

# History of Art at Mount Holyoke College, 1872-1914

Robert L. Herbert, 2018

## Preface and acknowledgements

In this study I've drawn extensively upon Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz and Arthur C. Cole (see Bibliography), whose excellent work supersedes early studies of the college. However, they do not address the history of art except in passing, so my contributions come from careful readings of Mount Holyoke's course catalogues and archival records.

Among several colleagues who have directly helped me, I must single out three for unusual contributions. Bettina Bergmann, Helene Phillips Herzig '49 Professor of Art, gave me advice about antique casts and relevant bibliography. Austin Clark (see Bibliography) wrote a splendid Master's thesis on history of art at the college with Bergmann's guidance. Like Horowitz, he wrote a sterling piece of cultural history that lets me focus on a chronological account of art history at Mount Holyoke while deferring to him and Horowitz. Chris Bennett, Director of Lincoln Library, Lake Erie College, gave generously of his time to compose ten pages of previously unknown records from all Lake Erie documents that referred to Louise Fitz-Randolph.

I've greatly benefitted from the cordial and professional reception by Leslie Fields, Head of Archives and Special Collections, and Deborah Richards, Archivist, and from helpful responses to my inquiries by Margaret R. Dakin, Archives and Special Collections Specialist, Amherst College; Nanci Young, College Archivist, Smith College, and Rebecca Bedell, Professor of Art, Wellesley College. Most of the photographs reproduced here were from digital scans kindly made by James Gehrt, Digital Projects Lead, DAPS. I'm also thankful to Eugenia W. Herbert for excellent editorial advice and meticulous proof-reading.

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A note about sources from Mount Holyoke's Archives and Special Collections: Instead of studding this essay with a forest of footnotes, I've

counted on the interested reader, if she wishes, to go to the archival papers that are housed under the names of all college people and departments that I refer to. The portrait photographs (Digitally scanned by James Gehrt) are from Archives and Special Collections: Louise Fitz-Randolph, c. 1895 (Van Loo & Frost, Toledo), and c. 1925 (Bachrach, printed in Austria); Florence Foss (unknown photographer); Caroline Galt (D. Blair); Gertrude Hyde (Leighton Bros., Norwich CT); Louise Jewett (The Allridge Art); Caroline Ransom (Van Loo & Frost, Toledo).

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## Part One: 1872-1901

Before 1876 little is known about art at Mount Holyoke Seminary. There were some small objects and coins in Seminary Hall, and a few portraits, but no other paintings or sculptures. A thirst for art was manifest, however, and in the campaign for a building for natural science and art, Principal Julia Ward in 1874 made an appeal to former pupils. “In the department of Art we are especially needy and we solicit paintings, engravings, photographs, statues, busts, coins and other articles suitable for such a collection.”<sup>1</sup> There was no “department” of art but the subject nonetheless was given high standing.

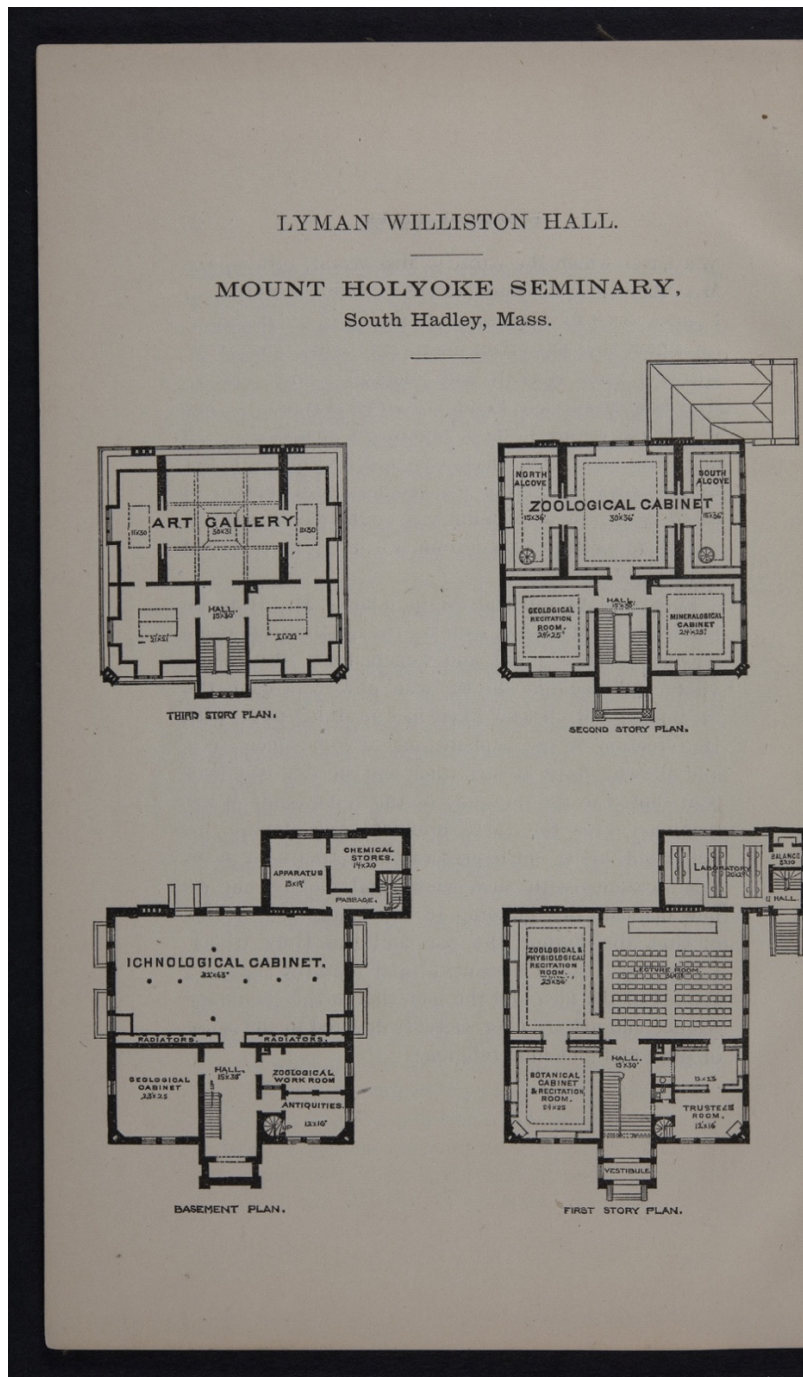


Williston Hall, c. 1876-78

In November, 1876, Williston Hall was opened, dedicated to art and science. It was the first autonomous academic building outside the huge Seminary Hall. A brick-clad structure in “collegiate gothic” style, its third

<sup>1</sup> From a three-page lithographed text of 1874, on the reverse of the first plan for Williston Hall (Williston Hall, box 106, folder 1).

floor had a large sky-lighted art gallery with side rooms, also with skylights, for study and drawing. The first and second floors were given to zoology, ornithology, botany, physiology, mineralogy and chemistry. Occupying the basement were geology and a collection of fossil dinosaur tracks.



Williston Hall plan, 1876

In his dedication address, Professor W. S. Tyler of Amherst outlined a moral and religious hierarchy.<sup>2</sup>

Language and history and philosophy are higher than chemistry and geology and astrology, as man is more exalted than nature, and ethics and religion are higher than even the humanities [. . .]. Art is nature *and* man idealized, penetrated with the idea of the artist, suffused with his feelings, transfigured by his imagination. [. . .] The study of art, including poetry, oratory and music as well as painting, sculpture and architecture, is the study of the highest ideals which the genius and imagination of man have ever created.

Tyler praised the Woman's Pavilion in the current Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia. "The idea which it represents is that of Science and Art in a woman's Seminary, united and consecrated to Religion. Science and Art are sisters, and Religion is mother of them both." At the national exhibition a prize was awarded a large geological map of Massachusetts devised by Charles Hitchcock and destined for a room in Williston.

The Natural History and Art Building opened with an important canvas, *Hetch Hetchy Canyon* by Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902), which had been painted the year before. This was given by Mrs. E. H. Sawyer and Mrs. A. L. Williston to celebrate the new undertaking.<sup>3</sup> In their letter of November 15 they thanked Bierstadt for forgiving "a large proportion of its appraised value" to enable their purchase. His letter dated from New York, November 3, 1876, described the painting.<sup>4</sup>

The season I have chosen is late Autumn, when distant objects are mellowed by a golden haze and when the grass is dry and yellow. A few elk, now unfortunately becoming rarer every year, are coming up

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<sup>2</sup> Opening of Lyman Williston Hall, Address by Prof. W. S. Tyler and Exercises of Dedication (Springfield 1877).

<sup>3</sup> Also given was *Morning Glory* a marble medallion presented by its sculptor J. A. Jackson (1825-79).

<sup>4</sup> Both letters were quoted in *Opening of Lyman Williston Hall*, p. 8. Bierstadt was evidently pleased by the Seminary's acquisition and on the following July donated his large engraving *Rocky Mountain*.

the valley in quest of one of the few mountain streams that the long, dry season has not quenched.

In a stereopticon view (Knowlton Bros.) signed and dated December, 1876, by Anna Edwards, we look in the art gallery where the Bierstadt is centered on the wall. The other paintings have not been identified.



Williston Hall picture gallery, 1876

The position of the chairs suggests a study session with more chairs lined along the wall to accommodate a larger attendance.

Then in 1883 another distinguished painting was paired with the Bierstadt: *Saco Ford, Conway Meadows* by George Inness (1824-94), a gift from Ellen W. Ayer. Painted the summer before Williston opened, it shows the Saco River in North Conway, New Hampshire, with North Moat Mountain in the distance. Inness then typified American Barbizon-style art that featured painterly execution of specific natural landscapes. Subsequently he developed a way of painting that featured blurred and misty elements evocative of spiritual concerns.

Mount Holyoke was really fortunate in starting its art collection with two recently painted pictures that are still among its most treasured objects. Deemed today of lesser significance were a few other paintings. *Springtime*

in *Lauterbrunnen* by the British artist William Gale (1823-1909) was given in 1874, and in 1877 came the bequest by Edwin White (1817-1877) of a veritable collection of his paintings. He was a South Hadley native who was nationally known and collected. This was reason enough for his paintings to have loomed large in esteem and doubtless were held up as encouragement to student artists.



Edwin White, Leonardo and his Pupils

In addition to these paintings by Bierstadt, Inness, Gale and White, art-minded students could examine “pictures by other well-known American painters.” These, however, are not named in contemporary documents, except for Robert Kluth (1854-1921) whose *Coast of Norway* was given in 1891.

Supplementing Williston’s [original paintings](#) were copies in oil of major European pictures. These included in 1877 Murillo’s *Immaculate Conception* and Raphael’s *Transfiguration*, and before 1883 (when listed in

the Seminary's catalogue), Domenichino's *Last Communion of St. Jerome* and Titian's *Assumption*. In the catalogue of 1886-87 mention is also made of Guido Reni's *Aurora*, and "a set of carbon photographs from Rembrandt's most noted works."<sup>5</sup> Then in 1888, a copy of Fra Angelico's *Madonna with Angels* was added to the works on exhibit, the last major copy listed for several years. Before 1900 the only original paintings in Williston that we today would credit with enduring notice were the Bierstadt and the Inness.

### Antique casts

Full-size casts of antique sculpture entered more prominently than painting in the seminary's curriculum. They spoke for the central position of classical art and archaeology which gave pride of place to these replicas of famous Greek and Roman sculptures.<sup>6</sup> Casts embodying the understanding of ancient cultures had become prominent in royal and aristocratic collections in Renaissance Europe. By the eighteenth century, veritable galleries of casts were formed in major European centers, occasionally accessible to the public, and well-to-do individuals in Europe and this country had acquired casts. Italian workshops of plaster casts catered to Europeans and Americans on the Grand Tour. Casts of classical antiquities were sold by private shops and by some museum workshops, including those of the British Museum and the Louvre. By the nineteenth century Americans could also obtain them from suppliers in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia.

In the US, casts became essential in teaching. Art academies emphasized drawing at the outset of their training. Antique and a few Renaissance sculptures were the approved models for learning idealized form with which students approached "natural" subjects before they were entitled to paint with colors. In the early years of the nineteenth century,

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<sup>5</sup> "Carbon photographs" were photographic reproductions on a layer of gelatin mixed with carbon black or another pigment and then chemically treated and hardened.

<sup>6</sup> Bettina Bergmann kindly identified many of the casts shown in photographs of the era and steered me to the compendious history by Hima Bindu Mallampati, *Acquiring Antiquity: The Classical Collections at the University of Michigan and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, ca. 1850-1925* (University of Michigan PhD, 2010). Austin Clark Master's thesis brings up-to-date the significance of antique casts at Mount Holyoke. Also very helpful is Alan Wallach, *Exhibiting Contradictions: Essays on the Art Museum in the United States* (Amherst 1998).



collections of casts were used to train students in the Pennsylvania Academy, the American Academy of Fine Arts in New York, and other public and private schools. They were not only fundamental in the training of artists, they also served the teaching of ancient history and archeology and therefore appeared in college and urban collections and museums. Collegiate departments of classics sometimes formed their own collections of casts to embody their conceptions of the history and literature of Greece and Rome.

