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## **‘[It] Made Me Want to Rush Out and Take an Antiseptic Bath’: Frances Cochran and the Dilemmas of Social Work in Progressive Era Cincinnati**

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In the summer of 1913 a young Cincinnati social worker, Frances Cochran, described returning to her job at the House of Refuge, an orphanage and reform school for juvenile delinquents, following a few weeks absence:

After a brief visit with the workers . . . I went in to [*sic*] the lion’s den and submitted, an unwilling martyr, to twenty affectionate greetings which made me want to rush out and take an antiseptic bath. I was rather startled to notice I suffered a rather severe repugnance at meeting some of the harder girls; I was surprised to find out that I really had not naturally felt the same toward all, and realize now that to treat all alike is an effort and not the simple outcome of a willing heart.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Frances (FCM) to Laurence H. MacDaniels (LHM), 8-11-1913, Correspondence Received by LHM, Series 2, Box 3, Papers of Laurence and Frances MacDaniels (30/276), Oberlin College Archives (unless otherwise noted, all citations in this article refer to Series 2, Box 3 of the MacDaniels Papers).

In one sense, this incident is merely an example of a young woman's timeless chagrin at learning of the gap between ideals and reality. In another, however, Frances's story has a larger value for helping us understand how the experience of interacting with the poor affected the ideas and attitudes of many social workers during the Progressive Era. These social workers were among the first to be college-educated and to view themselves as embarked on careers, in contrast to the upper class amateurs who had dominated charity work in the nineteenth century. Frances is representative of many young middle class women of the period who entered social work out of pity and compassion only to suffer varying degrees of disillusionment when confronted by what seemed baffling, self-defeating behavior by poor people. Too committed to simply give up, one of the ways they coped with their disillusionment was by embracing the cooler approach of professionalization and social science. On a personal level, this meant that rather than succumbing to the anxiety of face-to-face encounters with poor people, social workers could maintain their psychological balance by subordinating direct interactions to the big picture work of gathering statistics and writing reports.<sup>3</sup> Such investigations in turn could underpin efforts to solve much-debated problems like unrestrained immigration, alcohol and tobacco abuse, child labor, prostitution, and vulgar entertainment.<sup>4</sup> Thus the social worker could see herself not as a casualty in a cultural clash but instead as a soldier in a great campaign whose end was the safeguarding of middle class values threatened by the dysfunction of the poor.

<sup>3</sup> By the early twentieth century it was becoming acceptable for female social workers to not only gather social data but analyze it as well. Women of Frances' generation would benefit from this shift. Steven Stritt, "The Faith-Based Movement: The Religious Roots of Social Progressivism in America (1880-1912) in Historical Perspective," *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, March 2014, v. XLI, n. 1, 91.

<sup>4</sup> The great majority of social workers were women. For discussions of the roles women played in Progressive era reforms, see Lois W. Banner, *Women in Modern America*, (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1984, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 1-137; Robert L. Daniel, *American Women in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: The Festival of Life*, (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1987), 4-41; Rosalind Rosenberg, *Divided Lives: American Women in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: Hill and Wang, The Noonday Press, 1992), 3-73; and Peter G. Filene, *Him/Her/Self: Gender Identities in Modern America*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), 3-120. For discussions of the emergence of a professional, social science-based social work during this period, see Susan Tiffin, *In Whose Best Interest?: Child Welfare Reform in the Progressive Era*, (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, Contributions to the Study of Childhood and Youth, Number 1, 1982), 47-48, 254-74; John H. Ehrenreich, *The Altruistic Imagination: A History of Social Policy in the United States*, (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985), 19-77; Karen W. Tice, *Tales of Wayward Girls and Immoral Women: Case Records and the Professionalization of Social Work*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 1-3, 8, 33-36, 47-77; and Walter I. Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America*, (New York: The Free Press, 1999, 6<sup>th</sup> ed.), 234-50.

A key to safeguarding those values, and one of the more salient features of the Progressive Era, were the varied efforts at the state level to harness a growing body of natural and social science knowledge in service of reform. Frances's new interest in research and its applications to reform was just one example of a phenomenon that was gaining notice and raising hopes around the country.<sup>5</sup> One of its leading exemplars during the Progressive Era, Louis Brandeis, later observed that the states could function as the laboratories of democracy and try out reforms that, if successful, could be imitated elsewhere.<sup>6</sup>

Some of the most influential practices grew out of the experience of Midwestern states like Wisconsin with its "Wisconsin Idea" whereby the knowledge of university scholars and other experts would be used to address needs in that state.<sup>7</sup> A key figure in making the Wisconsin Idea a reality was Charles McCarthy, an ally of progressive politician, Robert LaFollette, Sr., and University of Wisconsin President, Charles Van Hise. McCarthy was the great founding director of the Wisconsin Legislative Research Library (later Bureau) who meticulously collated factual and interpretive information from state, national, and even international sources for use by state lawmakers as they considered bills. A branch of the Bureau, to insure uniformity and lessen the likelihood that reforms would be overturned by the courts, even drafted the language of bills.<sup>8</sup>

McCarthy was instrumental in writing bills for such reforms as direct primary elections, railroad regulation, workmen's compensation, and progressive taxation. This work brought him to the attention of Theodore Roosevelt, who used McCarthy to draft the Progressive Party platform in 1912. In 1914, a Congressional Reference Library modeled on McCarthy's success was established in the Library of Congress.<sup>9</sup>

Ohio was another leader in progressive reform, and McCarthy encouraged its efforts by advising state leaders on setting up their own legislative research library in 1914.<sup>10</sup> Yet even as Ohio

<sup>5</sup> Maureen A. Flanagan, *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms, 1890s-1920s*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 81-87.

<sup>6</sup> *New State Ice Company v. Liebman*, 285 US.262 (1932).

<sup>7</sup> Two works representative of the recent interest in reviving study of the Midwest by showing both its distinctiveness and its usefulness for understanding American national history and identity are Richard Sisson, Christian Zacher, and Andrew Cayton, ed., *The American Midwest: An Interpretive Encyclopedia*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007) and John K. Lauck, *The Lost Region: Toward a Revival of Midwestern History*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2013).

