

## **Group 3 Paper 2**

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HSA 5003: History of American Higher Education

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July 7, 2024

## Chapter Summary

Chapter three explores the period of higher education from 1860 to 1890. It covers the era influenced by the Civil War, the Morrill Act, and many other movements that helped shape higher education. The Civil War significantly disrupted education, leading to the enlistment of many students and faculty in the military, thereby reducing the academic population. Moreover, several institutions were repurposed as hospitals due to the war's impact, further affecting the educational landscape.

The Morrill Act aimed to expand education across the nation using land grants. However, not all institutions benefited, leading to division in certain states like Oregon and Indiana. "If the Morrill Act of 1862 made a contribution to American higher education, it was that it helped expand the state college into this 'university' model of federated units. ... Despite the incentives offered by the infusion of funds from the federal Morrill Act of 1862, by 1890 state support for higher education was uneven at best and usually uncertain." (Thelin, 2019, p.84) Agricultural programs were adopted using the act but could not realize their full potential due to the priorities of their respective states and financial limitations.

Some institutions, such as Columbia and St. Johns in New York, began labeling themselves as seminaries, offering a wide range of disciplines, from elementary education to technical studies. The rise of technical education across the nation was apparent with the founding of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "Even the public institutions that gained support via the Morrill Act looked and behaved more like the allegedly archaic 'private colleges' than like modern state universities. And those university presidents ---such as Charles Eliot at MIT and, later, Harvard---who were in the best position to pioneer graduate programs actually devoted most of their administrative attention and writing to the reform of undergraduate

education." (Thelin, 2019, p.105) There was a demand for practical studies, even with some resistance from those who advocated for classical studies.

Overall, the chapter covers the period between 1860 and 1890 and how it changed the higher education landscape in America. This period accomplished this feat by expanding a more comprehensive array of educational programs, including minorities and women, and dealing with financial challenges through innovation and philanthropy. Although this period was far from perfect, it helped lay a foundation for future advancement in higher education.

### **Time Period Connection**

In the article "Becoming Jane Addams, Feminist Developmental Theory, and 'The College Woman'" written by Tamara Beauboeuf-Lafontant, Jane Addams (1860–1935) was considered a reformer during the American Progressive Era, which also coincides with the resilience of the American Higher Education period. The article investigates Jane Addams's feminist insights by focusing on "the college woman." Addams, part of the first generation of white women with access to secondary and tertiary education, is analyzed through a feminist developmental lens. Beauboeuf-Lafontant, T. (2014) There are parallels drawn between Addams's views and the developmental strengths, struggles, and resistance girls and adolescents face. Addams worked on child labor laws, juvenile courts, public health, racial integration, fair labor practices, women's suffrage, and pacifism. The article emphasizes the socially transformative potential of young women. Addams challenged patriarchy, promoted social justice, and believed daily interactions were crucial for democracy. Her narrative voice bridged theory and practice, and it continues to attract attention today. Beauboeuf-Lafontant, T. (2014)

## **Influence**

During 1860-1890, American higher education faced significant diversity and adversity while molding the ideal college and, in some cases, turning university. This time marked the beginning and ending of the Civil War and the enactment of the Morrill Act of 1862. Higher education institutions face challenges moving into directions they presumed were important and viable certifications or education for populations in their communities. In doing so, universities amped up ways to pivot and keep the enrollment momentum even during challenging times. Even with higher education becoming more accessible and available, it faced many financial pressures.

Institutions became innovative in their enrollment strategies, and many received philanthropic assistance from groups like The American Mission Association, which helped spread educational models around the United States. As Beauboeuf-Lafontant, T. (2014, p. 99) mentioned, “If a college had not met its enrollment quota as the start of the academic year approached, it might offer discounts to fill empty seats with paying customers.”

Today, higher education entities continue their creativity to keep enrollment steady, an influence constant since the 1860s. There are events in which institutions have learned to offer accelerated programs, build scholarships to encourage students to maintain the course of higher education, and even open enrollment for all-women universities to include men.

## **Essential to Practitioner**

As practitioners in higher education today, we must examine where we came from to understand where we are now and continue moving forward. In this chapter specifically, there were a few different key milestones, but women being allowed the opportunity to enter the world of higher education is of note to discuss.

"Expanding access to higher education for women, usually seen as an extremist activity, received an unexpected boost from the fears of conservative constituencies." (Thelin, 2019, p.84)

Until the mid-1800s, it was unheard of for a woman to be considered a serious potential college candidate. As we know from the colonial era, women were humored with the ability to take an oral entrance exam. Still, even if deemed worthy, they were not allowed to enter the institution. Although these first women's colleges may have been another form of control for southern families by manipulating where their daughters could go to study based on their approved religions, it was the first stepping stone into getting women into college.

When higher education practitioners move forward, it is essential to remember what minorities and women have gone through over the centuries to be able to attend college freely as one does today. We must embrace and celebrate the wins for these populations because although free will and opportunity exist, colleges were not always welcoming of all races, genders, or income levels. Poverty-level students facing financial barriers, students who are parents themselves, and students in our LGBTQ community who may not always have the support at home to pursue the education of their choice – all need our support. Community colleges today are a safe space for all students regardless of gender, race, or identification and must remain as such.

## References

- Beauboeuf-Lafontant, T. (2014). Becoming Jane Addams: Feminist Developmental Theory and “The College Woman.” *Girlhood Studies*, 7(2), 61–78. <https://doi.org/10.3167/ghs.2014.070205>
- Thelin, J. R. (2019). *A History of American Higher Education*, 3rd Edition. Johns Hopkins University Press.