At Mount Holyoke the antique casts that first entered the art collection were gifts from individuals and classes because until 1902 the seminary didn't make money available for buying casts. Class gifts were probably prompted by teachers of art and classics although students steeped in classical literature and history might well have initiated some choices themselves. In December 1877, the class of 1866 gave casts of the *Venus de Milo*, *Minerva Medica*, and *Diana Huntress*.



Williston art gallery, c. 1878-80

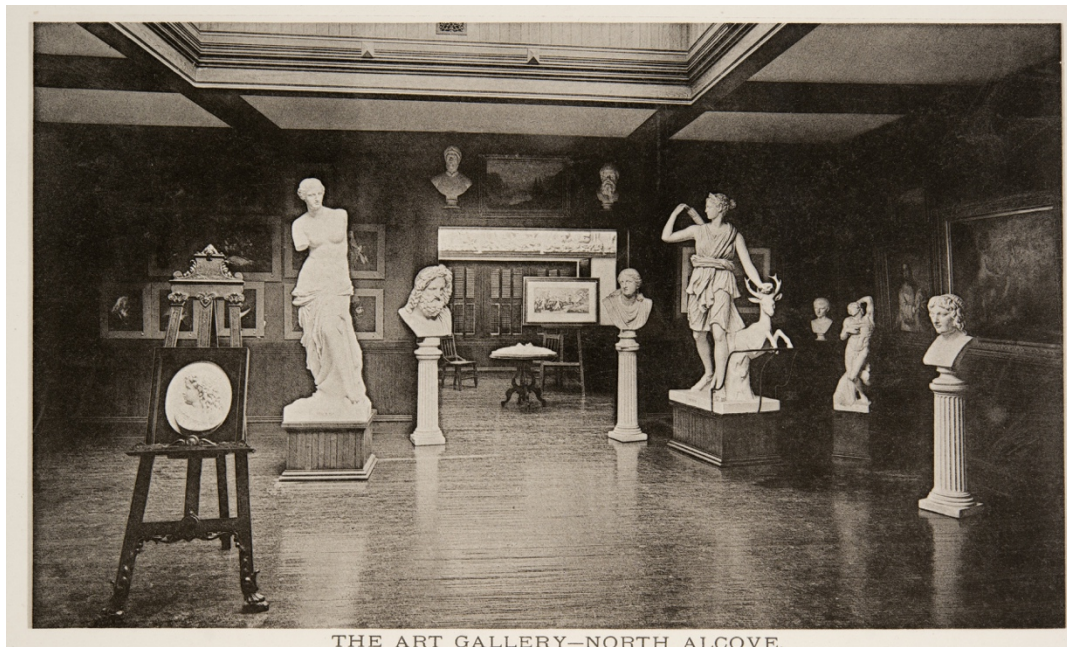
All three goddesses appear in an anonymous cabinet card of three of four years later with two of them in foreground corners and *Diana* beyond on the left. Near her is Michelangelo's *Dying Slave* (for which there's no accession record). Bierstadt's painting is on the wall, flanked by two busts, with White's *Leonardo and his Pupils* to its right.

Other anonymous photos and stereos in Archives and Special Collections give us ideas of how the collections were displayed. There are no contemporaneous documents whatever about what was exhibited, so the photos are our only sources. Nearly all are undated but from internal evidence they can be sorted in rough chronology. Moreover, taken from different vantage points, they tell us about how the objects were displayed in adjacent alcoves.



Williston art gallery, c. 1878-82

Life-size casts are accompanied here by a dozen framed and mounted photographs behind *Venus*. To the rear, light floods in from the north alcove's three leaded windows. On a table there is an architectural model (probably of old Jerusalem) and overhead, a lengthy cast of an antique relief. On the left the open door leads to the entrance hall with a look into the northwest alcove. Both of these spaces exhibited casts.



THE ART GALLERY—NORTH ALCOVE.  
Williston art gallery, c. 1885-90

Also looking toward the north alcove is a mounted photograph (probably by Hearn & Davis) with Venus, Diana, and the Dying Slave, and busts now on either side of the wide opening. (The relief of a young woman on an easel in the foreground has not been identified.) This photo features the symmetry of the display whose formal, presentational aspect is for public viewers although students of course could have used it for their study. In the north alcove the windows have been shuttered to give advantage to overhead lighting. A large framed engraving or reproduction is on an easel just beyond the architectural relief on its table.



Williston art gallery, c. 1883-85

Inness's *Saco Ford*, on the wall next to Bierstadt, dates this photo 1883 when the picture was acquired or shortly afterwards. To the left is the north alcove, with its windows obscured. Illumination there comes from an overhead skylight to reveal a crowded group of objects, including Michelangelo's *Dying Slave*, several casts and a large drawing or print of a male bust and head placed on an easel.

Although original European and American paintings and sculptures were in short supply in Williston, there were a goodly number of objects from across the world. There were coins, metal work and ceramics from ancient Rome, the Near East, India, and China, along with "Chinese printing." Many of these objects and some African necklaces and textiles were sent by former students who went abroad as missionaries. Peruvian pottery was also exhibited and, closer to home, came pottery of the Zuni and Arizona cliff dwellers. These objects would have been available for many classes across the curriculum but no mention is made of them in the annual descriptions of courses.

## Photographs

Photographs of European paintings, sculptures, and architecture were available from the early days of Williston's art gallery. Until the 1870s, art was usually represented in publications by engravings and lithographs, and only rarely by photographs. It's hard for a modern viewer, swamped by photography in all its forms, to imagine the era when formal photographs of art were uncommon and often were treated like works of art in their own right. Framed photos of paintings by Renaissance masters and of famous antique sculpture were hung in Williston from the beginning. More common were groups of photographs purchased from European suppliers like Alinari of Florence. Mary Ellis, class of 1855, taught a course in 1872 on Greek and Roman architecture using photographs she had brought from Europe, spread out on tables in a seminary parlor.

After Williston was opened, reproductions of art were placed on the walls of small lecture rooms, but because more than one department used the same rooms, they had to be moved frequently. A photograph of the 1880s shows photos crowded on three walls and the desk (a plan of the Parthenon is on the wall to the left).



Williston recitation room, c. 1885-90



Louise Fitz-Randolph with screens of reproductions, c. 1895

In 1892 when Louise Fitz-Randolph came as head of the department of art, she used portable screens of reproductions which could be moved from room to room. In a photograph of about 1895, her small lecture room has dozens of photographs of individual antique sculptures and of the Sidon *Sarcophagus of Alexander*. It's easy to see why she agitated for more rooms for art that led eventually to the building of the Dwight Art Memorial in 1902.

### The practice of art, 1839-1901

In Mary Lyon's circular of 1835 proposing a female seminary, she included "linear drawing" among the proposed subjects. Beginning with the course catalogue of 1839-40, instruction in linear and perspective drawing was regularly listed. Lyon emphasized the sciences for which drawing was a desirable component. By 1868-69 the course catalogue read "Instruction is given in Vocal Music, Reading, Penmanship, Gymnastics, Linear and Perspective Drawing. and French," and in the following year crayon and

pencil drawing and painting in water-colors were added; the expanded description appeared regularly in succeeding years. These courses were not numbered or itemized in the catalogues, and just how often they met is unknown. This is also true of “vocal music” and the other subjects grouped under “instruction is given . . .”.

Lessons in drawing, offered outside of credit courses, would have been especially useful in botany where drawing, watercolors and prints of natural plants had long been the domain of women. Young women were taught such drawings as a part of their school training; this was considered a normal and desirable attainment for a middle-class girl. Earlier in the century, a number of women had become notable botanical illustrators, including Orra White Hitchcock (1796-1863) who was close to Mary Lyon (she designed the Seminary’s diploma logo). At the Seminary the drawing of plants was encouraged although this work would not have been considered “art.”

Until 1901, drawing and painting were taught by recent Seminary graduates. Such appointments were further examples of Mount Holyoke’s policy of favoring her own daughters. These young women began with only undergraduate training in art. but they were singled out as brilliant students in more than one subject. As they taught, they gradually added professional schooling in art and art history. Scattered records show that Hannah Noble ’58 (1836-1925) taught drawing and mathematics from 1861 to 1888, painting and English composition for two years, and painting until 1901. In 1879, a teacher of drawing was named in the annual catalogue for the first time: Lillie L. Sherman ’80, called “Assistant Pupil.” Interestingly, she also taught drawing in mathematics that year, but only “drawing” from 1880 to 1884. It’s no surprise that mathematical drawing was part of the seminary’s curriculum. Future public school teachers would have to teach accurate drawing in courses on geometry and physics. Drawing was therefore not conceived only as a “fine arts” subject. From 1885 to 1898, Sherman was succeeded by Sara A. Worden ’83 (1853-?), who taught drawing until 1899. Worden attended the Cooper Union in New York and other professional schools, so she was also a painter.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> She had a figure painting at the annual exhibition of the National Academy of Design, New York, in 1901: *The Mount Holyoke*, vol. 10 March 1901, p. 328.

Starting in 1884-85, the phrase “Instruction is given . . .” disappears and one now reads “Drawing and Painting. Lessons in charcoal-drawing, from casts or models, and in sketching from nature, are furnished without extra charge. A normal class, also, is instructed in the elementary forms of design, and in outline-drawing. Painting is taught, in both water-colors and oils.” This is the first year when oil painting is mentioned. Rooms on the third floor were supplied with many casts of antique and Renaissance sculpture from which drawings were made, and there were copies in oil of notable Renaissance paintings, reinforcing the history of art. Also available for drawing were the casts of prehistoric animals on the second floor, and the nearby collection of stuffed birds.

Drawing and painting were given more elaborate descriptions in 1890-91, the same year when the entry for art history was enlarged. For drawing, “First year: Preparatory Antique Class; Cast Drawing—plant forms, heads, parts of the human body;” in the second year, “Antique Class; Cast Drawing—heads, busts, full-lengths;” and in the third, “Life Class; heads from life, draped model.” Like other colleges, drawing after casts was intended to teach ideal form before nature was approached. The Normal Class also listed “charcoal drawing from casts of geometrical and plant forms.” Outdoor sketching in oils and watercolors included “flowers, fruit, and other forms of still-life and landscapes.” This program was supplemented “by lectures upon perspective and composition, theory and philosophy of painting, and history of the different schools of painting.” For studio credit, six hours a week was required. There were exams upon the readings and participation in the year-end exhibitions of their work. It’s evident that students engaged in the practice of art graduated with a good training and a knowledge of the history of art sufficient for teaching in public schools.

For the next several years, the descriptions of drawing and painting remained much the same. Modeling in clay and studying the antique in charcoal and clay were specified, and drawing and painting from life loomed larger in the catalogues. By 1897-98, the history of art was put forward more than before in studio courses. Noble’s six one-semester painting courses were not clearly separated from history. They were closely associated with Fitz-Randolph’s “Course 1” although Noble gave her own one-hour lectures



on history each week. Her courses had a minimum each week of two hours' painting (one academic credit) or five hours (two credits).

Worden's courses in drawing were similarly more expansively described. In addition to drawing from casts and still lives, students drew "from Life," sketched out of doors, made original compositions in several domains, and had lessons on historical ornament, anatomy, perspective, and "Decorative and Pictorial Art" including "Original Decorative Designs."

### History of art, 1872-1900

Professor Ebenezer S. Snell of Amherst College, a teacher of mathematics and natural philosophy, gave public lectures on Egyptian, Greek, Roman and English architecture in 1859, but the first course in the history of art was the one already mentioned on Greek and Roman architecture by Mary Ellis in 1872, given that year only.<sup>8</sup> Anna C. Edwards (1859-1930), who taught religion and ancient literature, often alluded to art and supplemented her lectures in the 1870s with photographs she had brought from Europe. For more than a decade beginning in 1874, there were lectures on classical art by Amherst College professors Julius H. Seelye and W. S. Tyler. In 1886-87 for one year only, Richard H. Mather, also of Amherst, taught the history of sculpture. These men were not historians of art but their studies in theology, Latin, and Greek made them well equipped to give occasional lectures on antique art. As in most institutions of higher learning, Greek and Roman art were regularly allied to the study of classic languages, and often to courses on theology, moral philosophy and on the history of the ancient Mediterranean.

The Amherst professors were members of a contingent of men who gave lectures and courses at the seminary, which as yet had no male teachers on the faculty.<sup>9</sup> Male "lecturers" taught most of the physical sciences. For years Charles Hitchcock and Charles Young, both of Dartmouth, and Charles

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<sup>8</sup> Information about courses comes from the annual Seminary and College catalogues and from Louise Fitz-Randolph, "Department of Art and Archaeology, History of the Department," *Alumnae Quarterly*, 1, 4, January 1918, 197-202, and "Art and Methods of the Present Department, by the Members of the Department," 202-05.