<sup>8</sup> Marion Casey, "Charles McCarthy's 'Idea': A Library to Change Government," *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy*, v. 44, n. 1, January 1974, 29-35; Vernon Carstensen, "The Origins and Early Development of the Wisconsin Idea," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, v. 39, n. 3, Spring 1956, 181-86.

<sup>9</sup> Casey, 29-35, 37-38.

<sup>10</sup> Casey, 38-39.

took steps toward political reform, its recent past was clouded by blatant examples of corruption. Cincinnati in particular, in the years Frances was growing up there, was notorious. In the minds of reformers, the embodiment of this corruption was George B. Cox, “Boss Cox,” the street smart leader of a potent political machine that dominated Cincinnati in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Muckraking journalist Lincoln Steffens summed up Cox’s career as one of overseeing the worst example of urban graft in the United States.<sup>11</sup> There was plenty of evidence for such a view in the machine’s rampant vote-rigging and bribe-taking.<sup>12</sup>

The progressive response to political corruption in Cincinnati and elsewhere was to try to reduce the political component in government operations by making use of impartial research to help determine more open, honest alternatives. Wisconsin became a national leader in this endeavor, but Ohio also gained national attention for its pioneering efforts.<sup>13</sup> In Cleveland, for example, Tom Johnson served as a reform mayor from 1901-1909. According to Steffens, he was the best mayor in the United States, a model for running a big city.<sup>14</sup>

Helping inspire Johnson was a key principle of the Social Gospel movement then in its ascendancy: that much of the evil in society was not simply due to individuals with bad character but was rooted in bad environments. Many problems could be solved by changing those environments. Taking action would mean combining some of the new findings of science with evidence drawn from the experience of a number of European welfare state experiments.<sup>15</sup>

Several of Johnson’s policies focused on changing the environment for the poor. Working with the Reverend Harris Cooley, a Disciples of Christ minister and director of charities and corrections for the city, Johnson built more parks and other recreational sites, instituted a more liberal policy of pardons and paroles, and eliminated much of the corruption in the police department. The initiative that captured the imagination of reformers around the country and abroad, however, was

<sup>11</sup> Lincoln Steffens, *The Struggle for Self-Government: Being an Attempt to Trace American Political Corruption to Its Sources in Six States in the United States*, (New York: McClure, Phillips and Company, 1906), 161, 174-77, 198-203.

<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, historian Zane Miller argues that Cox’s reign was more complicated than such a contrast suggests, with a commendable concern for public safety and municipal efficiency that has often been forgotten in the face of more spectacular examples of corruption. Zane L. Miller, *Boss Cox’s Cincinnati: Urban Politics in the Progressive Era*, (Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 1968), 74-110.

<sup>13</sup> Hoyt Landon Warner, *Progressivism in Ohio, 1897-1917*, (n.p., Ohio State University Press, 1964), vii.

<sup>14</sup> Steffens, 161, 187-88, 192-93.

<sup>15</sup> Warner, 75-78.

the creation of work farms, one for adult criminals and another for juvenile delinquents, run humanely and with rehabilitation rather than punishment as the ultimate goal. By learning useful skills and raising much of their own food, it was hoped the criminal and delinquent could begin to imagine a new, more productive, way of life for themselves. Johnson thus made Cleveland a leader in prison and welfare reform. Experts from all over the world came to study its success.<sup>16</sup>

Cleveland, along with Toledo and Columbus, would get the most attention as Ohio cities on the cutting edge of urban reform.<sup>17</sup> Yet Cincinnati at the time Frances was beginning her career in social work was breaking free of the reign of Boss Cox and showing that it too could use scientific research to validate reform policies. An example of this may be seen in the effort to solve a major problem with machine rule in Cincinnati: “nonexistent or shoddy [record-keeping] practices.”<sup>18</sup> In 1909, private organizations like the City Club and the Chamber of Commerce helped create the Cincinnati Bureau of Municipal Research to monitor city activities and push official record-keepers to be more honest and efficient. Two accountants who studied the work of the Bureau concluded that it became “by a large margin the most active and productive research agency in the State of Ohio.” The Bureau was successful enough that within a few years it was phased out as the city became more effective at auditing its books.<sup>19</sup>

Another local example of applied research in Cincinnati, and even more pertinent to Frances, were the studies of pupils in the public school system by the Vocational Research Bureau. The project was led by Helen Thompson Wooley, the first female Ph. D. experimental psychologist in the United States. She had earned her degree from the University of Chicago in 1900 under the supervision of the pioneering educational theorist, John Dewey. Concerned that traditional classical education was inadequate for the practical needs of many poor children (who often seemed to suffer from intellectual deficits), Wooley’s intention was to identify those who would most benefit from vocational training that could lead to manual labor jobs. Using a battery of mental and physical tests, Wooley and her associates followed well over a thousand students from ages 14 to 18. It was a herculean effort but a mixed success. Wooley had hoped to show that a methodology adapted from the intelligence testing pioneer Alfred Binet to study young children could also be useful for

<sup>16</sup> Warner, 75-78; Robert H. Bremner, “The Civic Revival in Ohio: Harris R. Cooley and Cooley Farms,” *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, v. 14, issue 1, (Oct. 1954), 71-76.

<sup>17</sup> Warner, vii.

<sup>18</sup> Richard K. Fleischman and R. Penny Marquette, “Chapters in Ohio Progressivism: The Cincinnati and Dayton Municipal Research and Accounting Reform,” *Ohio History*, v. 97, (Summer/Autumn 1988), 133.

<sup>19</sup> Fleischman and Marquette, 138.

understanding adolescents. Unfortunately, the work was never generally accepted by other experimental psychologists. On the other hand, it did lead to setting up psychological clinics in the city's schools which helped sustain special education classes and also acted as a resource for the juvenile courts.<sup>20</sup> A student of the Bureau concludes that it helped Cincinnati have "one of the most progressive programs in the country involving the use of psychological research to support educational, vocational, and social reform efforts."<sup>21</sup>

Although we do not have specific evidence that Frances was aware of the work of the Bureau of Municipal Research or the Vocational Bureau, as an educated, civic-minded person, it is hard to believe she was not. In addition the local press was full of stories about both bureaus and kindred reforms. After 1914, for example, the Cincinnati *Post* began crusading for cleaning up city government in the wake of Cox's fall from power.<sup>22</sup> The *Post's* crusade coincided with Frances' years as a career woman and would have helped confirm her turn from social work to social research.

