized individual independence in both men and women, instead of the family which must be the fundamental basis of race survival, and as long as we maintain that attitude our race suicide statistics will be portentous.

---

### Lectures in Eugenics

At the request of the Young Men's Christian Association of Washington, the American Genetic Association arranged a course of public lectures on eugenics which has been largely attended. The speakers secured were the following: Feb. 4, Alexander Graham Bell on Heredity and Marriage; Feb. 11, Paul Popenoe on the History of the Eugenics Movement; Feb. 18, Dr. L. E. Cofer, assistant surgeon general, U. S. Public Health Service, on the Relation of Immigration to Eugenics; Feb. 25, G. N. Collins, Bureau of Plant Industry, on How Heredity is Measured; March 4, Roswell H. Johnson, University of Pittsburgh, on the Young Man and Marriage; March 11, Alexander Johnson, the Training School, Vineland, N. J., on Feeble-mindedness; March 18, Dr. Elnora Folkmar on Negative Eugenics and Racial Poisons; March 25, Paul Popenoe on Heredity vs. Environment; April 1, Paul Popenoe on the Birth Rate; April 8, Daniel Folkmar of the Bureau of the Census on the Evolution of Man.