<sup>9</sup> The first man on regular appointment was Asa Kinney (1873-1961), teacher of plant science, from 1898 to 1939.

Thompson of Worcester taught geology, chemistry and astronomy. Miriam Levin has observed that in this era

the teachers still divided the labor with male lecturers . . . in the fields of chemistry, astronomy, physics, and geology—that is, the physical sciences most closely associated with industrial growth and national economy and traditionally with interpretations of natural law. [Women] retained the right to have charge of botany and physiology, those biological sciences most identified with laboratory work, the manipulation of living organisms, systematics, and evolutionary theory and least with economic and industrial interests.<sup>10</sup>

In 1878, shortly after the opening of Williston Hall, history of art became a regular course given in the second half of senior year. This was only a year after Charles Eliot Norton was named professor of art at Harvard and began teaching the history of antique, medieval and Renaissance art.<sup>11</sup> At Mount Holyoke, Elizabeth Blanchard, Associate Principal, gave courses in the history of art and Latin from 1878 to 1889. She had gone to Europe in 1877 to study art history, with an important stay at the University of Zurich, one of the centers of the scientific Germanic method of teaching art history. Trustees hadn't authorized the purchase of photos so Blanchard herself bought some for her annual class in art history.<sup>12</sup>

Blanchard's history of art was expanded in 1879 by the annual appointment until 1891 of William Henry Goodyear (1846-1923) as lecturer in the history and philosophy of art. He was the first professional historian of art to teach at Mount Holyoke. He had taught at Cooper Union and in 1882 was named a curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The detailed content of his courses at the seminary is unknown but in view of his publication in 1888 of a survey of art history, we know that he brought Mount Holyoke's history of art to an enlightened if traditional level.<sup>13</sup> By 1885, he assigned regular use of Wilhelm Luebke's *Outlines of the History of*

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<sup>10</sup> Miriam R. Levin, *Defining Women's Scientific Enterprise: Mount Holyoke Faculty and the Rise of American Science* (University Press of New England, 2005), p. 64.

<sup>11</sup> The importance of this initiative is brought home by Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>12</sup> Fitz-Randolph, *op. cit.*

<sup>13</sup> He published *A History of Art* in 1888, and later, books on Egyptian and Greek art.

*Art*, a best-seller well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Two years later, the annual catalogue gave a few hints about Goodyear's course. "Luebke's History of Art, furnishing the outline, with constant use of the best works of reference in each division of the subject. The historical development of art is philosophically traced, with the aid of excellent copies of several of the old masters, casts of antique statuary, and numerous photographs. Courses of lectures are also given by non-resident professors." These latter, however, are not named, much as we'd like to know who they were and what they taught.

Goodyear's 1888 book, with 205 high quality halftone reproductions, was too expensive for most students who therefore depended on library copies and mounted reproductions and photographs. In his book, Goodyear wrote that history of art dealt with the best examples from the past. Students would learn to suppress "individual views" until after they had studied great art sanctioned by generations of criticism and history. He began his book with a chapter on nineteenth century architecture, then reverted to the ancient world and progressed forward chronologically in separate sections on architecture, sculpture and painting. He concluded his survey of sculpture with a few nineteenth-century works, but his painting ends in the eighteenth century because modern work "is so largely of a technical quality that professional artists or technical experts are its fittest critics." This conservative view excluded nineteenth century painting although lectures by visitors and resident studio teachers probably introduced some of its art.

With the elevation in 1888 from seminary to Mount Holyoke College and Seminary, the curriculum was enriched by setting higher preparatory standards along with college level courses in classical languages and the sciences. From 1890 to 1893 when Mount Holyoke College became the institution's permanent name, seminary course enrollment dropped from 269 to 8 as the higher levels took hold. These changes were abetted by the high standards Elizabeth Storrs Mead encouraged when she was made President in 1890.<sup>14</sup>

The course catalogue for 1890-91 enlarges upon the previous descriptions of courses in the history of art, presumably the classes offered

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<sup>14</sup> For the shift from seminary to college, see Cole, *A Hundred Years at Mount Holyoke College*, pp. 205ff.

still by Goodyear. In addition to early Christian and medieval art, the following were included: “Renaissance Period: Sienese, Tuscan, Umbrian, Paduan and Venetian Schools, with those of Bologna, Rome, and Naples; Spanish, Flemish and Dutch Painters. An opportunity is offered for the study of the development of art in the XVIIIth century.” This survey was apparently spread over junior and senior years. In 1892-93, the history of art was said to be “pursued according to philosophical methods and as outlined by Wincklemann and Luebke, the topics further elaborated in daily lectures and by many references to the valuable works of the Art Library.”<sup>15</sup>



Louise Fitz-Randolph, ca. 1895

In 1892 a gifted and charismatic newcomer utterly changed history of art at Mount Holyoke when President Mead appointed Louise Fitz-Randolph

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<sup>15</sup> J. J. Wincklemann (1717-1788) was the hugely important art historian and archaeologist who brought out the distinctions among the different periods within Greek and Roman art, deploying a systematic conception of style.

'72 (1851-1932) as teacher of Art and head of the department. Anticipating the shift to a full college in 1893, Mead was determined to shed the institution's cloistered heritage. She wanted to raise the status of the faculty—she freed teachers from domestic duties—by appointing those with higher professional qualifications. They would abandon the former authoritarian stance and teach students to seek intellectual independence and self-expression. Fitz-Randolph was a well-tested teacher from Lake Erie Female Seminary in Painesville, Ohio. Until January 1897 she taught halftime in both institutions, then became a fulltime member of the Mount Holyoke faculty.

Fitz-Randolph was an unstoppable force who dominated her department; she also had an impact on the whole campus. At first she was listed as Louise Randolph, but beginning in 1894 she appeared in college publications as Louise Fitz-Randolph, assuming the name the family had used for several generations. Sometimes, especially later in life, she signed letters simply as "L. F. Randolph." As we'll see, she was the prime mover of a new building for art, the Dwight Art Memorial. She had no advanced degree, but had studied history of art and archeology at the Harvard Annex and Boston University, then in western Europe from 1881 to 1884, principally in Berlin, Zurich and Paris. She obviously had her own funds, presumably from her family, to support these study-travels.

In 1893-94, her impact on the history of art can be easily detected. Just a year after she was made chair, the introductory "Course 1" of the history of art now was required of all degree candidates in art. She obviously had persuaded her colleagues' curricular and degree committees to make this requirement, which was not true of Vassar, Smith or Wellesley whose students could graduate without a course in art history. The catalogue for 1893-94 outlines her courses in greater detail than in the previous year. Her four semester-long courses were identically described by Mount Holyoke and Lake Erie, and remained the same through 1896. Three of them proceeded from Egypt to the Renaissance. The first was Ancient sculpture, painting and architecture, from Egyptian and Assyrian to Greek and Roman, taught "with the results of recent excavations" (which would have incorporated Fitz-Randolph's work abroad in archeology). The second was Early Christian and medieval art and architecture, and the third was

dedicated to the Italian Renaissance. The fourth course was given to art of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in the Lowlands, Germany and Spain, with attention to “the French and English Schools” and a “Review of Modern Art.” Illustrations for these courses consisted of plans, engravings, Arundel prints [chromolithographs], and photographs. “An annually increasing series of slides, used with the oxy-hydrogen lantern [lit by gas flame], afford further illustration of the subject.”

On January 1, 1897, the ambitious Fitz-Randolph printed a short flyer justifying “An Art Building for Mount Holyoke College.”<sup>16</sup> She knew there would have to be new construction after the fiery loss of Seminary Hall the previous September and she wanted to make the case for art. Her text was presumably sent to the trustees and potential donors. Then in the 1897-98 catalogue, she repeated her appeal for a building that would accommodate “a fuller series of casts in Greek Art [. . .] and the required supply of new appliances, as well as to place to better advantage the present equipment for the historical and technical study of art.” The latter phrase points to her devotion to “scientific” lab work, parallel to labs in sister departments in the same building. She also paralleled the innovations at Wellesley that same year by Van Vechten Brown that will shortly be discussed.

Fitz-Randolph carried on an open campaign for a new art building. She inspired two articles in the students’ yearly *Llamarada* for 1898 which argued for a new art building in terms closely echoing her own. That same year Sarah Worden, the drawing instructor, produced a printed card, “The Mount Holyoke College Art Fund,” in which she wrote that the class of 1889 was trying to “secure a large fund for the purchase of casts for the department of Drawing.”<sup>17</sup> Indeed that class gave \$500 for casts in memory of Elizabeth Blanchard. In 1898 this fund was used to purchase casts of slabs from the Parthenon frieze. Worden’s card confirms what we have known, that drawing from casts was an important undertaking. It was not a coincidence that her card included a plea for a new art building.

Also in the catalogue for 1897-98 is a new heading “Archaeology and History of Art,” making clear Fitz-Randolph’s reorientation of the department.

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<sup>16</sup> The text is not identified in addition to its title. Fitz-Randolph papers, folder 1.

<sup>17</sup> Art Department records, LD 7092,6, box 1, the card dated June 19, 1897, It’s unclear how this card was distributed.

It is the object to make the student acquainted with the history and method of archaeological science, and the important results of recent excavations. In this study, the existing remains of ancient civilization and examples of later art will be considered as interpreting the life, character, and artistic spirit of the people, and the progress and thought of literature.

She points to recent archeological works: “the publications of the Egyptian Exploration Fund are received, together with the reports of the Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania.” By now the photographs she selected for study had increased to 5000. The eight history courses listed in the catalogue were all taught by Fitz-Randolph. College enrollment in 1897-98 was at 401, compared to 331 at the time of the fire, a welcome sign that the college still had its appeal despite its catastrophic loss.

In the catalogue for 1899-1900, each of Fitz-Randolph’s seven courses (painting in Northern Europe and Spain was omitted this year) was described in more detail than heretofore. From these expanded entries we get a good idea of what and how she taught. For example, “Classical Archaeology” will encompass

The Mycenaean civilization. Palace and citadel of Tiryns. Greek columnar architecture. Topography and monuments of Olympia. The Acropolis of Athens; present condition, with topical study of each building, its history, order, sculptural decoration. Sculpture as the characteristic art of Greece. The archaic period. Leading types, referred to the great masters of the fifth and fourth centuries, B.C. Discussion of existing original marbles and copies. The Hellenistic age. Greek painting and ceramics.

## Other women's colleges, 1875-1900

Up until now I have dealt solely with Mount Holyoke's teaching of art and art history. It's been convenient to focus on the college's curriculum from within in order to establish its own chronological narrative. However, the school didn't live in isolation from other colleges. It shared a common culture and persistent contacts with Wellesley and Smith, founded in 1875, and both of these looked also to Vassar, opened a decade earlier. Devoted to the education of young women, the four schools were distinct in many regards from male liberal arts institutions. Each had its particular character and qualities, but they shared interconnections that are essential if we're to situate Mount Holyoke's art instruction in the history of women's higher education.

Vassar's origins were only loosely related to Mount Holyoke, but the precedence of Mary Lyon's institution was in the minds of Matthew Vassar and his collaborators when he first thought of a school for women.<sup>18</sup> He began by considering a new seminary but he wanted to make a splash and therefore turned to the creation of the first college for woman that would be a match for men's liberal arts colleges. He thought at first that his college would be exclusively in charge of women, as was Mount Holyoke. He lavished his wealth on a building on the scale of a Renaissance palace that far surpassed South Hadley's Seminary Hall. His Main Hall would house the faculty, the students, classrooms and laboratories in a single building as Mary Lyon had done. It would be a protective home for female students under the care of women, not like a college where men were able to have a freer social life. Like Mount Holyoke it was located well away from a city with all its worldly influences.

Despite Vassar's early resolution to have women run the school, it was in fact led by a male president from its opening, with students overlooked by a Lady Principal. With the exception of the astronomer Maria Mitchell, all the professors were men; the ranks of teachers were filled mostly by young women. Mary Lyon's protective family system was emulated. The day's divisions, including two periods of silent devotion, were marked by bells,

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<sup>18</sup> See Horowitz, *op cit.*, pp. 28-41.



and teachers closely monitored the students who were obliged to make weekly self-reportings. Although it had a college curriculum, life at Vassar in its early years was governed like a seminary; it was only in the 1890s that female professors become common.

From its founding, art and its history was considered an autonomous subject, not attached to classical languages, theology or history.<sup>19</sup> A large art gallery was placed on the fourth story of Main Hall; ten years later it moved into its own building, formerly the gymnasium. It was well endowed with original paintings, especially landscapes, many by Hudson River School artists. The Dutch-born painter Henry Van Ingen (1833-98) was the Professor of Drawing and Painting who in 1867-68 began lectures in the history of art, the first such offerings in women's institutions. Instead of surveys he taught topical courses focused on individual great artists and monuments; they were supplements to studio art. In 1877 a separate school of art was established, but it was dissolved in 1892 when art became part of the general curriculum. By then studio art had nearly faded away; it had never been given academic credit. Van Ingen's courses in art history continued until his death in 1898 after thirty-three years of teaching. Until this point, Vassar had not made art history as important as it was at Mount Holyoke where the professional art historian William Goodyear gave courses from 1879 to 1891, followed by Fitz-Randolph in 1892. She not only taught art history as a separate discipline, but her charismatic presence and her experience in archaeology gave it decided luster.