When Wooley was in the midst of her study of Cincinnati students, she was visited by both her old mentor Dewey and Jane Addams, the great settlement house leader, who had become acquainted with the younger woman when she volunteered at Hull House.<sup>23</sup> Although Addams was supportive of using research to gain more facts about the conditions of the poor, she was troubled by studies that seemed fixated on statistics at the expense of flesh and blood people.<sup>24</sup> When social workers undertook research projects, Addams hoped that, unlike academics, they would reflect the positive influences of their regular contact with the poor.<sup>25</sup> Whether gathering social data or ministering directly to people in need, for Addams, the key was to respond with empathy. In a famous account of her settlement house experience, *Twenty Years at Hull House*, Addams lauded social work as a great opportunity for idealistic young people to put Christianity into practice. For Addams, social work would not just help the unfortunate but also the young practitioners who would become better human beings by doing good.<sup>26</sup> Addams, who never forgot she was working with

<sup>20</sup> Katherine S. Milar, "'A Coarse and Clumsy Tool': Helen Thompson Wooley and the Cincinnati Vocational Bureau, *History of Psychology*, v. 2, n. 3, (August 1999), 219-35.

<sup>21</sup> Milar, 232.

<sup>22</sup> George Stevens, "The Cincinnati *Post* and Municipal Reform, 1914-1941," *Ohio History Journal*, v. 79, issue 3 & 4, (September 1970), 231-42.

<sup>23</sup> Milar, 221-22.

<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of Jane Addams as a leading exponent of the social gospel, see Jean Beth Elshtain, *Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy: A Life*, (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 72-73, 76, 96-97, 158.

<sup>25</sup> Stritt, 91.

<sup>26</sup> Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House*, New York: The New American Library, Signet Classics, 1960, 95-98.

real people, rejected the tendency to turn social work into an abstract endeavor. She wrote: "I have always objected to the phrase 'sociological laboratory' applied to us, because Settlements should be something much more human and spontaneous than such a phrase connotes."<sup>27</sup>

Mary Richmond, who did as much as anyone to define social work as a profession in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, followed Addams' thinking in describing the traits of a good social worker. In an early book, Richmond praised Addams' Hull House settlement in Chicago as "an object lesson in neighborliness."<sup>28</sup> What Richmond meant by neighborliness she explained as acting in a spirit of friendship rather than the condescension that could come too easily to case workers because of their educational and cultural advantages.<sup>29</sup> Richmond made this point in 1899 when social work was still very much rooted in Victorian volunteer charity work and searching for its own clear definition. Yet even decades later after social work had established itself as a scientific profession, Richmond closed her book on social case work by emphasizing the virtues of neighborliness and friendship that should characterize social workers' interactions with the poor. Like Addams, she emphasized the complementary benefits to both groups:

The highest test of social case work is growth in personality. Does the personality of the clients [*sic*] change, and change in the right direction? Is energy and initiative released in the direction of higher and better wants and saner social relations? Only an instinctive reverence for personality, and a warm human interest in people as people can win for the social case worker an affirmative answer to this question [*sic*]. But an affirmative answer means growth in personality for the case worker himself. The service is reciprocated.<sup>30</sup>

Richmond was defining success in social work as requiring a transformation in personality for *both* the client and the case worker. The latter were not doing their jobs properly without a friendly interaction with the poor.

That was the noble ideal and Addams and Richmond seem to have inspired many young people to reach for it. However, such an ideal was inevitably complicated, not just by the shock of dealing

<sup>27</sup> Addams, 217.

<sup>28</sup> Mary Richmond, *Friendly Visiting among the Poor*, (New York: Macmillan, 1899), vii.

<sup>29</sup> Richmond, *Friendly Visiting*, 183, 185-86.

<sup>30</sup> Mary Richmond, *What Is Social Case Work? An Introductory Description*, (New York: The Russell Sage Foundation, 1922), 260.

with people who could look, sound, and smell so differently but also by the less than noble values and prejudices the social workers often brought to their work. Allen F. Davis, in his study of the settlement house movement, notes that many workers were unable “to avoid the extremes of bigotry and hatred on the one hand, and sentimentality and condescension on the other.”<sup>31</sup>

Such attitudes could make it much more difficult to feel empathy for the poor and instead see them simply as a problem in need of a solution. Making the problem most pertinent and a solution more necessary, as LeRoy Ashby in his book on child-saving points out, many Progressive Era social workers came to believe that unless the poor could be socialized to embrace middle class values, the United States, with its growing population of ethnic and racial minorities, was in danger of turning the American dream into a nightmare of anarchy.<sup>32</sup> Such fears would only grow with the onset of World War I as Americans increasingly worried that their hyphenated minorities felt a higher loyalty to their old homes than to their new one.<sup>33</sup>

Many reformers came to see control of, rather than empathetic engagement with, the lower classes as the essential response if society were to continue to manage its affairs effectively. This belief gave rise to a variety of proposals. One, for example, as seen in Cleveland, was to place urban delinquents in rural settings based on the hope that country life with its greater access to the natural world would help civilize hardened youth raised on the big city streets.<sup>34</sup> Taking the youth out of the city could be only a partial solution, however, given the growing number of impoverished immigrants and reproduction rates that far surpassed those of the native born middle class. A more far-reaching solution was immigration restriction.<sup>35</sup> Yet restricting immigration did not solve the problem of immigrants (and poor people generally) who were already here and reproducing rapidly. The solution for that, many reformers thought, was eugenics. Increasingly, scientists were arguing that poor people tended to have low intelligence because mentally deficient parents reproduced

<sup>31</sup> Davis, *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914*, (New York: Oxford University Press, Urban Life in America Series), 1967, 85.

<sup>32</sup> Ashby, *Saving the Waifs: Reformers and Dependent Children, 1890-1917*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), 79.

<sup>33</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism*, (New York: Atheneum, 1965), 195-217.

<sup>34</sup> Ashby, 17-18, 23-25, 207, 208-09.

<sup>35</sup> Higham, 300-24. For a source that puts the Immigration Restriction Act of 1924 into the context of long-term immigration reform efforts, see Roger Daniels and Otis L. Graham, *Debating American Immigration, 1882-Present*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001).

mentally deficient offspring. Through forced sterilization, marriage bans for those with low intelligence, and institutionalization, eugenics seemed to promise a panacea, one neat solution to all the social problems associated with the poor by reducing their numbers to manageable levels.<sup>36</sup>

As Paul Boyer argues, in confronting the growing issue of urban poverty and its attendant ills, by the early twentieth century reformers were increasingly likely to subordinate the problems of individuals to the problems of an entire “urban environment.” They were also more likely to look for solutions, not as their Victorian predecessors once did, through adherence to a set of moral values, but through specialized technical expertise that could pride itself, contra Addams and Richmond, on its ability to objectify the work. In the end, this meant an approach that, whatever its merits, was in danger of missing the trees for the forest, of losing the individual in the mass.<sup>37</sup>

Nevertheless, an approach that sought to inculcate middle class values while limiting face-to-face contacts, using scientific techniques, and turning the poor into an abstraction was exactly what young Frances Cochran, like many of her cohorts in social work, came to desire.

Her original motive for choosing social work as a profession had been different. Although Frances’s father was a prosperous Cincinnati attorney who took a rather Darwinian view toward the poor, she was more influenced by the family’s strong connection to Oberlin College and its tradition of service to society. Her great-grandfather was Charles Grandison Finney, the famous evangelist and an early pillar of the college; both her grandmothers were among the first female graduates. Both her parents as well as many other relatives were also Oberlin graduates.<sup>38</sup>

Frances studied sociology while at Oberlin, but it gave her only a theoretical foundation for understanding the poor.<sup>39</sup> Her first practical experience came the summer after her graduation in

<sup>36</sup> Michael Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America*, New York: Basic Books, 1996, rev. ed., 188-92. For a provocative analysis of a eugenics program at the state level, see Nancy L. Gallagher, *Breeding Better Vermonters: The Eugenics Project in the Green Mountain State*, (Hanover, N. H.: University Press of New England, 1999).

<sup>37</sup> Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978, 190, 278-80.

<sup>38</sup> For Oberlin’s social mission in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see John Barnard, *From Evangelicalism to Progressivism at Oberlin College, 1866-1917*, (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1969), 109-27. For the educational attainments of Frances’s ancestors: author interview with Ellen MacDaniels Speers and Carolyn MacDaniels Miller, May 20, 1992, hereafter EMS/CM.

<sup>39</sup> For the development of sociology from its roots in Calvinist theology to its more scientific form in the Progressive Era, see Joyce E. Williams and Vicky M. Maclean, “In Search of the Kingdom: The Social Gospel, Settlement Sociology, and the Science of Reform in America’s Progressive Era,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, Autumn 2012, v. 48, n. 4, 339-62.

1912 when she worked in the dining hall of the Fresh Air Camp near Cleveland.<sup>40</sup> Despite the hard work, she was much taken with the potential of many of the underprivileged boys and girls she supervised. The children stayed at the camp for only two-week shifts, and Frances regretted not being able to do more for them but hoped to keep in touch. Despite warnings from her father “that such work is a mere drop in the bucket,” she committed herself to a career of working with the poor. As she wrote her future husband, Laurence “Mac” MacDaniels, soon after returning home from the camp: “I have to laugh at my conceit in believing that I could do any good in such work [,] but I certainly long to take up social work [,] not as a hobby or avocation but as a profession.”<sup>41</sup> Intellectually, Frances recognized that trying to help the poor could be frustrating, but she did not yet have enough concrete experience for that to deter her. She felt she had connected in an authentic way with some of the children at the camp, and she wanted to do more.

In the fall, Frances accepted a job as Social Secretary of the Young Women’s League in Dayton, an organization she likened to the YWCA, “only a little more democratic and entirely self-supporting.”<sup>42</sup> She was responsible for effecting, in her words, “the transformation of this association from an out-grown educational center into a lively social center.”<sup>43</sup> The actual work, answering queries about the organization and planning social activities, mainly dances, was seemingly mundane but potentially controversial. This was a time when reformers in Dayton, like those nationally, tried to provide genteel alternatives to the commercial dance halls whose ragtime music, it was feared, encouraged immorality.<sup>44</sup> Frances found herself relatively happy with the work, despite only lukewarm support from the league’s founders, but she was not yet working much with poor girls. Those who participated in League functions tended to be middle class. In fact, Frances had to actively recruit even the few factory girls who attended the dances.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>40</sup> *History of the Class of 1912*, v. 1, n.pub., April 1913, 8-9, Series 1, Box 1, MacDaniels Papers. For an early twentieth century defense of fresh air camps, see William H. Allen, “Fresh Air Work,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, May 1904, 23:56-63.

<sup>41</sup> FCM to LHM, 7-24-1912, Series 2, Box 2, MacDaniels Papers. Mac had been a classmate at Oberlin. The letters cited in this article were written while he was in graduate school at Cornell University.

<sup>42</sup> FCM to LHM, 12-4-1912, Series 2, Box 2, MacDaniels Papers.

<sup>43</sup> *History of the Class of 1912*, v. 1, 9.

<sup>44</sup> See Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn of the Century New York*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986, 83-111 and Linda J. Tomko, *Dancing Class: Gender, Ethnicity, and Social Divides in American Dance, 1890-1920*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 142-47 for the dance craze and reformers’ efforts to control it.

<sup>45</sup> FCM to LHM, 12-4-1912, 1-5-1913, 2-12-1913, Series 2, Box 2, MacDaniels Papers.