The founding of Wellesley College has some parallels with Vassar's but more with Mount Holyoke.<sup>20</sup> Its benefactor Henry Fowle Durant, like Matthew Vassar, was a wealthy man who lavished a fortune on College Hall, another palatial building that drew inspiration from Vassar's Main Hall and from Lyon's conception of everything under one roof although it dwarfed Mount Holyoke's Seminary Hall. Durant was a trustee of Mount Holyoke and for several years had visited there as a lay preacher. (His wife Pauline provided funds in 1870 for the seminary's first library.) Like Vassar, Durant

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<sup>19</sup> Claire R. Sherman, *Early Years of Art History* (Wellesley 1993)

<sup>20</sup> See Jean Glasscock et al., *Wellesley College 1875-1975* (Wellesley, 1975), and Sherman, *op. cit.*

first thought of endowing a seminary but he aimed higher and opened Wellesley College in 1875. Administrators and faculty had to be members of an evangelical church. Rivaling Vassar, he insisted upon lavish furnishings and spaces that suited his wish for elegance, in contrast to Mount Holyoke's plain domestic scale. He gave the college a substantial collection of art, mostly Hudson River School landscapes. Among them were canvases by J. T. Kensett, Martin Heade and Albert T. Bricker. These paintings were intermixed on the walls with many framed engravings and photographs of Europe's famous painters and monuments, as well as plaster casts of antique and some Renaissance sculptures. Except for its sheer extent, its displays were much like Mount Holyoke's.

In 1878, following Vassar's example, a school of art was established. Five years of study began with outline drawing, progressed to light and shade drawing, then to work in color, with the highest course devoted to drawing and painting from life. This was the standard procedure also in Mount Holyoke, Vassar, and Smith, where students began by studying antique and Renaissance art to acquire essential form in black and white before turning to color and nature. There were no separate courses in the history of art in Wellesley's five-year program, but historical lectures supplemented studio practice. In 1886 art history began to loom larger. Elizabeth Harriet Denio (1844-1922), who had been "Teacher of German Language and Literature," returned from two years in Europe to become Professor of the History of Art and Professor of German. She regularly taught four or five one-semester courses in art history and a like number in German language and literature. Her art began in antiquity, mainly Greek sculpture, passing on to the Renaissance and baroque in Italy and northern Europe. In 1890-91 her courses were aided by Florence Bigelow, a preparatory teacher, and during the following five years, also by two other instructors. However, the history of art offered only four yearlong courses, and studio art faded away.

Only forty-three students took art courses in 1892-93, with but three in the five-year school. The schools of Art and Music (the latter much larger and more successful) were dissolved and merged with departments. The practice of art reached a crisis in 1895-96 when one read in the course catalogue "The Department of Art. During the present year, pending

reorganization of this department, the College gives no instruction in art.” In 1896 Denio left Wellesley, and was replaced in 1897 by Alice Van Vechten Brown, a painter, as Professor of Art. She brought about a newly vigorous program that closely allied the history of art to a new kind of practice. Studio art no longer was based on photographs, reproductions and textbooks, but on drawing directly from objects in emulation of laboratory methods in the sciences. This was carried out the same year when Fitz-Randolph altered the program at Mount Holyoke. It’s not known if there was communication between the two women; both probably arrived independently at the same idea of modernizing the teaching of art history. Advanced courses in Greek art and mythology, combining history and studio, were taught until 1902 at Wellesley by Alice Walton, who had a PhD in Latin classics and like Fitz-Randolph, a strong interest in archaeology.

Smith College, like Wellesley, was founded in 1875.<sup>21</sup> It was formed by Amherst men who were closely attached to Mary Lyon’s seminary. Several of them gave courses at Mount Holyoke and three became trustees: Edward Hitchcock (son of Lyon’s mentor), Julius H. Seelye, and William S. Tyler. However, in establishing their college, they rejected much of Lyon’s conception of a home for young women isolated from city life. In their view, a school devoted uniquely to women was apt to indulge emotional feelings rather than a healthy social life. They also rejected Vassar’s parallel outlook, and decided instead to give women an environment like Amherst College, a secular urban system of values. Distinct from Mount Holyoke’s and Vassar’s overt Christian character, Smith had no college chapel and encouraged students to attend Northampton churches. Students were further engaged in Northampton by the use of the town’s library. Smith only started its own library in 1900 with a room in Seelye Hall, whereas Mount Holyoke, to be self-sufficient, had built its library in 1870.

Smith’s physical environment was in striking contrast with Vassar and Mount Holyoke and more nearly resembled a man’s college. Instead of putting students and teachers together in a giant building, Smith had a central administrative building and several “cottages,” each housing thirty to fifty students. Living in each was a matron to supervise domestic life, and a

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<sup>21</sup> Horowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-81, Sherman, *op. cit.*, and John Davis, et al., *Art and Art History at Smith College* (Northampton 2003).

teacher for intellectual life. The cottages were conceived as so many homes loosely modeled on family environments, with adult supervision. Male authority was found outside the surrogate homes. The president was a man, and the 1876-77 catalogue listed ten male professors with five unmarried women as teachers. This was rather like the gender division at Vassar and Wellesley and of course unlike Mount Holyoke's exclusively female faculty except for visiting male lecturers.

Art at Smith College had some parallels with Mount Holyoke and Vassar. Its art gallery was on an upper floor of College Hall as it was in Vassar's Main Hall and Mount Holyoke's Williston Hall, and it similarly housed many casts of antique and Renaissance sculpture and many reproductive prints and photographs. Art moved in 1883 to the new Hillyer Art Gallery. This gave art its own building and its patrons gave funds and original works of art that constituted a veritable museum, the most impressive among the four colleges. Its curators had funds to buy paintings from contemporary artists, including Homer, Eakins and Gifford.

In 1882 Smith matched Vassar and Wellesley when it established a School of Art and a School of Music. Students of tested aptitude could be directly enrolled in either school at age sixteen. They were entitled to take courses in the academic program, and students there could elect courses in the two schools. However, although separate programs for art and music gave them distinction, they were detached from the Classical, Literary and Scientific tracks whose students could graduate without ever having courses in art or music, unlike Mount Holyoke.

Art history wasn't offered at Smith, but the painter James Wells Champney came two days a week in fall and winter to give practical instruction in art. Courses in drawing began with study of casts of Greek and Roman sculpture, the basis of all the country's collegiate art programs. The hegemony of Greek art, mythology and literature was apparent. At Smith, all first-year students had to take one course in Greek art, taught from 1881 to 1885 by Richard H. Mather of Amherst College, who also was at Mount Holyoke for one year. His course as a visiting lecturer involved a one-hour lecture and two hours of drawing, led by assistants. Visiting lecturers were the norms for the art school. John H. Niemeyer, professor of drawing at

Yale's School of Art took care of drawing and painting, and Frederick Honig of Yale's Sheffield School taught perspective.

Art at Smith got a significant boost in 1886 with the appointment of the nationally known painter Dwight William Tryon as director of the School of Art and the Hillyer Art Gallery. Tryon only came every third week to criticize student work, which was taught by assistants well schooled in his procedures, but as an artist of national reputation he added prestige to the program. On regular appointment to teach drawing and painting from 1884-88 was Mary Louise Bates, from the Yale art school, followed by Mary Rogers Williams, a well-viewed painter who taught studio art and lectured on the art history of classical antiquity from 1888 to 1906. Louise Both-Henriksen, who taught French, gave courses in art history through the 1890s. In 1902 the schools of art and music were dissolved and made into academic departments. At last, after years of lectures by artists or part-time teachers of allied disciplines, Smith appointed a professor of art history, Alfred Vance Churchill, in 1905. This was nineteen years after Elizabeth Denio was named professor at Wellesley and thirteen after Louise Fitz-Randolph's appointment at Mount Holyoke.

Elizabeth Denio had taught history of art at Wellesley only half-time, and after her departure in 1896 there was no professor of art history there for the rest of the century although studio art would have included some history. There was none at Smith, either, and Vassar's Van Ingen was a painter. Teaching art history by artists and by others (from classics, French, German, philosophy) isn't to be despised, especially because it was so closely tied to practice. Doctorates in art history didn't appear in the U.S. until after the turn of the century. The near-equivalent was study in Germany, which both Denio at Wellesley and Fitz-Randolph pursued. Denio was as fully advanced in art history as Fitz-Randolph, but Mount Holyoke was the first to identify courses in art history as distinct from the practice of art, and to give faculty appointments in the new field.

As has been said, Mount Holyoke was unique in having William Goodyear, a professional historian of art, teach for a decade in the 1880s, and then Fitz-Randolph from 1892 onward. Mount Holyoke also took the lead in other ways. History of art had become a regular course in senior year starting in 1878, and beginning in 1893-94 the introductory course in art

history was required of all candidates in art for a degree; none of the sister institutions had such a rule. The first major in the discipline, Gertrude Hyde, was graduated from Mount Holyoke in 1896. At that point, Smith, Wellesley and Vassar didn't offer majors in art history.<sup>22</sup> However, the practice of art was guided at Vassar and Smith by professional painters, whereas until 1901 Mount Holyoke's students were instructed by recent graduates.

What accounts for the history of art having a significant place at Mount Holyoke before it became standard at the other colleges? Part of the answer is found in the fact that Vassar, Wellesley and Smith were led by male trustees and teachers who associated art with women's domain: decoration, illustration and domestic practices like flower painting. Men of traditional disciplines thought of these as "practical," not intellectual, and they were kept to a subordinate level. They were believed to lack the erudite quality of the dominant fields led by the classics and the sciences. This prejudice was widespread although the science of botany had engaged professional women artists since the beginning of the century. Furthermore, Fitz-Randolph was learned in archaeology, which was closely allied to the sciences.

The history of art thrived at Mount Holyoke because as it progressed from seminary to college, its students were still mostly from lower middle-class homes who sought a practical education. Most students in the other women's colleges came from upper middle-class families. Amherst men made it clear that they created Smith College so as to have worthy wives for their sons. Young women there and at Vassar and Wellesley often married businessmen, lawyers, doctors and other professionals who sometimes gave paintings and drawings to their wives' alma maters. Lots of these women had the resources to go to graduate and professional schools, if they wished. Students at Mount Holyoke were educated for useful work not for "good marriages" and few could afford graduate school. For them the history and practice of art were indeed practical. The arts were part of a well-rounded preparation for teaching in public schools and missionary schools abroad.

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<sup>22</sup> Sherman, *op cit.*, p. 155, is in error when she wrote that in 1900 Wellesley was "the only American college with a major in the history of art."

## Part Two: 1901-1914

From 1901 to 1914, Archaeology and History of Art prospered as never before. The new era began with the appointment of Louise Rogers Jewett (1859-1914), a painter, as co-head with Fitz-Randolph of the department. There were now two full-time teachers, and one or two teaching assistants. With the expansion of the college brought about by Mary Woolley, three more fully fledged teachers were added by 1912. The department of five members was made possible by burgeoning enrollments in history and the practice of art, supplemented by extraordinary activity in archaeology outside the classroom. The choice of 1914 to end this period has nothing to do with national or international events, but instead with the sudden death of Jewett on January 21st. Not only was her death a blow to the department, but it followed by only two years the retirement of Fitz-Randolph. From 1914 onward, its senior teachers continued the work of the department, but they lacked the particular energy and the prestige of the departed members. Not until the 1920s was there again a team of teachers in Archaeology and History of Art that could provide some of the luster of the earlier era.



Dwight Memorial Hall, postcard, c. 1905

## Dwight Memorial Hall

By December, 1900, the much anticipated Dwight Art Memorial was under construction. According to the later account by Asa Kinney, who taught plant science, he and Henrietta Hooker, a memorable teacher of botany, schemed to get the wealthy John Dwight to give money for a new greenhouse and garden.<sup>23</sup> When Hooker visited Dwight in New York, he offered instead to give money for a building and the Clara Leigh Dwight Gardens, named for his second wife. Room for the new building was found by moving the eponymous Dwight Hall (acquired in 1882) on the corner of Park and College Streets down the road (subsequently named “Everett House”). On July 12, 1900, Fitz-Randolph wrote from Berlin to the treasurer, A. Lyman Williston, giving recommendations for the building, which included remarks on Wellesley’s and other institutions’ similar structures. She concluded that the best model was Wellesley’s Farnsworth Hall, superior to Smith’s Hillyer Art Gallery because it had lecture rooms and studios in addition to exhibition spaces.