Perhaps this pleasant work would have continued indefinitely, and Frances never would have fulfilled the ambition to make a difference for poor children, but in March 1913 an historic flood devastated Dayton and destroyed the building housing the Young Women's League.<sup>46</sup> The long delay in finding new facilities and Frances's conclusion that "the position isn't large enough to keep an energetic soul contented," led her to take a new job with Cincinnati's House of Refuge.<sup>47</sup> The original House of Refuge had been founded in New York City in 1825 as a reformatory for young people in trouble with the law. It aimed to rehabilitate them through work and regimented living. The New York institution eventually became the model for similar ones in cities around the country, including Cincinnati's.<sup>48</sup>

At first Frances's work at the Refuge seemed exciting. Although the building was a forbidding prison-like structure beside the workhouse, there were plans (in keeping with the preference of progressives like Cleveland's Tom Johnson and Harris Cooley for putting poor children in a country environment) to move to a farm where the youths would be housed in cottages. Frances, with the critical eye of a young reformer, considered most of the staff ineffectual and characterized them as either "fat, good-natured but utterly aimless matrons, or thin, sanctimonious old maids who haven't the least sympathy for the girls in their charge."<sup>49</sup> Such women's days seemed to be numbered, however, and Frances looked forward to the Refuge hiring more college-trained women like herself. Most encouraging was the leadership of the institution, for whom the young social worker had nothing but praise:

The superintendent is a fine young man with lots of push and ideas [,] and the assistant a young woman doctor who has been . . . an ideal or idol for all young girls who have ever known her. It is her aim to build up this place into a model one.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Ellen MacDaniels Speers to author, October 31, 2000. For a detailed discussion of the flood and efforts to prevent future ones, see Judith Sealander, *Grand Plans: Business Progressivism and Social Change in Ohio's Miami Valley, 1890-1929*, (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 42-84.

<sup>47</sup> FCM to LHM, 7-6-1913, Series 2, Box 2, MacDaniels Papers.

<sup>48</sup> "House of Refuge," Peter Eisenstadt, ed., *Encyclopedia of New York State*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 1088.

<sup>49</sup> Ashby, 12-14, 21, 22; Boyer, 94-95; FCM to LHM, 7-6-1913.

<sup>50</sup> FCM to LHM, 7-5-1913.

Frances was especially taken by the woman doctor, characterizing her, without irony, as “a regular martyr” who, out of a sense of duty, had foregone a successful medical practice to work with those who had not enjoyed her advantages in life. For the young social worker, “just to work with her would be a privilege worth sacrificing for.”<sup>51</sup>

The question would be just how much sacrifice Frances could bear to make at the Refuge. It may have been easier to feel enthused at the outset because her job was only vaguely defined. She was assigned to oversee seventeen girls, aged sixteen to twenty. The actual duties would “grow as I grow, I reckon.” One sacrifice that Frances would not have to make was living at the Refuge. She would continue to stay at her parents’ home, where, she noted revealingly, “I can get better company.”<sup>52</sup>

Frances’s willing heart would be tested over the coming months in several ways. One test was political. Leadership positions at the Refuge were determined by patronage and their status thus open to political meddling. It distressed Frances that the beloved assistant superintendent was “suffering tortures at the hands of the opposition newspapers,” but the young social worker was determined to keep working for the time being, even “if I’d most kill myself doing it.”<sup>53</sup> The eventual turnover in administration and staff seems to have resulted at least partly from politics, but Frances came to feel the changes were mostly for the good. A new superintendent proved to be a supportive boss and if friends among the staff left, other congenial young women replaced them.

Still, Frances admitted to Mac that she had felt like “an infant out of my proper environment” at the Refuge.<sup>54</sup> This feeling eased somewhat as she gained more experience, but she was never to develop a sense of mastery over her work. After leaving the Refuge she acknowledged the “storms” of the job and admitted to Mac that it was a time “when everything [was] slipping beyond my control.”<sup>55</sup>

Her disgust with the lack of physical cleanliness among the girls, as noted above, was certainly part of Frances’s inability to feel comfortable with the job.<sup>56</sup> This was only one element of a deeper

<sup>51</sup> FCM to LHM, 7-6-1913. On the difficulties of female doctors having much in the way of a practice, see Banner, 11.

<sup>52</sup> FCM to LHM, 7-6-1913.

<sup>53</sup> See FCM to LHM, 10-14-1913 for the quotation and the information in the rest of the paragraph.

<sup>54</sup> FCM to LHM, 10-14-1913.

<sup>55</sup> FCM to LHM, 4-27-1914.

<sup>56</sup> For the middle class obsession with cleanliness, see Susan Strasser, *Never Done: A History of American Housework*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982) and Glenna Matthews, *Just a Housewife: The Rise and Fall of Domesticity in America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

cultural and psychological clash with the girls, however. As she had confided to Mac: "I suffered a rather severe repugnance at meeting some of the harder girls . . . and realize now that to treat all alike is an effort and not the simple outcome of a willing heart."<sup>57</sup> Frances had innocently believed that her idealism would bridge the barriers that separated a privileged, educated young woman like herself from the uncouth girls from the slums. In instances where a girl seemed genuinely penitent for her delinquency and possessed aspirations for a different life, then Frances's heart could indeed go out to her. Unfortunately such girls were few in number.

One of the clearest signs of a cultural divide was the inability of most of the girls to be uplifted by the music that Frances introduced. She had studied piano at Oberlin and good music would remain one of the passions of her life. It was profoundly discouraging, therefore, that even when she could induce some of the girls to join in singing, they sang out of tune and mispronounced lyrics.<sup>58</sup> If the girls found it difficult to join in Frances's love of music, she found it difficult to join in their fun. When she accompanied a group of the Refuge inmates to a local amusement park, Frances could not share the raucous joy of the girls.<sup>59</sup> As difficult as this must have been for a woman known among her family and college friends for her high spirits, worse was her fear that the demands of the job would force her to adopt a harsh personality. As she admitted a few weeks after starting at the Refuge, "discipline is the hardest row I have to hoe, but I'm growing stern enough to lock up a girl occasionally now."<sup>60</sup>

It is likely that her feeling the job required the mentality of a prison guard and the consequent fear that she was in danger of losing some of her feminine refinement that drove Frances from the Refuge. Too many of the girls lacked the self-control to avoid petty thievery and free sexual behavior, and she felt compelled to exercise a heavy-hand to make up for what the delinquents lacked. An attack of tonsillitis at the end of 1913 became a convenient way to escape a job that had become unbearable. Frances left with the understanding that she could return after her recovery, but she never did.<sup>61</sup>

In subsequent months, Frances tried to maintain a relationship with a few of the more promising girls, inviting them home for an afternoon or for supper, hoping that contact with individuals of more gentility would inspire them to lead better lives. This contact was far from satisfactory,

<sup>57</sup> FCM to LHM, 12-14-1913.

<sup>58</sup> FCM to LHM, 3-22-1914.

<sup>59</sup> FCM to LHM, 8-11-1913, Series 2, Box 2, MacDaniels Papers.

<sup>60</sup> FCM to LHM, 8-11-1913.

<sup>61</sup> FCM to LHM, 1-31-1914.

however. Frances felt sorry for her guests, but she was exasperated by their ignorance and insularity and made anxious by their inability to control their emotions. Of a visit by one Anna, Frances complained that it was:

Somewhat long drawn out [...] Poor children have nothing to talk about but themselves and their troubles at the "Ref," and that only takes up an hour or so. We played games, sang songs and finally I read aloud to her from Kipling's *Jungle Book*. It was something of a relief to have the clock strike four, for then I took her up to the car.<sup>62</sup>

Part of the difficulty she attributed to an inability of the girls to share her interests. As she put it: "The Refuge girls . . . . Are rather difficult to entertain for they don't care for music, pictures, sewing, books or walking."<sup>63</sup> Frances was able to salvage another visit "by going to call on Dr. Hollingshead, and by having [the girl] help me get supper [,] we managed to while away the time."<sup>64</sup>

A deeper difficulty stemmed from the emotional neediness and mental slowness of some of the girls that Frances found a struggle to handle:

This girl's one of the kind that can't keep their hands off of me, always hugging or hanging on me---ugh! I hate it, but the poor things have so little affection [,] I put up with it occasionally. I fear this poor girl wouldn't pass the Binet psychological test for ten years old [*sic*], yet she is eighteen. Do what you can for her [,] she simply never can, never will have good reason [,] Its [*sic*] so discouraging, for when they are so at the mercy of their environment you feel as tho [*sic*] they never would be safe out of sight.<sup>65</sup>

Yet another girl communicated through daily letters that Frances complained kept her "wrought up."

<sup>62</sup> FCM to LHM, 2-24-1914.

<sup>63</sup> FCM to LHM, 2-12-1914.

<sup>64</sup> FCM to LHM, 2-12-1914.

<sup>65</sup> FCM to LHM, 2-12-1914

To begin with, the grammar and spelling is unexcusably [*sic*] wretched, and then she's always threatening to run away, or telling me of some horribly rude things she's said or done to the people in charge [at the Refuge]. When I get real worried or provoked I write a scathing letter. Someday I think I'll have to publish them [as] "Helpful Letters to the Waywardly Inclined."<sup>66</sup>

A couple of weeks later, the same girl [apparently] wrote that she had hatched a plan with some of her fellow inmates to run away, and Frances reported them to the Refuge authorities. Although she recognized she was violating a confidence and this led to the girl being punished, Frances no longer had qualms about being hard and doing what she believed needed to be done.<sup>67</sup>

She had found her experience at the Refuge trying; now even dealing with a few individuals from the security of home was too much. Their lives were just too far removed and out of control from her genteel perspective. Trying to teach them middle class values had failed. When Frances decided to resume her career several months later, it was with the Juvenile Protective Association (JPA). The JPA, which had originated in Chicago in 1899 and, like the House of Refuge, inspired similar institutions around the country, was intended to assist special juvenile courts in treating young offenders separately from adults, with a focus on probation and other options short of incarceration.<sup>68</sup>

Frances's job involved a range of responsibilities, including investigating prospective foster families, testifying in court, monitoring arcades and movie houses frequented by young people for the moral quality of their entertainment, making statistical reports, and preparing charts for presentations.<sup>69</sup> It was a job that gave Frances much more control over her workday and made it easier to view the poor as abstractions. Although she still had a fair number of personal interactions with the lower classes, by this time she had developed a protective screen of amusement and contempt to avoid the "wrought up" feelings she had often had when working with the Refuge girls.

The job with the JPA began promisingly. Frances interviewed newsboys about finances and family matters. Although some of the dwellings she had to enter were dark and frightening, she

<sup>66</sup> FCM to LHM, 2-24-1914.

<sup>67</sup> FCM to LHM, 3-10-1914.

<sup>68</sup> For a discussion of the new juvenile courts and the probation system, both of which were integral to Frances's work at the JPA, see Katz, 139-42.

<sup>69</sup> FCM to LHM, letters from June through December, 1914.

managed to conduct several interviews on the first day. To her surprise, the subjects seemed interested and forthcoming. Suggesting another gap between the manners of the middle class and the poor, Frances admitted she would have been inclined to be “short or rude” to anyone making such personal inquiries of her.<sup>70</sup> The second day Frances began gathering information for a study of “feeble-minded” children.<sup>71</sup> She acquired a list of them from the special school they attended, found pertinent records at the work certificate office, and finally went to see two families. A wrong address sent her temporarily on a wild goose chase and led her to enter a saloon and a police station seeking the right address. Ultimately, a local shopkeeper showed her the place she sought. While neighborhood loiterers converged to listen in, he told Frances of his own interest in “hereditary,” as he put it, and that he was convinced there was insanity on the mother’s side of the family. The mother proved to be helpful in providing information, “a Kentucky mountaineer and a talker from way back[.] In] ten minutes I had more family history than I could jot down, deaf mutes, blind[,] depraved and all . . . .” Frances found additional details at a clinic and a mission in the neighborhood. No one from the second family was at home, “but the neighbor volunteered considerable desirable information.”<sup>72</sup>

Such work had the potential to be even worse, in its way, than that at the Refuge: visiting the poor in their slum neighborhoods with the attendant danger and unseemliness (proper women preferred not to venture into saloons and police stations).<sup>73</sup> The first days had gone well, however, and Frances closed the description by remarking, “As it goes, I think this work will be fascinating [.] Now that I find these people don’t resent inquiries *I can forget the persons in the interest of the program* [emphasis added].”<sup>74</sup> This would be the key. Although the work might involve some potentially awkward interaction, the willingness of poor people to cooperate meant that Frances could more easily see them as statistics to be tallied up as part of a scientific study. If she could view the poor like a behavioral scientist viewed lab rats she need not worry about the emotional turmoil that had occasioned too much of her work with the Refuge girls.

<sup>70</sup> FCM to LHM, 6-2-1914.