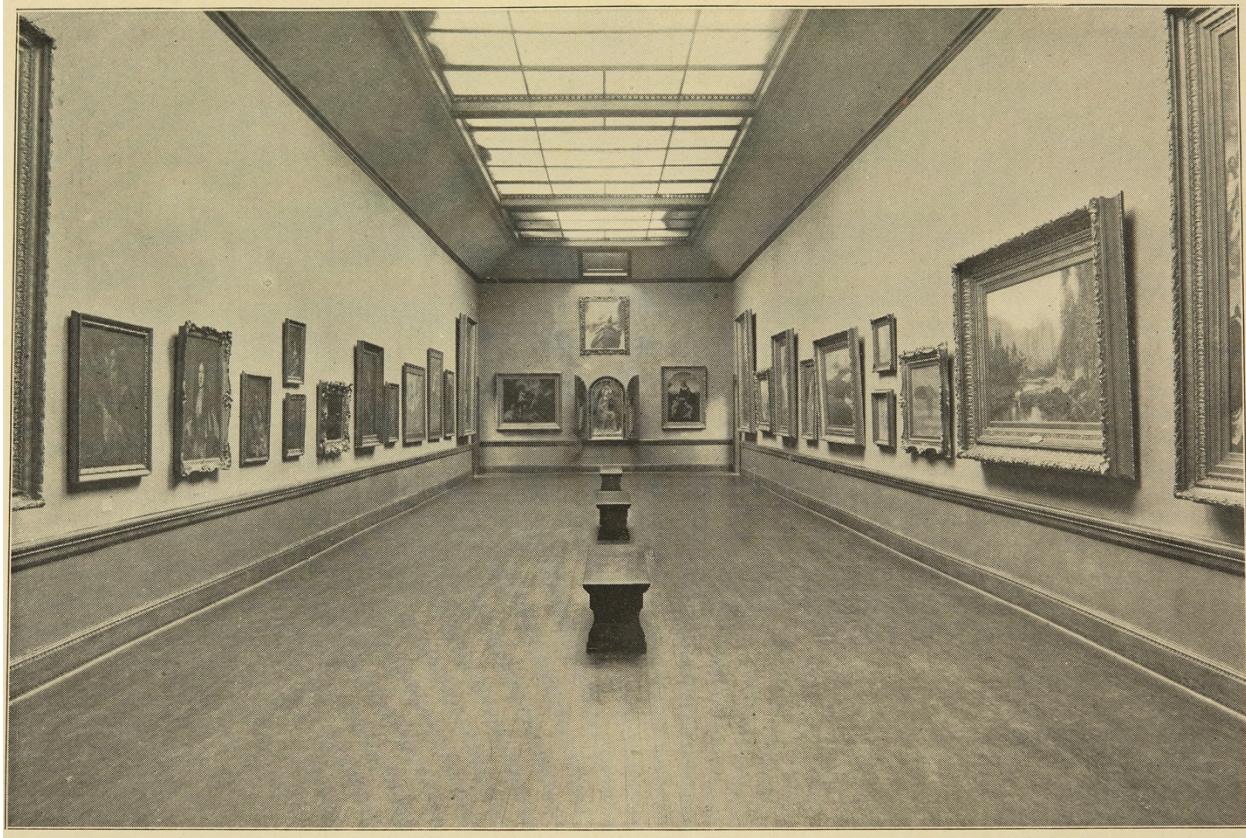
While the Dwight building was getting underway, Fitz-Randolph wrote seven-pages with hand-drawn plans outlining ideas for the future structure. These were drafts for a detailed description of the building which she published in February, 1901.<sup>24</sup> George F. Newton of Boston, who designed Tremont Temple and other public buildings there, was made the architect, with Caspar Ranger of Holyoke the contractor. The new building was dedicated on June 18, 1902. Constructed of reddish Kibbie stone in “Gothic collegiate style,” it looked toward the famous colleges of Oxford and Cambridge. In the L-shaped structure each floor had a fronting section along College Street that enclosed a gallery seventy-five by twenty feet plus side-rooms.

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<sup>23</sup> Rogers and Sarah Rusk, *Reminiscences by Asa Kinney*, typescript of interview, Mount Holyoke College, 1954.

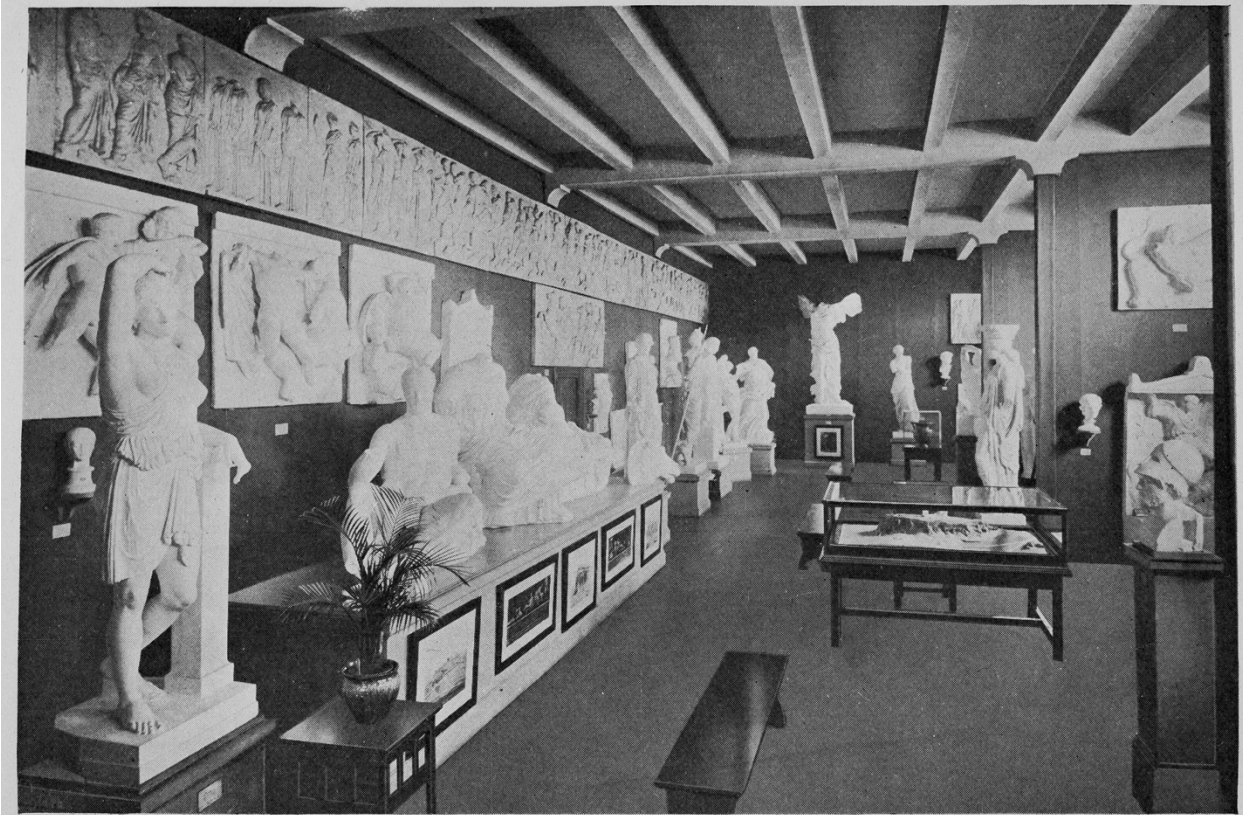
<sup>24</sup> “The Dwight Memorial Art Building,” *The Mount Holyoke*, vol. 10, Feb. 1901, pp. 347-52. A somewhat fuller description was given by Beth Bradford Gilchrist in *The Mount Holyoke*, vol. 11, Mar. 1902, pp. 329-34.





Louise Rogers Jewett Galley of Paintings, 1918

The second floor, the Picture Gallery, had frosted glass skylights and small rooms on either side, also sky-lighted. Original paintings like the Bierstadt and the Inness, were given pride of place, but most of the works were copies after famous Renaissance and Baroque art. There was a large corner room for exhibitions and lectures, and studios on the north and east sides. At the head of the stairs was a room for original engravings of the Connecticut River valley by Elbridge Kingsley from the Clara Leigh Dwight Collection, given by her husband.



Louise Fitz-Randolph Gallery of Casts, 1918

The first floor, the Sculpture Gallery, had casts separated into four groups exhibiting “development of artistic power” in several stages, from Egypt and early Greece to the fifth century (including the Parthenon’s west pediment and a metope from Olympia), then to Hellenistic and Renaissance sculpture. High along the wall opposite the windows over College St. were “a long line of slabs from the Panathenaic frieze,” and below those, reliefs of Greek stelae of the fifth century. This arrangement was praised in *The Mount Holyoke* as unique in the Connecticut River valley for enhancing the study of art and for “tracing development,” as distinct from collections at Smith, Amherst, and Springfield which instead featured “the masterpieces of the periods of finished art.” This claim might seem to be a case of *faute de mieux* because the college had few such masterpieces but the devotion to the history of art ran deep, and pride in the new building’s displays seemed justified. The shorter arm of the first floor along Park St. had the art library and large and small lecture rooms for the history of art.

On the ground floor were the departments of Greek and Latin, subjects that had undergirded art history for a generation or longer. There was a large hall and four alcoves on either side, where a number of classical casts were displayed. Casts had been stored for lack of space but now there was more room for them, including the Rosetta Stone, the Obelisk of Shalmaneser, and “a series of important reliefs in Assyrian sculpture.”<sup>25</sup>

These casts had already figured prominently in Williston Hall from the late 1870s, when they appear in a number of photographs discussed in Part One. Replicas of famous sculptures were regularly added in the next two decades; in 1898, as we saw, casts of the Parthenon frieze were provided by funds raised by the class of 1889. Some casts, lacking room, were relegated to storage. More casts for Dwight began arriving in numbers by January, 1902, from Berlin, and from the Caproni Brothers of Boston. Former President Mead, in a letter from Athens, wrote that she went to the Greek National Museum to see casts made for the college.<sup>26</sup> In manuscript notes of late 1902 or early 1903, Fitz-Randolph refers to the purchase list of casts published in *The Mount Holyoke* in June, 1902, and to an order for casts from Berlin and Dresden costing \$700.<sup>27</sup> “I am happy to report to you that the fourteen cases of casts have arrived safely at the college, all the casts fortunately unbroken and in perfect condition.” She added that “the next foreign order” might be for casts of Egyptian and Babylonian art, and others named in the purchase list. Subsequently she published a list of desirable casts, 128 Greek, Roman and Hellenistic pieces, most of them costing well below \$100, and thirty-four medieval and Renaissance sculptures. The college continued to add casts; the last sizeable shipments were received in 1912.<sup>28</sup> Even when these were acquired, Mount Holyoke lagged far behind the other women’s colleges. Smith had nearly 400 casts already in 1898.<sup>29</sup>

From Fitz-Randolph’s notes we can make two deductions, one, that the college now made some money available for casts, and two, that Fitz-Randolph was in charge of obtaining them. Indeed, from her early proposals

<sup>25</sup> “Department Notes, Art and Archaeology,” *The Mount Holyoke* vol. 16, June 1906, p p 32-33.

<sup>26</sup> *The Mount Holyoke*, vol. 11, March 1902, pp. 339-40 and 374-75.

<sup>27</sup> Fitz-Randolph papers, folder 1. Her notes, signed “In the bonds of Alma Mater,” were addressed either to the Alumnae Association or to the trustees.

<sup>28</sup> *The Mount Holyoke*, vol. 22, April and November, 1912.

<sup>29</sup> Catalogue of Casts in Hillyer Art Galley (Smith College, 1898).

for an art building and her subsequent communications with the treasurer, then on to these orders of casts, it's evident that she was the principal voice in determining what went into Dwight. The casts she personally selected followed from her teaching the history of art and archaeology. She was filling in the collection by adding prime examples that detailed each period from Egypt and early Greece to the Renaissance.



Antique casts in Dwight Hall, c. 1905

A photograph of about 1905 shows a motley assembly of casts in Dwight. Their crowded jumble communicates some of the excitement that greeted the expanded set of casts. It seems that a maximum number were put on display in these two rooms, more for student study than for public viewing. Among them are several famous sculptures. The *Venus de Milo* dominates the center; to the right is the *Apollo Sauroktonos*, *Ares Borghese*, and the *Discus Thrower*, and in the room beyond, one of the caryatids from the Erechtheion.

Casts had a dimensional reality that prints, photographs and slides couldn't offer so they continued to be used in most schools, colleges and universities well into the early twentieth century. At Mount Holyoke, many

casts of Egyptian, classical and Renaissance art were still being received in 1912. However, with museums that had more original art, casts began to decline in significance at the start of the twentieth century when naturalism in art took hold in opposition to “academic” art. If students could benefit from significant displays of original art, then changing conceptions of originality and authenticity increasingly demoted the prominence of casts. In major collections across the country the growing acquisitions of original works of art pushed casts into storerooms. The vast increase in art dealerships and the concomitant growing availability of original ancient artefacts catered to the increasingly affluent American middle class, for whom giving to museums was a noteworthy social asset.