<sup>71</sup> In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the term was commonly used by medical and social work professionals in reference to a high functioning form of mental deficiency. A leading proponent of the heritability of feeble-mindedness and related maladies was Henry H. Goddard, author of *The Kallikak Family: A Study of the Heredity of Feeble-Mindedness*, (New York: Arno Press, 1973), originally published in 1912.

<sup>72</sup> FCM to LHM, 6-2-1914.

<sup>73</sup> Banner, 41-43; Rosenberg, 9-10.

<sup>74</sup> FCM to LHM, 6-2-1914.

To look upon the subjects of her study this way seems cold, but it was not because Frances lacked sympathy. It was just that she found it much easier to sympathize with those who were more like her (or at least aspired to be more like her). When poor people ignored or rejected those values, Frances felt a gulf opening up. "Feeble-mindedness" marked one obvious difference, but the poor in general did not even seem to have a notion of privacy such as more genteel persons saw as a bedrock of civilization. Everyone in slum neighborhoods seemed to know each other's business. They listened in on each other's conversations; they gossiped and happily shared their observations, even with strangers.

When young people seemed salvageable, Frances's heart could go out to them. She found it a shame that society seemed to be making more provisions (such as model schools) for those she found "good-for-nothings" than it did for those who tried to live right despite the disadvantages of poverty.<sup>75</sup> As part of her job, Frances frequently found herself in court testifying on information she had gathered on particular individuals or families.<sup>76</sup> The dishonesty of many witnesses and the aggressiveness of many lawyers appalled her. She came to think more highly of her father who had avoided criminal and divorce cases in his law practice.<sup>77</sup>

Court appearances could be bearable because testifying as an expert allowed her to distance herself from the often disturbing behavior of the poor. Interviewing was more bearable if she was accompanied by another social worker; they could shield each other from too much contact. More than anything else, however, the trick for Frances to maintain her equilibrium in the face of "life in all its hideousness" was creating a protective shell of professional coolness and behind-the-hand laughter at the expense of the poor.<sup>78</sup> She had gotten too close to some of the Refuge girls, but she would not make the same mistake in her JPA work. Although Frances could pity many of the youthful victims of poverty, increasingly she looked at their condition with a more quizzical eye. Her letters to Mac recount one incident after another that might once have left her tearful, frustrated, or angry but that now she reported with condescension and amusement.

<sup>75</sup> FCM to LHM, 11-24-1914.

<sup>76</sup> Mary Richmond would have praised Frances' professional behavior, if not her personal prejudices. In 1899, Richmond had deplored the unwillingness of social workers to testify objectively about clients in legal cases. Richmond, *Friendly Visiting*, 89-90.

<sup>77</sup> FCM to LHM, 11-7-1914.

<sup>78</sup> FCM to LHM, 7-22-1914.

The way Frances expressed this new attitude varied depending on the group with which she was interacting. The degree of condescension was in inverse proportion to how potentially threatening to society she judged them to be. The largest such group was composed of immigrants and their children. In the early twentieth century, roughly 60 % of Cincinnati residents fell into this category. They came predominantly from Germany, Ireland, Greece, Hungary, and Italy and made the city one of the more polyglot of the day.<sup>79</sup> Oddly Frances could not see this, once remarking that her hometown was “the most thoroughbred American city of [its] size . . . [with only] a 7 % immigration problem.”<sup>80</sup> Perhaps she felt that most of the immigrants were assimilating well and thus posed less of a problem. Most immigrants *were* relatively productive citizens. The potential threat was that if very many members of this large group shirked their responsibilities (through juvenile delinquency, for instance) it could tip the city’s social balance into anarchy. In practice, however, Frances’s complaints about immigrants tended to be hypothetical or matters of taste. She worried that when the war in Europe broke out and many male immigrants considered returning to their homelands to fight, they would leave behind dependent wives and children for society to care for. A more heartfelt criticism was in the realm of taste. When one of the Refuge girls who followed her around like a puppy announced she planned to have a button made from a photograph of Frances and wear it on her dress, the subject of the photograph “waxed wroth” and pressured the girl to abandon the idea. Frances may have still been trembling when she wrote Mac:

Just imagine! [A] picture of me on a button, to be worn about promiscuously! My, how I dislike them . . . (Visions of foreigners with their wedding pictures on the lapel of their coats, or ugly babies’ pictures)[.]<sup>81</sup>

Many of the immigrants were Catholic, and this raised a red flag for the good Presbyterian social worker. Her sympathy for prohibition made her skeptical of any group with a lax attitude toward liquor.<sup>82</sup> A meeting she had with a priest turned out to be surprisingly pleasant, not what she had expected after meeting many of his co-religionists in the slums.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>79</sup> George W. Knepper, *Ohio and Its People*, (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1997, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 315.

<sup>80</sup> FCM to LHM, 1-19-1915.

<sup>81</sup> FCM to LHM, 9-28-1914.

<sup>82</sup> FCM to LHM, 6-5-1914.

<sup>83</sup> FCM to LHM, 8-8-1914.

Immigrants may have created some problems, but they tended to be employed and law-abiding compared to other groups. Lower on the rung of civilization, in Frances's estimation, were the rural Kentuckians she interviewed. These included migrants to the city, but the choicest specimens she found in their native habitat in the hinterlands across the Ohio. These were poor, isolated white people who seemed to fulfill all the stereotypes about "hillbillies" that urban Americans have long harbored.<sup>84</sup> The reluctance to talk to strangers set them apart from their urbanized cousins, but their dirtiness, "ignorance and lethargy" did not seem that different.<sup>85</sup> Something that generated particular scorn to one of Frances's middle class background, given the high value placed on preserving the honor of one's good name, was the casual dishonesty many of the Kentuckians applied to their own names.