Louise Rogers Jewett, c. 1890-95

## Louise Rogers Jewett

In 1901-02, anticipating the opening of Dwight Art Memorial, the college welcomed a huge change in art when Louise Rogers Jewett joined the college as Professor of Art and co-head with Fitz-Randolph of Archaeology and Art History.<sup>30</sup> Jewett was a graduate of the Yale School of Fine Arts who had several years' study in Paris and had travelled widely in Europe. In 1894 she opened a studio in Boston and by the turn of the century was well known in the region. Mary Woolley knew Jewett's sister Sophie, who taught at Wellesley with her, and she hired Louise from this proximity rather than seek out a better known artist like Smith's Tryon (she also could offer only a modest salary). The construction of Dwight was underway, so there was a double benefit in the appointment of Jewett. She could professionalize the practice of art and was well instructed in the history of art. For the first time, there were two full-time teachers in the department.

We get a good idea of Jewett's teaching from two booklets she published and might have asked her students to buy. *Masterpieces of Painting: Their Qualities and Meanings, An Introductory Study* appeared in 1906 with seventeen half-tone plates of Italian painting from Giotto to Michelangelo and two of Rembrandt and Velasquez.<sup>31</sup> It consists of a list of salient works, each with an interpretive paragraph by a major writer, a list of leading examples of the artist's work, and a bibliography. She followed this in 1908 with *History of Italian Painting, Outlines and References*, published by the college, which displayed a similar, more expansive sequence of paintings and interpretive notes. Up-to-date, her suggested readings included the latest editions of Berenson, Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Muentz, Woelfflin, and current books by Julia Cartwright and John LaFarge. Her own two books, however, didn't give a narrative or sustained history of art. Instead she had the students study one master work at a time, using the paragraphs in her books which she supplemented importantly by color sketches she had made in Europe of portions of those paintings.

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<sup>30</sup> Jewett's papers in the college archives are extensive, and include much besides her teaching that is personal. In 1988 C.R. Ludwig wrote a cogent four-page summary of Jewett's papers that has been a sure guide to the present essay.

<sup>31</sup> Published as "Key Book III" by L. J. Freeman, Central Falls, RI.

Surprisingly at first glance, drawing and painting were no longer given separate entries in the course catalogue for 1901-02. They were instead englobed with the history of art and subordinated to it. Parallel to Van Vechten Brown's method at Wellesley, Jewett treated the practice of art as laboratory work that served history courses. Echoing also Fitz-Randolph's emphasis on the alliance of science with archaeology, Jewett had students use drawing and modeling to attempt objective records and interpretations of art's structures and colors.

Jewett introduced a new course, "History of Sculpture," with Greek sculpture the first semester and Renaissance sculpture, the second. Greek sculpture was given also in the second semester. Each course had one hour's lecture and six hours of drawing per week. Her lectures were on the "general progress in the representation of form and the character of styles from the period of the early archaic Greek." In 1902-03, Jewett greatly expanded her presence in the department. Her classes were now semester-long history courses, with allied practice periods given every year. She continued Greek sculpture, but added the history of Italian painting alternating with one on Northern Europe, Spain, France and England in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The latter extended to "the development of modern painting, the great men and schools of the nineteenth century, modern theories." This was the first time that the history of nineteenth-century painting was taught, a logical addition by Jewett since her own painting grew from these schools.

About the same time, several of Jewett's pictures were added to the museum's collections, presumably the artist's gifts (they were later deaccessioned). Among them were *Old Peasant Woman with a Child* and *Old Peasant Woman Plaiting Straw*, painted in Florence in 1892-93. She also put on display several details from Italian frescoes she did in 1905, intended to bring students closer to actual painting than permitted by the best reproductions. Jewett's work drew campus-wide notice in 1906 when she painted a portrait of Mary Lyon after a daguerreotype (now hanging in the archives).

Students now had the advantage of studying with a professional artist whose pictures brought home her lessons, and who could talk as a practitioner about the other paintings on exhibition. In the archives there's a hand-annotated photograph of 1903-04 of "Miss Jewett's Life Class. Wed.

morning 3 hours (Wed. free day).” We can assume “free day” meant that no other studio courses were taught that day. In the photo, students are drawing a young costumed woman seated against a white background. Preceding this life study were classes in drawing after classical casts, which provided lessons in chiaroscuro and modeling.



Gertrude Stewart Hyde, c. 1896

### Gertrude Stewart Hyde and Florence Winslow Foss

In 1903-04, Gertrude Stewart Hyde '96 (1873-1964) was added to the art faculty as Instructor in Art, its third full-time member. She had graduated from the college in 1896 as a major in art and art history, so her appointment continued the college's conservative practice of hiring former students. She had studied at the Art Students League in New York in 1898-99, and at summer schools in the University of Chicago, Columbia, and Radcliffe.



Before coming to South Hadley she taught at the Norwich Art School in Connecticut since 1899 (Wellesley's Van Vechten Brown had also come from there). Hyde taught alongside Jewett in the latter's studio work, and had her own classes that combined lectures and practice. She occasionally took over Jewett's classes covering the whole of western art, with more attention to American painting than Jewett. She later became Professor of Art in 1926, retiring in 1939.

In 1904-05, Hyde adopted Jewett's course in Greek Sculpture, given both semesters. Jewett maintained her course in Italian painting, adding a revealing sentence to its description: "Critical literature is read and discussed, and notes are made as a preparation for foreign travel." In earlier years few students could afford travel abroad, but with the doubling of enrollment since the 1896 fire (674 registered in 1905), presumably more had the wherewithal to visit Europe. Her course on Italian sculpture now ended with the study of Greek Revival and "modern sculpture." An autonomous "practice course" of six hours in drawing and painting was led by Jewett, Hyde and a new assistant, Edith Abigail Abbott.



Florence Winslow Foss, c. 1930-35

In 1905-06, the department was further expanded by the appointment as instructor in art of Florence Winslow Foss '05 (1882-1968), another graduate of the college. She taught mostly studio courses, but occasionally also art history although not as frequently as Hyde. There were now four members of Art and Archaeology: Fitz-Randolph, Jewett, Hyde and Foss. In the year before Foss came, she had studied in Europe as the recipient of the college's prestigious Bardwell Fellowship. In her first year teaching at Mount Holyoke, she joined Jewett, Hyde, and a two-year assistant, Mary Adeline Lemer, in studio work associated with the history of painting. She eventually became one of the college's longest-serving teachers, rising in the ranks to professor in 1926 and chair of Art and Archaeology from 1939 until she retired in 1948. A sculptor, her growing reputation led in the 1930s to her participation in exhibitions at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the National Academy of Design in New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, and at regional clubs and libraries. Her best-known works of that decade were casts of cats in pewter and aluminum.



Miss Foss's class, 1926 ((Asa Kinney)

In 1907-08 Foss joined Jewett in the course on Italian sculpture, and she introduced a new course, Mechanical Drawing. She also worked with her colleagues in a team-taught course in studio practice in both semesters. Jewett's other courses, and Fitz-Randolph's in archaeology and the history of architecture appeared as usual. In the following year, however, Fitz-Randolph began taking her distance from the department. She was absent "during a few weeks" in the fall of 1908. This was probably the time when "her eyesight gave way;" with the aid of a specialist it was restored, but remained a worry.<sup>32</sup> Her introductory course was taken over by Kate Niles Morse '98 (1894-1966) who had earned an MA at the college in 1900. Fitz-Randolph was on leave for all of 1909, but courses in Greek and Roman archaeology were given by Edith H. Hall (1877-1943), the first teacher in the department with a Ph.D. (Bryn Mawr, 1906). She was a field archaeologist who had been at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens in 1903-05, with field work in Crete in 1904. Her special subject was decorative aspects of Mycenaean and Cretan pottery. She gave archaeological courses in the department through 1911-12. In 1908-09 also, Caroline Morris Galt (1875-1937) was listed with the department for the first time. She was not a member, but was Instructor in Latin since 1903; her courses had increasingly involved ancient art.

In 1909-10, Hyde gave a survey in Ancient Art, and guided studio work for several departmental classes. Foss now expanded her offerings. She taught courses in Greek and Italian sculpture, each with two hours of historical lectures and three of studio work. She continued teaching mechanical drawing. Jewett's courses were in Italian painting and a year-long survey of History of Painting that stretched from Gothic through to the nineteenth century. She also launched a new subject "Historic Ornament." It began with "primitive ornament" and "the decorative elements in ancient and early Christian art," then continued to the Greek Revival. The study of ornament and mechanical drawing were particularly useful for teaching in public schools. All of Jewett's courses had studio work coached by Foss, Hyde, and Ethel Vera Crosby, an Assistant.

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<sup>32</sup> Katherine Dwight Berry; "A Tribute to Louise Fitz-Randolph," *Alumnae Quarterly* 17, Aug. 1933, pp. 74-75.

In December, 1910, the Archaeology Club was reformulated as the Archaeology and Classical Club, serving archaeology and the Latin and Greek departments, confirming the long-standing interrelations of archaeology with classics. Hall lectured to the club on her work in Crete, and introduced a new course for advanced work in archaeology, "Special topics in sculpture, vase-painting, coins or architecture, arranged to meet the needs of individual students." Fitz-Randolph's and Hall's courses were entirely devoted to history and had no studio work.

Foss was on leave for 1910-11, but Jewett assumed her class in historic ornament. She was the most busily engaged of the department's staff. She repeated her classes in Italian painting and the broader history of painting. Hyde joined her to give an autonomous course in art practice, and she also collaborated in studio practice for all of Jewett's classes. Hyde took leave for the first semester of 1911-12, but some of her work was replaced by Emily Leaman Hoffmeier '09 (1888-1952), a studio instructor in art. Foss taught history of European painting both terms, devoted to the northern half of the continent: Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, France and England, while Jewett taught Italian painting. Both courses had attached studio practice.

1912-13 began with the sober news that Fitz-Randolph had retired at age sixty-one.<sup>33</sup> Jewett now became sole head of the department. Fitz-Randolph was so important to the college that her life and work will be summarized in Part Four. In effect, her withdrawal ended a decade when archaeology was paramount. Hall also left the school to direct an archaeological excavation at Vrokastro, Crete, for the University of Pennsylvania museum. Art and archaeology therefore suffered a double blow. Not only were Fitz-Randolph's and Hall's courses lacking, but the loss of their active roles outside the classroom was keenly felt. They had engaged students in archaeology in preparations for their presentations to the Archaeological Club's frequent meetings, they regularly posted announcements about conferences in New York and Boston (attending them sometimes), they invited colleagues to come to Mount Holyoke for lectures and discussions, and they gave prominence to the acquisitions for the library of the latest

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<sup>33</sup> According to an anonymous obituary she retired "to save her eyes from the strain of teaching." From a group of photocopied obituaries of 1933 without sources being given. Fitz-Randolph papers, folder 1.

books on archaeology, including reports on recent excavations. Hall's participation in Cretan excavations were particularly relevant.

With the departures of Fitz-Randolph and Hall, archaeology suffered a decline at Mount Holyoke from which it never recovered. Some courses in the subject were maintained in 1912-13. Caroline Galt, who had included Greek and Roman art in her courses in Latin, and who had spent 1910-11 at the American School of Classical Studies in Rome, gave a course in Roman archaeology, and Helen Currier Flint '80 (1857 – 1954), Assistant Professor of Greek, added one in Greek archaeology.<sup>34</sup> Galt and Flint represented a return to the last quarter of the previous century when art history across the country was commonly taught by teachers of classical languages, literature and history. The course catalogue this year listed advanced work in archaeology for both terms, but no teacher was named and it may not have been given. A general history of art was offered by Hyde, a lecture course with no associated studio work, but autonomous studio classes were taught by her, Jewett and Foss.



Caroline Morris Galt, c. 1914

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<sup>34</sup> Among Flint's papers in the archives is an eighteen-page memoir of a summer in Turkey in 1894.

Fitz-Randolph was replaced in 1913-14 by Galt who moved over from classics to be named Associate Professor of Archaeology and Greek. She gave an introduction to Greek archaeology and offered advanced work in the same subject. She also taught semester courses in Roman archaeology and Greek Sculpture. This meant that except for medieval and Renaissance architecture, Fitz-Randolph's courses were continued two years after her departure. Foss gave a full year in Greek sculpture with studio practice. Hyde taught Masterpieces of Ancient Art in the first semester and Masterpieces of Medieval and Renaissance Art in the second, both without studio work. Jewett offered the history of Italian painting in both semesters, with additional credit for taking time in the studio. Painting was taught by Martha Louise Mixer '13.

Fitz-Randolph's retirement was still felt by older students in 1914 but another blow struck the college half way through the school year. Jewett died suddenly on January 21, 1914, a few days after she had moved into her new house. She was only 55. She had been a very popular teacher and was widely praised for organizing the costumed pageants for the hugely popular Seventy-Fifth Anniversary celebration in October, 1912. Among the art faculty she was known for bridging history and practice by pressing students to make color studies after the work of old masters, exemplified by the sketches she made from original pictures in European collections. She had been a worthy partner to Fitz-Randolph, taking charge of studio work and offering courses in the history of art to supplement her colleague's devotion to archaeology. The two had contrasting temperaments. Fitz-Randolph was very much the professional lecturer at the head of the room whereas Jewett was constantly alongside the students in the studio and offered lessons outside the classroom.