One difficulty in tracing folks is the variety of "aliases [.]" [They] fake names when enlisting in the army, when begging at the charities, and even in wedding licenses and so involve themselves in all sorts of legal entanglements. *I'm mighty thankful I was born above all that* [emphasis added].<sup>86</sup>

Two young women of her acquaintance, "very enthusiastic with the missionary ideal," were volunteering to teach in a Kentucky mountain school. Frances could not share their eagerness. "I feel sorry for them if our . . . mountaineers are a fair sample of what they'll be closed up with all day."<sup>87</sup>

In a special category all their own were African-Americans. They made up only a small fraction of Cincinnati's population in the early twentieth century (4-5 %), but the great majority was very poor. The persistence of what one scholar calls an "old, southern-oriented racial attitude" kept blacks from employment in many occupations. For the great part, they were stuck in the most menial jobs available and usually had trouble making ends meet.<sup>88</sup> Their poverty meant that black families were highly likely to come to the attention of the JPA.

<sup>84</sup> Anthony Harkins, *Hillbilly: A Cultural History of an American Icon*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 3-12.

<sup>85</sup> FCM to LHM, 7-24-1914.

<sup>86</sup> FCM to LHM, 9-28-1914.

<sup>87</sup> FCM to LHM, 9-16-1914.

<sup>88</sup> Knepper, 316.

Like most whites of the time, Frances viewed blacks through the distorting lens of racial superiority. Running across a black person in rural Kentucky drawing water from a well, she reported sighting a “funny, raggedy coon.”<sup>89</sup> In the most fearsome slums in Cincinnati, blacks could represent just another element of a foreboding moral anarchy. Frances wrote of places she had seen “where crime, vice[,] drunkenness, fighting and colored folk make night hideous, and day a perpetual sodden ‘morning-after.’”<sup>90</sup> Her actual interactions with blacks tended to be more benign and a source of entertainment. She joked about warding off a bedbug attack while visiting one family. She was amused by the innocent superstition of another who thought raising a puppy with her baby, including washing the dog in the baby’s bath water and toweling it off with the baby’s towel, would keep the child free from illness.<sup>91</sup> In contrast to her reaction to immigrants and native-born whites, Frances felt that there was no point in getting worked up over the behavior of black people. After several months at the JPA, she concluded: “The colored folks are so gloriously irresponsible they’re lots of fun to talk to and to hear talking together.”<sup>92</sup>

Whether the poor seemed more menacing, or merely amusing, after several months on the job, Frances had developed self-consciously self-protective techniques to keep them at bay. By March 1915 she could describe her reaction to interviewing thus:

I haven’t given any of it a tho’t [*sic*] after I’m thru [*sic*] the day [‘]s visiting—a cruel research worker without any heart I guess—but better so than suffer too easily from a bleeding heart. Thanks to my almost wicked sense of humor [I] can see the jolly side of any situation.<sup>93</sup>

If her tendency to see humor in the lives of the poor could be “almost wicked,” the religious Frances must have been aware that she was guilty of behavior that was less than Christ-like, treading on the edge of sin. It is also significant that she referred to herself as a “research,” not a “social,” worker. She seemed to be consciously distancing herself from the poor, what Addams and Richmond counselled against. For Frances, the appeal of her job was not in the direct social interactions

<sup>89</sup> FCM to LHM, 11-14-1914.

<sup>90</sup> FCM to LHM, 8-5-1914.

<sup>91</sup> FCM to LHM, 6-5-1914.

<sup>92</sup> FCM to LHM, 1-19-1915.

<sup>93</sup> FCM to LHM, 3-4-1915.

with the poor, but in being able to study their problems and prepare charts and reports from the facts she had gathered.

During much of her time at the JPA she helped assemble a report on “feeble-mindedness.”<sup>94</sup> It was based on assumptions about the intelligence of the poor similar to those of Wooley in the Vocational Research Bureau study.<sup>95</sup> The point of Frances’s report was to go beyond the older explanation for poverty as stemming from bad character to prove statistically that there were environmental reasons.<sup>96</sup> It was a more congenial way of being her “brother’s keeper,” as she once put it.<sup>97</sup> This was an apt metaphor, for Frances’s work at the JPA came to imply controlling the brother for his own good. Frances had been appalled by the moral laxity of many poor people. They lacked the standards that guided members of her comfortable, middle class family and people like them. Her experience at the House of Refuge disabused her of the notion that love could conquer all. By the time she had spent several months at the JPA, she was convinced of the need to apply a more realistic social science model to the poor. Her reports translated the individual stories of human suffering into numbers that could be used to guide charitable and government bureaucrats in making decisions to save not individuals but masses of the poor from disease, overcrowding, and crime through such reforms as prohibition, public health, eugenics, and new housing.

By impersonalizing her interactions with the poor and embracing professionalization and social science, Frances followed the trajectory of reform-minded social work in the early twentieth century. In doing so, she benefited from the pioneering work of Midwesterners like Illinois’s Jane Addams, Wisconsin’s Charles McCarthy, and Ohio’s Tom Johnson, Harris Cooley, and Helen Wooley in addressing problems related to mass immigration, urbanization and industrialization that so vexed Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These people became nationally influential figures, but their work was rooted in an almost single-minded focus on problems within their local communities, in the state of Wisconsin and the slums of Chicago, Cleveland, and Cincinnati. Americans in other parts of the country came to see this work as exemplary.

<sup>94</sup> FCM to LHM, 2-21-1915.

<sup>95</sup> Milar, 229.

<sup>96</sup> “Feeble-Minded; or The Hub to Our Wheel of Vice, Crime and Pauperism: Cincinnati’s Problem,” (Cincinnati: Juvenile Protective Association, 1915).

<sup>97</sup> FCM to LHM, 5-30-1915; Boyer, 190.

Without them and other Midwestern reformers of the time, it is difficult to imagine the Progressive Era. It would be equally difficult to imagine Frances Cochran taking up social work as a career before transforming herself into a research worker without the inspiration of these Midwesterners.

With the exception of Addams, who placed a limit on the value of research as a template for relating to the poor, the example of the other reformers encouraged Frances to take a more detached view of her work. If she had originally been drawn to social work out of compassion for the less fortunate, her experience with the Refuge delinquents had taught her that love was not enough. The lives of such girls were too chaotic. They needed help to bring rationality and prudence to their behavior. They needed what Frances, writing her fiancé about the kind of marriage she desired, called “sane love.”<sup>98</sup> For Frances, as for many of her contemporary social workers, it was only a sane love (with more emphasis on the adjective than on the noun) that could ultimately resolve the problems of poverty.

<sup>98</sup> FCM to LHM, 3-28-1915.