### Part Three: Louise Fitz-Randolph

Louise Fitz-Randolph was the most significant teacher of art history at Mount Holyoke from 1878 to 1912. It doesn't seem right for this essay to leave her when she retired. She deserves her own mini-biography, not least because she continued to live on the campus and work for the department. Her art colleagues gave her a principal role in Dwight Hall for another decade

after her retirement. And through the 1920s, she was active in alumnae affairs. Staff and faculty treasured her as a worthy follower of Mary Lyon.



Louise Fitz-Randolph, c. 1895

From the beginning, Fitz-Randolph was a dedicated teacher of women. She had taught in grade schools before she graduated from Mount Holyoke in 1872, and then in public schools in Toledo from 1874 to 1878. In 1875 she began part-time teaching history at Lake Erie Female Seminary, changing 1883-84 to the history of art from Egypt and classical antiquity to the

Renaissance.<sup>35</sup> In 1887 and 1888 she took parties of Lake Erie women abroad and in July, 1890, a group of fourteen, including Mary Evans who had moved from Mount Holyoke to become head of Lake Erie Seminary.<sup>36</sup> There had been close and continuous links between Mount Holyoke and Lake Erie ever since its founding in 1856 as a “daughter college.” Alumnae and teachers from South Hadley’s seminary were prominent among Lake Erie’s faculty and staff.

During the 1880s Fitz-Randolph maintained a heady schedule of lecturing before women in addition to her work at Lake Erie. From 1883 to 1889 she gave extended series of lectures on “The Historical Development of Art” at the Western Reserve School of Design for Women in Cleveland, and similar lectures for the Pittsburgh Club Theater from 1886 to 1889. In 1889 also she lectured before the Ladies’ Art Club of Wooster, Ohio. There her nine lectures were devoted to the Renaissance in Italy, from Giotto to Tintoretto. All her courses in this decade and the next were accompanied by photographs, diagrams, maps, and plans, many of them acquired during her travels.

From the mid-1880s onward, Fitz-Randolph spent most summers abroad. She listed her father simply as a farmer but the family was well off because she had the means to support her constant travels. Time spent in the Near East was not at all unusual for graduates of the college. Many Mount Holyoke women went there as Christian missionaries and most were in frequent contact with faculty; Fitz-Randolph presumably got in touch with some of them. She spent six months in Europe in 1885 and again in 1887, then summers there from 1889 to 1892, including Egypt. All along she paid close attention to current archaeological work in Rome, Greece and the Near East, with special interest in Egypt.

After Fitz-Randolph came to Mount Holyoke as chair and teacher of art history in 1892, she continued at Lake Erie, teaching the same courses at both institutions. She maintained these half-time schedules until January, 1897, when she signed on as a full-time teacher at Mount Holyoke. The college’s catalogue for 1892-93 had been established before she arrived, but she had

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<sup>35</sup> For her teaching in Ohio, as I say in the Preface, I am deeply indebted to Chris Bennett, Director of Lincoln Library, Lake Erie College.

<sup>36</sup> Lake Erie *Seminary Recorder*, June 21, 1890 (C. Bennett).



forwarded a description of her course in the history of art from antiquity to the Renaissance which boasted of her own 3000 photographs. They were essential materials for her courses before lantern slides became available beginning in 1894.

Given Fitz-Randolph's impact upon Mount Holyoke, we would love to know more about her origins and her family. She was born Louisa [sic] Phebe Fitz-Randolph on June 23, 1851, in Panama, Chautauqua County, New York. Little is known about her parents, Julia Bell (1807-1874) and Reuben Fitz-Randolph (1806-1889). In adult life she was close to her older sister Ellen Agnes Ransom (1848-1933), but apparently not to their two brothers. Ransom's daughter Caroline Louise (1872-1952) often stayed with Fitz-Randolph from early age, and became her protégée. She transferred from Lake Erie to Mount Holyoke; having shared both institutions with her aunt, she graduated in 1896.

Unfortunately, no testimonials have yet been found about the ways Fitz-Randolph interacted with students at Mount Holyoke but we can guess from what is known about her at Lake Erie. The students' *Seminary Recorder* frequently wrote about her in the early 1890s when she was one of Lake Erie's stars. They mentioned all her activities, including her travels abroad, with occasional excerpts from her letters home.

I am planning to give much time to the art collections in the Louvre and Luxembourg these weeks, consulting books at the Bibliotheque Nationale, the great library of Paris, as I have need. There are many valuable works on special Art subjects to which I shall have access here, and which I could not find in ordinary libraries. Then there are frequent lectures upon art and Archaeology at the College of France and at the Louvre, which will prove quite valuable as I come to understand the language better.<sup>37</sup>

Her letters to Lake Erie mention what she was drawn to in European museums and how she was lining up casts to be sent to the seminary, giving her the know-how she subsequently used for Mount Holyoke's collections.

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<sup>37</sup> Letter dated Paris, May 11, 1891, from Lake Erie's *Seminary Recorder*, June 1891, p. 224.

In February, 1893, the *Seminary Recorder* recounted an evening when she entertained the senior class.

When the guests were assembled in her cheery room, wafers were served upon plates that would have made a lover of rare china turn green with envy; and with these, orange marmalade, which the hostess had brought from Smyrna [. . .]. The hostess told many stories of her life in Turkey, and gave an account of a visit to the Sultan's palace, made in company with General Lew Wallace and others. [. . .]. When the goodnights were said, a photograph selected by Miss Fitz-Randolph, during her travels, was presented to each guest to serve as a remembrance of the happy hours spent in the art class, as well as the souvenir of a pleasant evening.<sup>38</sup>

Such witness accounts lack for Mount Holyoke but we can assume that here also she met students outside the classroom. We know that she had a dazzling presence. She was remembered by a former student as “a person of rare intelligence, graciousness and charm; a figure tall and slenderly fashioned, gliding along street or corridor or in and out of the lecture room [. . .]. The casual meeting always gave pleasure, for Miss Fitz-Randolph was able at once to respond to the mood of another, while the longer period, spent in consultation or conference, cleared the mind of perplexity, because hers was never confused [. . .].”<sup>39</sup>

Her success in the classroom was due, not only to her own understanding and enthusiastic interest, but to her insistence on the study of casts, building-plans and photographs, and the keeping of the lecture and library notebooks subject to her supervision. [. . .] the student soon learned that to identify a work of art was not possible to one of 'vague regardless eyes.'

As Austin Clark has explained so convincingly (see Bibliography), Fitz-Randolph's singular contribution to Mount Holyoke was her role in the

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<sup>38</sup> *Seminary Recorder*, Feb. 1893, p. 102.

<sup>39</sup> Martha Hall Cowles '95, "A Tribute to Louise Fitz-Randolph," *Alumnae Quarterly* 17, Aug. 1933, pp. 75-76.

professionalization of art history. Her studies in Europe and her devotion to archaeology gave her practical training of a high order. In advance of Vassar, Smith and Wellesley, she made a course in art history a requirement for graduation. She brought to the college the German conception of art history (she had studied in Berlin and Zurich) as a well-ordered and documented discipline. In this she emulated the specialization that gave the sciences their foundation in observable facts and rational conclusions.

Dwight, we've already seen, was in large part a product of her energies. She drew upon the precedent of London's South Kensington Museum, which she knew well, to house in one place the pedagogy of art and archaeology and the objects that embodied them. Until 1902, casts of Egyptian, classical and Renaissance art had been a haphazard matter. Fitz-Randolph expanded the collection and made a systematic arrangement that grouped them into periods following a clear chronology of art from ancient times. Almost singlehandedly, she made archaeology a major subject at Mount Holyoke. She had become a member of the Archaeological Institute of America in 1889 before her appointment at the college. During her frequent travels to the Near East and Europe, she visited the sites of the latest archaeological investigations and had the college acquire their scientific publications. These aided her lively commentaries on the excavations, keeping students abreast of the most recent work. The college recognized her eminence in the field by giving her an honorary Master's degree in 1905.

In 1902 Fitz-Randolph helped establish the Archaeological Club and got the college to contribute to the American School of Classical Studies in Athens. She also had Mount Holyoke subscribe to the London-based Egyptian Exploration Fund from which the college received artifacts yearly until 1912 when the subscription became too costly. Students were given access to the national meetings of the Archaeological Institute of America which Fitz-Randolph went to. She also attended archaeological conferences in Rome and Athens, reporting back to the student club. In 1904 and 1907 she was in New York for the meetings of the Managing Committee of the American School of Classical Studies. Also in 1907 she was one of the very few women at the Cairo International Congress of Archaeologists. While abroad, she several times acquired objects for the college. In 1910, for example, from a merchant in Luxor, she chose an alabaster dish, a wooden

sacred snake, a blue vase and some bracelets, to be shipped to South Hadley.<sup>40</sup>



Caroline Ransom, c. 1896

Fitz-Randolph also enlisted her niece to add objects to Dwight's collections. Ransom was the first American woman to receive a doctorate in Egyptology (University of Chicago, 1905).<sup>41</sup> During her travels in the Near East and eastern Europe, prompted by her aunt, she selected some objects for the college: small pieces of Egyptian and early Greek work in 1901, and early English and Roman pottery in 1904. Fitz-Randolph spoke to the Archaeological Club more than once about Ransom's work. In February, 1903, she showed the club photographs her niece sent from Crete. "Concerning Delphi and the French excavations, Miss Fitz-Randolph read a few extracts from letters written by Miss Ransom during a recent visit to

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<sup>40</sup> Among Fitz-Randolph's papers in the archives is a receipt for 12 pounds and five shillings from Mohareb Todrous, Luxor, for "1910 purchases, Addressed to Department of Art and Archaeology, Mount Holyoke College [...] bought from me through Miss Louise F. Fitz-Randolph."

<sup>41</sup> Before her doctorate, Ransom spent four semesters from 1900-03 studying Egyptology at the University of Berlin. She married Grant Williams in 1916.

Delphi and Troy [. . .]”<sup>42</sup> The club moreover had the advantage of Edith Hall’s contributions. While teaching at the college from 1908 to 1911, Hall lectured to the club on her participation in excavations in Crete. Students also gave informative papers at the club’s meetings, based on their readings of the latest archaeological literature. In addition they brought back reports on their attendance at conferences of the Archaeological Institute in New York and Boston.

### Fitz-Randolph after her retirement

The double blow of Fitz-Randolph’s retirement in 1912 and Jewett’s death two years later was partly softened by the former’s remaining in South Hadley and in constant touch with her colleagues. In fact, she never really left the college. She continued to live in faculty housing on Park St., and then moved to Faculty House (later Dickinson House) when it opened in 1916, and remained there for the rest of her life. She kept her hand in Dwight’s art collections, classifying and annotating the Egyptian and Near Eastern objects, some of which she had acquired for the college and others that had been secured by her niece.<sup>43</sup> Remaining close to her former department, in 1918 she published a short history of it in the *Alumnae Quarterly* which featured Dwight’s collections after 1902.<sup>44</sup> In that issue of the *Quarterly* were captions of two photographs announcing the naming in 1917 of *The Louise Fitz-Randolph Gallery of Casts* on the first floor, and *The Louise Rogers Jewett Gallery of Paintings*, on the second. Those names appear in photographs and publications, but faded away after Fitz-Randolph’s death in 1932.

Again in 1923, in an article in the *Alumnae Quarterly*, Fitz-Randolph kept her readers abreast of the latest additions of ancient objects to the collections in Dwight.<sup>45</sup> She pointed to a fragment of an early Greek grave relief and a mosaic medallion of the first century. Among newly acquired Egyptian objects were a bronze statuette of Osiris, and several limestone scarabs and a cup of red earthen ware. She also referred to the “past season of

<sup>42</sup> *The Mount Holyoke*, vol. 12, Feb. 1903, p. 327.

<sup>43</sup> In the Fitz-Randolph papers, folder 2, are many 5 x 8 typewritten notes (some annotated by hand) of her descriptions of individual Egyptian objects. Undated, they were probably written well after her retirement in 1912.

<sup>44</sup> “Department of Art and Archaeology, History of the Department,” *Alumnae Quarterly* 2, Jan. 1918, pp. 197-200.

<sup>45</sup> “Department of Art and Archaeology,” *Alumnae Quarterly* 7, April 1923, pp. 44-45.

thrilling discoveries,” which included the sensational opening in Thebes of the tomb of Tutankhamun. Her colleague Caroline Galt is mentioned because she had arranged the publication of those recent finds at El Amarna. And Fitz-Randolph’s article has other proofs of her continued engagement with the department. She tells of two exhibitions of ancient art in Dwight since January, one from the leading New York dealer Brummer Galleries, the other of the college’s own Egyptian objects.

Five years before her article was published, Fitz-Randolph wrote the first of several surviving letters in which we find some rare glimpses of her life in South Hadley and when she was abroad. There are six others and a postcard which extend to 1930, two years before her death. They’re precious because no such personal writings have surfaced from her previous years.

On January 7, 1918, she wrote Jeannette Marks of the English department who had asked about illustrations for her class on Keats.<sup>46</sup> She was sorry that “in the short hour this morning at Dwight Hall, we could not get together all that the department might offer you in this.” Six years after she retired, her departmental colleagues continued to delegate Dwight to her.

A few years ago at South Kensington I heard an interesting discussion of the question whether Keats, in the Ode on a Grecian Urn, might have had in mind a painter rather than a sculptured vase. So many of the beautiful sepulchral ‘urns’ of ancient Attica were of painted terra cotta, like the one recently acquired for Dwight Hall. However, the text here, as in similar allusions, made by Keats, would seem to imply the sculptured frieze, do you not think? I am indeed glad for all that you do in beautiful and convincing ways ‘to stimulate love for this which once seen can never fail to hold,’ and particularly now when the call of the practical sounds loud in the student world, and aims, in these terrible days, to claim first attention.

From this paragraph we learn that Fitz-Randolph had attended a discussion about Keats in London, an instance of her constant attention to cultural events while abroad. (In 1891, a letter she wrote to Lake Erie mentioned her going to

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<sup>46</sup> Marks’s papers, Correspondence, box 14.

lectures in Paris at the Collège de France and the Louvre; see above.) She wonders if Keats' "Grecian Urn" might be a painted vase like Dwight's recent acquisition, but she's familiar enough with the British poet to assume that he invoked a sculptured urn. She's also familiar with Marks's teaching of literature during the World War, for which she's glad because Marks countered the "practical sounds" of 1918. A conspicuous feature of the war's practical impact were student "farmerettes" in the large War Garden across Ashfield Lane which was supplying food for the campus.

Fitz-Randolph often went to Boston but only one letter survives that was posted from there. On January 5, 1919, she wrote Ruth Sherburne Rafferty '15, Alumnae Secretary from 1918 to 1921, on the stationery of "The Priscilla. Exclusively for Women" at 307 Huntington Avenue.<sup>47</sup> Like other single women she found comfort in such lodgings instead of a hotel for mixed society. She writes that she enjoys this place. "Its chief attraction to me has been that the Museum of Fine Arts is in near vicinity, only two or three blocks away." The MFA was well known to her since the early 1880s when she studied at the Harvard Annex (later Radcliffe) and in her days of teaching at Mount Holyoke, she had volunteered to meet students there.<sup>48</sup>

More interesting by far are three letters she addressed to Mary Quigley, the editor of the *Alumnae Quaterly*, from 1926 to 1928.<sup>49</sup> These concern her last trip overseas, the only one which is well documented thanks to these letters. Forty-five years earlier, in 1881, she had made her first trip to Europe. By 1915 she had accumulated ten and one-half years of study and travel in Western Europe, Greece and Egypt.<sup>50</sup> Alas! No letters from those years.

The first letter to Quigley was written on November 4, 1926, aboard the brand-new Italian ship *Roma* which she had joined in Quebec at the end of October. The letter was prompted by a query from Quigley about the Dwight family. Fitz-Randolph gave her several addresses of members of the family, including that of the granddaughter Katherine Dwight Berry '04 with whom she was friendly. However, the letter's chief interest is its account of the first

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<sup>47</sup> Fitz-Randolph papers, Folder 2.

<sup>48</sup> *The Mount Holyoke*, vol. 13, Dec. 1904, p. 173.

<sup>49</sup> Mixing direct quotations with indirect discourse, Quigley published the letters in the *Alumnae Quaterly* among "Class Notes" in January and July, 1927, and January 1928.

<sup>50</sup> According to her handwritten biography of January 30, 1915, sent to the Association of Collegiate Alumnae for their Census of College Women. (Fitz-Randolph papers, folder 1.)

leg of Fitz-Randolph's year abroad. With short stops en route, the *Roma* was headed to Alexandria, where it docked on November 14th. Fitz-Randolph stayed in Cairo for a month before going upstream to Luxor and Thebes where her sister Ellen and her daughter Caroline Ransom Willams were newly established. They were part of a group from the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, founded seven years earlier by James Henry Breasted who headed the expedition. Niece Ransom, a well-known Egyptologist, was an official member of this Chicago venture.

In Cairo, which she had visited many times, Fitz-Randolph frequented the Cairo Museum where she saw for the first time some objects from Tutankhamun's tomb, discovered in 1922, which "now fill some well arranged, most alluring galleries in the Cairo Museum," as she wrote later in this letter. She also enjoyed the medieval city and its Arabian Museum, "a place of rare enchantment," and made excursions to Sakkara and other sites in the region.

She then headed upstream to the Savoy Hotel in Luxor, on the east bank of the Nile, where she remained until March. Ransom and her mother were staying with the expedition on the west bank at Chicago House in Thebes, the Oriental Institute's own facility. On February 19, 1927, Fitz-Randolph wrote a postcard from Luxor to Quigley to say that she was about ready to send "the class note we talked of, for 1872 and 1896," adding that "It has been a wonderful winter—for us all three—and especially for Miss [sic] Williams in the opportunities for archaeological work enjoyed." A detailed letter to the editor dated the same day on the letterhead of the Savoy Hotel was mailed a day or two later. Quigley used the letter for the *Art Quarterly's* issue of July, 1927.<sup>51</sup>

Several times Fitz-Randolph took a felucca across the Nile to see her sister and niece. She used a carriage or donkey to visit a number of noteworthy sites, among them the temples of Queen Hatshepsut, Seti I and Ramses II. She also went to "the weird picturesque 'Valley of the Tombs of the Kings,' " and beyond that to the "even more picturesque 'Western Valley,' where 'Cook's tourists' seldom penetrate." At age seventy-six, Fitz-Randolph must have been proud of the stamina required for such explorations. In her

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<sup>51</sup> "Class Notes, 1872," pp. 110-11.



letter she describes the tomb of Amenhotep III and that of Tutankhamun as though she visited them, but that's not certain. Her descriptions might have been drawn from available guidebooks and other publications.

In her letter of February 19, Fitz-Randolph wrote about her niece's work in Thebes for the class notes for 1896 in the *Alumnae Quaterly*.<sup>52</sup> The expedition's aim was to make a careful record "of the inscriptions and pictorial reliefs still remaining on the walls of the funerary temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu. [...] Much of the work is done out-of-doors, from early morning on, in the bright desert air, climbing ladders to read and scan closely the middle and upper regions, as well as the lower temple walls." Fitz-Randolph described Chicago House in considerable detail, including its architecture and views from it, "with the Colossi of the Theban plain in near distance."

In late January at Queen Hatshepsut's temple, Fitz-Randolph had the surprise of meeting Emily Disbrow '02, a former student, who was making her own trip up the Nile. A few days later, the two spent a week together in Luxor, when they took trips to Karnak "and other historic shrines." Fitz-Randolph gave Quigley more news of her further travels with Disbrow in a letter she wrote after her return to South Hadley in January, 1928.<sup>53</sup> They sailed from Alexandria to Athens "and together they spent April and a part of May in Greece and Sicily. The two then traveled north through Italy, with five weeks in Rome, [. . .] a month in Florence, and nearly a fortnight in Venice." After this, at Disbrow's suggestion, they had a weekend in Cortina in the Dolomites. They were joined there by Florence Sargent '00, another former student, "with whom they had jaunted elsewhere in Italy." For Fitz-Randolph, traveling through Western Europe after four months in Egypt was a heady schedule that a younger woman would have found strenuous.

Upon Disbrow's departure for New York in July, Fitz-Randolph went to Geneva, where she continued her convivial meetings with college friends and alumnae. She spent time with Katherine Dwight Berry and her family, and presumably talked with them about documenting the life of Nancy Everett, John Dwight's first wife, a project she never finished.<sup>54</sup> The Dwights were a

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<sup>52</sup> "Class Notes, 1896," pp. 117-118.

<sup>53</sup> "Class Notes, 1872," *Alumnae Quaterly*, Jan. 1928, p. 243.

<sup>54</sup> Katherine Dwight Berry, "A Tribute to Louise Fitz-Randolph," *Alumnae Quaterly* 17, Aug. 1933, pp. 74-75.

special part of Fitz-Randolph's lifelong attachment to Mount Holyoke. Her year abroad was a recapitulation of her earlier travels, this time not for archaeological study, but for the pleasures of cultivated tourism. In late October she took the *Montnairn* of the Canadian Pacific Line, to Quebec, reaching there in mid-November. She was back in Faculty House at the turn of the new year.

Following her return to South Hadley and her third *vade mecum* to Quigley, only two letters have been found. From Toledo, where she was visiting her sister, she wrote Caroline Galt on December 15, 1929. Galt had asked about "a membership in perpetuity" for the *American Journal of Archaeology* for Mount Holyoke, to which Fitz-Randolph replied that she would write the archaeologist Ralph van Deman Magoffin, a frequent reviewer for the journal, whom she knew well. "I am glad to think this may bring the A.J.A. and Annual Bulletin to the department library each year gratis while helping toward the much needed endowment of the Journal itself." Galt's main purpose in writing this letter was to ask about Elizabeth Osgood '73. Fitz-Randolph hadn't known her well, but from the *Alumnae Quarterly* and other sources she tallied basic facts of her biography to send Galt, and remarked that several of Osgood's students had come to Mount Holyoke.

Fitz-Randolph's last surviving letter was a note sent from Faculty House to Jeannette Marks on April 19, 1930.<sup>55</sup> Marks had long made the undergraduate theater her acknowledged domain so, after thanking her for "a pleasant evening," Fitz-Randolph congratulated her for plays the previous Tuesday that were well done. "The illusion of distance in the background of the stage was perfect. You must use the best and most modern methods to produce such wonderful effect of light and color. The equipment on both floors appeared admirable. I was reminded of one of the best things ever said of Dwight Hall, when a visiting university professor called it 'a thoughtful building.'" This was a gratuitous mention of Dwight Hall by Fitz-Randolph, rather like the remark about Dwight's terra cotta vase in her earlier letter to Marks. That hall was so steadily in her mind that she volunteered references to it even when none was called for. Isn't it wonderfully fitting that the final words in her last known letter evoke Dwight Hall as "a thoughtful building"?

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<sup>55</sup> Marks papers, Correspondence, box 14.

She was surely proud that her thoughts and her plans had entered into the building since its inception and that her role in forming its collections and cataloguing them was evident to all.



Louise Fitz-Randolph, c. 1925

### Fitz-Randolph remembered

On December 28, 1932, Fitz-Randolph died aged eighty-one in Toledo, where she was visiting her sister Ellen. It was probably her sister and niece who wrote the obituary that was published by the *Toledo Blade* the next day. The same text, lightly redacted, appeared in many papers on the 30<sup>th</sup>, including three New York dailies, the *Times*, the *Sun*, and the *Herald Tribune*,

as well as the Springfield papers.<sup>56</sup> They recapitulated her career and credited her major role in the Dwight Art Memorial as exemplified in *The Louise Fitz Randolph Gallery of Casts*. The Springfield papers printed a fuller account with information from the college's press bureau. It was noted that "Her own collection of photographs she has given to the college and much of last year [sic] after her retirement from teaching she spent in superintending their mounting and classification."

On January 9, 1933, the college faculty passed a resolution honoring her. "Although Miss Randolph retired from active service in 1912, she had maintained her helpful interest in developing the artistic resources of the College and has held a quietly distinguished place in the college community. [She was] a person of unusual force, individuality and charm, whose achievement must be remembered as a contribution not only to the work of Mount Holyoke College but also to the development of the liberal arts curriculum in other American colleges."

Honored though Fitz-Randolph was in 1933, in later years, evidence of her prominence can be found in only one recent publication, Austin Clark's thesis of 2017. Before his eye-opening essay, she was such a minor figure that she's not even mentioned in the authoritative history of the institution, Arthur C. Cole's *A Hundred Years of Mount Holyoke College* (1940). Cole failed to include her among the [several Mount Holyoke women who made singular impressions on the male-dominated realm of higher education](#). [Among them were Lydia Shattuck, Cornelia Clapp, Henrietta Hooker, and Mary Woolley](#). It's true that Fitz-Randolph was not a publishing scholar and, although equal to them in her role as charismatic teacher, she could not match their enduring contributions. However, as Austin Clark reminds us, she was one of the first American professors of art history and the founder of one of the earliest art history departments in the country. Moreover, she was well thought of in the archaeological world where she served on national and international committees.

Fitz-Randolph's place is admittedly a parochial one; she cannot be boosted up to national prominence. But for Mount Holyoke, she is a notable

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<sup>56</sup> Clippings from newspaper obituaries are in the Fitz-Randolph papers, folder 1.

heir of Mary Lyon because she also devoted her entire life to the teaching of women and the provision of objects and ideas that enriched their education.

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